MARTHA ALEXANDER GERBODE (1909-1971):
ENVIRONMENTALIST, PHILANTHROPIST, AND VOLUNTEER
IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA AND HAWAII

Interviews with

Garland Farmer                Esther Fuller
Huey Johnson                  Maryanna Shaw
Clarisse Stockholm            Aaron Levine
Georgiana G. Stevens          J. Russell Cades

With an Introduction by
Maryanna Shaw Stockholm

Interviews Conducted by
Harriet Nathan and
Ann Lage
1989-1991

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Martha Alexander Gerbode

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Retrospective interviews about environmentalist Martha Alexander Gerbode (1909-1971) with eight individuals, friends, family, and co-environmental and civic advocates. Gerbode's support of World Affairs Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, Japan Society, Encampment for Citizenship, Planned Parenthood, Visiting Nurses Assn., Cross-Cultural Family Center, Exploratorium; planning and housing; women leaders in public life; San Francisco Bay Area conservation issues: opposition to the Marincello development in Marin Headlands, protection of Alcatraz, and of Bodega Bay; support for Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Art and Ecology Institute; Hawaii: defense of Diamond Head, Oahu Development Conference, forebears and Alexander holdings, the firm of Alexander and Baldwin, family properties Lanihau and Haumalu on Maui, Papaa Ranch on Kauai; husband Dr. Frank L. A. Gerbode, and children, and attitude toward wealth and responsibilities; friends Alice Spalding Bowen, Catherine Bauer Wurster and William Wurster; discussion of WWII experiences, Japanese Relocation, McCarthy Era, Harry Bridges, historic preservation, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation.


Introduction by Maryanna Shaw Stockholm, Martha Gerbode's daughter.

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INTRODUCTION--by Maryanna Shaw Stockholm

Martha Alexander Gerbode as I remember her, was a devoted mother and fine "grassroots" politician. A woman driven by an internal sense of social responsibility, her influence is still felt in this changing world. Those who felt her presence knew she was important for the future generations and their survival. She was a humanitarian familiar with feeling the need to respond to her conscience in order to be at peace. She was, for her time, a "radical" in search of the meaning of life, with a social awareness which helped her to respond to the needs of society.

Martha grew to acknowledge she was a legacy in philanthropy. Most of her early years were spent in cultural pursuits with the strong influence of her parents who devoted a good part of their lives to community service and foreign relations. They did not live lavishly, but respectably, as due their "station" in life. Martha learned from them the importance of wielding influence without showing decadence or deceit.

Her visionary heritage helped give her the conscience; her intelligence and creative thinking helped form her leadership capabilities. Her influence was felt as lasting and unpretentious.

In today's world we hear the words "social responsibility." Having a sense of this, showing commitment to changes, hers was a devotion to the survival of future generations, and to her the keys were in two areas of commitment: the first, conservation; the second, in the area of personal choice.

Land use and ownership was a tangible and real area of concern. She was one of the first to put down her own hard dollars and use strategy to preserve the natural beauty of Hawaii at Diamond Head where she spent the early years, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Martha traveled extensively both with her parents and with her husband Frank, who often had conferences in Catholic countries where she found some women who were verbal about pro-choice. Planned Parenthood took on a new dimension with her financial and positive backing. She was particularly sensitive to the cause of women and knew the importance of being independent.

Martha's spirit was ever infectious. Her humor lent a light touch to the ironies of life. She laughed at the craziness, and saw the truth in her unique ways. It was right to have opinions, to challenge others in theirs, and to not need a consensus. It took courage to be often alone in her convictions, but she was blessed with the ability to stand firm and take criticism without compromising her principles. This creative sense allowed her greater freedoms. Rightfully so, she appeared
to be a complex personality, applying her methodology to get at the core of the truth, be it political or philanthropic, and then sense how to make her attack upon what she considered was wrong and should be changed.

Her grassroots approach seemed to evolve from her diffuse background and internal need to be generous and to find truth and order.

In sidestepping the usual bureaucratic formalities of problem-solving, Martha was in a time frame far advanced for her era. She laid the ground work for many of today's social objectives. Although she preferred to be a behind-the-scenes person, she often found herself the subject of controversy on the front page of the local newspaper. The exposure never seemed to cause her to waver from her objectives. To the contrary, she would thrive on the momentum of her "cause," determined to see it through to fruition.

Martha, through her own financial and personal means, was able to achieve what many nonprofits and corporations are today striving to accomplish. Hopefully with some of her many activities documented in this archive of history, future generations will realize the examples she set during her lifetime--of tenacity and dedication--with the heart of a true humanitarian.

Maryanna (Gerbode) Shaw Stockholm

October 1993
San Francisco, California
INTERVIEW HISTORY--by Harriet Nathan

The mission of the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library, as stated in its founding directive in 1954, is to capture the memories, perceptions, and experiences of persons who have played a significant role in the development of the West. Like all effective ideas that take on new coloration over time, the decades-old directive still holds true, while the "persons" include increasing numbers of women, and "development" can also mean safeguarding the ecology. ROHO has kept pace with this expanding focus, producing oral history interviews relating to women as volunteers, contributors, and professionals in philanthropy, politics, community organizations, in higher education, in the ecology movement, in the arts, in the media, and including many who combined these and other callings with family life. These were women who participated deeply in the life of their times, a description that fit Martha Alexander Gerbode, whose untimely death in 1971 meant that her story could be told now only by others.

Martha Alexander Gerbode had established the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation in memory of her son in 1951. Looking ahead to the foundation's fortieth anniversary in 1991, Thomas Layton, the executive director, in 1988 initiated discussions with ROHO on behalf of the foundation board concerning an oral history memoir of Martha Alexander Gerbode to be funded entirely by the foundation. The purpose was both to celebrate her contributions and to provide at least a partial record of her concerns for others, her thoughts, actions, and point of view. The project got underway in 1989 with plans for two stages. The first, completed in 1991, comprised a written biographic profile based on interviews, consultation, and documentary research. It appears in this volume as Appendix I, titled Martha Alexander Gerbode 1909-1971, A Life of Generosity, Involvement, and Responsibility. The present oral history memoir volume, the project's second stage, presents eight interviews with individuals who remember Martha Gerbode. Each narrator draws on personal experience in recalling some aspect of her intelligence, wit, energy, and independence as well as her sense of how best to provide for a friend or family member, or support a cause she believed in.

When she married Stanford classmate Frank Gerbode1, she observed a conflict between the comfortable and sheltered life her family provided, and the excitement and challenges of the far more complicated and even dangerous world outside her circle. She chose the big world. While she had enjoyed the social pleasures and frivolities available at home and on visits to friends in Atlanta a few years earlier, she determined to do it all: be a full partner in supporting her husband's interests, cultivate and enjoy her children, keep an eye on family enterprises, maintain a social life and, as a volunteer and later a philanthropist, play a major role in helping to shape responses to public questions.

1Please see the oral history of Frank Leven Albert Gerbode, Pioneer Cardiovascular Surgeon, an oral history conducted 1983-1984 by Sally Smith Hughes, Regional Oral History Office, 1985.
As a young matron in San Francisco, she found role models including the "great ladies" of the city, who were already wielding considerable power. She never sought so grandiose a title, but public recognition came her way despite her taste for privacy, and even anonymity. For example, she was the first woman to be named to the federal Grand Jury in San Francisco, and the San Francisco Examiner gave her the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Award as one of Ten Distinguished Women of 1969.

These women of distinction and their forerunners were for the most part volunteers with responsibilities in organizations that soon also claimed Martha Gerbode's allegiance. These included the pre-World War II Japan Society, groups interested in historical preservation, defense of the ecology, the Institute of Pacific Relations, Planned Parenthood, the World Affairs Council, and Cross-Cultural Family Centers. Others included the Save Diamond Head effort in Honolulu, the fight to stop the Marinello development, and the defense of Alcatraz. Martha Gerbode took an active role, contributed financially and sometimes did both in all these efforts, as well as helping with solicitations for the Community Chest Drive and the Red Cross Roll Call in the 30s and 40s. She also supported the Visiting Nurses Association, where to her horror she learned that her duties as president included speaking at the annual meeting to present the year's report. She was also involved in the San Francisco Center of the League of Women Voters, the Encampment for Citizenship, and the Wilderness Camp co-sponsored by the Hearing Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the Society of Friends. This list can only cite the range of her participation, but not the full evidence of her interests, nor the many occasions when she chose to work alone.

Preparations for and conduct of individual sessions for the eight taped interviews followed the methods of the Regional Oral History Office: research, correspondence and/or conversations, a suggested topic outline for each narrator, followed by the tape-recorded interview. When each session was transcribed, the interviewer provided light editing, heads and sub-heads, and usually a few queries for clarification. Each narrator reviewed his or her transcript, made any needed corrections or additions, and approved the material.

When Clarisse Stockholm was interviewed at her San Francisco club, she invited Martha's daughter Maryanna Shaw (later Stockholm) to sit in; she did, and saying little, quietly facilitated the interview. In her own interview, Maryanna Shaw provided family background and setting for the Honolulu interviews, and in addition wrote the introduction for the memoir volume of her mother, Martha Gerbode.

Six of the interviews were conducted in the San Francisco Bay Area: those with the late Garland Farmer (San Francisco); Huey Johnson (Marin Headlands); Clarisse Stockholm--with Maryanna Shaw Stockholm (San Francisco); Georgiana Stevens (San Francisco); Esther Fuller (San Francisco).
Francisco); and Maryanna Shaw Stockholm (Berkeley). Ann Lage interviewed Huey Johnson and Esther Fuller. The other Bay Area interviews were conducted by Harriet Nathan, as well as the two that took place in Honolulu: Aaron Levine in his home, and J. Russell Cades, Esq., in the offices of his law firm.

The interviewer's research and interview sessions in Honolulu in March 1991 might have met delays due to transportation problems during a busy three-day visit, but the matter-of-fact hospitality of the residents prevented any difficulties. Ellabelle Wall said that her house could be hard to find, and did the driving herself. Aaron Levine took time for a scenic round trip to and from the hotel to his house so the interviewer could see some of the actual places he had discussed. He pointed out properties situated "toward the lighthouse," where delays and a loss of momentum disappointed civic-minded groups. Instead of an extensive addition to a Kapiolani Park, the space was reduced to two attractive but relatively small areas. Finally, when it was time for the interviewer to leave for the airport, Michelle Matson found that she had "errands in that direction," and made sure than the visitor met the plane without anxiety.

A number of people involved in this project provided valuable help that included consultations, publications and a variety of other items including family letters and records, organizational reports, legal documents, and clippings. These supported preparation for the interviews, and furnished valuable background for the written biography. Thanks are due to generous consultants both on the mainland and in Honolulu. Those in Honolulu included Michaelyn P. Chou, Librarian, University of Hawaii; Dr. Garton and Ellabelle Wall; and Michelle Matson on behalf of her grandmother, Alice Spalding Bowen. Valuable assistance from the mainland came from Philip Gerbode in Vermont; Penny (Penelope) Gerbode Jay in Marin County; John Darby of the Hearing Society in San Francisco; and William M. Roth in San Francisco. Sarge (Dr. Frank Albert Gerbode III) traveled from his Woodside home to San Francisco for a conference and consultation. Ann Lage conducted and reported on similar discussions in the Bay Area with John Jacobs, Matilda Kunin, the late Miriam Levy, Helene Oppenheimer, Judge William Orrick, Templeton Peck, and Toba Wiley.

Germaine LaBerge and Ann Lage undertook the search for contemporary accounts of Martha Gerbode's work as they appeared in newspapers and other documents published in San Francisco and Honolulu. Subsequent searches in Hawaii revealed little mention of Martha Alexander Gerbode other than records relating to family properties and historic family connections.

Those involved in conversations and interviews produced a number of important items. Maryanna Shaw made available cartons of family records and correspondence; Penny Jay provided newspaper clippings and other valuable papers; Frank Gerbode brought historical material and loaned a diary with his mother's first-hand account of travels in Europe in the
1930s. Georgiana Stevens provided various papers and a poem Martha had written. Aaron Levine, who headed the Oahu Development Conference and the Save Diamond Head effort, compiled a generous packet of reports and other papers, some to be kept and others copied and returned; and J. Russell Cades searched the archives of his law firm for documents and clippings to be copied. Finally, Michelle Matson made available the files of Alice Spalding Bowen containing a trove of correspondence with Martha Gerbode and documents on Save Diamond Head. The generosity, good spirit, and effectiveness of these contributions were invaluable. Some of these items, along with other related documents, were deposited in The Bancroft Library as materials supplemental to the oral history.

Taken together, the eight interviews in the volume provide glimpses and interpretations of Martha Gerbode's range of interests and unique personality. As Garland Farmer spoke of Martha's hours of volunteering at the speakers' bureau of the World Affairs Council and her willingness to give time and respectful attention to the public rather than hiring someone else to do the work, he also recognized that she understood the need to develop community support for the council. At the same time, she did not hesitate to use her prestige and political skills to pacify Harry Bridges and avert a potentially awkward confrontation. Asked for his assessment of Martha Gerbode and her abilities, Farmer said in admiration of her achievements, "She's not someone easily categorized." Huey Johnson recollected that Martha advised him to bring problems and causes that others might not want to handle. She had confidence in her own abilities and judgment, and no fear of working alone. On the other hand, Aaron Levine's account of the Save Diamond Head effort showed Martha working on a team with others, generous in her support of Alice Spalding Bowen and Levine as leaders she respected. Esther Fuller observed still another aspect of Martha in action, noting that her fascination with public affairs, national and international issues never obscured her affectionate focus on individual friends, and her sensitive response to their needs. Maryanna mentioned still another facet, when she observed the way Martha overcame her essential disinterest in wealth and its management, but focussed effectively on business affairs when she saw the need to do it.

The eight narrators saw Martha's legacy as one of valiant action, remembered laughter, and keenness of vision that embraced diversity and sought to bring people together. She flew the Ecology flag over her house as a reminder of the vital need to preserve open space. She knew how to be a good friend and a strong family person. She was willing to stand up for the public good as she saw it, and to prepare for a future she was to experience only in imagination.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

January 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
Martha Alexander Gerbode Retrospective

Garland Farmer

MARTHA GERBODE: INFORMED VOLUNTEER WITH A WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVE

An Interview Conducted by Harriet Nathan in 1989

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INTERVIEW HISTORY--by Harriet Nathan

Garland Farmer, organization executive, was interviewed in a San Francisco office on September 29, 1989. From the U.S. Department of State, in 1952 he came to San Francisco to serve as director of the World Affairs Council, first during a time of turmoil and challenge and then one of growth. His friendship with Martha Gerbode developed during her service on the council's executive committee. It flourished when Martha volunteered to sit at the speakers' bureau desk, deal with public requests personally, and to make friends for the council. He recognized that this was her way of demonstrating her view of community service.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name  

Date of birth  

Birthplace  

Father's full name  

Occupation  

Birthplace  

Mother's full name  

Occupation  

Birthplace  

Your spouse  

Your children  

Where did you grow up?  

Present community  

Education  

Occupation(s)  

Areas of expertise  

Other interests or activities  

Organizations in which you are active  

FARMER, Garland R., Jr.
3/3/22
Henderson, Texas
FARMER, Garland R.
Newspaper Editor
Durango, Texas
Langhorne, Sarah Agnes
Teacher
Henderson, Texas
Helen Colvin
Kathleen H. and Garland Langhorne
Texas
Palo Alto
Univ. of Texas, The George Washington Univ. (West. D.C.)
Government, World Affairs Council, Iron ore mining, West Africa, international trade, Belgium
Africa, development
Farmer:  (I should tell you that I have a lung problem, and I'm a little short on breath. You may find me pausing at awkward moments, but don't think that I'm losing track; I'm losing breath.)

I POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL SETTING, WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL (1952)

[Date of Interview: September 29, 1989]##

Farmer:  I have been thinking that it might be well to put into time and circumstances how Martha and I first met each other. I came to the [World Affairs] Council as director in October or early November of 1952. The council was deeply in debt. Mr. J. D. Zellerbach had made it a loan, Mr. Brayton Wilbur and Walter Haas had, Helen Crocker Russell had made it a loan, and it was still going into debt. I didn't know that when I accepted the directorship [laughs].

Criticism of the Council

Farmer:  One of the reasons why it was doing so poorly financially was that it was in the eye of the [Joseph] McCarthy storm and of the Eisenhower-Stevenson presidential election campaign, which added a little sharpness to the problems, but particularly with regard to foreign policy and especially with regard to who "lost China." San Francisco was in the midst of all of that type of controversy, with William Knowland in the East Bay and the Oakland Tribune being in the forefront of the attack on the State Department and the government for having permitted the Communists to take over China.

Therefore the IPR--the Institute of Pacific Relations--relationship to the council made it especially vulnerable or especially a target of all sorts of rumors and criticisms. Many

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'This symbol (##) indicates that a tape or a segment of tape has begun. For a guide to the tapes, please see the page following the transcripts.
people, particularly in the business community, inclined to be conservative in the first place and not too busy with the council—not too knowledgeable about its activities—were withdrawing or at least stepping back.

**Institute of Pacific Relations, Talk, and Conspiracy Theories**

Nathan: Would you like to say a little more about the relationship between the institute and the council?

Farmer: I will do that, because that's very pertinent to Martha.

I had to be educated on the IPR and the World Affairs Council, because I walked into a hornets' nest of criticism here. I took it upon myself to visit all sixty-five or seventy members of the board of trustees of the council. Many of those, particularly, as I said, the businessmen, the first thing they would bring up was the IPR heritage, always, obviously, as a criticism of the council or a reason to be a little cautious about it.

So I did two things to try to deal with that. I should say, parenthetically, that the source of most of this talk seemed to be Stuart Ward, the secretary of the Commonwealth Club. Stuart Ward was outraged that, among its many sins, the council should have hired as its director a refugee from the State Department.

Nathan: That was you?

Farmer: That was I, yes. Particularly because Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State, was a great target of the Knowland critics of foreign policy. I came here to be interviewed for the job from attending a labor convention with Acheson. Acheson gave a speech to the International Association of Machinists, and I came directly from that session. So it gave all the more substance to Ward's suspicions that this was all some great conspiracy--IPR, World Affairs Council, State Department conspiracy.

I felt I'd better go meet these business people who had either decreased or just postponed their financial contributions and see what was the effect of all this talk. Was it really a major problem for the council? Well, it didn't take long to find out that it was a major problem. That problem had been aggravated by the fact that within the council there were, as always, Democrats and Republicans, but the animosity between the Eisenhower and Stevenson camps was probably higher than was normal
in a presidential campaign. That was a particularly acrimonious period. Our active members, who were normally quite tolerant of one another, had their feelings on their elbows about this campaign.

So you had people who were quite irritated with my predecessor as director, a brilliant man named Eugene Burdick, who was a professor at the University of California and a famous novelist. He had written speeches, or a speech, for Stevenson when Stevenson came out here and had appeared as one of his sponsors. Well, the World Affairs Council was supposed to be nonpartisan, and the director was supposed to be more nonpartisan than that.

I'm sure that Mr. Zellerbach had become quite disenchanted with the council, not merely because of the prominence of some in the council in the Democratic Party here in the Bay Area, but also because of the fight amongst the active members, many of whom were on his doorstep once a week to complain or talk. Nobody told him he was going to have to give that much time to the council when he took on the presidency of it. He was really happy to give up the whole thing. Later on he became quite interested again. He was always helpful, even when he was disaffected; he still realized that the council was an important organization, but he was tired of all this infighting.

Visiting the FBI

Farmer: As I said, I tried to ascertain where this talk was coming from. The business people I talked with--some mentioned Stuart Ward and the Commonwealth Club, others mentioned the political party fight. But it appeared to me that I'd better go talk to the FBI and see if the FBI had actually gotten anything, because frequently people would say, "We understand that the FBI has an unfavorable file on the council."

Nathan: You were very bold, weren't you?

Farmer: Well, yes. It took me quite a long while to get an appointment; nobody wanted to talk with me. Finally a very nice man, Special Agent So-and-So, received me in an office with nothing else but a desk and a file in it. I told him about myself and my background, and I said, "I'm sure you have all of this because I just left the State Department, where I had top secret clearance. So you must have an adequate file on me as an individual." He said yes, they did. I said, "I can't ask you what's in the council's file, but I
can ask you what are the things that you would consider the most important matters for me to try to clarify, either in the minds of other people or in the file. If there are outstanding problems in your file about the World Affairs Council, and if I can find adequate answers to them, what would they be?"

The only thing that came up was the IPR. That was the only matter that he considered to be important. He said, "Oh, there are a lot of other things. There's one man in town who feeds us things all the time." [laughs] But he found that the only thing that seemed to be a problem was the IPR relationship. I said, "Well, I'm afraid I can't do anything in the files about that, because it's a fact. But I appreciate your telling me."

**Martha Gerbode and IPR Background**

Farmer: Then I decided I'd better find out for myself what was the history of the IPR. The sources of what I'm about to say now were Mrs. Alfred P. McLaughlin and Martha Gerbode. Mrs. McLaughlin was an early and active member of the IPR, and Martha's father had been one of the founders of it. It was founded mainly by business people and academicians who felt that what's now called the Pacific Rim was not known in the United States. People like themselves, who either had academic or business interests in the Far East or anywhere in the Pacific, should be encouraging better understanding, more knowledge of the Pacific.

As time went on it developed into a national group of some importance, with headquarters in New York. Mrs. McLaughlin, particularly, and others--Ray Lyman Wilbur at Stanford, Monroe Deutsch at Berkeley--were, as she, concerned that this was becoming a centralized organization out of the New York headquarters.

Nathan: Is there anything curious about the fact that a Pacific Rim interest would be headquartered in New York rather than on the Pacific Coast?

Farmer: I don't know why. I do know that the Bay Area group--and there were about six or seven chapters in the Bay Area--felt that it should be a rather loose federation rather than a centralized organization. So far as I know, they had never really ever considered that a national headquarters was anything more than something of a service group that would see to it that they would get data or speakers' names and this sort of thing. But it wasn't
going to be a national organization in the usual sense of that term.

The national organization was headed in its latter days by a man named Edward (Ned) Carter. Ned Carter became a close personal friend of Martha Gerbode, and when he came to the Bay Area, I understood that he would commonly stay at the hospitable Gerbode house. Martha had both an intellectual and a friendly interest in this relationship, whereas most of the other people were very resentful that Carter began to bring more and more power into his and the national headquarters' hands. They felt that they were having less and less input into policymaking, and that in general the organization had gotten rather bloated, with lots of money being spent in the headquarters, and so on--typical development of organization life.

This group really didn't give much credence to the McCarthy committee's disturbing findings that Carter was left wing and that the Institute of Pacific Relations espoused left-wing speakers, writers, and causes. Largely, also, their concern centered on the problem of China; that is, it would come back again and again.

Owen Lattimore, who was a great China scholar, had written things under the imprimatur of the Institute of Pacific Relations, ergo the Institute of Pacific Relations was giving its approval to Lattimore's friendship toward the Communist Chinese as opposed to the Kuomintang. Many people in the Bay Area, the quite conservative people, had had sufficiently close acquaintance with the excesses of the Kuomintang, so that they shared the sentiments of the left-wing people regarding that particular fight--not being pro-Communist, but being anti-Kuomintang. So there was some justification for William Knowland's and the Oakland Tribune's contention that these people had opposed the free China movement, or what have you. They hadn't opposed that; they'd simply opposed what everyone here seemed to have admitted was a regime that didn't deserve support.

Well, with all of that background, and there was a very heated national debate about this problem of the politics of the IPR, there was a so-called Coronado Conference, a conference held at the Coronado Hotel in San Diego. Martha, Mrs. McLaughlin, Monroe Deutsch, and various members of this group went there, apparently determined to clip the wings of headquarters and of Ned Carter. Martha, apparently, was not unsympathetic to Carter, but she had a great sense of organizational proprieties. She did believe in nonpartisan educational, informational activities. And if she didn't believe in it, Mrs. McLaughlin saw to it that she would eventually have believed in it. [laughter]
So she went there, from what I've heard--I wasn't here at the time--reluctantly. This was in 1947. She was a member of the group, if not really an enthusiastic supporter of the opposition to Ned Carter. Mrs. McLaughlin was gung-ho against him. She found Carter an insufferable egotist and all sorts of other things that she found unsuitable to the head of an organization of this type.

Bay Area Institute of Pacific Relations and Its Library

Farmer: To make a long story a little bit shorter, the six or seven Bay Area chapters withdrew from the national organization and founded the Bay Area Institute of Pacific Relations. It had one very substantial asset, which was perhaps the best library on the Pacific Rim, on the Pacific Ocean area, that existed in the Bay Area. Even in the libraries of the great universities there hadn't been such a specialization. So that was a great asset that they tried to preserve. One of the first employees of the new group was a librarian; in other words, this was a way to keep the library that they had had. Then there was an institute at Mills College and some other organizations that were ripe at that time for some kind of amalgamation of efforts.

Nathan: Who had access to this splendid library?

Farmer: Members of the IPR and, really, any scholar who wanted it. Schools could send their students or staff there; but if you were not a scholar, then it was open only to the membership. As a matter of fact, one of the things in my early days with the council that was impressed upon me was the importance of the library and that its use was a privilege, not a right of the community. This was one of the few attractions for certain elements to join the council. When these groups ultimately merged to form the World Affairs Council, the library was the first asset it had.
II WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL, SAN FRANCISCO

Some Council Founders

Farmer: Lynn White, the head of Mills College, was one of the founding members. The founding members, I should mention, were the Who's Who of the Bay Area and showed the wide spectrum of political opinion that had gone into this, quite contrary to what Stuart Ward and the critics had said: that this was left wing, that this was merely a cover for the IPR's Communist leanings, that the World Affairs Council had taken on a new name to conceal its identity as a reborn IPR.

You had people like Monroe Deutsch; Paul Edwards, who was the editor of the San Francisco Call Bulletin, which was a Scripps-Howard newspaper--very conservative; Walter Haas, Sr.; Paul Leonard, who was the president of San Francisco State; Paul Smith, the editor of the Chronicle; Robert Gordon Sproul; Brayton Wilbur; Ray Lyman Wilbur. As well, there were liberal elements like Harold Fisher, who was the head of the Hoover Institution at Stanford and who soon was to be let go because he got crosswise with Mr. Hoover.

Nathan: Was Harold Fisher a professor at Stanford when Martha Gerbode was there?

Farmer: I believe so, and Martha was very generous to Harold throughout all her life afterwards. Harold was retired early, in some shame, by the Hoover directors, partially--or I'd say largely--because the institution had printed a series of books by very liberal personalities that Mr. Hoover didn't approve of, and it had his name on it. There was a certain problem about a man still living whose name was being given to authors who were entirely at odds with him. [laughter] So there was a dilemma. But Hoover was very harsh, and they retired Harold.
Harold's wife, Helen, was incapacitated, and they were living on rather short rations. I understand that Martha assisted him financially for the rest of her life and perhaps after; I'm not sure that it didn't extend after. Harold Fisher was a dear personal friend and had, perhaps, taught Martha at Stanford when she was there. I know nothing, really, about Martha at Stanford.

That gives you an idea of the type of people--Ellie [Elinor] (Mrs. Edward) Heller; Louis Lundborg, who was vice president of Bank of America; Rabbi Irving Reichert--these were all the founding members of the council. So clearly this was not a left-wing activity. It was a very responsible group of people who wished to have an organization that would be nonpartisan and a center in the Bay Area of some kind of more active information and education on world affairs.

**Relationships: the Council and the Commonwealth Club**

Farmer: As I said, they took over the library. They engaged a very well-known scholar, Eugene Staley, as the first director. The council became quite quickly an important factor in the community. It wasn't, let's say, a vast membership organization. The Commonwealth Club had many more members; it had been there longer and had more members. But Stuart Ward and many of the people in the Commonwealth Club felt that this was an encroachment on their turf. When there was a visiting dignitary there was considerable scrambling for who would get the lunch with him, or who would get the dinner with him, or who would hear his major speech. The Commonwealth Club thought it had a lock-grip on that, that nobody else was supposed to even have these personalities.

Nathan: Was the World Affairs Council more closely connected with the State Department? Did they have first dibs on good State Department people?

Farmer: I don't know. I can honestly say that the State Department had no particular commitment or even any disposition to favor one versus the other, but it certainly wasn't predisposed toward the Commonwealth Club, which had sections lambasting the State Department on every side. [laughter]

Just to illustrate the point, I had just left the State Department's information section. As a matter of fact, I had been directed to the council by Howard Cook, who had succeeded Staley as the director and was himself the chief of the division I was working for in the State Department. So it did look rather
suspicious that the council sends a man to the State Department, and once at the State Department he sends a man to the council. If you believe in conspiracy, on the face of it there you have evidence that something was going on. [laughter]

I came here at a time, as I said, when the financial state of the organization was deplorable.

Appointment as Director, and Running the Asilomar Conference

Nathan: How were you recruited? Was there a committee?

Farmer: Yes. Howard Cook wrote to Mr. J. D. Zellerbach. Mr. Zellerbach had appointed a committee, the chairman of which was a young man newly in the organization--well, for two or three years--Louis Heilbron. Mrs. McLaughlin was a member, and Harley Stevens, Lynn White, Dorothy (Mrs. W. Lister) Rogers, Easton Rothwell. So it was a splendid committee.

They had me come out here from Kansas City and have a dinner at the Women's Athletic Club, Mrs. McLaughlin hosting. They interviewed me and sent me on my way--no word or anything. It was weeks later that I got a telegram from Louis offering me a job. I think they had considered a number of other people out here in the Bay Area. The salary wasn't very generous, and they weren't a very big attraction in terms of a career. Incidentally, they were reluctant to commit themselves, because the council was going further into debt every month.

In any event, when I arrived the big event of the year was the Asilomar Conference. In those days it was held in December. There was a stormy petrel by the name of Charlie Wheeler, the head of a company called Pope and Talbot, a big shipping and timber company, who was conference chairman. He had made an effort to mollify the business community; appointing him was an effort to get the business people re-interested in the council. The subject of the conference had something to do with international trade. Mr. Wheeler had wide contacts and was an enormously energetic and enthusiastic man, but he alienated almost everybody he talked with for one reason or another. He just had a knack for frightening people off when he was trying to attract them.

I came and used the State Department's public information division as a contact for getting quite decent speakers. The conference was a moderate success. I won't say it was a raving success, but the fat was pulled from the fire by the speakers. So
that again gave credence to the argument that this organization was the West Coast branch of the State Department.

During this time, of course, I was getting acquainted with people such as Martha.

Nathan: Was she on the board?

Farmer: She was a member of the executive committee at that time. I think her term expired soon, but she was still a member of the executive committee at the time I came. I was asking her and these other old-timers about the early days, in an effort to try to answer the questions of the people whom I was visiting on behalf of the council. Much of what I've just said, which is about all I know about the IPR early days, came from Mrs. McLaughlin and Martha and Dorothy Rogers. Dorothy Rogers was a stern and staunch Republican and not always congenial with Martha; they didn't always see sufficiently alike to be close friends. But they both supported the council for the same reason: that here was an independent, nonpartisan source of information about an important aspect of national life.

Council Finances and Staff

Farmer: After the conference was over I began to be able to pay some attention to the finances of the council. The first thing I had to do was reduce the staff. Eugene Burdick had had an idea which the executive committee had approved, that it needed to upgrade the personnel. Most of the people were nice, eager young people who worked for almost nothing for long hours, hewing wood and drawing water. But he wanted a more intellectual tone to at least a certain part of the staff. He began to replace these willing but not very well prepared people with Ph.D.s from Berkeley. We had two Ph.D.s from Berkeley and one from Stanford. Well, the council couldn't afford Ph.D.s, in the first place; in the second place, strong-minded people like Dorothy Rogers had no intention of being told by a Ph.D. from Berkeley how to run a study group. [laughter]

I hadn't even found this out until after the conference, but this was one of the things that was underlying the failure of the activities to be satisfactory to some members. I stumbled across it but didn't do anything about it right away. I had to reduce the staff for financial reasons rather than for policy reasons.
III MARTHA GERBODE AND THE SPEAKERS' BUREAU

Farmer: One of the first staff members to go--this brings us back to Martha--was a young man just out of Berkeley, a Ph.D. in political science, who was the head of our speakers' bureau and of the associated councils.

Outreach Responsibility

Farmer: We had associated councils in Santa Rosa, Sacramento--

Farmer: --Fresno, San Luis Obispo, Monterey Peninsula, and San Jose. Some of these were quite active, some others were dying on the vine. The council had requested and had obtained some foundation support for this type of evangelical outreach. That was helping to support this expensive person on the staff.

In addition to that, the speakers' bureau had encouraged organization memberships by service clubs: the Rotary Club, study clubs, Los Altos Morning Forum, and all sorts of very good groups that would pay limited memberships to the council in order to have access to the library and to the speakers' bureau. The speakers' bureau was really doing an excellent job of getting foreign policy discussed in organizations which otherwise wouldn't do so. They could, but it was too much bother for them.

Nathan: There was no speaker's fee involved?

Farmer: Well, the speaker's fee was paid to the speaker. This was one of our problems, of course. An assistant professor at Berkeley had to drive to San Jose to speak, and he probably got a $20 or $30
fee. The council kept $5 of that to pay for the service, which didn't do much more than pay for the phone calls to set it up. But it was a little bit of income for the professor; and the more times he spoke, the more helpful it was to him, and the more helpful it was to us.

But, of course, not everybody wanted the nice assistant professor; they wanted some big names. They wanted to have one big name for three small names, for example. It was a juggling act to try to keep all the customers as well as the speakers happy, and then to work with the consulates when they had people of prominence coming through the country who were not big enough names to be a featured speaker but who could be informative--to try to schedule their visits with meeting dates with these various organizations and so on.

I found that the speakers' bureau was one of the most satisfying activities. The study group was the big activity of the council, but that was for members, and it was for a very restricted percentage of the members--people who would come to the council headquarters at lunch or at evening time for two or three hours and who were committed at that point to doing a paper. Mrs. McLaughlin would say, "We're not a 'sit and listen' group. We're here to learn something, and we're here to do research." There were at that period a lot of young men in business and law firms and so on who, having just returned from military service, wanted to keep a contact with the world which their daily business didn't afford them. So the study groups were very satisfying for them. Louis Heilbron joined after he got a postcard asking him if he would be interested in joining the study group. Mrs. McLaughlin said the best thing that ever happened to the council for one cent was to get Louis. [laughter].

In any event, we fired this fellow who was the head of the speakers' bureau and of the associated councils. I was in despair for two reasons. One, I thought the activity was important. Two, we had gotten foundation support; we were morally obliged to continue an activity for which we had taken money.

Nathan: Would it be proper to ask which foundation it was?

Farmer: I don't even remember. I'm not sure it wasn't the Carnegie Foundation. It wasn't a local one. It was national, which was all the worse, because they only knew of us at a distance. The local ones knew from day to day about us, but the national ones only knew when we reported what we had done with their money.
Volunteering to Keep the Speakers' Bureau Running

Farmer: That activity was one that Martha Gerbode had liked because it suited her approach to what the council should be doing. While we were trying to straighten out the finances--because I had committed myself to restoring this activity once I could get the finances of the council straightened out on an overall basis--I would have to find money out of the pot somehow to continue this. I was bemoaning this at an executive committee meeting. After the meeting was over, Martha Gerbode came in, and she said, "You know, until you do that, I'll do the work. I'll come in half a day, three days a week, and keep it moving."

Nathan: How did you feel about that?

Farmer: Of course one has divided opinions, because we needed the work done. I didn't know Martha well enough to know how methodical or reliable she would be about these three days, because such women had a lot of activities. They had a lot of things on their platter. For them to come in and sit at the desk and telephone program chairmen, the luncheon club, Adult School, and so on--I wasn't at all persuaded that it was going to work out, but it was the best thing I had for the time being. So I was delighted to accept.

Nathan: How did she do?

Farmer: In the first place, she came reliably. We could answer the phone and take a message for her, and the program chairmen knew that they would get an answer back. That was the first and, really, the most important aspect, because these people were not at their phones all day, either. Secondly, Martha had a nice manner with these people. She wanted to help them, and she communicated it to them. When they learned that she was a lady of wealth and prominence who was so accommodating and so friendly on the phone, of course they were all the more delighted. So, with time, Martha began to get quite a following, and people didn't want to talk to anyone other than Martha.

It became more demanding, and Martha had to give some time every day. She couldn't guarantee to be there at a certain hour, but she would come in to take care of an emergency. If she hadn't pinned something down, she'd come in again and do so. She became very familiar with the staff. The staff were so, I'd say, relieved that a person of Martha's prominence in the organization was committed to seeing that the council remain on its feet at a time when they weren't too sure of that.
Personal Commitment and Time

Farmer: Now, some of them were mystified—"Well, Mrs. Gerbode could just pay that man's salary. Why didn't she do that instead of doing it this way?"

Nathan: What do you think the reason was?

Farmer: I think that not simply Martha but most of the people who gave generously to the council had a kind of credo that an organization has to have enough support from the community at large to be useful. For one wealthy person to buy it is not going to serve that purpose. So "if it's worth enough to the community at large to support it, I will help support it. But I will not buy myself a plaything and foist it on the community simply because I find it satisfying."

We had one member—it's not really fair to name names—who was so enthused about UNESCO that we had to have a UNESCO group within the council or else this member would not contribute. This was really blackmail. It was a big contributor, too. I always resented it, to tell you the truth, more because the people who came in to work with this group as volunteers knew that we had the pistol to our head and threw their weight around with the staff, with me, and this sort of thing. Of course, the person who was doing this had no idea how this played out on the day-to-day basis.

But it was an illustration that you simply can't just buy something and hand it over and expect it to be treated as you had anticipated that it would be. If it's foisted upon an organization, it's treated differently.

Nathan: That's very interesting. What a lesson.

Farmer: Yes, that's right. Secondly, Martha had, for all of her political commitment, which was strongly felt (and Martha was not a diplomat; she didn't hold her tongue) either from her relationship with people like Mrs. McLaughlin and the other older people who had been active in the community, an understanding of nonpartisanship. Of course, she'd worked with Mrs. McLaughlin, not simply in the World Affairs Council and in the IPR, but in the League of Women Voters and all the other things that Mrs. McLaughlin had been a leader in, so Martha had a genuine sense of nonpartisanship on the behalf of certain types of activities, certain organizations. They should be nonpartisan; they were most beneficial to the community as nonpartisan rather
than partisan. So she knew what was the proper place for certain activities and certain types of giving. She didn't expect the council to go out and beat the drum for her cause simply because she was a major donor.

All that was, I think, epitomized by her willingness to come sit and do this work on a day-to-day basis. Because, clearly, her time was worth more to her than the money would have been, had she given it. But the time gave us more than the money would have given, and not the least was the enthusiasm of the young people working there. I had had to fire three or four people all at once, and they felt "the council was on its last legs, it was disappearing, the community doesn't care about it any more," and all sorts of talk like this. Martha was there as living evidence that that wasn't the case.

**Views on Study Groups and Social Events**

Nathan: Clearly she appreciated and understood the value of the speakers' bureau and the outreach. Did she also go to any study sessions? Was she interested in the scholarly aspects?

Farmer: I understand that before I came she had been more active in the study groups. She was not active when I was there. I have to say honestly that I never saw any scholarly inclination on Martha's part. She felt more with the heart than with the head on many things. Not that she wasn't intelligent, but she wasn't intellectual; she didn't believe in theorizing or intellectualizing, and academic jargon didn't attract her--this sort of thing.

More than that, the study group activity of the council, as important as it was, was an elitist activity. I can say that now. I wouldn't have said it at the time. But there was maybe 5 to 10 percent of the council's membership that really could take advantage of it. Now, that 5 or 10 percent were essential to the council's well being, because they were the Louis Heilbrons and the Harley Stevenses and the Dorothy Rogerses and the Helen Brown Lombardis, and so on. That's where they found their satisfaction. So it had to be kept going but as something to participate in, it wasn't Martha's cup of tea at that time.

Let me digress here to say that some time later Henry Grady became president of the council. The council was still struggling but had improved its circumstances. Mrs. Grady, who was a wildfire, decided that we needed more "social" activities. The
papers in town were lamentable in their coverage of the council; we couldn't get a line in the papers for anything. Lucretia Grady said, "If you can't get it on the front page, get it on the society page, because then the front page people read the society page. They know who are doing things, and you will find that you can work your way in that way."

So she got together a group of ladies. So many of them had joined the council but had never been active and didn't have any real interest in the substance of the World Affairs Council, but they adored having black-tie dinners at the St. Francis [Hotel] for a visiting head of state. This not only got us note in the papers, it also got people to come to other activities, because some of these people found that they enjoyed the substance. Others got their husbands to contribute because finally the council was doing some good, and so on.

We had several members who resented Mrs. Grady's having changed the nature of some activities of the council in this way. Well, in point of fact, they were not mutually exclusive. As long as we had staff enough to try to keep abreast of all of them, why not do all these things?

Nathan: Did Mrs. Gerbode have a view about this?

Farmer: She didn't care for these big society functions. Quite often she would buy a table and give the tickets away so she wouldn't have to come herself. No, this was not her cup of tea. That's what I was getting at. Just like the study group, it was not something that attracted her. Oh, she would come. Also, Martha had relationships all around the world. There were people who, when they were younger, had stayed in her home or had dined in her home who later became foreign minister or this, that, or the other in some foreign country. When those people showed up, clearly she would attend. But she didn't attend just in order to be in the society section list of people who attended last night.

I think the speakers' bureau activity of Martha's lasted maybe five or six months; it was not just a couple of weeks. We had thought it was going to be a fairly brief period. It wasn't; it was longer than that. Martha was going to travel when summertime came, and she gave notice that she was going to have to be away and we were going to have to do something about it.

Fortunately we had gotten the finances sufficiently straightened so that the first nice, intelligent, active young lady whose father could supplement our salary [laughs], we hired. She did a wonderful job, leaning heavily on Martha. Martha would come in and sit at the desk with her, tell her who all the people
were--the committee chairmen and so on--and did a beautiful job of bringing this young lady into this rather demanding situation. She did a wonderful job. Then we didn't see so much of Martha, but she had filled in when we had needed her.

The Evatt Luncheon, Harry Bridges, and the Gerbode Solution

Farmer: That leads me to perhaps the only other important thing which I now remember. Some time later we had an offer to honor and hear a talk by Herbert Vere Evatt, who was the former prime minister of Australia and a labor leader. He was the head of the Labor Party and head of the labor union. He was quite the darling of San Franciscans because he had been, at the San Francisco conference of the United Nations in '45, the most prominent spokesman of the small nations. He led the fight against the veto in the Security Council. He was a voluble, outgoing fellow who just captivated all sorts of San Franciscans.

When we were offered him, everyone knew that this was somebody we should have. We thought this was one of those occasions where we would not open the occasion to non-members. It was always a big fight: if you have a prominent person, do you make that a privilege of membership or do you use it as an attraction to bring in new people and get them interested? Bring them in at a higher price, but at least show them that it would be worthwhile to join. Every time we had a big speaker or a big dinner, this particular argument arose.

This time we felt that this man was not so big a public figure for people who were not interested in the World Affairs Council already. But for those who were, he would be an attraction, so we made it a "members-only" luncheon at the Fairmont. We took a moderate-sized room, not too sure of what we were getting into.

Well, this was publicized in the paper because of Evatt's renown here. Martha happened to have been in the office. (I'm sure this was after the time when she was actually working in the office.) There were two or three desks in each office, and the person at the other desk got a phone call saying that Harry Bridges was calling. Harry Bridges not only said that he wanted to attend this luncheon for Evatt, who was a friend of his from Australia and a fellow labor leader, he expected to be at the speaker's table because of his own prominence.

Nathan: He was not a member of the World Affairs Council?
Farmer: He was not a member of the World Affairs Council. Well, we had just ridden through this whole Communist scare business in the council, and while we certainly had no objection to Harry Bridges being there, we didn't see why he should be at the speaker's table, to begin with. Secondly, we had the dilemma of no membership.

I didn't know a storm was coming, but that afternoon about four or five of the young people on the staff marched in and drew a line in the sand. They said, "We've been cautious about the political commitments of the council, we've been cautious about the Communist scare and so on, but there's a time when we ought to stand up and represent something. If Harry Bridges wants to come, Harry Bridges ought to be allowed to come." I said, "I agree with you in principle, but then what do you do about the business of the membership? Is everyone who wants to hear Evatt then allowed in?"

"Well, no, just Harry Bridges." Well, there you are, you see; we get into problems on this. I asked them to let me have overnight to think about it, and we would convene the next day. After they left, Martha came by. She had heard this; she was at the other desk. She had heard my little talk. She knew the staff was going to revolt, to come in and tell me that this was an important matter of principle. She said, "I'll take a table for the lunch and invite Harry Bridges as my guest, on the condition that you will sit at my table with him."

So that's how it came off. Harry Bridges did not sit at the speaker's table, but he was a guest of a member and he sat with the director of the council, rather sullenly and not too happily, I have to say. But his table was in front of the speaker, and he could turn around and talk to Evatt and so on.

This story is more important, not merely because of Martha's deft touch in getting us past a potentially bad political problem, but for a look at the distant but warm relationship between her and Bridges. When he came in and greeted her, it was clear that they hadn't seen each other for an extended period of time. It was clear that they had an admiration the one for the other and some warmth and regard, but no closeness. And yet all during lunch Martha recalled old times, fights and so on, with Bridges. By the time he left he had had a fine lunch and all was well. I might say, nobody rose up in revolt because Harry Bridges had come as Martha's guest. Those who were excited about it didn't expect anything different from Martha. [laughs]

Nathan: It was the shipping connection?
Farmer: Well, I think it was just Democratic Party politics in San Francisco.

Nathan: Yes. I wondered about the family connection.

Farmer: I don't know. Martha was the first one I ever heard employ the "My family went to Hawaii to do good and did well." [laughter] That was the only reference I ever heard her make to her family's wealth. She had no interest whatsoever, in my presence, in business--in her family business or any other business.
Ambivalence Toward Wealth

Farmer: You ask in your letter about her attitude toward wealth and her own family wealth. I don't know much about that. But one episode in our early times here so epitomized Martha's ambivalence. Martha did not cherish wealth. She did not cherish the things that wealth bought, but she had them, often without realizing that she had them, because she had been born and raised with those things.

When we moved here we lived in an apartment on Divisadero, between Union and Green, just down the hill from Martha. We had a small child one year old, and we had rented a bed and a crib and borrowed a folding card table and three folding chairs. That's what our furniture was for weeks while we were trying to get our furniture out from Washington. The moving van arrived in front of the house at 3 o'clock on Friday, before Christmas on Monday.

We were hopeful of having things in the house for Christmas, and the deliveryman said, "I need a certified check for x amount." Well, there was no way. The banks had already closed at 3 o'clock, in the first place. Certainly we didn't have that kind of money around the place. So Ann was desperate. Here was her Christmas, couldn't I do something? She called me, and I tried, but there was nothing to do. So the man took the furniture away and went over to the East Bay. Then he came back the next Tuesday and unloaded it.

I think we had gone to a Christmas party at Martha's place, and Ann was telling this to Martha. Martha said, "Why didn't you do what I do?" I asked what that was, and she said, "I go to Gump's and cash a check." [laughter]
Throughout our acquaintance with her she had this ambivalent attitude. She didn't spend extravagantly; she didn't overdress. I mean, she dressed quite unimaginatively most of the time. When she came to a dinner in an evening gown she was a splendid-looking woman, but she was given to the sort of clothes that didn't do much for her. There was no pretense to her, no show. But every once in a while she would reveal how unfamiliar other circumstances were. And of course she had a great generosity toward the poor, great feeling toward helping others.

**Friends in a Small Apartment**

Farmer: We couldn't afford that apartment on Divisadero very long, so we moved down the hill to the Marina, to a much smaller apartment on Greenwich Street. Ann was expecting our second child, and Martha generously loaded up the most beautiful bassinet, carried it up the stairs to this little apartment, and brought it in for Ann and the baby to use. She was clearly surprised at the modesty of this apartment. She didn't think that the director of the World Affairs Council would have to live in such restricted quarters. It bothered her. It really bothered her. And yet, the Marina was there, and there were hundreds of other people living there. I think this was the first time she had ever been inside of one of those very modest row houses to see what it was like. It was no slum; we were not apologetic about it, but we wished we had been able to stay in the other place. It was a revelation to Martha.

So this was an aspect of her personality which to me indicated that her generosity of heart was so genuine and not intellectual. If you intellectualize these things, then you know these things I've been talking about are parts of life; people don't go to Gump's and cash checks, but people do live in little apartments like that. But for all her generosity, which was undeniable, there was still a certain naivete about how the "other half" lives. I don't think she was naive about the ultra-poor; she'd done a great deal for that type of person. It was this other element of life, people with whom she dealt more normally, where she couldn't understand why they didn't have better quarters than that, so to speak.

We were, of course, devoted to her, couldn't have been fonder of anybody. When we left San Francisco she gave us a beautiful little watercolor that Frank had painted of the Palace of the Legion of Honor to remind us in Texas of San Francisco. We still have it hanging in our bedroom. She was a very thoughtful person.
Visitors in Residence

Farmer: Oh, and we always had some kind of slave labor at the council, unexpectedly, provided by some person living in Martha's basement. They'd come through, recommended by a friend, going to stay there for three months or two months. There would be an urgent need or something, and Martha would come down to help and bring along this visitor. It must have been rare that her family didn't have some stranger living in the spare room, someone whom Martha didn't know and whom they didn't know, who had been recommended by friends.

Now, is that all that you asked me about?

Nathan: You've done brilliantly.

I did want to ask about whether in your view she brought in members through her associations.

##

Farmer: I think the answer to whether she attracted members and financial support is that by the time I came, she had already done that. She did that at the beginning, when the IPR was transmogrified into the World Affairs Council. She'd already done a great deal of recruiting and, I'd say, probably had influenced most of the people who were going to be influenced by her to join.

Occasionally, she would ask for some financial support for a specific function, like the Asilomar Conference—this sort of thing. Occasionally, more than occasionally, quite frequently she would tell us about prominent people who were visiting and who had gotten in touch with her or forewarned her so we could get them for a program or for one of our speakers' bureau customers. But she didn't really relish—I don't relish, and not many people do—money raising. So I didn't really ever expect her to do that type of work.

Membership at that point had gotten to be more a matter of recruiting $10 or $15 members from the masses rather than from the social circles, let's say the personal acquaintances, that had started the council. We were now trying to go further beyond that, and there was not much she could do for that. She did a great deal when she was working with the speakers' bureau to encourage those organizations to take full advantage of the council so that they would renew their organizational membership and to get their members to join. She would always send out
membership information when these people would speak. Martha would precede it with membership information which could be handed out at the time of the speaker.

So there were things that she did without being committed to either recruiting membership or raising money.

Nathan: I wondered, too, whether she had talked about her own travels and interest, say, in the Japan Society. She had spent time in Germany in the early thirties, and there were other travels. I wondered if that may have informed her interests.

Farmer: I'd have to say, in all honesty, that I remember all of those things, but nothing specifically about them. Of course she was interested in Stanford, but she didn't really talk with me very much about those things. I think Martha had a happy faculty for confining herself to the case in point. She dealt with me on the World Affairs Council; that was how we knew each other and what we had the most to talk about. We didn't know her so closely socially. We were guests at her dinner table fairly often, and she had a Christmas party to which she'd invite the staff, and this sort of thing. So there were social occasions, but not when she would talk about things prior to our acquaintance very much. The IPR was the only one, and there I asked questions. So I didn't really know anything about her travels.

Nathan: I wondered also whether you had picked up any clues as to why she did have this warmth of heart and feeling of some obligation.

Farmer: I cannot quote her specifically, but I can say that she left the impression with me that that was a heritage of the missionary forebears, that there was something that remained there of that spirit that had driven her grandparents to Hawaii in the first place. But otherwise not so much, no.

Major Interests: World Affairs and Family

Farmer: I have also to say that she pursued these interests and this emotion more or less separately from the rest of her life. She did have two areas of interest: there was her life with Frank Gerbode and Frank's interests, to which she was quite dutiful and attentive, I thought. She was not interested in medical circles on her own but because they were Frank's interests. So she did have other aspects of her life that I was not familiar with; I had no reason to come across them.
I would say that world affairs, sort of the encompassing worlds rather than just the council, was her biggest interest. But, you know, she had these family interests. She adopted these children, a very generous thing for a lady past the years for having small kids around the place. That took up time; it changed her life. She's not somebody easily categorized.

Nathan: That's one of the things that makes her particularly exciting as a person, I think. I also wondered whether, in addition to this witty little quip about "going to do good and staying to do well," she had talked much about her family and about the traditions of the family.

Farmer: No, not with me. I really know very little about that. Mrs. McLaughlin respected her father highly.

Nathan: This was Wallace Alexander?

Farmer: Yes, that's right. He was highly regarded by the people who knew him. They portrayed him to me as a stern and rather distant man, not someone that one became close to. I never got any impression one way or the other from Martha about that, but I was always interested in that. Martha felt an obligation toward the IPR inherited from her father. That was one of the reasons that she had, I would say, worked harder than she might have otherwise to preserve it and to keep elements of it afloat, because it was a heritage.

Nathan: How about her mother? Did she speak of her mother at all?

Farmer: No. I know nothing whatsoever of her mother.

Nathan: You've given a beautiful composite picture of the World Affairs Council activities. I'd be happy to hear anything else that occurs to you.

Farmer: I've gone through my files. Ann reminded me of the episode of the check at Gump's, which I had forgotten, but it impressed her. So I think I've milked her memory also. [laughs]

"Confidential Report on Martha Gerbode"

Nathan: Maryanna Shaw, her daughter, is very much interested in this and has given me a number of letters and documents to look through. I wonder if this document looks familiar to you? It has your signature on the bottom.
(To the Program Chairman: We should appreciate your frank appraisal of the speaker's presentation of his subject at your meeting. We are especially interested in having your comments on the speaker's organization of his material, his general platform ability, and the reaction of the audience to him. Information of this sort enables us more readily to find the most suitable speaker for each occasion.)

Name of Group: UNITED ECONOMISTS OF THE WORLD

Name of Speaker: MELLIFLUOUS MARTHA

Date of Speech: xxii vii MCMIII

Number in Audience: SCADS AND HOSTS

Comments

Re your request: I do not wish to make a comment per se, but rather feel that, under the present circumstances, it would be more appropriate, relatively speaking, to pose a question. On second thought, cancelling the previous concept, I neither want to comment nor to ask a question; I wish to testify briefly, insofar as this report has been requested of me, and you will forgive me for being so concise, that Martha Gerbode is, and always will be, the sweetheart of the World Affairs Council.

In Totidem Verbis WE THINK SHE'S WONDERFUL!!!!
Farmer: She didn't put a date on it.

Nathan: It's in small Roman numerals there.

Farmer: Oh, the 22nd of July, '53. Now, why would that have come up? Jean Wildberg had--here's Dorothy Rogers. That's interesting that Dorothy signed this. She was not a member of the staff. She was one of our great supporters.

Nathan: But Jean Wildberg was a staff person?

Farmer: Yes. At this point, '53, Martha was leaving as the speakers' bureau volunteer. This was the occasion of that. Reading this, it's clear. I told you that she was going to go traveling, and she had told us that she had to go. Mind you, this is the end of July, so she had been doing this since January. It was quite an extended period. Jean Wildberg had succeeded her on the speakers' bureau.

Nathan: She was the one that Martha trained?

Farmer: That's right. Jean later moved on to another job, and we hired a young woman from Salt Lake City. But Jean was the one who came in and learned from Martha.

Nathan: The rest of these people were staff?

Farmer: This is the secretary. I'm surprised that Caryl de Groot was still there. She was the secretary to the director. Barbara Mark, a wonderful girl who was a kind of a factotum; Ann Allison was the librarian; Dawn Wisner was the secretary in the accounting and administrative office; June Wilkin was a glorious young redhead who was the receptionist, telephone operator, pamphlet seller, and so on. And then Dorothy Rogers--that's very interesting that Dorothy should have signed that as staff.

Nathan: She may have been there when it was being circulated and wanted to make a gesture of some sort?

Farmer: Here also Jean makes a little bit of fun of our friend Siggy Kempner, by adding him--"Siggy and staff"--because Siggy was the chairman of the committee that had domain over the speakers' bureau. There were times when Martha thought he was meddling in her business. Well, Siggy was an active person and had a good imagination. He would call up this speaker and that speaker; he was a person who believed in being active in anything you put your name on. But that wasn't always welcome [laughs], so I see that Jean was making a little bit of fun. Oh, that's a wonderful document. This is the only one I don't remember, Peggy MacAlpine.
Well, that places her incumbency.

Nathan: Thank you. This has been more helpful than I can say.

Farmer: Nobody deserves it more than Martha. We just truly were so devoted to her as an individual, and then all these other aspects of our relationship added to it. She was a sweet, generous-hearted, enjoyable woman who you are grateful that you had other reasons to be with, like the speakers' bureau and other things. There's an additional pleasure in being related to them, to know they can handle this, and how they do it.

Nathan: That was a marvelous insight into her whole way of being active. I'm grateful for that. Thank you.

Transcriber and Final Typist: Judy Smith
Huey Johnson

THE CHALLENGE OF DEFENDING NATURE AREAS

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
in 1989

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Huey Johnson, environmentalist, was interviewed by Ann Lage November 20, 1989, at his office in Sausalito, where he headed the Resource Renewal Institute. When he met Martha Gerbode in 1963, he was the western regional director of the Nature Conservancy. He was impressed by her grasp of issues and willingness to support projects she recognized as significant, often efforts that others would be unlikely to fund. He described her strategic role in blocking the proposed Marincello development in Marin County, and her defense of Alcatraz. In her honor, Huey Johnson designated the Martha Alexander Gerbode Preserve, later renamed Gerbode Valley, in Marin County.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name  

Date of birth  

Birthplace  

Father's full name  

Occupation  

Birthplace  

Mother's full name  

Occupation  

Birthplace  

Your spouse  

Your children  

Where did you grow up?  

Present community  

Education  

Occupation(s)  

Areas of expertise  

Other interests or activities  

Organizations in which you are active  

Your full name  Huey Dernier Johnson  

Date of birth  January 6, 1933  

Birthplace  

Father's full name  

Occupation  

Birthplace  

Mother's full name Margaret Joyce Johnson  

Occupation  

Birthplace  

Your spouse Susan  

Your children Tyler and Megan  

Where did you grow up?  

Present community Mill Valley, CA  

Education B.S. Biology, Western Michigan University  

Occupation(s)  

Areas of expertise  

Other interests or activities  

Organizations in which you are active  

PHILANTHROPY AND EFFECTIVENESS

[Date of Interview: November 20, 1989]##

Lage: Let's start with a little background on the Nature Conservancy, what your position was, and what your organization was like at that time.

Johnson: I was with the Nature Conservancy and had the title of western regional director. I had arrived in San Francisco in 1963 and immediately became the only employee west of the Mississippi.

Lage: So it was expanding into the West. Is that correct?

Johnson: Yes, and in our various projects, since I was free to kind of do what I wanted. The rest of the organization was pretty busy in other things. I inherently became involved in not just the acquisition but the concern with policy. And some of the immediate projects were, since I was a stranger, local in nature.

I didn't know what I was doing, and I soon found myself helping people who had particular interests. One of them, I remember, was saving the Seaman's Church in Tiburon, for instance. I received an inquiry: would I be willing to join Caroline Livermore and her friends for tea in the Seaman's Church? "Well, I'm not interested in meeting with people on things like churches. We're out here to save natural areas." But I was there for tea in the church, and I quickly understood that there were command performances in this world, and that was one of them.

Lage: This was your introduction. [laughter]
Johnson: Yes, right, and we got on with the process of saving the church. Which we did. In the midst of that and other projects, I met Martha Gerbode.

Lage: How did you meet her? At tea?

Johnson: I probably met her through an inquiry. At that time I had undertaken some projects of a large enough risk that they were noticed in the media.

Lage: This is purchasing land?

Johnson: Yes. Kent Island in Bolinas Lagoon was one of them, which was to be a high-rise hotel, and we bought it out from under the builders. They were trying to drive down the price of the people who owned it, and we went to the people who owned it and actually paid them quietly and gave it away to the park within an hour or so, so the developers couldn't get it. The controversy was written about broadly.

I may have gotten a call from Mrs. Gerbode or somebody close to her saying that Mrs. Gerbode is somebody you ought to know, and you'd better go have tea. [laughter] But that got me, because the Caroline Livermores and the Martha Gerbodes were kind of the people who were the backbone, principled people who also had the wealth to put behind their beliefs and who did things.

And so, anyway, I got to know her, and being new, I would often go to her because I didn't have any place to go for money. There were endless projects, and they weren't always land saving; they were often oriented to policy things, lawsuits against polluters, or lawsuits against one group or another.

Lage: That was new in those days, lawsuits for the environment. How did she receive the idea of that kind of less traditional action?

Johnson: Silently at first, but she always gave me the money. I'd go meet her at her home, and we'd talk about it in a rather formal setting, usually in the afternoon, as I remember, and she would listen and then write the check.

Then, as I got to know her better, we would deal more philosophically, and it got to be a more comfortable relationship. She then one day said--well, I had come in with some ideas. People learned that I knew her, and had access to her, so I'd get all kinds of requests from others to go see if I couldn't get her to help. I was in a learning process myself, of course. She then said, "Look, don't bring me any projects that other people would fund. I just want the tough, controversial ones."
Lage: Did that surprise you?

Johnson: Yes, because she just listened; she had hardly ever expressed anything other than, "That sounds like a good project. I'll give you a check." Then it became fascinating, and I realized that she was willing to support challenging, complex projects. It was not what one would expect, you know, by the setting of her life. So that's what happened.

Blocking Marincello in the Marin Headlands

Lage: What kinds of things, now, would you bring to her? I mean, what I've heard of is the Martha Alexander Gerbode Preserve, here in the Marin Headlands. Were there others?

Johnson: Well, this was tough enough. I named the Martha Alexander Gerbode Preserve myself [later called Gerbode Valley].

There was a lovely valley here, and there were to be a number of high-rise hotels in the valley. We wouldn't have been able to block it had she not consistently been giving us money for the lawsuits. In the end--

Lage: She gave money for the lawsuits?

Johnson: She gave money for everything. Yes, there was no purchase involved. We just had to block Gulf Oil. We just tried everything imaginable, and we did, totally. Most people had given up, and a handful of us didn't.

And one last gasp--. The developer had spent a tremendous amount of money to reverse local zoning, to buy out many of the traditional environmentalists in the county [Marin]. He went to them and said, particularly to older people who were naive, "Look, I've got this dream. I've got a developer who will give me an option on two thousand acres near the Golden Gate Bridge, and I am going to put in a very, very sensitive development. This is new territory for me in this area, and I need some consultants. Would you be willing to work?" He'd say, "I'm sure I can't pay you what you're worth, but we'd give you, oh, $5,000 a month and have you, you know, answer a few phone calls."

Well, he just went around and very cheaply bought up the backbone of the opposition. It just drove me nuts.
Lage: Even those people who had been environmentally sensitive in the past?

Johnson: Yes. Most of them never recovered, either; and those who did that, we remembered (in politics one gets even). That can happen. I went to her and said, "Jesus, here we are, being sold out and double-crossed, and we've got very little hope; but what we need to do is, we've got to keep going, got to try every possible angle we can."

And we had wonderful things happening. There were the most touching stories. We had to make it a ballot issue, and she helped us with the funding of that. So we would go out and get signatures to put it on the ballot.

The county at that stage was totally controlled by the developer, so the registrar of voters rejected a lot of our people who had signed the petitions. They went over them with a microscope and rejected a bunch of our names, and that just made us madder. God, on and on. We had people with card tables at supermarkets all over the county signing up support.

Lage: Were these volunteers?

Johnson: Yes, all volunteers.

Lage: But you needed the money to coordinate it?

Johnson: Yes, whatever. One of the interesting things: there were a couple of sisters who were in their eighties. They linked arms and blocked commuter traffic on 101. One of them had the petition to be signed, and the other one had a canister to put money in. They'd go right down the line of cars. We were, by this stage, real fired up, and Martha Gerbode was quietly supportive. We were such a marginal operation, the volunteers were volunteering a lot of time.

The developer was ready to go, with his cement trucks, and he built this big arch with Marincello's name on it, over the road. We resurveyed the lines in desperation, to find every angle we could, and found that the survey was incorrect, and went over the corner of a private landowner. So we went to this private landowner and got him to join our side. We filed for an injunction and got it, and the guy couldn't start. He faced, you could see a lot of opposition.

The banks at this stage were starting to get very apprehensive on projects like that. At that time B of A [Bank of
America] came up with the policy that it would make no more loans to projects that were controversial.

Lage: Did that take some lobbying, or did they come up with that on their own?

Johnson: They did that on their own. It was just that they were losing their shirts on projects like this. Our little bands of environmental activists were getting more and more sophisticated about our work, and so were getting far more successful at doing it.

Anyway, the guy did not succeed, and he was so close on his financial planning that he went bankrupt. It wasn't long thereafter that he died.

And so, in any event, I would go back to Pittsburgh, to Gulf Oil Headquarters, half a dozen trips, and finally was able to option the property for $100 for a $12 million project. I wrote a personal check right there, on the spot. I was meeting with top executives on that occasion, so I promised them that we would come up with more than $12 million--$6 million in cash and $6 million in tax credits, and that they would come out whole within five years. That's how we stopped Marincello, and Mrs. Gerbode was the basic checkbook for the different angles of that.

Lage: For the whole process through the years?

Johnson: Yes, and I was the conduit. I would go back and forth.

Lage: Did people know she was the one who'd given the money?

Johnson: No, she wanted it to be done quietly; she didn't want to be harassed.

Lage: Did she also give money for that $6 million?

Johnson: No, we didn't have to ask her. We got that from Congress. The amounts that she gave were not--

Lage: So all you needed was the option?

Johnson: Yes. Once we got that, then we had to go to Washington. She may have helped on that. I didn't keep careful records. Anyway, that was the important project and an example of the kind of thing that few would have funded in those years.
Land Titles in Kauai

Johnson: Other things she got into: she asked me to go to Hawaii once. I had worked on a major land transaction in Hawaii for the Nature Conservancy, the so-called Seven Pools on Maui.

She had a home on Kauai and, as is true of Hawaiian landscapes, they are very complex as to ownership. There are always private inholdings that belong, usually in unrecorded ownerships, to native Hawaiians. It was a process, I think, called the Great Mahele, when one of the Hawaiian kings, I think it was Kamehameha, when one of the Hawaiian kings, I think it was Kamehameha apportioned land, divided it. He was led somewhat by the white missionary types, to the advantage of the missionary types, of course.

It was a crazy system, and to this day, though, it affects land titles. If you buy a hundred acres in Hawaii, there are going to be three or four, certainly, small house sites. Nobody can even figure out who they belong to. Mrs. Gerbode had a bunch of those, and she was afraid, justifiably so, that in the middle of her paradise somebody would crop up and say, "That's mine. I'm going to build here." She wanted me to go over and see if I could figure out a way around it.

As I recall, I looked it over, stayed in the house, and then came up with an answer, which, I think, probably worked for her, which was to hire a local specialist who just did that [title search]. He knew his way around and would track down the heirs, a hundred relatives, in order to get a majority of them to sign on. For a price, he paid, and then they would clear the title of that parcel. That was a tedious process, but that's just what you have to do.

Protecting Alcatraz

Johnson: She once asked me to come with her; and she was going to "buy Alcatraz." I guess it was the Hunt family in Texas who was going to build a phallic symbol on Alcatraz. So she rented a boat, and we all went out there.

Lage: This was something she initiated?

Johnson: Yes. In fact, she called me up and said, "I want you to come." It wasn't an invitation; it was kind of a command performance, with great, by this stage, anger: "I am going out there, if
necessary, to buy this island." And she said, "I'd like you to join me." So we were there; there were several of us, and we got a thorough tour of the place by the federal officials--took us down in the dungeons and way down there, many layers under there, where they locked people up.

Lage: Did you see a potential there for a park?

Johnson: Oh, yes. Sure, I'd love to see it. I had my own ideas. I thought it could be a wilderness, and you could just let the pelicans come back, and other birds, and let the birds have the island. (It doesn't have fresh water.) Level off the prison and forget about it. But, in any event, I think her action [gaining time by providing counter-offers] averted the Texans coming in with their plans.

Lage: Just by showing an interest in it? I know it got play in the papers.

Johnson: Yes, showing an interest in it and the willingness to make a commitment. I mean, it was a formal application, and the Feds formally accepted it as that; and they, I think, used our appeal as a reason to discount the Texans. But in the meantime it bought time, and we were able to get park status.

Lage: But then the Indians came right after that.

Johnson: I don't remember when it was.

Lage: I think it was just twenty years ago. There was some kind of article recently.

**Style: Tough, Radical, Independent**

Lage: You mentioned nuclear lawsuits. Was it Bodega Bay [lawsuits to keep PG&E from building a nuclear power plant at Bodega Bay]?

Johnson: Bodega Bay, for sure. I would be certain that would be the kind of thing she would help. Any nuclear opposition early on was seen to be very radical. The majority of the voters now would have opposed it, but then it wasn't so. So that was a success.

Lage: Did you get a chance, as you got to know her better, to discuss some of these things philosophically? Could you give an idea of where she was coming from?
Johnson: Yes. As happens with people, she became predictable. And she was very tough and very radical.

Lage: Where was the source of that? Did you get any sense of it?

Johnson: I think the environmental issue was obviously an honorable one. She just could sense--maybe by having seen change in Hawaii--the importance of it. She could give her vision of it ahead of others.

She was independently wealthy, and so she was free to act, and she was very independent as a person. She seemed not to be aligned to worrying about what social peers might have recommended for her decision making. She's one of the few people I've ever met who are both wealthy and independent of peer pressure of her own class. She seemed to me rather oblivious of it.

Lage: So she didn't do things like have social teas in her home?

Johnson: No. In fact, I'd never met with her with anybody else there. It may well have happened. Maybe her children were there. I got to know them, but it really wasn't until her death that I got to know the children much at all.

Lage: How about her husband? Did he get in on it at all?

Johnson: No. I think that was a very difficult relationship, and I think probably a very unhappy one at that stage. Heart surgeons, by and large, are, I have often found, heartless types. I've known half a dozen of them. They just don't seem to have a damned flicker of interest, much, in the environment. I'd known her husband. I was a guest in their duck club with somebody else when he was there, a friend from Hawaii, and I watched Dr. Gerbode socially. A very pleasant guy; but, as I said, I know a half a dozen heart surgeons, and there's a certain ruthlessness about them, you know. To make that decision to hold someone's heart in your hand takes a different kind of personality.

I'm fighting with one right now. A very dumb, greedy thing that's happening in Sawtooth Valley, where this California heart surgeon, with his Lear jet, flies up there, and he takes all the water out of the headwaters of the Salmon River--and kills all the salmon that swim nine hundred miles--in order to feed a hundred cattle. We said to him, "Jesus, we'll buy that hundred cattle ten times over, whatever it is." He's very stubborn, saying, "No, cattle are more important than fish." It isn't even a sensible argument, but he's been such a narrow person, and
succeeding as a heart surgeon. The difficulty in getting there, achieving that, made him know more and more about less and less. He isn't what you'd call very socially balanced.

Lage: So this was not something that she operated jointly with her husband?

Johnson: Not at all. I'll tell you, I'm sure her husband wasn't interested. His philanthropy was not in the environment; it was more, whatever it was, medical.

Lage: Did she ever get involved in the Nature Conservancy as an organization as a board member?

Johnson: No. She seemed uninterested in that. And I think she equated it, which is often true, to kind of a social thing.

She sensed the tragedy of the world. In one way, at that stage, I saw her as a tragic figure. I know other people like that. I don't think happiness in any depth was a part of her life then. She cared a lot about nature, and she cared a lot about the future of the world, but she probably wasn't blessed with great happiness.

Lage: She had been quite interested in social, political affairs when she was younger, interested in what was going on in Soviet Russia and interested in what some considered "left-wing" causes--housing and--

Johnson: You know, she never said much. She would ask me questions, want me to talk. She didn't fill me in on her other interests or her background or her earlier years. In fact, it was, at first, a very tense situation for me to go in and talk to her, because she'd drill her eyes on you, and you'd carry on with your appeal. She would not signal whether she favored what you were saying or not. She was like a judge.

Lage: Sort of removed?

Johnson: Yes, listening, and then she'd nod her head, nod her head and say, "Okay, all right."

Lage: It must have been gratifying when that happened. What did she turn down?

Johnson: Oh, popular things. You know, the things that the average socialite would be conjuring up. So you learned that she said, "Don't bring me those."
Lage: She was interested in the Save the Waterfront movement in San Francisco.

Johnson: I didn't have anything to do with that.

Lage: Do you know who I could talk to to get that area of her life?

Johnson: No, I don't. There was a group of San Francisco-beautiful types in those years who probably would have had that.

I had thirteen states that I was responsible for and still one person as a secretary. I was trying to expand. I did succeed in that for the Nature Conservancy, but it meant that I didn't spend a lot of time on domestic, local issues. I did in Marin, to too great a degree in those years, but I eventually stopped doing that.

From Nature Conservancy to Trust for Public Land

Lage: Back to the Nature Conservancy and the setup then. Were you pretty much on your own, or was somebody directing your activities?

Johnson: I was on my own. It was wonderful. I mean, we had, probably, eight employees.

Lage: You didn't have to have your projects approved?

Johnson: Oh, you had to. But, basically, they were so desperate; we were at the verge of bankruptcy, and there were complexities and problems. I was fresh and new and hard-driving. I'd really been trained in industry.

I'd gone to work for Union Carbide after getting out of college--their training program--and I was used to competing. I had an office in New York City, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Denver, and I understood how the system worked and rewards and whatever.

So the efficiencies one learned from management in industry are very valuable. You conserve energy--your own or your institution's--and those are readily applicable to environmental problems. So I think probably I was early a better judge than most people for what was possible; and I could reach--i.e., a big project in Hawaii, the first million-dollar project we ever undertook in the Conservancy's history.
Lage: At Seven Pools?

Johnson: Yes. I got the first million-dollar grant the Conservancy ever got in its history, a bequest. In any event, it gave me tremendous opportunity for growth. It would be very difficult to find in anything other than a pioneering situation, because nobody in their right mind, myself included, would have turned some green person loose with the illustrious name of the organization; you absolutely had to go to the board. But, like most things, if you're lucky enough to get started, and you succeed, then you build up trust. They're somewhat mystified, but the mere fact that you keep pulling the projects off warrants further trust.

Lage: And then you left Nature Conservancy and started your own organization?

Johnson: Yes. I started another organization, the Trust for Public Land. It seemed to me that with reapportionment--one person, one vote--the cities were clearly going to dominate future policy in everything: education, health, environment, and you name it. If environmentalists continued just dealing with rural preservation efforts, we would miss the boat.

So I started this organization to take lessons of the Nature Conservancy into the city and deal with the more complex real estate there, corporate especially, and acquire properties that would have importance to people in urban settings. My first office, really, was in Newark, New Jersey, you know. My first meeting there was flat-out frightening. Everybody wanted me to come to Manhattan, and I said, "No, I'm going to have it in Newark." "Oh, God. What, are you crazy?"

Lage: Now, when would this have been?

Johnson: Oh, gee, I don't know. It would have been probably in the early seventies, I guess. So I sent somebody to Newark, a kid I'd hired, a member of the first graduating class at UC Santa Cruz in Environmental Studies. He was interested in urban things. I sent him to Newark to set up a program. I flew in there, and he said, "We're going to have lunch with the mayor." So I got a ride downtown; and the Hilton Hotel was boarded up, and so was everything else. And, hey, you know, we went to a little restaurant. It was dark, there was a big table; we sat down. Two or three Blacks had met us, and there was Black music.

Anyway, these guys came in, and the guy had a roll of bills. The mayor and this other guy said, "This is for the, whatever, the Jones thing." He peeled off money to pass it around to
everybody. You know, you realized you were in somebody else's territory.

Lage: It wasn't Marin County.

Johnson: No, ma'am. The positive side of it was that the whole damned town was up for grabs. The banks had foreclosed, as they had in Oakland, on all kinds of places, and so they were starting from the bottom. The wonder of it was--and I had no assurance that it was illegal money that this guy distributed, but nobody explained anything to me, either. It could have been just a payday; I don't know. But one surmised that there was--. It was a dark room, and a few of these groups were together; and we were white folks from outside with an idea that could have benefit to the community. We weren't offering them any money. We said, "We're going to go to the banks; we're going to try and acquire, by gift, key parcels and make open space out of them." That's what we did; we did it very successfully.

Lage: So you would be demolishing buildings, is that it?

Johnson: Yes. One good example was Dan Koshland's park, down on the corner of Oak Street in San Francisco, started by a Black federal housing project. A tenement was burned by an arsonist, and we just bought the land, tore down the tenement, and made a park out of it. We got Dan Koshland's family to put up the money for his eightieth birthday, and we surprised him--drove up in there with bands playing and hundreds of Black kids and an ice cream wagon, and that was his eightieth birthday present. That's still a park.

So a lot of that kind of thing happened, and Martha Gerbode was the kind of person who would support those kinds of directions. (I don't know if she was still alive at that time.)

Lage: I don't think she was.

Nature Conservancy, Tax Exemption, and the Art and Ecology Institute

Lage: I think you mentioned something about Mrs. Gerbode funding some sort of an inner-cities outing program.

Johnson: Oh, yes. That was critical. Let me give you a little background. Here I was, ensconced in the West, where I wanted to be. I had been in a doctoral program at the University of
Michigan, and I'd dropped out because I'd noticed somebody tacking an ad on the job board in graduate school, "Nature Conservancy seeks Western Regional Director in San Francisco." And, boy, that's where I wanted to be. I just walked into a phone booth when they were tacking it up, called, and the guy who answered the phone got me through to the head of it and said, "Well, you sound like someone we'd like to interview. We're about ready to make a decision."

Lage: Was this George Collins, who hired you?

Johnson: No, this was Walter Boardman. George was a board member of the then Nature Conservancy in San Francisco. They said, "Can you come to our Washington meeting?" So I just went right there the next morning and was hired and dropped out of graduate school.

Lage: And what were you studying?

Johnson: Environmental Studies. I had gotten a Master's and couldn't get a job in the kind of thing I wanted to do. So that led to my getting here and being very happy.

Then I got a call. The State of California said it would not give us tax exemption on the properties. The board, very frustrated with California at that time, said, "Well, if you don't get the tax exemption, then we're just going to shut down the office, because we are not going to pay taxes in the State of California." I was suddenly, one moment, very high because I was in San Francisco, and the next moment very low. Then I thought about it: "Well, what I'll do is just set them up. Make them give the tax exemption."

We had one property that George and others had acquired. It was called the Northern California Coast Range Preserve. It was eight thousand acres, and it was way over our head. There was a wonderful old eccentric who conned the board into signing a document he prepared himself, about an inch thick. It was just utter stupidity. Nobody but greenhorns ever would have done it.

Lage: Where was it?

Johnson: Up by the Eel River. He was a wonderful old character. We had stories go on and on about him.

I said, "Well, I will come up with a strategy." And my strategy was this: I noted that our attorneys had found that one could
get tax exemption for educational uses. So I figured, "Well, if they won't do it for gene pools, I guess I'll take on this project."

With two weeks lead time, I got these professors at California College of Arts and Crafts, and we had a meeting. I came up with the name of the Art and Ecology Institute.

If we could raise the money—that is to say, if I could raise the money—within two weeks, we would take five ghetto kids up to this preserve and have a camp. The professors—they were young artists, art instructors—would be the Art and Ecology Camp counselors. So we whipped together a brochure in about a day, very well done, artistically.

Lage: Of course. [laughter]

Johnson: With that kind of a lead time—and it was just beautiful. I went, certainly, to Mrs. Gerbode first, and said, "This is a problem. They're going to shut me down. I'm going to have to leave California. Nature Conservancy is going to fail due to lack of tax exemptions. I'm going after these bastards, and I'm going to do it in this way. I've got two weeks to raise money. Will you help?" Well, she obviously would say yes.

Lage: This must have been an early contact with her.

Johnson: Yes, it was. And so we got the money, went to some other people, got enough, and did it. Made movies of the whole thing, then took the assessor to court and won. It was a long court hearing.

Lage: Then what did you do about your other property?

Johnson: Well, we used that application to go to the other assessors and say, "Look, we went to the toughest county, Mendocino. We won, and you're next." You know, it wasn't that big a deal. It was in Mendocino; it was eight thousand acres. It was a big amount of money for that county. But these others were small, as we progressed. And then we got legislation introduced to give other things on down the line.

Lage: But you didn't end up running an educational offering on another piece of property?

Johnson: No. That at least held the office in place against the board. Yeah, I had my job. They had these tax exemptions, and I got by that immediate hurdle. Eventually I was able to put the whole thing together.
Philosophically Attuned Philanthropists

Johnson: Those were the kinds of things we were doing, and the importance of them. It was critical, and it took sophisticated donors like Mrs. Gerbode, who understood that we were pioneering and why it was important.

Lage: Did Mrs. Gerbode give funds for the Art and Ecology Institute?

Johnson: I don't remember, but I expect she did.

Lage: Was she one of a group of sophisticated donors? You had others who were like her?

Johnson: Yes. Basically, I still function that way, to try and get to know a handful of people who want to be philanthropists and who are philosophically in tune with what we're doing.

Lage: Do you do a lot of educating, or did you with her?

Johnson: No. Don't have time. What you do, you come in with an appeal, and if you're lucky, maybe one out of three of them will help you. But I still do that sometimes. I don't really succeed in getting money from foundations. The lines are long, and the government has now joined the line, hired people. Foundation staffers tend to give money for safe reasons so that they don't threaten their own existence, and if they've been there a long time, then they're less apt to take risks. The Gerbode Foundation, though, has always been better than the rest, I think. Tom Layton--I don't know if the family is still in it. They've always been willing to take more risk than most foundations.

Lage: I think their daughter's quite involved in it now, Maryanna Stockholm.

Well, Martha Gerbode was operating partly through the foundation, as I understand it. I mean, she had the foundation in place at that point.

Johnson: Most people will. They'll give you a check. You know, the Heller family helps me that way. You may get a check from the foundation, you may get a check from them personally.
More on Martha Gerbode's Style and Interests

Lage: Anything else that will help us understand where Martha Gerbode was coming from and how she operated?

Johnson: Well, she would, in my mind's eye, be a very principled person who, in an existential sense, was willing to stand alone. At that time the environmental movement was just becoming--at least in the kind of work I was doing--in any way relevant, in any way starting to impact policies instead of just putting together little postage stamp landscapes here and there. The Nature Conservancy's never outgrown that. That's why I left it. She was not [afraid of rocking the boat]. She was courageous. She understood, and she was willing to share everything. You could go in there, and if you cared enough and you really made an appeal to her, she would respond. What it was she would respond to--she wanted it to bring about positive change. And she did not want to get safe kinds of projects that everybody else would fund.

Lage: I like that approach.

Johnson: Yes. Just wonderfully courageous of her.

Lage: Did you ever talk about anti-war activities, or civil rights--that kind of thing?

Johnson: Yes. I did, but it was not something she saw--other than anti-nuclear stuff--that I was really the conduit for. She trusted me about environmental stuff, but I think if I went in and gave her a pitch for the arts, or for civil rights, or for a dozen other things, she would be seeing me, probably, stepping over the bounds of my expertise.

She was a very formal person to deal with. She was no nonsense, little humor, formidable, and, buddy, you'd better have the answer. She would ask you some questions. You might lose her--I'm sure you would--if she thought you were so lightweight that you were uninformed and couldn't answer her questions successfully.

Lage: So the encounters were really--

Johnson: They were sweaty events for me, you know, because I knew if I failed once, she probably never would get back, so I obviously didn't want to take on some new subject. You'd be known as someone with that access by other people in the community, so your friends were already saying, "Would you mind going to
Mrs. Gerbode and getting some help at the dog and cat hospital, or the symphony," or whatever it was. And since I was the one who had to go in there, no, I wasn't about to go. It was straight and narrow environmental subjects, far more liberal than the Nature Conservancy would have undertaken. Environmental things were what I cared about and where I was seen as an expert, at least by her.

Lage: Okay. Just one more question. Did she evidence any particular political savvy? Did she have any ties with the power structure in San Francisco, or a sense of what was politically feasible?

Johnson: She was as formidable, and usually as silent, as a stone dragon. She would let me take the risk of making a mistake in talking to her. She wouldn't purposely; only a doctor of psychiatry would, I suppose, want you to do the talking, and then take the notes and do the listening. But that was her mode. It was not a chummy event.

It was a pattern I've run into with others. People are very busy. They are constantly sought to help things. They get something they like, and they want it to be efficient, and they want to get results back. I'd send her press clips about the successes, or whatever, but she wouldn't discuss them.
Martha Alexander Gerbode Retrospective

Clarisse Stockholm with Maryanna Shaw

MARTHA ALEXANDER GERBODE: DECADES OF FRIENDSHIP

An Interview Conducted by Harriet Nathan in 1989

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STOCKHOLM, Clarisse Mitchell. — In Menlo Park, California, on Sunday, June 23, 1996 of pneumonia. Wife of the late Sophus Stockholm; mother of Charles of San Francisco; grandmother of Lisa Stockholm Ballinger of Blue Lake, California; great grandmother of Benjamin, Elaine, and Roland Ballinger; sister of Burke Mitchell of San Jose. A native of San Francisco; a lifetime resident of the Bay Area who was active in many civic and charity groups in the East Bay and the Peninsula. She will be missed by all her friends and relatives.

At her request, no Services will be held. Remembrances may be made to charities of choice.
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INTERVIEW HISTORY--by Harriet Nathan

When Clarisse Stockholm was interviewed at the Metropolitan Club in San Francisco, April 3, 1989, she invited Maryanna Shaw (later Stockholm), a close friend of hers and daughter of Martha Gerbode, to sit in on the session. Clarisse, Mrs. Sophus Stockholm, saw herself and Martha, Mrs. Frank Gerbode, as "typical Piedmont housewives" when they established a friendship in 1931. They were also young together and full of fun, with an affection that outlasted Martha's death forty years later. In their circle, the Stockholms brought together such friends as the Gerbodes and William and Catherine Bauer Wurster.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Clarisse Stockholm
Date of birth 11/12/48 Birthplace San Francisco
Father's full name Clarence L. Mitchell
Occupation Importer Birthplace San Francisco
Mother's full name Marie Genevieve Mitchell
Occupation None Birthplace San Francisco
Your spouse Sophie Stockholm
Your children Charles Mitchell Stockholm

Where did you grow up? San Jose, Calif.
Present community Palo Alto, Calif.
Education 3 J High School - School of Fine Art

Occupation(s) None

Areas of expertise None

Other interests or activities Garden - Decorating -
Clothes Design - Walking - Swimming -
Volunteer Work

Organizations in which you are active Garden Club - Children's Hosp (All in the Past)
A PERSONAL APPRECIATION

[Date of Interview: April 3, 1989]#

Nathan: What I will write in this notebook are names or words that might be hard for the transcriber to interpret, so I'm not really taking notes on what you say. This is for the help of the transcriber.

Could we start, perhaps, with your earliest recollections of Martha Alexander as a young person? How old was she when you first got to know her?

Stockholm: Ages--I'm not very good at that.

Nathan: A child or younger?

Stockholm: No.

Beginning a Friendship (1931)

Stockholm: I met her shortly before she was married, at a party in Palo Alto with some mutual friends, and I didn't see her again until after her marriage, which was in 1931. I liked her right away, and we seemed to enjoy each other at that one moment. I didn't see her again until after she was married and after I was married, because we were both married in the same year. I was on my honeymoon at the time she was married, so I was not there. I lived in Menlo, and she lived in Palo Alto.

Nathan: Was she still going to Stanford then?
Stockholm: Yes. She must have been almost in her last year. I can't recall that. Frank, of course, was in school also. We had mutual friends, so we used to see quite a lot of each other.

Nathan: Did you know her parents and her family at all?

Stockholm: Her mother and I became very good friends, and I knew her father only casually, because later we lived in Piedmont.

Young Families

Stockholm: She and Frank also lived in Piedmont, so of course we saw a lot of each other then, I think because of our children. Mine was number one, and Alec I think was a year younger. So we were together a lot then, at this time, both living in San Francisco. Frank was at Stanford Lane [Hospital]. Then we had nurse girls that had the same Thursday off, and we used to take our little demons to the park. So we did a lot of things together, silly things, although Martha was always a very serious girl externally. But she had a lot of fun in her that wasn't obvious until after you knew her.

Nathan: Did she ever talk about the classes that she had taken at Stanford, about her studies?

Stockholm: Not too much, except that once in a while she used to give us the psychology bit, which we always laughed about, teased her about. I don't think she was too serious about it. She wasn't, at that time, a leader.

Nathan: So she studied psychology at Stanford?

Stockholm: That's the only thing we really heard much about. It didn't work on us but--.

Shaw:1 She tried some theories on you?

Stockholm: Once in a while she would let go a little of her wisdom on the subject. We were all very silly girls, I must say, at that time.

---

1Maryanna Shaw at the time of the interview; she later became Mrs. Charles Stockholm. Narrator Clarisse Stockholm is Mrs. Sophus Stockholm.
Nathan: Did she speak of any professors who were of particular interest to her?

Stockholm: No, not particularly. I don't think she was too active in anything while she was at Stanford. She had her horse, and that was interesting.

Shaw: Cavour was his name, I think. A black stallion.

**Engagement to Frank Gerbode**

Stockholm: I do remember when she became engaged, Baccamama and Grandpa were in South America.

Nathan: Now, what was the name you used?

Stockholm: Baccamama.

Nathan: Is that Hawaiian?

Stockholm: Oh, no. That was Martha's mother's name--Alec's name for Grandmother. We all, I think, called her that. Am I screaming into this [microphone]?

Nathan: This is fine; you're doing just perfectly. It's Baccamama?

Stockholm: Yes. That was so cute, because Alec made that up himself. Maybe I shouldn't be telling you this, about when she became engaged to Frank. We all thought it was great news, and she sent a cable to her parents, who were then visiting in South America, saying, "I'm engaged to Frank." Her mother wired back or cabled back, "Who the h--- is Frank? Congratulations," which was one of our family jokes. [laughter] But you would have to know Maryanna's grandmother to really appreciate what a terrific person she was.

Nathan: [to Maryanna Shaw] Was she a salty person, your grandmother?

Shaw: She was quite outspoken, as I recall.

Stockholm: And a terrific wit.

Shaw: Yes.

Stockholm: Wrote the most terrific letters.
Shaw: She was a great writer of letters.

Stockholm: Embarrassed her daughter--she was always apologizing for her mother--because she really was very cute. You should have known her also.

Nathan: Well, perhaps the thread passes along in some interesting ways.

Shaw: Excuse me, I just want to say that I think there was a letter written that Mother sent to her parents. Then she expected the letter to arrive, and it didn't arrive before the telegram. The letter was supposed to tell her about who Frank was. [laughter] So, anyway, it turned out that it was late. The telegram came, and everything happened after that.

Nathan: That sounds pretty dramatic.

Shaw: I have some of those letters in Marin; I have them at home stashed away. I haven't had a chance to go through them.

Stockholm: Do you have some of Baccamama's letters?

Shaw: Yes. In fact, you might be interested in reading some.

Stockholm: You know, I have some, too, some real gems.

Shaw: Oh, do you? We ought to get together on that.

Nathan: Whatever you think you would care to add to the materials for deposit with this memoir would be fine. I'm sure between the two of you, you can decide what you think would be appropriate to show the personalities as much as you can.

Friends, Politics, and Organizations

Nathan: I wondered, too, about whether Martha spoke to you about public issues at that young age.

Stockholm: No, I don't think she was quite that involved. She was mostly involved in child bearing in those younger days. I think she became more involved after she moved into the city, because in Piedmont we were just typical housewives of the day, I guess, with our children. Of course, Maryanna was not around in those times. Well, there were several people; I think Gigi was a great influence on her.
Nathan: Was this Georgiana Stevens?

Stockholm: Stevens, yes. What was Bill Wurster's wife's name?

Nathan: Catherine Bauer?

Stockholm: Catherine Bauer, yes, I think really stimulated Martha's interest in politics. Of course, prior to that, she was very interested in the Visiting Nurses. Then the next one, I guess, was Planned Parenthood, because I had got little jobs of addressing envelopes and things like that.

But, of course, I was not living in San Francisco; we were then not in the same vicinity. So I really didn't get involved in too many of those. Then having been Republican, I was not in on the Democratic platform.

Nathan: I wondered whether her interest in the Visiting Nurses and Planned Parenthood arose through her medical contacts through her husband.

Stockholm: No, I don't think so, not to my knowledge. But to my knowledge, those were the first things that I recall her being really very interested in.

Nathan: She somehow invited you to participate?

Stockholm: Oh, yes, egged us on.

Nathan: Did she do this with other friends as well?

Stockholm: Yes, with Jane Jones, who was then Brophy, who is now living in Atlanta, Georgia. Of course, at that time she was very involved also with the house building, which took a lot of her time.

Nathan: As a volunteer?

Stockholm: No, her own house.

Nathan: Oh, her house.

Stockholm: Yes. Then, of course, Maryanna was in the making at that point.

Nathan: Was this the San Francisco house?
Stockholm: Yes. [turning to Maryanna Shaw] And then you were on Green Street; you were living there in the interim while construction was going on.

Nathan: You mentioned some interesting names: Georgiana Stevens and Catherine Bauer. Do you know how those connections were made?

Stockholm: I don't know about Georgiana, but I do know about Catherine, because when the talk came up about building the house, my husband was the first one considered. Then he introduced Martha to Mr. Wurster, and that's where she met Catherine. I think Catherine had considerable influence on her. Don't you think so?

Shaw: Yes.

Nathan: Were you thinking of issues like planning, housing--?

Stockholm: Yes, right. I think a lot of the environmental interests, also, were stimulated there, as far as I could guess.

Nathan: Would you care to speculate, perhaps, about how this young woman, leading the life of a mother and a wife and someone responsible for her family, became further interested in public issues and really moved into that realm?

Stockholm: I think that was rather gradual. Of course, she was always very serious minded, very interested in other people's problems, and gave little thought to her own.

Nathan: Can you tell me what you had in mind about being "serious minded"?

Stockholm: I mean she considered others, and she had all the worries. She was a serious person, I always felt, although she could relax on that. But she was not at all self-centered, like some of us might have been.

War Years and Husband in the Service

Nathan: I was interested, too, in the way she seemed able to engage your attention to do some of the things that she was interested in. How did she get you interested in some of her own interests?
I don't know. I think we all loved her so, we would have done anything that was possible for us. However, we all went through the war period where we were left doing our own thing, which kept us busy, especially ones with children. She had her friends and, of course, her interests—but then I think Orrie had a great influence. Her name was Mrs. Escamilla.

Her last name now is Vander Leith.

Martha was really very much at sea when Frank left. She was sort of a lost soul. Mrs. Escamilla, then, was living close by and also had a husband, a doctor in the service. She sort of took Martha over, tided her over this very emotional period. It was very difficult for her.

Why do you suppose that was? Why do you suppose she was so upset about that? Of course, everyone was.

Well, she was, and she told us all if—I don't know whether I should be saying this on the tape—that if Frank was called, that she would shoot him in the leg sooner than see him go in the service. Of course, she didn't do that, but she was sort of a lost soul. I think Orrie felt that she needed guidance, and Orrie was right here.

I always saw her when I came back and forth. We always had luncheon. For many years we did that. Because for so many years after I moved down the peninsula, I was always here at the club once a month for two or three days because I took over this directorship that my husband had held. When he passed away, they, for no reason at all, took me. I wasn't much of a help.

What were you a director of?

It was a corporation called Empress Theater, but it was a conglomerate of things. Mostly, I think, Sacramento, the properties—I never really understood what I was doing there. I just sat. It was a very good excuse for me to come up here, and I was here. Then I would always see Martha for lunch, because I stayed here at the club for two or three days. So we kept in touch, but it wasn't as close as it had been in our earlier days.

In his oral history memoir, her husband mentioned his experiences in the war and what he saw in the concentration camps and other places. I wondered whether she spoke of what she learned from him, whether that influenced her.
Stockholm: No, I think she stayed very carefully away from that. She avoided it, and she was capable of doing that. She could, you know, sort of close it off, although I'm sure it was on her mind all the time. But she was not in any way a sob sister.

Nathan: So your husband, then, was the one responsible for the house?

Stockholm: Yes.

Nathan: Did you observe the process?

Stockholm: Oh, yes, I was chief inspector.

Nathan: Did she know what she wanted in the house?

Stockholm: Yes, she did. She had very definite ideas, and I think they were most all incorporated. We kind of worked together on some of the things for the furnishings. So I sort of felt as though I had a little finger in the house.

**Links to Mrs. Alexander**

Nathan: I also wondered a bit about your acquaintance with her parents. Did that come about in time also?

Stockholm: Later. I wonder where I should begin on that? Mrs. Alexander apparently liked me from the very start, and I used to see a lot of her, because then I was living in the East Bay. So I would run in and visit and discuss the affairs of the family, because Martha was very involved at that time. She used to call me and say, "Go see Baccamama. She's kind of down today." When she lived in Orinda, of course, I saw her a lot because my mother-in-law was unfortunately with some nurses in the house across the street. I used to go there to see her at least once or twice a week, so I always made my visit to Mrs. Alexander. Then, before the war I guess, she used to go to Honolulu around April.

I just had the one child, one awful child.

Shaw: No.

Stockholm: One delightful child. We used to go to her place in Honolulu. I remember when she was in Honolulu, we went to Orinda and stayed in the house. She thought it would be a great thing for Charlie. So then, of course, we got to see the Gerbodes
 practically every weekend, because they came over, all of the little ones. That went on for eight years.

Nathan: Did you go to Hawaii as well?

Stockholm: Yes. I went there, I guess, in 1952. We stayed at the house, I think, for two months, because my husband had had a heart attack. Mrs. Alexander insisted that that was the place he should recover. It was absolutely delightful, but we didn't get to see any Gerbodes at that time.

Nathan: That is interesting. You really had a long association.

Stockholm: I just loved both of them, all of them.

Nathan: Somewhere along this time I think Martha Gerbode became interested in the League of Women Voters. Do you recall this part of it?

Stockholm: Yes.

Nathan: Was this one of your interests at all?

Stockholm: No, it really was not. I was sort of involved in minor things, like doing Red Cross and--.

Nathan: That's not minor.

Aversion to Showing Affluence

Stockholm: Things that Martha felt very strongly about, anything like joining the Junior League or anything that had any affluent expressions to it, she talked me out of. [to Shaw] You also?

Shaw: Yes.

Stockholm: She liked to do things quietly on her own, which she did.

Nathan: I wonder if you can give a clue as to why she preferred to be quiet and relatively anonymous.

Stockholm: Because she was such a very modest person, just unbelievably so. She didn't ever flaunt anything. She just did things in her little, quiet, darling way.
Nathan: I wondered whether there was any missionary influence. Was her family an early part of the missionary movement?

Stockholm: I don't think that rubbed off on her very much. Do you?

Shaw: I don't know if it did or it didn't.

Stockholm: Well, at least she didn't show it, and I think it didn't rub off on Baccamama either, except maybe in the early years.

Some Family Influences

Nathan: I was thinking perhaps not so much of imposing a way of thinking or a religious way, but of conviction somehow.

Stockholm: I know that there were great restrictions in the beginning in Piedmont, because there was never any liquor allowed in the house. Of course [turning to Shaw], your great-grandmother lived across the street. She objected to things like playing tennis on Sunday, but I think Mary [Baccamama] registered an objection against her mother-in-law. I think that's the only thing, except maybe the charitable trait of thinking about other people and putting yourself in the background, which to me was something very obvious in Martha's makeup.

Nathan: Did you notice this from your earliest acquaintance?

Stockholm: Very much so. Very much so. She was not interested in buying clothes for herself. She was really very frugal about herself but most generous to deserving people.

Nathan: How did she decide who was deserving?

Stockholm: I never quite figured out. There were some of them, I think, who were probably not quite so deserving.

Nathan: That is always the problem.

Stockholm: Always little things like--maybe this should be off-the-record.

Nathan: Well, we'll get this transcribed, and you can review it.

Stockholm: Might be the egg man or something. He was always going to go into business.

Nathan: The egg man?
Stockholm: The egg man.

Nathan: Did he come around with a truck of eggs?

Stockholm: Yes. He asked for $2,000 to start a business and then disappeared. You know, that sort of thing. But she listened. A few times people get carried away, but it was one of our jokes, Martha's philanthropy.

Nathan: It didn't seem to sour her?

Stockholm: No, she could laugh it off also. It wasn't anything of any great importance, I don't think, but it was something amusing. I think he had tried several businesses that never developed.

Nathan: That's interesting. You spoke of the Wursters, Catherine Bauer and William. Were there others that you think of who were of interest to her?

Stockholm: At that particular time I was living across the Bay, and we had just seen Martha on occasion when I would be here. It would be at least once a month; many times it used to be the thing to do to go to lunch on Monday at the St. Francis [Hotel]. This is ancient history.

Nathan: Did you meet "under the clock"? It's lovely to hear some of these things.

Stockholm: You're listening to a ninety-year-old creature.

Nathan: I have to remind myself of that.

Stockholm: An antique.

Nathan: There's something very delightful about this.

Stockholm: But nothing really earthshaking that I could offer.

Nathan: No, the earth doesn't have to shake. I wondered, too, if you teamed up to go to the symphony on Fridays.

Stockholm: For a time, yes, when it was possible. But during the war years it was very difficult transportation-wise and child-wise, because we were left high and dry with no one; we would have had to tie our children to a tree or something.

Nathan: That was a major shift in responsibility?
Yes, to be caught with a house and a child, and I didn't know how to iron a shirt. There were a lot of things that were difficult.

**Connections to Stanford and UC Berkeley**

I wondered whether the connection to Stanford remained strong in her mind.

Financially, yes. I'm sure she always was most generous in her contributions. Yes, she always felt very strongly about that, hoped all the children would be Stanfordites.

She had an aunt who went to Cal?

That's right, Aunt Annie.

Was Aunt Annie a botanist?

Yes. Now I think of her friend, Miss Kellogg.

Yes.

Last night I told you to give me twenty-four hours of thinking, now remember.

Louise Kellogg.

Was she at Cal or at Stanford?

She was--.

Cal, I think.

She was Annie Alexander's friend, companion.

Annie was what--in her seventies when she graduated, when she got her degree?

Really?

Yes, I think so.

For heaven's sake.

Oh, what a role model.
Shaw: She was definitely a perpetual student. There's a better term for it today.

Stockholm: She was a very rugged soul.

Nathan: Was she serious?

Stockholm: Oh, very much so. She was a mountain climber and everything that was rugged, which doesn't relate to Maryanna.

Shaw: We're talking about Annie now.

Nathan: I understand. She intrigued me. So she had a connection both to Stanford and to Cal in a way?

Stockholm: Yes. Martha never expressed any opinions about Cal, to my knowledge, not to me anyway.

Forebears, and Differences between Generations

Nathan: Could you tell me a little more about the grandparents? I understand that Baccamama was a wit.


Nathan: How about the grandfather?

Stockholm: Well, I really didn't feel I ever knew him.

Nathan: No, I meant her father.

Stockholm: You mean Martha's father?

Nathan: Yes.

Stockholm: A very dignified person, a very generous person, very charitable, a real philanthropist I would say.

Nathan: Was he the one who was on the board of the opera?

Stockholm: He was president of it for years, I think.

Nathan: Also active in the Boy Scouts?

Stockholm: Yes.
Nathan: So there does begin to be that thread in a way, even that part, perhaps, of civic involvement?

Shaw: Also, the Japan Society; Mother got involved in that.

Stockholm: Yes, she was president after her father died, for a number of years, I think. Probably until wartime; I don't know.

Nathan: Was it related to the institute--?

Shaw: Institute of Pacific Relations.

Nathan: Yes, was that connected, or were they two different things?

Shaw: Two different things.

Stockholm: Yes, I think they had no connection, did they? Not to my knowledge.

Shaw: No.

Nathan: As you were speaking about his leadership qualities, I wondered whether there was any idea of emulating her father. I don't want to interpret that if that's not the case, but whether Martha saw her father as a civic leader and whether that would have had an influence?

Stockholm: She couldn't have helped but see that. Of course, he was also very active.

##

Stockholm: I certainly sound like a croak, a frog.

Nathan: You sound very good. Most people don't recognize themselves on tape.

Stockholm: [to Shaw] Would you recognize me?

Shaw: I think so.

Nathan: Perhaps, if you feel like it, you could tell me a little more about her parents, how life was in that house, a little about conversations there.

Stockholm: Everything was perfection, to my way of thinking at that particular time.
Nathan: Were you thinking of the domestic arrangements then--I mean, a beautifully run house?

Stockholm: Oh, perfect, absolutely perfect.

Nathan: Was Martha Gerbode's own house like that?

Stockholm: No, not exactly. Martha was very relaxed. Her mother was typical of her vintage, and Martha was far more relaxed. Her house was always run very nicely, but certainly not in the same way. Martha was always friendly with her help. In those days when Baccamama was keeping house, I don't think you were exactly friendly with your help. They were there, and everything was perfectly done.

Nathan: There was this lovely nickname, Baccamama. Did Grandpa have a nickname, too?

Stockholm: I don't think so, to my knowledge. I only remember Opa.

Nathan: Let's stop just a minute. [Tape off]

Nathan: Is it hard for you to rummage around among your memories?

Stockholm: Especially of Martha, but anyway, I'll try.

Nathan: I know; I want you to really feel good about it.

**Earthquake Interlude (April 3, 1989)**

Shaw: That was an earthquake.

Stockholm: Oh, yes, we're having fun today.

Nathan: Really?

Shaw: A big one, yes. Did you feel it?

Nathan: No.

Shaw: It's still going on.

Stockholm: Didn't you? Your chair went.

Nathan: Oh, how funny.
Shaw: We'll see it on the news. It's on the tape, what's being said.

Stockholm: We say, "Oops, an earthquake."

Shaw: You just recorded that, too?

Nathan: Yes.

Stockholm: It's not working now, is it?

Nathan: Oh, yes.

Stockholm: Oh, is it?

Nathan: Please don't be in any way concerned about what is on here. It will be transcribed, and I think I would like Maryanna to take a look as well. You haven't done or said anything that is in any way unsuitable. A lot of these conversations are to lead us to something else as well, so I appreciate whatever you wish to say. Also, I think it speaks very well of someone whose friends remain attached for years, so you're giving me something that's precious.

Impressions of Mr. Alexander

Nathan: I was trying to find out about Grandpa. What was he like?

Stockholm: Distant, I would say, from my point of view at that time. And just like Charlie said, as a child he was always afraid of him. Mr. Alexander was a very gentle man but always with great dignity. I guess we just didn't really get to know each other very well, except I was always impressed by how very diplomatic he was. I can always remember the first time I met him, and he had never seen me before in his life. It sort of put me very much at ease at that point in my life. When I was introduced, I think Baccamama said, "You've met Clarisse?" "Oh, yes. Nice to have seen you. I haven't seen you for a long time." He had never seen me before. But it sort of put me at ease; that was his friendly way. He might have looked forbidding if he was not friendly.

Nathan: Were there other brothers and sisters?

Stockholm: No, she was an only child.
Nathan: What could you tell about her relationship to her father? Did she speak of it?

Stockholm: Oh, yes. I think she was very devoted to him. They're a very close family. Of course, Martha, naturally, was the apple of their eye.

Nathan: Yes. You were speaking earlier of knowing each other when you were very young.

Stockholm: Quite young. Of course, I, you see, am older than Martha, but we just always seemed to like each other and get along.

Nathan: I wondered whether you spent much time on the campus at Stanford?

Stockholm: No, I was not on the campus at Stanford. I did not go to Stanford.

Friends and Children in the Park

Nathan: I was just wondering whether that was a part of the place you would take the children for a walk.

Stockholm: No, we were then living in San Francisco because Frank was here, and we had moved up to San Francisco at that particular time. We took them to Golden Gate Park. That was the Thursday occupation.

Nathan: The merry-go-round?

Stockholm: The merry-go-round and a little distemper among the young when they had to go home. But we enjoyed it; it was fun.

Nathan: Your memory of friends is very fresh. Were there other people in those early years?

Stockholm: Yes, Mrs. Brophy, who is now Mrs. Jones and lives in Atlanta, was there also. Her husband was a doctor in the same class with Frank, and she was living here also at the time. She was the third member. We had the three boys always in the park, regardless of the weather, on Thursday.

Nathan: Did you feel that many of the friends were drawn from the medical profession from Dr. Gerbode's associates?
Stockholm: Some. I don't know any, perhaps, too close.

Nathan: I was wondering whether she sort of created her own circle of friends.

Stockholm: More or less, I think so. They were in little different groups.

Nathan: During the war years when you were all on your own, did you also do hospital volunteering?

Stockholm: Yes. I don't know whether Martha did any actual hospital work, but she did things. Of course, her mother was very very active in the Red Cross in the East Bay, and so we all did that, I guess.

Shaw: I think Mother was a nurse's aide.

Stockholm: Yes, that's right. She was; I remember that now.

Shaw: In fact, she wore a nurse's uniform.

Stockholm: Do you still have her uniform?

Shaw: I don't know where the uniform is now, but she was going to the hospital at various times.

Nathan: So you had a lot to juggle?

Stockholm: Yes, we did, but we made it.

Children First, then the Environment

Nathan: As you knew each other over the years, could you tell which of Martha Gerbode's activities were closest to her heart?

Stockholm: Her children, number one.

Nathan: Number one, her children, and then?

Stockholm: Well, I think the environmental situation was really paramount, if I'm judging correctly from my observation.

Shaw: I think that's true.

Nathan: This would be both in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Hawaii?
Stockholm: Of course, she was interested in Hawaii also, and she did a lot of crusading there in order to preserve the terrain. But mostly her activities were here, because she was completely segregated from the East Bay by that time because the old home was gone. That was demolished.

Nathan: The old home in Piedmont?

Stockholm: On Seaview, yes.

Nathan: I wondered whether Catherine Bauer had some connection with these environmental interests.

Stockholm: Oh, I'm sure, and I think she was a very strong influence. Did you know her?

Nathan: Yes, I did.

Stockholm: She was a very strong person, and I'm sure she had a great deal of interest. Although I think Martha had it herself. Also, Bill Wurster was very interested in the environment, and of course we also knew Bill Wurster so well. My husband and he were associated in so many projects, and he also did our little house in Palo Alto.

Nathan: Those are rather high-powered, intellectual people and fun, I would think.

Stockholm: Yes, very much. He was lots of fun.

Nathan: In the environmental work, were there people she spoke of as colleagues particularly?

Stockholm: She could have, but they're people that meant really nothing to me. I don't register anything, any real personalities that I could tell you about.

Nathan: You have helped very much with a number of names. Let's just turn back for a moment and go back to the party. You met her originally at the party?

Stockholm: Yes, and I can't remember. I have been trying to rack my brain.
Appearance, Some Impressions

Nathan: What did she look like? When you saw her, what did you see?

Stockholm: Should I be frank? Very nondescript. She was never interested in her personal appearance that much. I don't mean to say that she was untidy or anything, but as we always teased her later, there was her uniform.

Nathan: What was the uniform?

Stockholm: The uniform was, at that time, a gray flannel coat, a very good coat but I should say uninspirational. She was not interested in being chic. She had other more important things on her mind. But she was just a darling, darling person you couldn't help but love the minute you knew her.

Nathan: So the attraction came later?

Stockholm: From the person.

Nathan: Yes, not from the external. Did you have to make overtures, or did she?

Stockholm: No, I'm not the overture type. Probably now in my dotage I'm not quite as shy as I was. People always had to approach me. I'm not very good at making acquaintances casually, so it must have been by some mutual consent that we became friends, because she was not terrifically outgoing, either.

Nathan: It's always a mystery, isn't it, how sympathy works?

Stockholm: I don't know what it was, but anyway, it worked.

Nathan: Then later, as she became a parent and the manager of the household and so on, if I were to see her on the street in San Francisco, what would I have seen?

Stockholm: You would have seen her in a camel hair coat.

Nathan: In a suit, or would it usually be--?

Stockholm: A blouse and skirt and a camel hair coat.

Nathan: When she would have to get dressed up for the evening, what would I see?
She always looked nice, but she didn't like to shop. She would ride past Magnin's and see a dress in the window and telephone and ask if they had it in her size. She just didn't want to try on clothes. She just was not clothes-minded; didn't need to be, did she?

No. Did she have a scheduling, timetable feeling: "Either I do or don't have time for that"?

No, she was a little bit inclined to be forgetful. So her scheduling wasn't that perfect.

I think we spoke a little earlier about some letters. Was she a good correspondent?

I don't know. We never wrote letters to each other. I don't know who she did correspond with. Some of her old school friends, she might have. She did have some whom I didn't know, only had heard the names, but I don't know.

Perhaps more phoning or visiting or something like that. How did she make contact with, let's say, people who were powerful?

I think they made contact with her. I would guess that would be it. She was not an aggressor in any way.

Participating, and Protecting the Children

This is someone so private, who then moved into the public realm?

That's right, and did it so well.

What do you think impelled her into that realm where there were different points of view?

I think she was very anxious to contribute. She had one very strong feeling that she talked about a lot to me. She never wanted her children to have too much money.

Why was that?

Well, I really don't know, except that she probably thought it was a contamination. I don't know what her thought was. But that was one reason why she influenced Baccamama to make such a large contribution to Stanford while she was still living:
spare her children from having too much money. It was something that she was obsessed with, that thought. So she had all these thoughts about doing good, which she did. With her very generosity she did support worthwhile causes. It would be great if everybody could feel that way.

Nathan: Did she speak of how she hoped to protect her children from the temptations of money?

Stockholm: I don't know. They were all such good children, I don't think she had too many qualms.

Shaw: Maybe I should leave the room, and then she can give an honest answer.

Stockholm: Not Maryanna. Maryanna was the first little girl; all of our friends had boys. So Maryanna was really something very special, still is.

Nathan: Yes, what a pleasure to have a little girl.

Stockholm: Yes, they're so cute, too. Cutest little girl you ever saw in your life. You wouldn't believe it now.

Nathan: I know you're a disinterested observer. [laughter]

As we go on with this sort of discovery of Martha Gerbode, can you perhaps suggest some areas that we might inquire into or some parts of her own interests that we should pursue?

Stockholm: Help.

Nathan: I was thinking that she was in many ways a mentor, really. Younger people always want to know how to live, and in a way that was cut short because she didn't live to an old age. It would be wonderful to be able to capture what it was that moved her to do these valuable things that she did.

Stockholm: It was just born in her, I think. She was just that kind of a person. I don't really feel that you can school yourself in those kinds of things if it's not natural for you to be that way. Of course, it isn't everybody who can, and she could, and she had that desire and certainly was not interested in showering herself with a lot of luxuries. Of course, she always lived very nicely, but she wasn't interested in Martha as number one.

Nathan: She must have had some reward from her activities, some satisfaction of accomplishment?
Stockholm: Oh, I'm sure she did. I'm sure she did.

Noticing the Needs of Others

Nathan: Did she ever speak of such matters to you?

Stockholm: I think she had a lot of self-satisfaction because she had a lot of trauma in her life, and I think that made her probably more aware of other people's needs and problems. Life wasn't always what one might think, looking at the outside. But she handled that very nicely in her way; she didn't burden other people with her problems.

Nathan: Deepened her, perhaps?

Stockholm: Very much so. Because I think about when she lost her darling son, how she handled it, which you would never believe. She was aware of other people's problems, and I think it was just... A lot of us go along oblivious to other people's suffering, but I think it was just natural for her.

Nathan: That's interesting that she did go with her own tendencies.

Stockholm: Right. She never talked about them. Well, her father was very much like that, too. He never advertised his philanthropies. It was always very quietly done and very generously done. Of course, Piedmont was then his residence. There were many things done for that part of the country that no one ever knew about; you know, it was just very quietly, modestly done. So I think that was perhaps an inherited trait or part of her home training. She was not a religious person in formal religion. I think she had her own theories of what was right and wrong.

Nathan: Did she ever speak of her earlier schooling in Switzerland and Mt. Vernon?

Stockholm: Well, she didn't like it very well, I know that. She talked more about her school in Switzerland. You probably heard about that.

Nathan: What didn't she like about it?

Stockholm: The people, mostly.

Nathan: The faculty or the students?
Stockholm: Oh no, not the faculty. I don't think that phase of her life was very important to her. I think some of her associates were not particularly to her liking. She liked to dramatize things. That was always interesting to her.

Nathan: I think of it almost as a protective sort of school.

Stockholm: I think you're right.

Nathan: And that did not follow her wish particularly?

Stockholm: I never felt that she looked forward to doing it again.

Nathan: You know, this has been full of ideas, and I would love it if there is anything you would like to add [directed at Shaw].

Shaw: Not at the moment.

Nathan: Fine. [To Stockholm] Is there something else that you would like to add?

Stockholm: No, I feel as though I haven't contributed anything that you probably desire except reminiscing.

Nathan: Well, it paints the picture. It is exactly what I had hoped that you could do. I begin to have a glimmer of this rather wonderful, elusive person, and I certainly thank you for this. I'm going to turn the machine off now. [tape off]

The Light-Hearted Side

Nathan: We do want a human picture, so tell me what you were just saying.

Stockholm: I have probably painted a picture of Martha as being very serious and not much fun, but she was. We had a lot of silly times together. We had a lot of things in common. We were married in the same year, not the same month. I was married in November, so that got me away. We had birthdays in the same month, not the same date. Our husbands both had the identical birthday. We had the same silver pattern.

Neither of us knew much about cooking. When they were living in a rented house on Broadway--I can't tell you exactly where it was, but I could picture the house now--we decided that we would make a birthday cake for the two gentlemen who
were February 3 birthdays. We did it at Martha's house. Frank came in in the middle of the process, and we both jumped out the window, out the back, with the cake. You know what happened to the cake? [laughter]

Nathan: He didn't see you making a cake?

Stockholm: He didn't know what was going on. He came home to lunch every day. In those days, it was good meat, potatoes, and carrots and everything. He had a good appetite.

Nathan: He came home to lunch?

Stockholm: He came home for lunch. He was in the medical school then. But we were in the process of making this cake. You have ever seen such a colossal mess. The birthday boys were kind of left without a cake.

Nathan: You were very brave. Chocolate cake is not the easiest thing to do.

Stockholm: I don't know what kind of cake it was. It was a mess, terrible.

Nathan: Well, that's fun. What other?

Stockholm: We did other silly things. I always sewed, so all my friends decided they wanted to sew. [to Shaw] If you can imagine, your mother wanting to sew.

Shaw: No, I can't imagine it.

Stockholm: She wanted to make something for Frank. So she made jogging shorts, big, white stripe. This thing isn't going is it?

Nathan: It is.

Stockholm: Anyway, it never got any buttons on them. He had a safety pin. I think the shorts probably turned out to be a dust cloth. We had such fun because we would just fly off for it. We were very silly people. We reacted like, I guess, most normal people do.

Nathan: It's somebody to giggle with.

Stockholm: We did a lot of that. So I wanted to tell you that she wasn't always just serious.
Nathan: That's nice to know. That's really a very good part of life, absolutely.

Stockholm: So poor Frank. I don't think he ever got into his lovely shorts. [tape off]

Orrie Escamilla was--are we going again?

Nathan: I put it on. Yes, I'm not going to miss this.

Stockholm: Orrie was a really uninhibited person. She took Martha over in her very gloomy period there, so they did some weird things, like serving.

Nathan: Were they good? Did they serve well?

Stockholm: I wonder what they did. I remembered, then forgot about it, what they would do.

Shaw: This was one thing. She always wanted to know what it was like to be a maid, I guess. I suppose that was a part of playing the roles, kind of fun and different.

Nathan: Sort of a madcap thing to do?

Shaw: I think she did a few madcap things when she was in school in Switzerland. She said she used to climb out the window at night to meet a visitor.

Stockholm: You see, that was something that people just knowing her casually would never expect, but she did do.

Shaw: So I think, in other words, she might have been a risk-taker in different ways. At seventeen, she had this interest in adventure and was intrigued with excitement and drama.

Stockholm: And dramatized it.

Shaw: Sometimes in the way she described something, it was very extemporaneously dramatized, almost out of proportion at times, meaning, if you knew the story exactly.

Stockholm: Well, she could embellish them beautifully, too.
Shaw: But she did a good job of it, so it was entertaining. I think she found that this was an asset. It would be, of course.

Stockholm: Another thing that she did, she was very interested in her own dreams. She kept a pad--at least she told us; I never observed--and a pencil by her bed, and she would write them down. I don't know what that ever came to.

Shaw: Maybe she got that out of the psychology.

Stockholm: Possibly.

Nathan: Thank you for your memories and insights, and for these personal snapshots in time.

Transcriber: Sophia Hayes
Final Typist: Judy Smith
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INTERVIEW HISTORY--by Harriet Nathan

Georgiana G. Stevens, journalist, was interviewed at her San Francisco home on May 9, 1989. She and her husband Harley met Martha and Frank Gerbode and established a friendship in the late 1930s. She observed Martha's community interests and conviction, and during World War II, her efforts to take part in significant war work. Georgiana Stevens told of the way Martha and her family joined friends in the out-of-doors, despite Martha's skepticism; and provided a copy of the "Poem After a Pack Trip to Bench Lake with William Wursters and Harley Stevens." The poem was vintage Martha, an unsentimental paraphrase of "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton."

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Georgiana C. Stevens

Date of birth 24 Oct, 1904 Birthplace Portland, Ore_on

Father's full name George Theodore Gerlinger

Occupation Timber executive Birthplace Chica_o

Mother's full name Irene Hazard Gerlinger

Occupation Public Philanthropy Birthplace Newbor_n, N.Y.

Your spouse Harley C. Stevens (deceased)

Your children xx

Where did you grow up? Portland, Ore_on

Present community San Francisco

Education B.A. U.C. Berkeley

Occupation(s) Writer, Editor

Areas of expertise Near Eastern Affairs

Other interests or activities International studies

Organizations in which you are active
Near East Foundation, NYC;
Middle East Institute, Wash., D.C.
Some Memories, and Activities in the Thirties

Nathan: You were thinking, perhaps, of some names of people who might remember Martha Gerbode.

Stevens: Well, I have two names of people who are still around who had very close contact with her. One is Mrs. Parmer Fuller.

Nathan: Would it be all right if I used your name?

Stevens: Oh, yes, certainly. The other one that Maryanna might not think of is Miriam Levy. She and Martha worked on some things together. There are a lot of people here on the list who aren't relevant, I think, but anyway, we'll get to that.

Nathan: Good. Now, I did want to ask you specifically if you could think of someone who would be a good contact for the Stanford years.

Stevens: Goodness, I mean, who is left down there, really? Maybe Mrs. William Deamer; they were there at the same time. She just knows the Stanford scene better than I. (They went to Stanford at the same time.) That's why I'm thinking of her.

Nathan: Perhaps as we go along you may think of other topics or other persons that are useful. One minor mystery: is your first name spelled with one "n" or two?

Stevens: One "n," yes. It doesn't matter. I'm not touchy about it.
Nathan: Great. Well, I will give you a form that relates to the tapes, and I wanted to be sure we were spelling it right. Were there any things you wanted to say before we looked at the list?

Stevens: No, that's fine. I'm just looking at your questions here.

Nathan: Perhaps you might cast back in your memory--?

Stevens: I met Martha and her husband when they had just come back from Germany, where he had done some postgraduate work. This was in about 1936 or 1937.

Nathan: Had she gone to Germany also?

Stevens: They went together. They had a year there, and he was doing some postgraduate work in surgery. I remember that at the time they had helped to get some people out of Germany. That was one of their preoccupations, especially a Dr. Engel, who is now gone.

Nathan: How did you happen to meet?

Stevens: They were great friends of my brother-in-law, Robert Kirkwood, who had been at Stanford with her (he's gone, too). We had met at their house.

Nathan: What did she look like?

Stevens: She was short and curly-haired, very lively, and very quick. She was always dressed impeccably. Always beautifully tailored.

She had been an only child, and I think she filled up her life with people. I think she had suffered from being alone a lot as a child. She had been to half a dozen schools in Europe while her parents were travelling. She was always digging up old friends from these schools, and they came over to visit. She loved being with people, and she hated being alone, although she did read a great deal.

Then as her children came along, she spent a lot of time with them. I remember she read aloud to them a lot, and she was a very good mother. She was always entertaining, which kept things going. Meanwhile, her husband was developing as a very successful surgeon. More than ever, as necessary, she was helpful, but he didn't involve her very much in those days. He was connected with the Stanford Medical School, which was then here in San Francisco.
Institute of Pacific Relations, and World Affairs Council

Stevens: She got involved in a lot of causes, partly through her father, who had started the Institute of Pacific Relations. He and some other businessmen and some educators thought after the war [World War II] that there ought to be some structure. No, it wasn't after the war; it was before the war, in the thirties. They set up this Institute of Pacific Relations, and its headquarters was here. They had a building up here on Franklin Street. They built a library and brought in people who knew a good deal about China and Japan.

Nathan: Was this also one of your interests?

Stevens: No, not at all. I remember this was very important to her. Very early in the game, she went to Japan to a conference and had a wonderful time there. There she met the people involved from the East, like Judge Jessup and a number of people she wouldn't have met otherwise. It opened the door to her, to Asia, and she had a wonderful time at this thing.

She had a great interest in international things. That brought her into the World Affairs Council when it started.

Nathan: That early?

Stevens: Yes. She was a trustee, and she was a volunteer. The World Affairs Council took over the Institute of Pacific Relations' library because the Institute went out of business here when it went to New York.

In those days, the World Affairs Council had very little money, and she spent several days a week as a volunteer there running the speakers' bureau. She actually put in time; she didn't just, you know, come to the meetings. She liked being a volunteer. She liked doing something. As I say, she hated being alone.

She was very attracted to liberal causes, and I don't know which ones particularly.

Nathan: How do you account for that?

Stevens: Well, I think she felt that she was rich, and she should do something.

Nathan: Sort of noblesse oblige?
Stevens: Well, I suppose so, and also she was genuinely concerned about what was happening. She had a lot of sympathy for the people who were down and out. She was interested in the early housing movement with Dorothy Erskine, who is long gone.

Now, it could be that John Jacobs was around then, and he is still around. He was head of SPUR [San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal] for a long time.

Nathan: Would he seem to you to be a good source?

Stevens: Yes, I think he would be a good contact. If he didn't know her, he would know who did know her. Another person who knew her well and who was, I guess, at Stanford, is Judge William Orrick. He certainly knew her well. I believe he was at Stanford; I'm not sure. He went to Yale, also. But he knew her extremely well, knew her family. I'm sure he would respond if you call him at his office.

Now, let's see. She thought of herself as a volunteer, strictly. She had gotten a degree from Stanford, but she was not a student, really. She had married in college I believe.

But the Pacific Relations trip to Japan gave her a lot more stimulation. She entertained a great many overseas visitors. I don't know how much time she spent in worrying about Stanford itself. It's something I have no idea about because I wasn't interested in Stanford, and this was before my time. I went to Berkeley, but Mrs. Deamer and Judge Orrick might know a little more about the Stanford connection. Her daughter would know, because she went there.

Nathan: I think they were unclear, perhaps, about who would presently be a good source.

Stevens: Judge Orrick, I think, and Mrs. Deamer. They were there at the same time. Jessup is dead; that's too bad. I don't remember about the Japan Society. I have no idea.

Nathan: I wondered whether your own work on the national level of World Affairs Council had any relationship to the local?

Stevens: No, not at all. I was only interested because my husband was interested. I'm not much of an organization person, though we did support it, certainly. I still do. Martha went in there [to the World Affairs Council] on her own power. She was interested in civic relations. For a year or two she put in a lot of time down there.
Another man who would know a lot about what she did there was a man named Garland Farmer. He's in Palo Alto. He was executive director for a while. So I'll give you his telephone number. He was very fond of her.

Nathan: He was the executive director of the World Affairs Council?

Stevens: Yes, at the time that she was there. Yes, he was. He was the State Department man who came out here. He would know a bit about her Stanford connections, too.Originally her family were friends of Herbert Hoover, but she didn't care about that. For her time, she had fairly leftist views. Nowadays, they wouldn't be considered so. I don't know about the Japan Society. Actually, she never mentioned it.

Nathan: Perhaps that was one of her father's influences?

Stevens: It was, but I don't remember her ever having Japanese around much. They weren't very popular in those days.

Civic Interests: Bay Area and Diamond Head

Stevens: I don't know about her appointment from Mayor Lapham, but I do know she was very active in the housing movement before SPUR was born. You see, it was a housing movement which Dorothy Erskine and several wonderful, older women, who are long gone, started. SPUR grew out of that, but John Jacobs would know.

League of Women Voters, I never went to a meeting. I have no idea how much time she spent there.

Nathan: The Urban League was listed in her phone book.

Stevens: Well, she would have had a sympathy with their cause. She probably gave them money. I doubt if she ever went to their meetings. The downtrodden appealed to her, and she had helped a lot of people individually. She was a pushover for any lost cause—not stupidly; there was always a reason.

This is where Mrs. Fuller comes in (she was married to Bishop Pike), and they became very good friends. She could tell you a lot about a whole lot of things I know nothing about. See, I didn't grow up here. A person like Judge Orrick would know a lot more of her background.
Now, later—you were right about the land use. For a while she took a fling to save Alcatraz. Luckily, she gave it up. She even offered to help buy it. Alcatraz meant quite a little to-do, you know. But anyway, it died out. I think she clashed with the Indians, who didn't want to give it up. They wanted it, too. In any case, it was just too much, but she thought it ought to be a park or whatever.

Nathan: Was there some discussion earlier about whether it would be developed as a casino or some similar venture?

Stevens: I think that's what set her off perhaps. That's the kind of thing she thought was horrible.

Now, in Hawaii she did a very clever thing. The family owned these two houses at Diamond Head, which had just recently been sold. She had bought the air rights to that whole area so that there couldn't be developers to put towers up. That was quite shrewd. So to this day, they can't defile the coast.

Nathan: The air rights?

Stevens: Yes, the air rights. You can do that, you know? For example, the Mechanics' Institute has sold the air rights over its building to somebody so something can be built there or they can control it.

Nathan: They had a height control measure in it?

Stevens: Yes, nothing out-of-scale can be put up. She was very shrewd about certain things she wanted to do.

Nathan: Did she have attorneys with whom she consulted?

Stevens: I am trying to think who in the world she worked with. It was somebody down there, I think. Here she relied, for a time, on a distant relative, Edward G. Chandler. She was also involved with the Chickering firm. Allan Chickering was a trustee of her father's trust. But she broke with the Chickerings and went to her cousin, Edward G. Chandler. His wife was an Alexander, and he's still alive. So are Allan Chickering and his brother. I think they were involved more in her father's financial affairs, in the trust funds that were left for the children.

Nathan: Did you have any impression as to whether she was interested in the financial aspects?
Stevens: No, not at all. She just was anxious to do good. She really was very generous. The land use was very important to her. The Diamond Head affair, her daughter knows a lot about, and so does a man named Huey Johnson, who may still be alive.

Nathan: Oh, he is.

Stevens: Well, if he is, he knew a lot about her interest in the Nature Conservancy and got her to give quite a lot to it. You know he's still around, is he?

Nathan: Yes. A colleague found his phone number and his address, and we will go talk to Huey Johnson.

Stevens: Is he around here?

Nathan: He's in Marin, I understand.

Stevens: Oh, you're lucky he's around. I just don't know who else was involved. He would know right away. As you know, there is a ranch over in Marin County that somehow the family, I think, endowed.

Nathan: Was that the Gerbode Preserve? [later Gerbode Valley]

Stevens: Yes.

Nathan: That was a ranch?

Stevens: Yes, it was a beautiful ranch that a lot of people coveted, but they saved it. Now, before the Gerbode Foundation, she simply gave money out of her father's family's trust. I have forgotten when the foundation was set up, but her daughter knows about that. I never talked about money with her. We talked about a lot of personal things but not money. She went to the symphony and I think to the opera. Yes, they had tickets for years. And what else?

The Score

Nathan: Now, about The Score--?

Stevens: The Score was a very small group of older women who met once a month for dinner. They would have no political or any other purpose. It was purely local people who were interested in
public affairs and met around at people's houses. They had no political significance whatever.

Nathan: Did the members present a paper?

Stevens: No, nothing like that at all. They just were supposed to produce whatever they were thinking about. It died out after some of the original people died. There was no point in going on. Anyway, it was, in a sense, kind of a dated idea, but it attracted some very interesting older women. Dr. Mary Lehman was one of the members, but all those people are long gone. There's one person left in Berkeley who was practically the youngest person there.

Nathan: Did you have anything to do with bringing Martha Gerbode into it?

Stevens: No, I didn't. I don't remember who--they all brought her in. She was very popular. She was a great deal of fun. She was amusing, you know, and wonderful company.

Camping in the Forties

Stevens: My husband and I went on a number of camping trips with her and Dr. Gerbode. After one of them, she wrote this poem. She didn't enjoy these one bit. It's so typical of her, and it gives you insight into the way she reacted.

Nathan: This is wonderful. Do you know about what the date might be on this?

Stevens: It should be in the early forties. It was a trip on which the William Wursters went and the Gerbodes and two of their sons--the one who died, Alec, and the younger one, young Frank--and the daughter. Maryanna went on that trip. They were all along.

Nathan: How did you like the rigors of camping?

Stevens: Well, I didn't mind. My husband loved it, and I went all the time. Martha hated being on horses. She hated eating outdoors all the time. The whole thing was just a trial, but she was a good sport. She did it, and this poem gives you the flavor of how she felt about it.

Nathan: This is very witty.

Stevens: It's very witty, and she was witty. She was very quick. She would do anything that her husband wanted, and this is one thing he liked, just as my husband did. So we had a very amusing time.
POEM AFTER A PACK TRIP TO BENCH LAKE
WITH WILLIAM WURSTERS AND HARLEY STEVENS
BY MARTHA GERBODE

Flow gently, King’s River, among thy green braes.
Remind me of yonder more halycon days;
Arcadian forest, and pastoral mead,
A line in one hand, and a good book to read.

The air is like wine, though the breath may come short,
And digging those trenches is laughable sport!
No air in the mattress, but plenty of ants;
A bear in the bushes, a rip in the pants.

The campfire’s glowing, the night wind is chill.
Undress at high speed . . . first a trip up the hill.
Fish chowder, fish salad . . . fish, baked, broiled and fried,
And when it runs out . . . why more fish is supplied.

Now bring up more water! And bake us a cake!
And where is the chocolate and cheese, for God’s sake?
Who’s leading this party? Look sharp with those ropes!
Don’t crowd me . . . step lively . . . hold back on the slopes!

Bucolic, agrarian, rustic, serene;
The dishpans lend charm to this pleasurable scene.
What’s gout in the toes or a burn on the hand?
We’re efficient! Terrific! We live off the land!

Flow gently, King’s River, I passionately care
For the world’s finest mountains, God’s Country, I swear!
The world’s finest friends, the best trout in the stream.
Flow gently, King’s River, disturb not my dream.
Their philanthropy was very scattered until the foundation was set up, but it was never foolish. I don't think she was sucked into many lost causes. She was pretty discriminating. She was quite shrewd. She could tell when people were just trying to operate, work on her.

Nathan: Did you have the impression that her preference was to work by herself, or with others?

Stevens: Oh, by herself, sure. I mean, half the time people didn't know who else had been around.

**Political Sympathies**

Stevens: There was a time when she knew Harry Bridges and had some sympathy for his positions. This involved difficulties later for her husband. Well, the union was considered left-wing, you see, and he was left-wing.

Nathan: This would be the waterfront connection and all the shipping interests of the family?

Stevens: I suppose so, but her father was long gone by then. When Dr. Gerbode was in the army, he had a problem with security. She had a problem once, something she wanted to do. The FBI made a fuss. I can't remember what it was. But there were people in the city who were very disapproving of this, of course. I know a lot of business people who were. This didn't stop her.

Now, Allan Chickering, who is still alive in Woodside--I don't think he comes to the city--can tell you a lot about her. It may not all be exactly what she would approve of. But he worked as their lawyer for quite a while until they had a falling out [over charges for expensive trips to Hawaii]. He knew her much more closely than most people downtown.

He just said, "Come on." But he won't say that. He felt that she made a dreadful mistake. So then she went to her relative, a distant relative, Edward Chandler, who is still alive and still has an office downtown. He's a Berkeley man; he doesn't know anything about Stanford. Allan, I think, was in Berkeley, too. Stanford is--I can't help you much on that. All of her closest friends from there are gone. That's too bad.
Nathan: I see. Did you have any suggestions with respect to activities? You've given me a lot of help on SPUR; how about Planned Parenthood?

Stevens: Well, she was an early believer, but I don't know in what way she would contribute.

Nathan: Were there people who might remember?

Stevens: Mrs. Fuller might know. I was away a great deal in those years. I didn't like meetings; I never went to any of them. Anything not to have to go; I sent a check. I wasn't as active as she was, and I wasn't a public person, as she was.

Nathan: I gather your interests were scholarly?

Stevens: I was traveling a lot with my husband. I was a journalist, and I was writing a lot. I wrote a couple of little books, and it just took my time. But I saw her two or three times a week for many years. We always communicated. She was younger than I, but she was, you know, very companionable. Our husbands were friends, and I admired her husband's work very much. He was a very gifted man. He invented the artificial heart, for use during heart surgery.

Nathan: There is a very good oral history with him.

Stevens: Oh, yes. He was very interested in his field.

**Family's Attitudes**

Nathan: I wonder how they managed their differing political views.

Stevens: Well, I think that he put up with all this because she was good company. Also, she had the money for many years. He made money later. But I think he felt it was her father's money, and it was up to her. The family didn't want her to marry him. I did know this. But when they finally broke down and accepted it, they settled some money on him, so he would not feel that he was absolutely the underdog. That was quite shrewd of the old man. So that he had a cushion, and then he later made a great deal.

Nathan: Did the family have another candidate in mind?

Stevens: I don't know. I didn't know her then. This was when she was at college.
Nathan: Yes, that's pretty young still.

Stevens: It was a long time ago. It must've been in the early thirties. But I do know this. They were in Piedmont, and they felt a rather conventional outlook, you see. She was absolutely carried away by this bright young doctor who was working his way through, selling blood, you know, carrying trays. She was always a rebel in that sense, that she was not going to be like her parents. I knew her parents. I could see that she was far more imaginative than they were.

Nathan: I wonder where this comes from.

Stevens: I would think people like old Aunt Annie Alexander and others. You see, there were a lot of other freewheelers in the family. I don't think it was just the parents. The mother was very interesting. She was a social worker, I believe, and I think that, you know, you just grow up knowing something about these things. I think that's where she came into the family. Mr. Alexander I only met occasionally. He was a very successful businessman.

Martha once took me to the little house which is a sort of memorial to the family on Kauai, which is where the ancestors had first settled. There was a little church there.

Nathan: Were these missionary people?

Stevens: Yes, I suppose her father's father. I can't remember which one. Anyway, she said we ought to see this, and I pictured it as very characteristic of the people who came out there and what they thought they were doing. She said, "We came out to do good and did well." They just landed right, and they all picked up land very cheap. Maryanna, as you may know, is on the board of Alexander and Baldwin. She's very good.

Another thing Martha did, she got some stateside members on that board. It had been strictly Honolulu, and she insisted that two men from here be on the board, young men. One was Charles Stockholm. He was then at Citibank. The other one--her daughter would have to tell you.

Nathan: Now, this was the son of Sophus and Clarisse Stockholm?

Stevens: Yes, the one who built the house. The son is still on the board. She said it was absurd to have it so terribly provincial in a company which is obviously in shipping and trading. Over a good deal of opposition, she did get these two young men on. She was a nuisance, I imagine.
Nathan: Indeed?

Stevens: Oh, certainly. That didn't bother her at all.

Schooling

Nathan: How much time did she spend in the islands when she was growing up?

Stevens: I think quite a lot. But then she spent a lot of time at schools in Switzerland, a couple of schools which weren't very good. She said the parents had a wonderful time together, and they just planted her wherever they were, you know. This was hard on her. She never liked to be alone. This is why the house was always crammed with people. Then when her children came along, it was crammed with their friends. Have you seen the house? It's quite an impressive place.

Nathan: No, I haven't. I have seen Maryanna Shaw's house.

Stevens: One thing for example--Mrs. Fuller, who was then Bishop Pike's wife, was really on the streets practically when he died. Martha bought a little house down here on Webster Street and just put her in it for some time, for several years.

Nathan: Martha Gerbode did that?

Stevens: Yes, and Mrs. Fuller's mother was alive. Martha just said, "I'd like you to be comfortable," and she saw to it.

She bought a little property on the bird sanctuary over in Marin County so that it wouldn't be torn down. Her adopted daughter, Penny Jay, inherited that, but she has sold that. But Martha was always picking up things that could be saved. It was very generous and very practical.

Nathan: I noticed that she had never gone to school in the islands, nor did her family have a principal residence there.

Stevens: No, she went to Miss Ransom's in Piedmont and then to Stanford. I don't think they spent that much time over there.

Nathan: Summers perhaps?

Stevens: Perhaps. I didn't know her then, but Mr. Chickering would know. He's not young--nobody's young anymore that knew her--but he
would know a good deal more about her life down there. He probably loves to talk about her.

Nathan: I wondered whether she was active in getting media attention to what she was doing.

Stevens: Oh, no. For herself, no.

Nathan: Or to the cause?

Stevens: Not especially.

Nathan: Did other people do that?

Stevens: She knew Paul Smith, but she didn't need to do this. There were enough other enthusiasts, you know.

Nathan: Paul Smith was with The San Francisco Chronicle?

Stevens: Yes, he was the editor for years, but I don't think he was a particular friend. Abe Melinkoff probably knew her, and Templeton Peck probably knew her.

Stevens: Yes, Templeton Peck is a good source, because he knew her at Stanford.

Nathan: He was at Stanford?

Stevens: Yes, he was at Stanford with her, and he knew a lot about her doings in the city, because then he was editor of the editorial page. He would have known her at Stanford. One memory brings back another, doesn't it? He would be better than Melinkoff, because he's maintained his friendship with her, and he was on the World Affairs Council for a while.

Nathan: Did you get the impression that she continued to make friends during her lifetime?

Stevens: Oh, yes. Never stopped, yes. But they had a very peripatetic life. They moved around a lot because Dr. Gerbode was always going to his medical conferences.

Nathan: I was really thinking of the people she would have met at the World Affairs Council study groups.

Stevens: They were pretty much the same. Mrs. Heller was a great friend of hers, but she's gone. Mr. Farmer is one of the better
connections on that, because he was then running it. He also would know any connection there she might have had. She didn't have serious academic interests. She had people working in her business. She was very successful.

A Liking for Ideas

Nathan: I wonder whether she was influenced by the quality of the person who would introduce an idea to her.

Stevens: I suppose so, yes. She liked fresh ideas. I remember having her here with Margaret Mead, and they got on very well. Then she said, "I'll take her on a tour of the city." Later I asked, "Where did you take her?" She said, "Oh, I showed her the dressing rooms at Magnin's," the remodeled marble ones. Well, you know, things that Margaret Mead never would expect in a thousand years. Martha had a very original approach to the city.

Nathan: What an anthropologist would make out of all that marble.

Stevens: Yes. She had a very original approach to all sorts of things, and she liked many people like Margaret. I think there was some affinity. Here was a volunteer who had so much imagination and sense. She was unusual.

Nathan: It would be nice to be able to find out what it was that made her unusual.

Stevens: I think she just felt responsible because she was so well off, and she had a wide-ranging group of friends. They let her into things, which is fine.

Nathan: If you were giving a dinner party, and you had rather a stodgy, non-conversational man, would you put her next to him?

Stevens: Oh, no. Absolutely no. She would make fun of it.

Nathan: She would not draw him out?

Stevens: No, she would know right away that he was a bore. No.

Nathan: So she could not suffer bores?

Stevens: Oh, no, certainly not. Her husband wasn't fundamentally social. They didn't do things just because they felt they had to. They
did go to the opera. I think he kept on doing it after she died. But dinner parties, except for a cause, were not promising. They were too busy. He was too busy, and the children ate up a lot of time.

Nathan: I wondered, too, about another interest, in fine printing. Were you aware of that?

Stevens: Vaguely, and she did have a fine library. I don't know what Maryanna's done with that. Not a big one.

Nathan: But rather selective, I imagine?

Stevens: Yes, it was. But there were some, of course her books on Hawaii. She had quite a good collection. I don't know what's happened to that.

Nathan: Did she ever ask you for advice about the sort of international field that is in your realm?

Stevens: Yes. We talked about lots of things. But chiefly we talked about a lot of our mutual friends and World Affairs Council, which is always starving. SPUR was a great interest, but not so much of mine; it was to some of the rest of my family. She was a very interesting person, restless. If she didn't have something cooking, she would cook something up.

Nathan: There was, I imagine, a certain amount of daring in, let's say, the board of Planned Parenthood?

Stevens: Possibly. Well, perhaps, but in those days that wasn't so terrible.

Nathan: Then somewhere I saw that she had been the first woman named to a grand jury in San Francisco.

Stevens: Maybe so. Well, she would have been very good and very shrewd. She was no fool, you know.

Nathan: Were you ever active in introducing an idea or a field to her?

Stevens: No, not really. I did give her some introductions when she went to Europe and to the Middle East. She stayed with some friends of mine, but to her they were just another set of people, another interest. She didn't focus on anything of that kind. She had to do things near her home.

Nathan: I wondered whether she was interested in writing?
Stevens: Not really.

Nathan: Was she a good correspondent?

Stevens: Yes, and wonderful, pithy little notes. Very brief and to the point.

Nathan: I wondered whether you had come across any letters from her.

Stevens: Once in a great while I had, but I don't know what I did with them. I haven't done a lot of re-filing lately. But they wouldn't mean anything in an account like this. They would all be, "See you on Monday," or some report on something outrageous going on. She was going to go to the fire and stop it, whatever it was. We were all very fond of her.

Nathan: How was she as a speaker? I mean, could she address an audience?

Stevens: No, she never was any good. She wasn't a particularly good speaker. I don't think she liked it. No, she was a doer.

Nathan: Suppose some board was obviously going to make a wrong decision. How would she operate to get a better decision?

Stevens: Quietly, she would lobby.

Nathan: She would lobby individually?

Stevens: Oh, yes, certainly. I don't think she worked in a head-on way--she could probably--but she was effective, too, I'm sure. There are a lot of people who know more about this than I do. We were great personal friends, but we didn't talk about Planned Parenthood or anything much, except the IPR [Institute of Pacific Relations]. She was distressed at the way that fell apart.

Clearances, and an Observation Post

Stevens: The headquarters were moved to New York, and it was taken over by three people. That bothered her. For years, people who had worked for the IPR had to be recleared when they went to Washington because the people who took it on in New York were very doubtful.
They felt this was a great chance to get next to the Russians, for example. Well, that wasn't really on in those days. There was an American-Russian Institute here briefly, and I don't know what happened to that. I don't think she was part of that. There were a few brave people who felt we ought to know more about the Soviets. I don't remember that she had anything to do with that.

There was one amusing angle. During the war her husband was away, but she was very involved in war work. The Soviet consulate was across the street from her home on Divisadero [in San Francisco], and so some of our people used one of her rooms for an observation post. You know, she accepted it as a necessity, but afterwards was very amusing about it. She said, "I doubt they ever learned a thing," but anyway, they had two men come there.

Nathan: Like spies in the basement?

Stevens: She just thought it was her job to make it easy for them. She would do anything she thought was constructive, which was, you know, quite a thing.

Nathan: Yes, when you consider the range.

Accomplishments

Nathan: Didn't she leave a lot of contributions?

Stevens: I don't know what was in her will. I never did ask.

Nathan: I was really thinking more of what she had accomplished.

Stevens: Well, yes, she left an example which was very good. A lot of things wouldn't be here if she hadn't done them, you know.

Nathan: Of course, that's cold comfort to her, but very useful.

Stevens: It was good for the community. She left a plus in the community. She left an army of friends, but there was very little that you could do for anyone who was sort of heartbroken and drinking. So I don't think there's much else I could tell you.

Nathan: Well, this is very helpful. I appreciate all of this. Sometimes when you start thinking about this, more comes to mind, and I would be delighted to come and talk to you again.
Stevens: Mr. [James D.] Hart [director of The Bancroft Library] must have known her. I don't know how well.

Nathan: I suspect that he did. I think so. I will ask.

Stevens: The whole Heller family were good friends, but Mrs. Heller's gone, and Clarie Heller is gone. To me, they were friends of mine. I miss them very much.

Nathan: Elinor Heller did a really fine oral history.

Stevens: I have that. It's two volumes. It's terrific; it's a marvelous social history of this city. She has a great memory. I haven't read Volume Two yet, which I'm saving for a rainy day. But I've loaned Volume One to a lawyer who is writing the Heller-Ehrman firm history, because it's full of folklore about them. She had a remarkable memory. I've enjoyed reading it.

Nathan: Well, I'm delighted to know that you do have some acquaintance with oral histories.

Stevens: Oh, sure. I know a lot of people who have done this and who have good recall.

Nathan: Of course, you're a very tempting person.

Stevens: I have no interest in the past, and I haven't kept any fragments of it. I'm really not interested. Anyway, there are people who did a lot more public good here than I ever did. Writing does not necessarily benefit the world.

Nathan: I would like to think it did.

Stevens: Oh, sorry. Sorry about that comment. [laughter]

Nathan: Well, it does its work, and sometimes there are consequences.

Stevens: Probably so, but a lot of my colleagues are in the East. They're not here at all.

Nathan: Are you still doing any writing?

Stevens: I'm still doing some editing. But anyhow, no one around here would even know what it's about, so there's no point in going into it. I don't think I can help you any more, but I have given you an awful lot of people to find. Allan Chickering is not young and is one of the early ones to get.
Nathan: All right, we'll try to reach Chickering. Thank you very much for your kind help.
Martha Alexander Gerbode Retrospective

Esther Fuller

MARtha GErboDe: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
in 1989

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INTERVIEW HISTORY--by Harriet Nathan

Esther (Mrs. Parmer) Fuller was interviewed by Ann Lage March 1, 1990, at her home in San Francisco. Her experiences as a professional and a volunteer led her to share many of Martha Gerbode's liberal and other community interests for years after they met in 1958. Martha recruited her for the board of the Encampment for Citizenship, and both supported the Cross-Cultural Family Center in the late 1960s and later the San Francisco Exploratorium, a major interest of Esther Fuller's. She recognized Martha Gerbode's quiet philanthropy and matter-of-fact, effective concern for her friends' well-being.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name ________________________________ Esther Fuller

Date of birth ________________________________ 9/11/18

Birthplace ________________________________ Washington, D.C.

Father's full name ________________________________ Elias Yanovsky

Occupation ________________________________ Research Chemist

Birthplace ________________________________ St. Petersburg, Russia

Mother's full name ________________________________ Alexandra Smirnova

Occupation ________________________________ Housewife

Birthplace ________________________________ Viatka, Russia

Your spouse ________________________________ W. Parker Fuller

Your children ________________________________ Constance, Mike Patterson, Constance

Pike Magee, Christopher Pike


Present community ________________________________ San Francisco

Education ________________________________ A.B. plus graduate work in Law + Theology

Occupation(s) ________________________________ Legal editorial work, Museum administration

Housewife

Areas of expertise

Other interests or activities ________________________________ Education, particularly

College accreditation, Paleolithic, Race relations, etc.

Organizations in which you are active ________________________________ Have been on many

Boards in the past. Presently on Fort Mason

Center Board
Lage: I'm speaking with Esther Fuller about Martha Gerbode. Can you give me just a little background to set us in time and place on yourself--when you came to her?

Encampment for Citizenship

Fuller: It ties in to how and when I met Martha Gerbode. I moved here in about 1958, and shortly after that Martha came to see me with a friend to interest me in a group she was very interested in, namely the Encampment for Citizenship. That was a group that dealt with young people about seventeen to twenty-three, I think, that was trying to teach democracy to a cross-cultural group of young people.

Lage: In the Bay Area?

Fuller: It was a national group, but they did some work at Berkeley. As I've warned you, my memory's poor, but Martha was on the board. I'm not sure how active a board member she was; I know she contributed to it financially. So they wanted me to go on the board. I was new in the community, and I did go on the board for, I can't remember, maybe a two-year term. It was a very worthwhile group; I don't know what's happened to it since. I did talk to one of the other board members and the person who had been the executive director, and she said that Martha was very generous and, of course, she was interested in intercultural groups. So that was my initial meeting Martha, except--

Lage: Could I ask you the name of the executive director?
Fuller: Yes, Miriam Levy. I thought I'd mention her in another connection that we'll get back to later.

Lage: Did she imply that Martha was more active as a financial supporter than as an active leader on the board?

Fuller: She did, but her memory's poor, too, so--

Lage: That's true of all of us.

Fuller: Well, you're too young for that. So that's how we met, and Martha and I became very good friends. Actually, I became very good friends with both of these women who called on me then, Martha and Miriam.

Lage: Did you and Martha go on to do other things together?

Fuller: We did a lot of things personally together. I can't really offhand think of any causes we were particularly in. I'm sure we were both interested in the same causes, because we were both interested in race relations and cross-culture, but I can't remember any of the boards we were on together. It's just that we became good personal friends.

**Concern for People**

Fuller: Now, the nice thing about Martha is that a lot of things she did, she didn't do out of duty; she did them because she really loved people. I mean, she had a genuine concern for people, and I think a lot of the things she did were really on a one-to-one basis. I mean, if she knew someone needed help, she might well do it, and she didn't care about publicity on it; she would just do it.

Now, in my own case, much later, when I was having a little trouble deciding where to live, she pitched right in and said, "Now, if I buy that place, would you rent it for a while?" Or "If I buy another place, would you rent it for a while?" And she finally did buy a lovely little house, saying, "If you want to rent it, pay whatever you can. When you can pay more, pay more. Do whatever you can do." That's the way she functioned.

Lage: It sounds as if she had a very nice manner about her. She didn't make you feel you uncomfortable.

Fuller: She was very outgoing, and she wasn't interested in credit for all of the wonderful things she did. Another personal instance: I
had a ninety-seven-year-old mother who had a small apartment. Well, when Martha first met her, she would have been, I guess, in her late eighties. She was all there in good shape but lonely. Martha loved old people--I mean, really genuinely cared about them. She would call and come over, take my mother for a ride, and want my mother to talk about her past. Even after Martha was ill, when her illness was in remission she would come over to see my mother, and it was very touching to me because it meant a lot to my mother, who didn't have many friends left.

Lage: But it was a genuine interest?

Fuller: A genuine friendship between them, and affection, and it was really very nice.

Lage: Did Martha talk about her own mother or father? Had they passed on by this time? I suppose so.

Fuller: They were both dead at the time, I think. She didn't talk much about her childhood with me, but I'm sure that her parents had both died by the time I met Martha.

Lage: Was she still involved in Planned Parenthood? We understand that she was one of the sort of founders of it, way back in the thirties when it was kind of a controversial thing to be involved in.

Fuller: That could well be. I was on the Planned Parenthood board myself here later, and I think at that time she was not on it, but I would imagine it would have been one of her interests. She had so many interests; I'm sure she contributed financially to any number of "good causes."

I think she really regarded her wealth in stewardship and used it well. I think she was embarrassed by her wealth, and I think there were times when she was sorry she was sort of a poor little rich girl. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't say she did extravagant things for herself.

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Fuller: I know one thing she did, however, and we had a lot of fun with it; she did buy a houseboat in Sausalito. She was interested in real estate also and was very good at it.

Lage: In kind of a business way?

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Lage: In kind of a business way?
Fuller:  She was a good businesswoman about it, that's true, but she did it for others. Sometimes she'd see a house that she thought ought to be preserved. I don't know whether she'd get the historical landmark preservation status or not, but she would sometimes see a place, and she'd just send a real estate person to the door and ask if the owners would be at all interested in selling, whether the house was on the market or not. Of course, Frank was pretty good on real estate, too. They'd often buy things at estate sales, as I recall. Yes, she was a good businesswoman, too, but she did good things with her ability.

Lage:  Was her interest, then, in fixing it up and then reselling? Was that the kind of thing she did?

Fuller:  No. Well, she actually bought houses that she later, I think, gave to her children, one to each child. I mean, the children could tell you more about it than I could, but some of them were to simply preserve the buildings as they were, and it was a genuine interest.

Lage:  Did she talk about her own children and how important a part of her life they were?

Fuller:  Oh, I think they were a very important part of her life, and I think the loss of the son was a very distressing thing, as it would be to any family. Yes, she was very concerned about her children, and I think that her husband was busy with his career so that she had more time, perhaps, for the children. I really don't want to get into anything too personal about her life, because I don't think that's my role here.

Lage:  It's really not exactly what we're after. The purpose, as I think I mentioned to you, is a sort of a brief biography for the foundation. We want the personal to the extent that it reflects on her philanthropic interests.

Fuller:  Right. Well, now, on her real estate business, as I say, she bought this little houseboat over in Sausalito, and we really had fun on that. I'd go over with her quite often. It was a stationary houseboat. We would work on it; I can remember us varnishing the rails and fixing it up with other friends. I had a party there occasionally, and she would have parties there, and it was a source of great enjoyment for Martha and for her friends. She liked the informality of it.

Lage:  Well, that's fun.

In the civil rights area, I'm interested when I think back about what was going on in civil rights during this period when
you were close to her. I wonder if the kind of Black power militancy was troubling. How did she take that kind of change?

Fuller: I can't remember specific conversations with her, but knowing Martha, I would just assume that she would have wanted equal representation for Blacks in every way. We really shared these views on civil rights and equal opportunities, education, housing, and I would think she would have been--. But again, that's jumping at conclusions.

Lage: I guess it's hard to recapture those conversations.

Fuller: It's hard to recapture the conversations, and then later on, of course, a lot of the occasions were social with other people present. We didn't have a whole lot of alone time. Actually, my mother saw her alone more than I did. Martha would go over there, and they'd visit for long, long periods.

Lage: What kind of people did she socialize with?

Fuller: You know, it varied according to her personal situation. I've been over there when there were a lot of doctors, and other times when there were old friends. International conventions or conferences would be here in town, and she would entertain. I think she had a very mixed group of friends.

Lage: Did she enjoy the hostessing role?

Fuller: I don't know whether she did or not. She was a good hostess, and she did have good help. I know that she enjoyed her simple little luncheons that she'd have over at the houseboat a great deal. So, in a sense, she had her more formal life, and then she had her more informal life.

I think the remarkable thing about her, though, to get back to this--a lot of people do good works because they think they should; you know, we ought to go see people who are sick or people in need. Now, Martha really loved them; she really gave of herself cheerfully.

I will add one more thing to illustrate the way she functioned. She called me from abroad; she said, "If I buy that particular house, will you rent it?" She hadn't even seen the inside of it. I went to see it, and then when I talked to her I said, "Martha, I think you can't lose by buying it. I'm not going to guarantee renting it or living in it, but," I said, "it's just a lovely old house." It had come around the Horn; it was a pre-fab. She bought it, and I did live in it. When she was dying, I think I saw her several times after she was back home from the
hospital, and she told me, knowing that I was going to remarry shortly, "Esther, I want you to know that even though I'm going to leave the house to Penny, you can live in it as long as you want." That was all prearranged, which I was thought was a remarkable thing.

Lage: Sort of taking care of business and friends.

Fuller: Yes, taking care of things that she felt she wanted to take care of. Now, that ties into this business that my friend Miriam Levy says is the last thing she did. Again, it's second-hand with me, and you might want to talk to Miriam.

Lage: The children are involved. I'm not the lead person on this.

Fuller: All right. Well, what I heard was that one of the last things she did was to buy an old Victorian, and I'm not even sure where--in the Western Addition, I think. That must be what Miriam told me. What it was--and I don't even know if it's still in existence--was the first Cross-Cultural Family Center, sort of a day care center, in that area. Miriam tells me that Martha arranged to give it as one of the last things she did, and that Philip carried through on seeing that it was done.

Lage: Do you know, was Miriam involved in other things with Martha?

Fuller: I think they were friends.

I think Miriam's worth talking to, definitely, and I think they became fairly good friends. Again, Miriam was executive director of Encampment at that time. That is probably the way they met, too, because it seems to me that Miriam came to town at about that same time. She'll have to tell you that, because I'm just a little hazy on it.

Martha as a Realist

Fuller: Now, I'm trying to think if there's anything else. Oh, I think of one interesting thing, though it's perhaps not the sort of thing you want. When Martha first became ill, she was the one who said, "You know, the doctors are telling me it's nothing. They're saying that it's just some little thing that I can't swallow too well, and it'll disappear." I've forgotten whether they were minimizing it. You know, with her, I can't believe anybody would have minimized something deliberately, and she was the one who told me. She said, "You know, I knew it was something much more
serious." It was cancer of the esophagus, as I recall, and she said, "I really knew that it was something like that." She was a doctor's wife; she knew a lot about it. But anyway, I thought that was interesting, that she had evidently diagnosed it, according to her, long before any doctors did.

Lage: Sounds like she looked at things pretty clearly.

Fuller: She was a realist.

Making Soup at Sugar Bowl

Fuller: I'm trying to think of other aspects of our friendship. I went to Sugar Bowl with them several times, had a fine time. She didn't ski and I didn't ski, but we had a great time. It's funny; up there, she always had a soup pan on the stove, and she was a great one for making these marvelous concoctions of anything left over. All the leftover foods would go into this soup she would concoct. Really, some of it was very good, so she had a reputation for her soups, and she was very pleased with it, because she wasn't a cook, particularly.

Lage: Well, she probably didn't have to do a lot of actual cooking.

Fuller: No, she never did. But she did make that soup in Sugar Bowl regularly.

Lage: Did she cook over at the houseboat?

Fuller: I think at the houseboat, she probably brought things from home. Eloise, her cook at home, would fix them, and she'd bring them over. I can't really remember, but I'm pretty sure that's what would have happened. But Martha was willing to try anything.

Lage: Huey Johnson described her as somebody who was not interested in helping fund things that other people would fund. She wanted something that you couldn't get the ordinary person to fund. She wanted to be on sort of a cutting edge.

Fuller: That could well be.
Supporting the Exploratorium

Fuller: As a matter of fact, you have reminded me of another thing which is really quite important. Because I was working as an assistant to Frank Oppenheimer, who started the Exploratorium in 1969, which is this very interesting hands-on museum over at the Palace of Fine Arts. I was with him before the museum opened, and I stayed for a couple of years after it opened. I got Martha and Frank together at dinner, I think at that little house of hers, and they became friends also. She was a tremendous support for the Exploratorium, as was Frank [Gerbode] and the Gerbode Foundation. But it was Martha initially who met Frank [Oppenheimer] and was very taken with him.

Lage: That's a nice insight that I didn't have. I think the Exploratorium's wonderful.

Fuller: It is. It's a great place. Frank and she hit it off at dinner, and she gave it a great deal of support, was very helpful in the initial stages. And, of course, that was a pilot thing, so when you say she liked new projects, that probably is right; because Encampment was probably just starting out here, although I can't say for sure when Encampment started.

Lage: Was the Exploratorium experience enjoyable for you--that period of time when you worked with Frank Oppenheimer?

Fuller: Oh, I thoroughly enjoyed it, although when I persuaded my second husband to go on the board and later to become chairmen, then I quit my job. [laughter]

Impressions of Martha

Lage: Did Martha have particularly strong religious beliefs or commitments?

Fuller: I'm just trying to think whether she had any connections with that Fellowship Church or not. I don't know.

Lage: You don't know if she belonged to a particular church?

Fuller: She certainly was not active in any church that I knew about. She might have given some support. I'm not sure.

Lage: She didn't express a lot of religious sentiments in her talking about doing good?
Fuller: We must have talked about it, but I don't know what her motivation was; I don't know what her upbringing was, religiously. I think Frank had been raised a Roman Catholic, but I don't think any of them were particularly active church-goers. You'll have to get that from the children. It's funny, because I'd say we would have discussed it, but--

Lage: It didn't leave an impact?

Fuller: No. I don't think any of them were particularly active.

Lage: How about political issues? Was that something that would come up in your discussions? Was she a member of one party or the other?

Fuller: I would assume that we were both at the liberal end of most political issues. But again, you know, it's funny; my memory really is shot. There are several reasons for it, but I don't have to go into it now. But I can't remember.

Lage: It sounds like she was politically aware, keeping up on the issues of the day.

Fuller: Very. She was certainly more liberal than her husband, but again I can't comment on that. You'll have to get that from the children; I just can't remember. I mean, we obviously would have talked about personal things and all these things, but I just can't remember any. Her very personal side I don't think should be commented on anyway, and the things which would be good material, I can't remember.

Lage: Can you think of other people we might contact? I wish Frank Oppenheimer were still with us; he would have been a good source.

Fuller: Yes, he would have been.

Lage: Miriam Levy?

Fuller: Yes, Miriam. It's funny, I called her to ask her about Encampment, and she couldn't remember much more than I could. Georgiana Stevens is probably your best source.

Lage: Right. My colleague did interview her and got a lot of nice things.

Fuller: She'd be extremely helpful, but some of the others, I think, have died.

Lage: Well, is there anything else you can think of that we should have discussed?
Fuller: There really isn't, I'm sorry to say. If I do think of anything, I'll simply call you. I'm certainly glad the Exploratorium came up.

Lage: What was the time period when you were working with it, and when she got involved in it?

Fuller: It must have been around '68, '69, '70.

Lage: Did she talk about environmental issues with you?

Fuller: Of course she would have been interested in environmental things.

Lage: Because she did some nice things in Marin. The Gerbode Preserve.

Fuller: She would have been terribly interested in them, but I can't remember any specifics.

Lage: I know she did a lot in Hawaii, but again I wouldn't expect you to be involved in that.

Fuller: Well, yes, I thought she was the one who was responsible for that--what was it called, the level that airplanes could fly over? The level of the protection of air over the homes in Hawaii--it seems to me Martha was very active in that. What was it called?

Lage: Something about airspace.

Fuller: Yes. I'd forgotten that. Of course, I wasn't involved, but she mentioned it, and I knew about it. I knew she'd been very active in that.

Lage: She sounds like a really intriguing person.

Fuller: She was. Oddly enough, I don't even have any good pictures of her. It's amazing. But she was a remarkable woman and accomplished a great deal. She really loved people.

But I really don't have anything else that I can think of to say.

Lage: When you say she really loved people, did you ever see her relating to people of a completely different social background and that sort of thing? Was that something she was comfortable with?

Fuller: Oh, I think she would have been. I'm just wondering if she was on the--I can't remember whether she was on the Hunters Point Boys Club board. I can't remember. This could be checked out easily. I would assume that she could have related to anybody and at any
level of society. I really admired her. I really miss her; there is no one around who is quite like Martha.

Lage: Well, that's a nice way to end, I think.

Fuller: Yes.
Maryanna Shaw

FAMILY ANTECEDENTS AND INTERESTS IN HAWAII

An Interview Conducted by
Harriet Nathan
in 1991
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INTERVIEW HISTORY--by Harriet Nathan

Maryanna Shaw (Stockholm) was interviewed in Berkeley, February 12, 1991. As Martha Gerbode's daughter and board chair of the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, she was a sympathetic and knowledgeable observer of her family's life and history in the Bay Area and in Hawaii. She saw how Martha took part in the Save Diamond Head effort and other civic issues, and understood the relationships with family and friends. Maryanna and her mother discussed the family's interests and concerns in the firm of Alexander and Baldwin; and Maryanna subsequently became the first woman member of the firm's board.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name: Maryanna Gerbode Stockholm

Date of birth: 5-27-38 Birthplace: San Francisco, California

Father's full name: Frank Leven Albert Gerbode

Occupation: Cardio Vascular Surgeon Birthplace: Sacramento, California

Mother's full name: Martha Barker Alexander

Occupation: Housewife Birthplace: Oakland, California

Your spouse: Charles Mitchell Stockholm

Occupation: Birthplace: San Francisco, California

Your children: Joseph Alexander Shaw, Lionel Albert Shaw, Sarah Marley Hunte

Where did you grow up? San Francisco, California

Present community: San Francisco, California

Education: B.A. Stanford University 1960

Occupation(s): Administrator - Housewife

Areas of expertise: See attached resume

Other interests or activities: See attached resume

Organizations in which you are active: See attached resume
NAME: Maryanna Gerbode Stockholm

ADDRESS: 2550 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

EDUCATION:
- Stanford University
- University of San Francisco
- The Wharton School
  (University of Pennsylvania)

EMPLOYMENT: Private Investor

DIRECTORSHIPS:
- Sugar Bowl Corporation (1991 - Present)
  Norden, California
- Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. (Matson) (1980 - Present)
  Honolulu, Hawaii
- World Print Council (1978 - 1981)
  San Francisco
- World Affairs Council (1976 - 1979)
  San Francisco
- Coleman Youth Services (A San Francisco Foundation Trust) (1976 - 1978)
  San Francisco
- Alexander Properties Company (1972 - 1980)
  San Francisco

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS:
- Trustee, California Pacific Medical Center Foundation (1991 - Present)
  San Francisco
  Kauai, Hawaii
- President, Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation (1985 - Present)
  San Francisco
- Trustee, Pacific Presbyterian Medical Center (1984 - 1991)
  San Francisco
- Regent, University of the Pacific (1983 - 1986)
  Stockton
- President, Frank L. A. Gerbode Medical Research Foundation (1980 - 1986)
  San Francisco
- Vice Chair, San Francisco Art Institute (1977 - 1978)
  San Francisco
- Trustee, San Francisco, Art Institute (1973 - 1978)
  San Francisco
- Vice President, Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation (1967 - 1984)
  San Francisco

VOLUNTEER AFFILIATIONS:
- Women and Foundations/Corporate Philanthropy (New York City)
- Community Service Society - Speakers Bureau (New York City)
- San Francisco Education Fund (San Francisco)
- Archives of American Art (San Francisco)

HONORS:
- British Order of St. John of Jerusalem (London)
I FAMILY PROPERTIES

[Interview 1: February 12, 1991] ##

Nathan: This list has some of the things we're going to talk about today. It has to do with details about Hawaii, about some of Martha Gerbode's interests in Hawaii, some of the places that I'd like very much to understand about and to look at. Maybe we can start with the first one if you like.

Diamond Head, Honolulu

Shaw: All right. [reading] "Can you identify this address--Lanihau?" [3101 Diamond Head Road, Honolulu, Hawaii]

Nathan: Is Lanihau one word or two?

Shaw: Lanihau is one word, and the address is correct. The house belonged to my grandfather, Wallace Alexander, and his wife, Mary. It was built around the 1920s by Charles Dickey. He was a prominent architect in those days.

There was a white clapboard house next door, which was torn down at a certain point in time. I've forgotten when, but it was a present to my parents when they got married. A few years later it was torn down and Haumalu was built in its place [2831 Coconut Avenue].

Nathan: Do these names have a meaning and translation?
Shaw: The first one [Lanihau] means "beautiful hau tree" and the second one means "in the shade of the hau tree."

Nathan: Could I go back just a moment to Lanihau? During World War II, were you aware that apparently other people were living in Lanihau?

Shaw: Yes. I believe it was used for R and R purposes, for the naval officers. An admiral in residence put a plaque on the outdoor fireplace as to the fact that he had lived there during the war, an amusing souvenir. The house was sold, as you know, about five years ago. It was owned by the Gerbode Foundation after Mother's death.

Nathan: Yes. And then Haumalu?

Shaw: And Haumalu I think also was used during wartime the same way Lanihau was, for naval officers. It later burned to the ground. There was a rumor that someone wanted to burn his tax returns because a little fire started in a wastepaper basket. My parents were able to recover the plans, however, and rebuilt it just exactly as it was before. After the house was completely reconstructed it was rented out to such movie stars as Hopalong Cassidy, [laughter] and Esther Williams, who caused a great stir on Diamond Head.

Nathan: Did she wear a bathing suit?

Shaw: I have no idea, but I heard-- [laughter]. Kirk Douglas used to use the house every summer, as well as André Kostelanetz, to name a few. The problem with having people from Hollywood in property like that was all the neighbors were a little upset at the parking, the parties [laughter], and the loud noises at night.

Nathan: Was that a rather sedate social group?

Shaw: Yes, I would say, quite. Very concerned about their area and environment.

Nathan: Of course. So Haumalu was rebuilt. Now Lanihau--.

Shaw: Lanihau remained intact, there was no fire there.

Nathan: And does it exist to this day?

Shaw: It does.
Nathan: As we go along to other things, if there's something else you'd like to talk about, there's nothing about this list that has priority.

Shaw: As we said, the architect's name is Charles Dickey. Penny did some research about Lanihau when she started to formulate plans to duplicate the home on Maui. She is in the process of building a house which is supposed to be reminiscent of Lanihau.

**Chinn Ho's Plans, Resistance, and the Fagan House**

Nathan: I see.

I'm not sure where this next question arose, but in 1944 during wartime there was a Chinese man who was interested in doing some property development. Then Chinn Ho came along later, I would presume.

Shaw: Well, I can tell you the later story. A Chinese gentleman in the development business decided he wanted to acquire all of the properties in Diamond Head, and then tear them all down and build a large high-rise development. Therefore there'd be no open space and instead there would be wall-to-wall buildings. Mother knew that on either side of the Fagan house, these houses had already been bought.

Nathan: By him?

Shaw: Yes; so he had bought up four or five properties. But the Fagan house was an important strategic house to own so that he could have a contiguous development. She didn't have any intention of using the Fagan house except to prevent him from furthering his cause. So she purchased the house and at a later date she found a buyer for it. She sold it for the same price to the Scripps family. She did not want to take a profit on it because she said that the cause was for conservation and not for her to make a profit on a deal.

Nathan: Was this Fagan property near Lanihau?

Shaw: Yes.

Nathan: About how far?

Shaw: Just a few blocks up the road.
Nathan: There was some reference to her retaining the air rights.

Shaw: I have a letter about that. We researched the air rights question.

Nathan: Were you involved in that, too?

Shaw: Well, I knew that she was interested in saving it in some way. Huey Johnson was a friend of hers at the time so Huey suggested--this was a new idea--donating air rights to conservation, open space nonprofits. She supposedly donated the air rights to Nature Conservancy, but there's nothing in writing that shows that this happened. The letters that I've seen indicate correspondence in regard to air rights, but we have not come across any legal document as to this action.

I think she was formulating a plan with Huey. Perhaps she died before she was able to complete the agreement officially but by the time she died, she'd given a portion of Lanihau to the Foundation [Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation]; Lanihau had been partially divested at that time.

Nathan: Huey Johnson has talked to us, but I don't yet know how much he had to say about air rights.

I also have the name of Alice Spalding Bowen.

Shaw: I used to go and visit her. When I first went on the A and B [Alexander and Baldwin] board in 1980, I would go and visit with her, hear the local gossip, and find out what people were concerned about up on the hill at Makalei Place. She was ill at the time and it was difficult for her to see people. She's always been a very exceptional person in terms of her generosity and intelligence, and being a successful activist in her time.

Nathan: Do you happen to know how your mother and she got together? Was it in connection with the Save Diamond Head effort?

Shaw: I think she came down to see Mother and knew that Mother had a large piece of property and told her about what Chinn Ho was doing. They corresponded by mail and then when my mother would go down to Honolulu, she'd visit with Alice. Of course, probably the relatives told her, too, but they really didn't want to get involved, except for Joe [Cooke]. Joe went and listened and talked with Mother about the situation. I think that she resented the fact that her closest cousins did not want to be involved.

Nathan: This is Martha Gerbode's family?
Shaw: Yes. None were interested in the Diamond Head issue. That separated them out emotionally. They began to think she was a bit too radical.

Nathan: Did they also have property at Diamond Head, the cousins?

Shaw: Not in her neighborhood of Diamond Head, per se.

Nathan: Did you have the feeling that before your mother took these actions around Diamond Head, there was much of a conservationist group or interest in preventing development?

Shaw: I think the Makalei Place group, the group of people who lived above, on the slopes of Diamond Head, were very concerned because their views would be impaired, and from an economic and environmental standpoint they would have a great deal to be concerned about. Also the roads were narrow and parking was sparse. The innate value of their properties probably would have diminished substantially. Now being on the slopes of Diamond Head you'd think about how beautiful it is and you wouldn't want it to change, so the element of conservation was important.

Nathan: This is a very interesting part, so if anything more comes to your mind we can come back to it.

Shaw: Well, the movement to save Diamond Head kind of snowballed, because Chinn Ho was an active developer. He owned several hotels, and was a very large landowner. He was well regarded in the community, however, as being a very successful businessman.

Nathan: Had your mother met him or gotten to know him before this development issue arose?

Shaw: I don't think so. I think she met him during the issue. She asked him to come to the house, and they had a talk.

Nathan: Do you know what they talked about?

Shaw: Unfortunately I wasn't there. I don't think it lasted very long. She probably asked him what his intentions were. [laughter]

Nathan: The whole thing is kind of marvelous.

Shaw: She was scared to death when she actually bought the Fagan property. She said, "Maryanna, what am I going to do with this huge house?" [laughter] It was in disrepair.

Today the Fagan house has been restored by a young man in his fifties to its original design. He was very concerned about its
innate beauty, the way it should have been or should look because it also is a house that was a classic representation of Dickey, and the era. I'm sure part of Mother's concern was preserving the beautiful Dickey house, but conservation was her main thrust.

**Brown Gables in Piedmont**

Nathan: There was a reference to three old houses in Honolulu that your parents visited after her mother, Mary Alexander, moved to an apartment in San Francisco. You mention two houses; was there a third house in Honolulu? Does that ring any bell with you?

Shaw: No, not that I know of. And what were you saying about my grandmother moving to an apartment?

Nathan: I read that Mary Alexander moved to an apartment in San Francisco at some point, I guess, after she had sold the Piedmont house.

Shaw: Do you know what she did with the Piedmont house?

Nathan: No. What happened?

Shaw: It was a mansion called "Brown Gables" with extensive gardens. According to Mother, my grandmother didn't want anybody else to live in it after Grandfather died. So she said, "I'm tearing the house down and if anyone wants the carriage house they can have it." It was subdivided. She later found a place in Orinda.
II HONOLULU BACKGROUND

Hawaiian Mission Children's Society

Nathan: Here's another one: the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society. How did that work? Can people put in the names of family members to become members of the society? There was a note that the Gerbodes made Alec a member at the age of seven months, and that Mary Alexander made Frank Gerbode a member after he married Martha. Does any of this sound familiar? Why would it be important to be a member?

Shaw: Well, it's very easy to become a member if one is related to a missionary family. [laughter] There are mission houses preserved in Honolulu, and the mission church there is called Kawaihao Church. It is supposed to be the oldest mission church in Hawaii. It's a big stone church with a very pretty graveyard in the back. The mission houses are behind it. At least one, maybe two mission houses are just across the street, behind the church.

Nathan: Have you ever done work with that group or been interested in it personally?

Shaw: Somebody sent a trunkful of letters to the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society at the time when Mother was rewriting the family tree, which was I think in 1956. I had some spare time, so I decided to get a "nonprofit" job. I worked for a while there sorting written materials.

Nathan: What did you learn from going through these trunkfuls?

Shaw: Well, it was fascinating. There were all kinds of stories about people coming around the Horn and what the conditions were like then, what the rules were like, how you were to obey them. The history of it was significant and religion played a key role. The mission library was pretty crowded when I saw it in 1956.
Nathan: Do you find yourself attracted by family history in Hawaii? The Hawaiian part of it?

Shaw: Well, I enjoyed it. I have enjoyed my time down there. It was a very big treat to go to Hawaii as a young person. We had happy memories there.

And another thing that occurs is the difference in culture between Hawaii and San Francisco. One had much more of a feeling of the Oriental culture. The servants were Japanese, also the foods they cooked. One stepped into a new world without going very far.

**World War II and the Japanese Relocation**

Nathan: How did you feel the difference?

Shaw: Everybody knew the Japanese were interned during the war. You know about the book that the California Historical Society put out about the relocation, *Executive Order 9066*. This book was written about what happened to the American Japanese during the war and Mother funded it.

Nathan: So it was really capturing the history of that event that your mother was interested in?

Shaw: Yes.

Nathan: Did she express a view at that time about the internment of the Japanese?

Shaw: Well, she pointed out where the barbed wire fences were, where they were held before they were sent out to camps. I remember what one area looked like. I don't remember seeing people there at that time.

Nathan: Very interesting. Did she mention whether she thought that was a good idea or not?

Shaw: Oh, of course she didn't like that at all. The servants were Japanese, and I think she managed to convince the local gendarmes that they were okay.

Nathan: Did they have to go?

Shaw: I don't think they did.
Nathan: No bad overt actions were ever ascribed to them. Apparently there were no spy activities found.

Shaw: I have never heard of any. And then of course the Japanese had the famous unit that went to Italy.

Nathan: Right, the Purple Heart Brigade.

Did you know your grandfather?

Shaw: No, I didn't, unfortunately.

Nathan: And your grandmother, did you know her?

Shaw: Oh, yes. She was a real character, a very lively person, well-dressed. Very definite in her opinions.

Nathan: I read somewhere that she was a midwife. Is that correct? That she actually did participate in medical care?

Shaw: I have no idea about that. She was with the Red Cross, and I think she was president of the Red Cross chapter in the East Bay.

Nathan: This is Mary--

Shaw: Mary Barker Alexander. I thought she brought doughnuts and coffee to the troops. I could of course be mistaken.
III ALEXANDER AND BALDWIN

Relationship with Matson Navigation Company

Nathan: This is a question about the connection between the Matson Navigation Company and Alexander and Baldwin. William Roth talked with me, and indicated that Alexander and Baldwin put money into that navigation company when it was started. In 1931 was Matson Navigation Company owned by Alexander and Baldwin?

Shaw: Alexander and Baldwin acquired a minority interest in Matson in 1909. On October 16, 1964, Alexander and Baldwin obtained a controlling interest in Matson of 93.64 percent. Finally in 1969 Matson became a wholly owned subsidiary. But Alexander and Baldwin did purchase land from Matson. They owned extensive properties on the island of Maui.

Nathan: I thought it an interesting connection that Mary Alexander christened the new liner Mariposa with a bottle of seawater.

Shaw: I did not know that.

Nathan: Maybe it was symbolic of the Pacific Rim, who knows?

[tape interruption]

Leadership, and the Alexander and Baldwin Board (1960s)

Nathan: In these references to the activities of Alexander and Baldwin, of course, you indicate an important development somewhat later. I wondered whether your mother followed closely the activities of Alexander and Baldwin? Did she take an informed interest in their positions?
Shaw: She did do that, especially in the sixties.

Nathan: Obviously, she had some interest, but why did she become more active?

Shaw: She felt the leadership was weak. She was worried about the possibility of the company not doing well, and she had a stake in Alexander and Baldwin.

She spoke to a cousin who was on the board at the time and tried to convince him that they should have better leadership and that management wasn't doing a good job. Perhaps it was the beginning of paid management being non-family members. She found it more difficult to deal with them than with members of the family.

[phone interruption]

Nathan: Did her concern and interest in the operation of Alexander and Baldwin spark your interest in eventually getting into it yourself? Of course you were pretty young at that time. Were you in college then?

Shaw: Yes, I believe so. I was, for some reason, the member of the family who always seemed to be around when something was happening. [laughter] It was fun for me, it was interesting.

Nathan: What kinds of things would happen when you were there?

Shaw: Well, she liked to bring up controversies and debate them with people, especially when she felt strongly about some matter.

For instance, I remember a conversation in the library with my cousin about the state of Alexander and Baldwin and how Mother was so angry that things were not going well with the company. I agreed with her. I think he felt that it wasn't her business to get involved in the company's affairs. Although she didn't have any business training, she could throw her weight around in terms of her ownership and that became quite a threat. She needed to get legal advice on how to do it.

Nathan: Like a stockholder's position?

Shaw: Yes. She felt that she, having looked into it a little bit, wanted to have better representation since she really didn't trust some of the family members anymore. She sort of took over the reins herself and decided she wanted to choose a person for the board. She forced the board to take on one young person whom she knew.
Nathan: Was that Clarisse Stockholm's son?

Shaw: It was another fellow, the son of a good friend. She had a lot of confidence in him and thought it would be refreshing for the board to have his input.

Nathan: Was the board expanded?

Shaw: Perhaps it was expanded. Before that time it was comprised of people mostly related to family. Mother was seriously disturbed about the chairman. However, by the time she got really involved she had become ill. She was ready to have a war with her relatives, unfortunately.

Nathan: This was in a legal procedure?

Shaw: She initiated a proxy fight. The board did not want negative publicity, so it said, "Well okay, Martha, we'll put somebody on." She felt as though I had an interest in the Alexander and Baldwin business, and she shared more with me. I was interested in history, particularly in the sociological aspects of how people get along and how groups function. But I think it came together when she started sharing more information and trusting me more because I was at home. She had access to me, more than to my brother Frank. Penny and Philip were still really too young.
IV MARTHA GERBODE'S STYLE AND METHODS

Issues of Communication

Nathan: How did your mother get her ideas across?

Shaw: She didn't mind what people thought, and she felt she was correct. But she also didn't like having to listen to people for very long. She seemingly felt she must have an opinion, and was most anxious to put it across. She didn't like not getting her way in a lot of instances.

Nathan: Was she willing to discuss or debate?

Shaw: Well, usually she would arrive at an opinion and then she'd push it. If it were not accepted, there would be a discussion or debate. It wasn't a good give and take. She loved to talk with people on the subject of nonprofits. She liked to help people and charitable causes. She wanted to do it in an individual way. If she had an idea, she wanted to do it her way, which in those days was a lot easier to accomplish because there weren't too many people willing to take risks and speak their minds.

She was financially well enough endowed to substantiate a threat or support an interest. Now today one must have corporate backing. Today my sense is that teamwork is much more important in accomplishing goals. She was an individualist, entrepreneurial in her method.

She might even be described as a loner when it came to achieving her goals. She had many friends, good friends and family who admired and loved her honesty and humanism. You could count on her. She was not arrogant. People of her age who remember her would say she was an outstanding individual in many different ways, and I would too.
Nathan: Do you have any feelings that the era changed? As you were saying earlier it was no longer a handful of powerful people who would just talk with each other and get things organized. The playing field got so much more crowded. When you saw the need to keep in touch with the family, the cousins, I gather you worked at a different level.

Shaw: Yes, I have.

##

Nathan: I was wondering whether you felt that your mother was an introspective sort of person? Would she examine her behavior?

Shaw: I couldn't picture her doing that. However, she did like to write, and so she took a correspondence course. She enjoyed writing letters, and that was something that was fun for her to do as a recreation. What came out of her writing stories was amazing and imaginative. That was sort of an artistic bent she had.

She didn't have, somehow, the capability to apply herself to new fronts as far as understanding group situations. She didn't want or need to tolerate it, really. It was something that she didn't feel was important enough. A lot of elements go into why or how somebody develops a capability. I think we have scratched the surface on that.

But she was capable of doing things she felt were important for society at large. She had a strong will. She could do it because of her financial capability. And she could do it because people respected the fact that she was an independent person. She did take it personally if you didn't agree with her. It seemed as if everything in life was an issue. It was the way her mind worked.

Nathan: She couldn't let something just pass by?

Shaw: No, not really. She was cause- or issue-conscious, not just for charitable causes, for most anything.

Nathan: It would be interesting to know what was in her experience--say near the end of her Stanford years--what it was that shaped her view?

Shaw: I have not answered that question in my mind. She had idiosyncrasies; she had a camel hair coat and she insisted on wearing it for years. It was almost in rags before she threw it away. She didn't wish to own a large car. Maybe she was embarrassed, because as my father became more successful he became
more economically visible. It seems as though the more he got that way, the more she took the opposite direction.

I never felt as though that reflected very good communication.

**Alec's Death and Two Adoptions**

Shaw: She of course experienced great sadness when my brother Alec died. That event produced complete and total denial. His death was never discussed in the family. One month later two children came to live with us. They had been in several foster homes.

Nathan: How old were they?

Shaw: They were four and six. Mother and Dad knew the British Consul General and his wife, who gave them the information on the children.

Nathan: Were the children related?

Shaw: Yes, they were brother and sister.

Nathan: And so it was through the British Consul General--?

Shaw: Yes. They said that the children had residency here, and the grandparents wanted to have them adopted because they couldn't take care of them. While Mother was still devastated by the loss of Alec, they took in the two children, who were somewhat nonconforming.

Nathan: Just so I have the dates right, your brother Alec died in '53 and then the children arrived a month after his death?

Shaw: Yes. They lived with us for six months, and then my parents decided to adopt them. There was no time to absorb the fact that a family member was gone.

Nathan: You felt that your father was instrumental in this?

Shaw: I believe so. We never talked through the events of Alec's death. But the two children lightened up the atmosphere, I suppose.
V MORE ON HAWAII

Nathan: Shall we talk about Papaa, the ranch on Kauai where an estate was for sale? Was that the original family holdings on Kauai where they first established themselves?

Martha's Missionary Great-Grandfather

Shaw: The company grew sugar cane on Kauai. Mother's great-grandfather, Samuel Alexander's father, was a missionary who at one point spent some time at Hanalei. He built a mission house there which still stands. Hanalei was a place where missionaries rotated through. But no, the family first settled in Honolulu. Samuel Alexander was a businessman and one of the founders of A and B; the headquarters were in Honolulu. They at some point lived on Maui as well as Kauai.

Papaa Ranch, Kauai (1950s)

Nathan: The Kauai Ranch had a building that your father reconstructed?

Shaw: Papaa Ranch is 172 acres of ranchland, and located approximately halfway between Lihue and Hanalei on beachfront property. My mother wanted to have a place in Hawaii that reminded her of Kipukai, which belonged to Jack Waterhouse. Jack was one of my mother's favorite cousins, a leading businessman in Honolulu. He owned a two thousand acre ranch where he ran cattle and where his friends and relatives visited. Mother thought it would be nice to have a little hideaway, a much smaller version of Kipukai Ranch.
Much property on that island was used for raising cattle. You see the little town of Kipu before you get to Kipukai down a cliff on the other side. A large acreage by the area was owned by the Rice family. In any event, Jack knew the Rices quite well. And they said, "We have this little piece of property in the district of Kauaihau, and Martha might be interested in it." It was purchased by her in 1956.

Nathan: How wonderful.

Shaw: She was very excited. A house she knew on Maui was replicated at Papaa Ranch. The family would go there summers and my father enjoyed painting there.

Nathan: So this is the place that you went too.

Shaw: It is charming in a way. I think Mother liked to get away and be by herself, with Dad, or have some place for the children to romp.

Nathan: Just to be sure I have it straight, on what island is Kipukai?

Shaw: That's on the island of Kauai. As you fly to Lihue, you can see the Kipukai ranchlands on the left side. You see beaches and high cliffs that go all the way around it.

Nathan: Right.

Now I have a few questions about the Gerbode Foundation. Do I understand correctly that Alec's trust was made over to the Foundation?

Shaw: At Alec's death, a family trust in his name was converted to a 501(c)3 private foundation, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation.

Nathan: And then a large portion of Martha Gerbode's estate, later, also went to the support of the Foundation?

Shaw: Yes, that is correct.

Nathan: Would that mean the Diamond Head property?

Shaw: Yes. The remainder of the Diamond Head property; she had already given a fifth of it to the Foundation before her death.

Nathan: Thank you. That is clear.
More on Haumalu and Lanihau

Nathan: Huey Johnson--this is back to the Diamond Head area--described the property as a strip of land between the road and the shoreline, where Martha Gerbode held the key parcel that would be her own holding originally before she bought the Fagan property. In other words, she had a property there already?

Shaw: She inherited the property from her mother.

Nathan: She inherited--

Shaw: Lanihau and Haumalu.

Nathan: These are both on Diamond Head.

Shaw: Yes, they're on one piece of property. The two houses are side by side, so it's a contiguous four-acre parcel.

Nathan: I see. So the developer would have had to come to her and would have had to deal with her.

Shaw: Oh yes. He would have liked to buy her property, too.

Nathan: She then reached out to the Fagan property, to increase what she held in Diamond Head?

Shaw: Well, the reason why it was so strategic was that he had bought properties on either side of the Fagan house up the hill on Diamond Head Road. Therefore she didn't want him to own the Fagan house because it would make a clear sweep of the area beneath Diamond Head.

Background on Save Diamond Head

Nathan: I see. There was a piece of information indicating that the Honolulu City Council had turned down high-rise zoning, and that scenic zoning was proposed for Diamond Head. I'm wondering whether you had any information about whether the scenic zoning actually was enacted?

Shaw: Yes, there's a forty-foot height limit, and I believe it's called the Diamond Head Preservation and Cultural District.

Nathan: So there was a district in existence?
Shaw: Yes. And the Makalei Place residents with Alice Bowen's leadership were really instrumental in getting that passed.

Nathan: The Makalei Place people were on the hill?

Shaw: Yes. And also neighbors.

Nathan: I talked to Alice Bowen's granddaughter, Michelle Matson. I don't know what Mrs. Bowen's health is or her situation, but her granddaughter sounded very clever and kind, and has invited me to come and look through files and papers. She was receptive and helpful.

Shaw: Well, you can certainly have some of these questions answered. I don't know the exact date, but I know it took place in the late sixties and seventies. The status of Diamond Head is that some of the houses have been torn down and reconstructed into a whole condominium project, so the population is more dense there at this point in time.

Nathan: All around Diamond Head?

Shaw: Yes. Denser in that their use of space is more practical than it was before. And then on the air rights question, we could not find anything in writing to verify that the air rights above Lanihau and Haumalu belonged to the Nature Conservancy.

**Foundation's Role in Hawaii**

Nathan: Perhaps I could ask you this question, and you can decide if you want to talk about it. I gathered that the Foundation does a certain amount of community organization in Hawaii, and I wondered whether that kind of work, for civil rights and other activities, would be an outgrowth of your mother's interests in these realms generally.

Shaw: Yes, I think so. I think it's mostly that for the Foundation, between the board and Tom [Layton], there's an understanding that there are needs that must be met today that were not apparent in years past, or not dealt with. And we can go there to Hawaii and start something up which the local foundations can get involved with. Tom has done a very good job of recognizing certain programs. A few areas have been land use, native Hawaiian culture issues, and environmental concerns and critical issues of public policy.
Nathan: There was a question about whether before the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation was established under that name, Martha Gerbode gave donations out of her father's family trust. Was that a correct description?

Shaw: I presume that she gave personally, very generously. She gave to various local nonprofit groups.

Nathan: Yes, I see. Thank you for the interpretations and background, and for explaining the important Hawaii connections.
PLANNING, EDUCATING, AND ORGANIZING FOR CITIZEN ACTION

An Interview Conducted by
Harriet Nathan
in 1991
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Aaron Levine was interviewed at his home in Honolulu March 12, 1991. A city planner, he was also effective as an educator, community organizer, and defender of historical landmarks. He first met Martha Gerbode when he was executive director of the Citizens' Council on City Planning in Philadelphia in the 1950s, and learned more of her interests and abilities in San Francisco meetings in 1959. Their friendship developed further in 1962 when he organized and became the head of the Oahu Development Conference in Honolulu, with Martha as a member-at-large on the board of directors. Levine and the ODC spearheaded the communitywide Save Diamond Head effort, with Martha's strong support.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name [Aaron Levine]


Father's full name [Harry Levine]

Occupation deceased Birthplace Russia

Mother's full name [Sophia Raditz Levine]

Occupation deceased Birthplace Russia

Your spouse [Beatrice Levine]


Your children [Karen Porreca, Lisa Margaret Levine, Dennis Barbara Eymard, Marc Nelson Eymard]


Present community [Honolulu, Hawaii]

Education University of California, Berkeley; B.S. Landscape Architecture

University of Pennsylvania; M.G.A. specialization in city planning

Occupation(s) [City Planner]

Areas of expertise [Urban and regional planning]

Other interests or activities [Urban design, architecture; Landscape architecture]

Organizations in which you are active [Honolulu Social Science Association (President); Montessori School of Maui]
AARON LEVINE Hon. AIA, FASLA, AICP
CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNER
RETIRED PRESIDENT, OAHU DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Birthplace: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Current home address: 1519 Kalaniwai Place; Honolulu, Hawaii 96821
Married to Beatrice Blass Eymard; four children

Education
University of Pennsylvania - Architecture and Landscape Architecture (1937-1940)
University of California, Berkeley - B.S. in Landscape Architecture (1941)
University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School - Master's degree in Governmental Administration with specialization in City Planning (1951)

Military service - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1942-1945)

Employment record
Philadelphia City Planning Commission - senior planner (1946-1951)
Oahu Development Conference - president (1962-1987)

Consultant and teaching assignments
Planning consultant to Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco and other cities
Lecturer at universities in England, Finland and the U.S.; University of Hawaii adjunct faculty member

National professional recognition
National past president - American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO)
National past board member and president of Philadelphia chapter - American Institute of Planners (AIP)
National honorary member - American Institute of Architects (AIA)
Fellow - American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

* Professional and community service in Hawaii
Chairman, Hawaii Coastal Zone Management Program, statewide advisory committee
Chairman, State Tourism Plan advisory committee
Chairman, Housing and Transportation Task Force, Governor's Conference on Year 2000
Chairman, Oahu Transportation Study, citizen advisory committee
Chairman, Hawaii Capital District master plan, citizen advisory committee
Chairman, Restoration Committee, Friends of Iolani Palace
Chairman, Policy Committee, Friends of Iolani Palace
Co-chairman, Governor's 1984 Tourism Congress
Vice president, Friends of Iolani Palace
Vice chairman of secretariat, Governor's Congress on Hawaii's International Role (1984)

* Planning articles published in:
New York Times Magazine section
Journal - American Institute of Planners
Proceedings - American Society of Planning Officials
Proceedings - Institute on Planning and Zoning, Southwestern Legal Foundation
Beacon Magazine - Honolulu
Honolulu Magazine - Honolulu
Planning magazine - American Society of Planning Officials

* partial listing
----- Founding member, Save Diamond Head Association
----- Chairman, Ways & Means Committee, (1965-1987)
----- Save Diamond Head Association
PERSONAL BACKGROUND: EDUCATION AND JOBS

[Date of Interview: March 12, 1991]

Nathan: Perhaps you could tell me, Mr. Levine, a little about your own background before we start talking about Martha Gerbode.

Levine: All right. I'm a native Philadelphian. I enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania to study landscape architecture, 1957. It was a five year course, but at the end of three years, in 1940, they discontinued the course, because there were so few of us at the University of Pennsylvania interested in landscape architecture at that time, and gave us our choice of locale to continue our education. I chose the University of California at Berkeley, and so I went to California and received my B.S. in landscape architecture in 1941.

Then followed some time in the military, two and a half years, during which I decided I wanted to become a city planner. I went to the University of Pennsylvania and worked for the Master's degree in governmental administration, because they had not developed yet their city planning course. The head of the City Planning Commission, a man named Robert Mitchell, and Edmund Bacon, who subsequently became the director of the Planning Commission, put together a course that would lead to my receiving an M.G.A degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania with specialization in city planning; I received that degree in 1951. I received early training for that degree some four or five years earlier. As I started working on that degree, I had to work part time in the City Planning Department. After about four or five months of that, they offered me a job there, full time, and that's the reason that I did not receive my degree until 1951.

My employment record is very, very simple. I worked for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, became senior planner, worked for them for five years; worked a short time for the
Housing and Home Finance Agency in Washington, D.C. (that's the predecessor of HUD [Housing and Urban Development]); and I was area planner then for the Western United States, Hawaii, and Alaska. That was in 1952. Then I returned to Philadelphia for ten years to be the executive director of the Citizens' Council on City Planning in Philadelphia. It was there that my first connection began with Martha Gerbode.

To complete my employment record, I worked ten years as the director of that organization, and then in 1962 I was invited to Honolulu to advise them on setting up a similar organization by a group of leading businessmen. The group invited me then to take the position as director. I accepted the job.

Nathan: So you were director of--

Levine: I was director of the Oahu Development Conference; I'm going to give you this 25-year report of the organization. I remained in that position for twenty-five years and retired in 1987. So that's my employment background.
II CITIZEN MOVEMENTS IN PLANNING

Levine: Now, I want to get to Martha Gerbode. It was in 1959 that Dorothy Erskine—whom I knew somewhat, not too well, from her attending planning conferences nationally—brought me to her attention and, likewise, I learned something about her, what a marvelous lady she was. She was my first introduction to the citizen movement in planning in California and in San Francisco.

Reform in Philadelphia

Levine: I should tell you that during the ten years I was executive director of the Citizens' Council on City Planning in Philadelphia, I was directing a private agency, non-profit, made up of 125 neighborhood organizations combined with leadership from the downtown business community. That group was very instrumental in the rebirth of Philadelphia during the 1950s and 60s when the Chinese wall was torn down and the city started rebuilding under Democratic mayors, Mayor Joseph Clarke and then-Mayor Dilworth. You have to remember that for sixty-seven years, the City of Philadelphia had been under Republican administrations, and no matter whether you're a Democrat or Republican, after sixty-seven years there should be a change. So there was a change, and the Democrats came in. At any rate, the reform movement was there, and the reform movement was supported by the citizen movement. I was the executive director of the citizen movement, and I had a government in place that was looking for the best planning and the best citizen participation possible. So it was the perfect fit as far as I was concerned, and obviously I was there ten years.
Citizen and Business Organizations in San Francisco

Levine: Dorothy Erskine visited Philadelphia and was very much impressed by the way citizens interplayed with government and with the business community. At that time the San Francisco citizen organization was called the "San Francisco Housing Association." It did not yet have "Planning" added to its title. It was natural for her to go around the country and visit Baltimore, New York, Boston, and of course Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Sometime shortly after her visit, I remember I was visited by Zellerbach, I guess it was James Zellerbach, and invited to come to California, to San Francisco to advise them and tell them how the business community and organized citizens interested in planning could join forces to improve the planning of their city. You have to recognize also that by 1959 the National Housing Act of 1949--which had as its goal, stated in the legislation, "... a decent neighborhood for every American family"--was in place, and it brought in urban redevelopment. Although you're going to have some people--and there are people around--who would speak disparagingly of urban redevelopment and urban renewal, I can tell you that there are many, many more cases where it worked and worked very well.

And so I was invited to San Francisco by really two, or let's say three groups. One was the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee of the ten or twelve top business leaders. They contributed towards my coming, I think just a matter of expenses, for two weeks. Second was the San Francisco Housing Association--and by then it had been called San Francisco Housing and Planning Association. Then there was also an official body, belonging to the city, the Mayor-Citizen Participation Committee, which was a very moribund group.

Nathan: I see. [laughter]

Levine: It would meet and fall asleep.

And so I was invited to San Francisco to advise them, maybe wake them up. To my pleasure and surprise, there was a lot of publicity, as you see here. I wasn't accustomed to that much in the way of newspaper editorials as well as publicity, and it culminated in my giving an address to 600 people at the St. Francis Hotel. It was entitled "Baghdad by the Bay," [laughter]--in those days that was still a nice way of saying it--with my recommendations as to what was wrong.

Editorials followed, and my comments were pretty biting. The city was not up to any other city in the country in matching its
resources against what was possible. What I thought of it are in these editorials. Jerd Sullivan and Caspar Weinberger—Cap was then very active with the citizen planning groups, as he has been all these years, and of course with the city leadership. I'm giving you one newspaper clipping, the story of why I came; this was before I came. Then I'm giving you a copy of a memorandum written by John Hirten in 1961, a couple of years later, in which he cites the things that resulted because of my visit to San Francisco.

Nathan: Oh, that's wonderful.

Levine: I thought that would be of value to you.

During the two weeks, I think I was scheduled for a meeting every hour and a half with someone different. As a matter of fact, one of the interesting points was dinner at Bob Lilienthal's house, and my dinner partner, the person sitting next to me, was Mayor George Christopher, who that day had watched his board of supervisors tell the federal government it could keep its money, that they would not build the freeway across the downtown where the Opera House is. The battle of the elevated Embarcadero Freeway began that day. I've watched that, of course, with considerable interest ever since.

During those two weeks, that's when I first met Martha Gerbode. She had a reception at her house for me, and there were a lot of people there. We got to know each other, and we rather liked each other right away. During the next three years, until 1962, I would visit San Francisco occasionally. My wife had lived there for thirteen years, although she's a Philadelphian, and I had gone to Cal, so we had very good memories and affiliations and connections with the city.

I set up in 1962 my professional assignment here in Honolulu. Twenty businessmen asked me what they could do about the future of the Island of Oahu.

Martha Gerbode and a Grasp of Urban Problems

Nathan: Could I interrupt you for a moment? As you got to know Martha Gerbode, could you give me a sense of how she seemed to you, her level of interest and information, a little bit about her at that time?
Levine: I found her depth of knowledge very great both in planning problems and in public policy issues that she saw pervasive in San Francisco. Also I was impressed by her understanding of what knowledgeable citizen participation could achieve. It's very easy to get people out to fight a zoning change that's proposed; everybody comes out en masse one night, and you get a crowd. But it's not easy to get people to work, and by work I mean continuing their interest, sustaining their interest intelligently about an issue that may not even have a turning point, that has simply a change in public perception and particularly political perception of how a community might be.

That is rare to find. Martha had a rare ability, I felt, to understand the problems and note the complexity of the problems, because urban problems are not simple. As we've learned since 1959, they become more and more complex.

So I found Martha was pretty much a kindred soul to what I was saying, and yet we came from totally different backgrounds in that I was from the East Coast, Philadelphia, and she had her very important Hawaiian background and life in California and in the State of Hawaii. I was not aware, of course, when I met her in San Francisco, of her Hawaiian connection; I only knew of her as the very close friend of Dorothy Erskine. It was Dorothy whom both my wife and I came to know and love as a person and Morse, her husband. Dorothy and I would see each other and be in touch several times a year ever since 1959 or before.
III HONOLULU AND THE OAHU DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (1962-1987)

Levine: In Hawaii the nicest thing you can say about someone is that you have "great Aloha" for them. It's a form of love, that kind of feeling of warmth and depth and appreciation for the person that I had for Martha Gerbode.

So when I came to Honolulu and advised the formation of the Oahu Development Conference, I was delighted to find that she was here part of the year. That was a bonus as far as I was concerned. She was never a member of the Oahu Development Conference, but she was a very important person in the community because of the historic role of her family in Hawaii.

Leadership by Businessmen

Levine: I should explain the Oahu Development Conference. The name of the organization is totally inaccurate. It was originally called the Honolulu Planning Council. The twenty men who formed the group had looked at Chicago and Pittsburgh, particularly Pittsburgh, and Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston and decided that what they needed was a council of people, a bringing together of business people to focus on the physical planning problems on the horizon for the next several decades. They formed the Honolulu Planning Council with the top business leadership spearheading it.

Nathan: There were no academics or other people; this was just business?

Levine: It was just business. There were no city planning courses being given at University of Hawaii. Our planning commission here is the Honolulu City Planning Commission. When I say Honolulu, it's for the entire island. The Island of Oahu and the City of Honolulu are contiguous, so we have a metropolitan government of Honolulu that spreads over this entire island. The business
leadership formed the group, and because they were important businessmen in this community they called the mayor and explained the whole thing to him. It received banner headlines in the paper.

**Finding the Right Name**

Nathan: May I ask, was the firm of Alexander and Baldwin represented in this group?

Levine: Yes, Alexander and Baldwin was represented in the group.

Before holding a press conference to announce the formation of the new organization, the chairman of the group met with the Honolulu City Council. The city council believed that a new organization called the "Honolulu Planning Council" would be confused with the Honolulu City Council. Because they knew of a similar group of businessmen in Pittsburgh, Pa., constituting the "Allegheny Conference on Community Development," the new group changed its name to "Honolulu Planning Conference."

The next day they met with the Honolulu Planning Commission, which pointed to the similarity of names and even the same acronym. So the new group changed its name to "Honolulu Development Conference." Then shortly before filing papers of incorporation, it was noted that the new group would be concerned with the entire island of Oahu, not just the city of Honolulu. So we ended up as the "Oahu Development Conference," popularly known as the "ODC."

Nathan: And to the uninitiated, assuming that development is your interest rather than--

Levine: Exactly. I would receive a call about once a month, during dinner usually: am I interested in three tons of cement or gravel on the next job we're doing? [laughter] I really disliked the name in that sense, because it was not development at all, it was planning. As a planner I resented it. But you cannot be literal and stick by the word "planning" if the city council doesn't like it and if the planning commission doesn't like it in your organization's title, and both of those are the two bodies you're going to be working with. So you'd better not be on the outs from the beginning of operations, just so planning remains your chief activity. So that explains the name.
Focus on Planning and Shaping Committees

Levine: We took on a series of projects. The first thing was, what planning are you going to devote the organization to, what subjects? I decided that we should be concerned primarily with physical items: not social, because we have a health and welfare council; not necessarily economic or financial, because there is a tax foundation and the Hawaii Economic Association. We should stay with planning--city planning, Oahu planning, regional and state planning.

We spent the first year and a half not supporting any particular issue except one, which I will come to in a moment. During that year and half we spent that time forming three committees made up of a few of our board members who represented the top business leadership, some smaller business, and other people from the community.

Nathan: And this was about--

Levine: This was 1962. The committees also included labor, women's groups, educators, social workers, small business groups, professional organizations, and downtown business people.

Nathan: I might just ask, was the Outdoor Circle--

Levine: The Outdoor Circle was a very active part of each of those committees. I mentioned that there was only one issue that we spoke out against, that we took a position on. That was the attempt of the Hawaii State Department of Transportation to build an elevated freeway along the Honolulu waterfront. It would be so similar to the Embarcadero Freeway; incredible that both cities were talking about it in the same decade. I was instrumental in that fight, with the Outdoor Circle, which was then the staunchest supporter that I have had and continue to have. There were two groups particularly, the AIA [American Institute of Architects] and the Outdoor Circle; the Outdoor Circle first.

Policy Books

Levine: During the first year and a half we developed policies listing what we were going to be interested in, what we stood for. We developed a policy book on urban renewal, a policy book on comprehensive planning, a policy book on transportation. Those became our bibles because they set the basic policy, and they gave
me, as the staff director, the ability to then work within the framework of that policy without having to constantly go back to my board and ask them, "Can I dot this i or cross that t?" In 25 years we became involved in many issues. I'm going to give you our annual report. It's more than an annual report; it's a 1962-1987 report; it's a twenty-five year report.

Nathan: That would be fine.

Levine: That gives the concept of the organization, the names of all the previous presidents who then became chairmen of the board when I was raised from executive VP to president of the organization. That was to give me the freedom to speak on behalf of the organization constantly. And it included the top leadership of this community, like Herb Cornuelle, Malcolm McNaughton, Frank Manaut, Governor William F. Quinn, and Ralph Johnson. These were names that were important in this community.

Nathan: At this point, was Martha Gerbode a part of this group?

Levine: No, but she was a member of the Outdoor Circle. That meant sending in twenty-five dollars a year or whatever it was to receive our dozen annual publications and participate in ODC committees. She undoubtably was a member of the Garden Club of Honolulu, which meant attending meetings when she was here. But she was spending only part of the year, as you know, here in Hawaii, so she herself was not on any of the ODC committees because they would meet every two, three weeks.

Nathan: Thanks; I wanted to be sure about that.

Levine: I decided very early (having worked as senior planner for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission from 1947 to '52, where we had over a hundred people on the staff, and then became the executive director of the Citizens' Council on City Planning in Philadelphia for ten years, where we only had five people on the staff) to keep my Honolulu staff very small so that we could streamline the operations and keep myself involved in everything. So I never had more than one assistant and two secretaries. Nevertheless, we were able to carry on a lot of activities, which you'll see.

Community Leadership Seminars

Levine: One of the early things I did, with the assistance of the Ford Foundation, was to set up community leadership seminars which
brought together 230 community leaders. These were fourteen different groups. They met weekly over a period of seven weeks for one-hour discussions on planning issues confronting this community in order to bring people up to snuff, to the same level of knowledge of what the problems were.

One group was the city council; another consisted of the board members of all the social welfare groups; another was the labor unions; another was composed of architects and engineers; another for land developers; another for all the top staff members of the board of education; another for members of the press, radio, and television.

You have to remember that in 1962 there were not more than one or two environmental writers over this entire country. That was before there was an environmental column in *Time* magazine or in your local newspapers. As a matter of fact, one of my chores here was to give private training sessions to two newspaper reporters so that they would be able to cover environmental matters.

Nathan: Do you remember their names?

Levine: One was Dale Richeson; he was with the Honolulu *Star Bulletin*. The other one was Bill Cook of the Honolulu *Advertiser*. Cook has been working as a housing specialist for the governor of Hawaii. It's very important to recognize that there was no common knowledge or source of information about planning and plans at that time.

**Restoring Iolani Palace**

Levine: I won't go through all the things we did when we restored the Iolani Palace, the only royal palace on American soil, how we formed--with a lady who would be queen today if she were alive, Liliukatani Morris--the Friends of the Iolani Palace. We spearheaded the move to restore Iolani Palace. If you're unable to see it--

Nathan: I did see it, but only from the outside.

Levine: Oh, great. You must go through it, because the inside is spectacular. Every single piece of wood on the floor, walls, ceiling, windows, and doorways, every place, has been removed. It was replaced if we were unable to clean it. The whole place has been redone, and it's the most sparkling building; I say that with
a real sense of pride. I was the very active chairman of that planning and restoration committee for the first six years.

City Planning School in the University of Hawaii

Levine: I was involved in many other planning issues. At that time the University of Hawaii was turning out engineers but not planners. The president of the University of Hawaii at that time, a marvelous man, Dr. Thomas H. Hamilton, now deceased, asked me to advise him as to whether the university should offer courses leading to a degree in city planning.

I told him I would accept the assignment from him under certain conditions: one, my services would be pro bono; second, under no conditions would I accept--

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Nathan: We are talking about Dr. Hamilton at this time. [tape interruption]

Levine: Three things: one was pro bono; second, I would not accept being the director of a planning school if I concluded a school was not needed; and the third was that he would appoint a committee of deans of the six schools at the university to serve as my advisors for the next six months. I would meet with them once every two weeks. He made that commitment, which was quite a commitment. At the end of the six weeks, my recommendation was that there be a planning school established there, geared to Hawaii and the Pacific area. That was subsequently done. So now we have been turning out planners. Before that time we had engineers, and the engineers did all the planning jobs because there were no planners from Hawaii.

We also had at that time, to further the problem, a very strict residency rule in the State of Hawaii. You had to live in the City and County of Honolulu three years before you could be hired to work for the city or county in its civil service. That, of course, kept planners out. In the planning field nationally there was a tendency on the part of planners to move about every four or five years to another job so that you received the benefit of experience and new views on community problems. That didn't happen here. That was another one of my accomplishments which I look on rather proudly. The 25-year booklet lists them.

Nathan: Oh, this looks excellent.
IV SIGNIFICANCE OF LANDMARKS AND THEIR DEFENSE

Levine: One of the things that struck me very early in Hawaii was the historic quality as well as the beauty of the state, and the importance of preserving it through planning if that is possible. We're witnesses to what has been happening all around the country with historical structures in the fifties and sixties being destroyed.

Part of my background as senior planner in the City of Philadelphia from '46 to '52 was the experience I had with Independence Hall. Most people don't realize when they visit Independence Hall--they don't see in the lovely lawn that extends several blocks in front of it and the open space around it that that building had been closely hemmed in by industrial and commercial structures and almost burned down one day if the winds had not shifted suddenly. Then the whole movement of restoration of Independence Hall became a very important one.

I came to this community armed with that experience, and that spurred me on to lead the Iolani Palace restoration and also to recognize the importance of other significant landmarks.

Development as a Threat to Diamond Head

Levine: One of them was Diamond Head. At that time, in '62, you would be able to look down Waikiki's main street, Kalakaua Avenue, and you could see the profile of Diamond Head. But there were proposals on the drawing boards, which were built in subsequent years, to build new high-rise buildings that would block Diamond Head. Finally came a proposal by landowners and people living on the slopes of Diamond Head to build not only houses but also
apartments and hotels with active commercial and, by that time, tourist attractions.

Martha Gerbode owned and lived on the property at the foot of Diamond Head. Of course she was one of the very early people to recognize what was happening to Diamond Head and Hawaii. You have to recognize, as I told you as we drove by, that Diamond Head not only has historic, traditional, and natural values for the history of Hawaii; but internationally it's a landmark, just the way certain cities have certain landmarks. Rio, the statue up on the hill. Other places have their own--the Eiffel Tower for Paris. Each city has certain landmarks, like London's Big Ben. When you see Diamond Head, that means Hawaii. I could not conceive of its being covered with further development.

**Outdoor Circle vs. Billboards**

Levine: Just an interesting insertion: years before then, there had been billboards on Diamond Head and on Punchbowl. Both of those landmarks had been covered or at least marred by billboards, which the Outdoor Circle was responsible for getting banned. You see no billboards in Hawaii. When you got off the airplane and drove out to Waikiki, you saw no signs saying "Fly me to Florida--Delta Airlines."

Nathan: Right. [laughs]

Levine: There are no billboards in the State of Hawaii, and that's due to the Outdoor Circle. They led the fight against it. One of the women who's most involved in that issue is Cynthia Marnie, Outdoor Circle chairman of the signs committee. She is probably the leading expert in the world on the legal requirements for signs and for prohibiting signs. Diamond Head was always a target.

**Save Diamond Head Association (Mid-60s)**

Levine: There was a very popular disc jockey here. He was the highest paid disc jockey in the United States. His name was Aku--that's a fish; his real name was Harold Lewis. His was the most popular radio program in the morning. He was making salaries in six figures long before any U.S. disc jockey dreamt of it, because he was so popular.
He wanted to outline the profile of Diamond Head with lights so that it would be bright at night and at Christmas make them red and green lights. There were also proposals to run tramways up to the top of Diamond Head Crater and install a golf course—that keeps coming up every legislative session—inside of Diamond Head. All sorts of proposals. It became so bad in the mid-sixties that several of us, led by a planner who has since gone to his reward, a marvelous person, Walter K. Collins, and Robert van Dorpe—he is still here—and a half dozen other people, including me, decided to form an organization that would try to "save" Diamond Head. We formed the Save Diamond Head Association. Of course, the Outdoor Circle was a leader in that group.

Nathan: Are we now in about--

Levine: Mid-sixties. Outdoor Circle led that fight, and they needed someone who was professionally trained, someone who had an office where people could meet, someone who could write, someone who could devote time to it and who worked at least ten to twelve hours a day in an office with a telephone. I fit all of those qualifications and wanted to save Diamond Head. So we worked very closely together and formed the Save Diamond Head Association.

I have here [showing documents] the membership of the Save Diamond Head Association board of directors, and it has all of the names and the affiliations, the organizations. At the end there is a page that lists some individuals as "members-at-large" on the board of the Save Diamond Head Association. There is Martha Gerbode, with her San Francisco address, on the board of directors, member-at-large.

Nathan: Oh yes, identified by "conservation;" so she was a member-at-large.

Levine: She was a member-at-large on the board of directors. This list is dated around '67, revised '69. It was formed in the mid-sixties and had all kinds of people; here's William Quinn, who had been the former governor and the president of Dole. I could lend this to you and have you mail it back to me; it's the only copy I have.

Nathan: I would like to xerox it because there are a number of names that look very useful.

Levine: Then why don't you take that.

Nathan: Thank you, this is very good.
Chinn Ho's Proposal

Levine: It was 1965 that things came to a crescendo. [pause]

Nathan: Was that when Chinn Ho--

Levine: It was Chinn Ho who really caused the whole situation to precipitate in a city council bill and public hearing. Chinn Ho was a legendary character in Hawaii. He was born poor, rose from selling newspapers as a boy to a millionaire when he died--millionaire on paper. I don't know that he had much money in the bank, but on paper he owned all kinds of property and fit the legend that every Hawaiian youngster wanted. It was really the Horatio Alger story, Chinn Ho version. I knew him; he was a member of the ODC board of directors.

Nathan: Really.

Levine: He was one of our founding members, yes. He was on the original board. When I came in '62, he hosted a lunch for me, I recall, and was very enthusiastic about planning, because he was an entrepreneur and wanted to build hotels and develop the State of Hawaii. At the same time, he was interested in a house on Diamond Head's lower slopes, not too far from Martha's property.

He made an offer. He may or may not have owned it at that time, because I dimly recall that it was the Dillingham house. There were a few other houses there where Chinn Ho wanted to build apartment buildings or hotels on the slopes of Diamond Head. It was a firm proposal. It wasn't just a pie-in-the-sky idea; he had a model. I can still recall that he had to come in for a zoning change because the area was not zoned for apartments or hotels; it was zoned residentially. That spurred the Save Diamond Head Association to really work itself up into a lather to see what we could do to save things.

Nathan: You're talking about this proposal to build up on the slopes, not at the base?

Levine: It's really the lower slopes. When I say the slopes, it's really around the base, because it gets pretty precipitous; the slope becomes very steep. It's the lower base. I don't want to mislead you; there are houses there. We drove by on Diamond Head Road before it becomes Kahala Avenue. Diamond Head Road has houses on the makai side. Have you learned the two directions, mauka and makai?

Nathan: Yes.
Levine: *Makai* means "to the sea;" *mauka," to the mountain." So the idea was to build apartment buildings on both sides of the road, and I'm certain eventually hotels.

**Economic Pressures for Development**

Levine: Remember that it was 1965. You have to put it in the context. Statehood came to Hawaii in 1959, the jet engine was born. It was applied to modern airlines in 1959. Tourism started to be the growing economic activity in this state. One of the reasons tourism looked attractive was because on the neighbor islands the pineapple and sugar plantations were upon hard times. They were losing population because there were fewer jobs. So what is the perfect answer to that? Tourism, visitor industry, hotels; and then you have all the related activities.

There were those pressures that made the airlines fly here, having received the franchises. They in turn wanted to build hotels, and they linked up with Chinn Ho. They had great economic prospects in sight if only he could get the zoning changed. Where would people know Hawaii is if they had never been here? But Diamond Head--everyone knows Diamond Head. The greatest thing would be to have a hotel directly on Diamond Head. You could call it the Diamond Head Hotel. [laughter] Then they'd know all over the world what you were talking about. So this transformed the eyes of many of the entrepreneurs into dollar signs with millions attached to it.

**Policy Paper on Alternatives (1967)**

Levine: In the meanwhile, this group of people who lived there, and then others like the Outdoor Circle, the AIA, ODC--people who were concerned about the community and its appearance and its historic quality--started to stir. The ODC, my group, did a policy paper.

Nathan: When you say, "did a paper," does that mean you wrote it?

Levine: That's a good question. The ODC would take a subject like Diamond Head, and I would develop all the staff information available; not pros and cons on hotels but the history of the landmark and environs: what the possibilities are, what its future is, what the alternatives are for it from good to bad and everything in between. There was an ODC committee on comprehensive planning,
and that was headed by a man named Thomas Hitch, who was a very conservative economist, chief economist for the First Hawaiian Bank. Bankers, as you know, are usually pretty conservative.

He headed the ODC committee, which spent a little over a year analyzing the problem of Diamond Head. Should it be turned to hotels? Should it be housing? Should it become a park? Should you remove people from it who are now living there? That whole range. The conclusion of that committee—which was recommended to the ODC board of directors by its comprehensive planning committee and thereafter accepted by these twenty businessmen who by then had been increased to thirty—was that the future of the makai side of Diamond Head Road should be park.

Nathan: Again, the makai side is the sea side.

Levine: The sea side. There were alternatives. These spell out all the alternatives. [shows a document] Here's the road we drove along. We came along Kahala Avenue, Diamond Head Road, and Kalakaua.

Nathan: I see, yes.

Levine: Here is one alternative with apartments.

Nathan: This is in 1967?

Levine: Yes. And eventually to turn the whole area into a park. Low density. Leave the housing that's there was another possibility. These were the alternatives we examined, and we concluded that park development was the best long-range future for Honolulu. I'm going to give you this. [shows another document] This is the whole concept.

We showed how to develop the area into a park, making a landmark park, so that Diamond Head would be preserved by very low, if any, development and eventually a park. Let me give you this. This shows you Diamond Head. This is provided to let the board make a decision. It's information like this, how many people today and in the future will need park space and the prices of obtaining it.

Proposal to Extend Kapiolani Park to the Lighthouse

Levine: Then we went into an actual proposal. You see, we have Kapiolani Park that goes on up there, and I think it's one of the most heavily used parks in the state. When you see it on a Saturday
and Sunday, it's filled with local people. We wanted to extend that all the way up to the lighthouse. I'm going to give you this.

Nathan: These are very interesting.

Levine: Then we retained an assessor to tell us what it would cost to purchase the parcels known as "B" and "A," because those were the areas most in danger of being developed. The assessment came to around five million dollars at that time, in '65. We felt that it was very practical to accomplish.

Nathan: I see that you are already dealing with air rights?

Levine: Not yet. I'm going to come to that in a moment. We were dealing then with a park. We concluded that it should be a park in the long run.

Nathan: Kind of a remarkable conclusion.

Levine: It was a remarkable conclusion for a group of thirty conservative business leaders in the community to make who were not only bankers and in construction and all that, but also included hotel developer Chinn Ho, who shortly thereafter, I think, resigned from our board. But he also financially ran into a bad patch. Board members of the Oahu Development Conference had to contribute money annually for its support. They paid my salary and for the organization and materials, like this report. I think his resignation was a combination of his disappointment at the position we were taking and his own financial problems; he did not have ready cash, I think. At any rate, he certainly had enough to pay dues, but there were more lucrative things for him to do.

Preparation and Turnout for the Public Hearing

Levine: That brings us to the public hearing on rezoning Diamond Head. So many people were in attendance that they had to at the last minute string a speaker down in the lower courtyard of the city hall, because several hundred people overflowed the main room. I'm going to give you a paper that I did that describes the public hearing and the whole issue around it.

We had people from eight years old to eighty-eight years old testifying. We had people from all over this island, not just the Outdoor Circle, not just the elite like Martha Gerbode. Some people had said, "Oh, she's a rich lady; she doesn't want anybody
else to have anything." But we had people from all over the island, of all income groups. We had the neighbor islands represented, and then we had--they're listed here--Huey Johnson, who was the Nature Conservancy director for the West Coast; he came to give his support. We had James Biddle, who was the president of the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. He came from Washington, D.C., for the hearing. The week before the city council hearing was to be held, by very careful work we had supporting editorials in the San Francisco Chronicle, the New York Times, and Time magazine, as well as here in both local newspapers. It was overwhelming what we were able to accomplish. I look back in awe at what we were able to do. It was done by personal visits. I traveled a great deal, and other people did, in trying to convince the people of the national importance of Diamond Head.

Near the end of the public hearing, one of the speakers was Jack Reynolds. Jack was the principal labor leader here in the construction trades, AFL-CIO. He was a feisty guy, and he said loudly into the microphone, "We need jobs. I want jobs for my members. [slaps hand down for emphasis] But we don't want 'em building houses on the slopes of Diamond Head." When he said that, I knew we had won the battle, because there's no city council in the world that could resist that.

You asked about Jack Hall and ILWU [International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union]. Jack himself did not participate, but his next in command, a man named Eddie Tangen--

Nathan: Are we also talking about Harry Bridges? He was the one I had in mind.

Levine: Harry Bridges, of course, is the national head; he's the top man in the ILWU. The local man was Jack Hall. Jack is a legendary figure in Hawaii, just as Harry Bridges is nationally and in the San Francisco area. But the person he assigned and who was interested in environmental and community planning was a man named Eddie Tangen, who was the secretary of the Save Diamond Head Association. He brought labor in. He was speaking for Jack Hall. There were other labor unions, but he represented the strongest one.

The city council saw they could not give Chinn Ho what he wanted. Chinn lost that battle. The city council, however, had to look to the mayor. The mayor then was Neal Blaisdell. He was Hawaiian and a remarkably nice man. Everybody liked him. He liked to say "yes" to everybody, especially to developers. He was very close to Chinn Ho. As a matter of fact, several city councilmen were very close to Chinn Ho as well. One was his
lawyer, one was probably his accountant. At any rate, at one time it looked as though the ways were greased for Diamond Head zoning to go through.

Nathan: As a park?
Levine: No, for Chinn Ho.

**Air Rights, Appraisals, and HUD Funds**

Levine: But we set that all back. The mayor felt that he had to do something to not let this go all the way to park use, that he had to satisfy in some way Chinn Ho and the others and at least keep it in some revenue-producing use. He turned to his planning director, who said, "Instead of making a park, let's just put reservation of air rights over it." He said that if people could not develop the air rights, that will keep it low rise and save Diamond Head forever.

Some of us were dubious. We had appraisals prepared to see how much money we were talking about for land acquisition and park development. We retained the leading appraiser of the state, who was also state senator, chairman of the ways and means committee of our state senate, and politically a very astute man. He came up with the five million dollar figure. So we had to figure out how we were going to pay that; that was an awful lot of money at that time.

Nathan: Now, this five million dollars represented--

Levine: The purchase of all the properties on the makai side of Diamond Head Road. About the same time, the federal government, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had several open-space programs in which they provided funds for open space to be acquired. One of the programs was for open space in urban areas. We approached them. One day, lo and behold, a federal staff member named Boldt arrived here and offered the City of Honolulu $2.5 million towards the purchase of properties at Diamond Head. In other words, 50 percent of the total acquisition cost.

We also flooded the city and state with these bumper stickers.

Nathan: [reading] "Save Diamond Head"--black on orange.
Air Rights Instead of Park Zone

Levine: It was on Martha's car and everybody else's car. I saw one in London that year, and they were in Boston, they were in Mexico; they were all over, and of course in San Francisco. The city council just talked and debated about air rights instead of going for the matching federal funds. Martha Gerbode felt, as we did, that we really should go for the park. However, the planning director of Honolulu said that air rights would do. So the council did not proceed to change the zoning to park, but rather kept it in residential with the idea--

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Nathan: Now we're talking about air rights. [tape interruption]

Levine: All right. The city council decided that it would go for the air rights and not change it to a park zoning.

They debated the issue for some months, and when they finally decided that they would accept the federal funds and use them for air rights, the answer came from Washington as we expected—that is, those of us in the Save Diamond Head Association expected. Those funds could not be used for purchase of air rights. That would not guarantee a park. It's different from creating a park; it permits development. So we lost the funding. The $2.5 million went to other communities to help them meet their open space needs, and we were left with the status quo.

An Alternative: Martha Gerbode's Purchase of the Fagan Property

Levine: The next thing was to try to figure out a way of making this whole project work. Could people donate their property? Were there ways of handling that? Nature Conservancy was of great assistance. But without the bulk of funds, the $2.5 million from the federal government, we really lost steam in that direction.

The only noticeable thing that happened was that one of the properties, known as the Fagan property, came up for sale. To prevent someone who would be unsympathetic to the Save Diamond Head approach from purchasing it, Martha bought the property. At that time that was considered a lot of money; I believe she paid half a million dollars. She bought the property and then sold it as a residence when the zoning was obviously not going to become park, but she retained the air rights and arranged with the Nature
Conservancy for the retention of the air rights. That limitation was put into effect. Martha came through when we needed her in a very dramatic way.

**Timing, and Loss of the Park Battle**

Levine: But the city council was insensitive to the issue, and as an English friend of mine says, "Timing is all." The timing for action was right when Washington offered the $2.5 million dollars shortly after the public hearing for this project to move ahead, and then it all fell apart.

Now, as you ride along Diamond Head Road, if you look quickly *makai*, the property just past the former Gerbode property, you'll see an iron fence and open space where the city eventually purchased that one property, cleared it, and that's a little park. Then you pass a dozen houses, and you'll find another spot where they were able to buy a few houses to open the area. Those two spots are testimony to what could have occurred along that entire *makai* side of Diamond Head Road if the city council and Mayor Blaisdell had taken the action that the community wanted them to take.

Agonizing all through that was Martha Gerbode. She lived in the house along the road and had, I'm sure, indications of future lack of cooperation by her neighbors, and that others might want to develop their property more intensively rather than put it to park use. The spirit was changing. Some of the people who were then environmentally conscious were either leaving the islands, dying, or moving to Sweden. The situation was changing. And so the battle was lost.

I have here letters from Martha--let's see, 1968, and one March 12, also 1968. These are for you.

Nathan: Oh, thank you.

Levine: They are letters in which she expresses her views of what has happened there.
Levine: I'm going to give you this editorial, very strong editorial support for the park. Martha would appear at public hearings. She would go with me and van Dorpe and later Walter Collins, who became the president. Van Dorpe was the first president of Save Diamond Head Association.

There's the famous meeting that was held June 30, 1967. It was a meeting of the city council public works committee. The chairman was Ben Kaito, a lawyer. The meeting was held to discuss Diamond Head and the plans for Diamond Head. I was sitting there with Martha Gerbode. I had a prepared statement on behalf of ODC. Martha was there as well, prepared to speak.

Chinn Ho was not present, but his planner was there, a former planning director of the City and County of Honolulu who formed his own planning firm. He brought in a model about twenty inches high of two or three apartment buildings. It showed Diamond Head and had a high-rise building--one of the three highrises--right on Martha Gerbode's property. [laughter] The woman almost blew apart. I can still remember the blast of exasperation as she realized that what they were proposing was on her property.

I wanted to present a statement on behalf of the Save Diamond Head Association and on behalf of the Oahu Development Conference, but the chairman would not let me speak. Why? Because I was not a property owner. He claimed I had no interest in the site. This is after the site had been declared a state monument and everyone knew its importance. Then he turned to Martha, "But you're a property owner. If Mrs. Gerbode wants to speak, now is the time for her to speak." She was too upset to speak and asked me to speak for her. So I presented the usual narrative we had been giving. It made little if any impression on the committee members, because they were not listening to what was being said; they were tuned out completely. Their minds had been set.

This was before the public hearing at the complete city council, and they did not know the extent of community concern about this problem. But I'll always remember that committee meeting and Martha Gerbode exasperated as she heard and saw what the future of her property would be.
Alice Spalding Bowen

Nathan: I wanted to remember also to ask you about Alice Spalding Bowen. Was she one of your colleagues?

Levine: Yes, yes. Alice Spalding Bowen was one of the leading--I'd say she was not one of them; she was the leading voice to preserve Diamond Head. She was the leading conscience of this community. She of course is the staunch fiber of the Outdoor Circle. She's still alive; I think she's close to a hundred.

Nathan: She is a hundred.

Levine: You didn't interview her by any chance, did you? Or see her?

Nathan: I saw her briefly. Her granddaughter, Michelle Matson, said she just is not able to do an interview, but she is going to let me have access to her letters.

Levine: Good. Well, she was a marvelous person and is the most marvelous person. She would appear at every hearing and do all sorts of work--just incredible. Not only at Diamond Head but in other places around the city. We could spend an afternoon just on Alice Spalding Bowen. She happens to be one of my dearest friends.

This is a letter in connection with the letters of Gerbode.

Nathan: Oh yes.

Levine: I gave a talk last May about "Honolulu's Missed Opportunities," the three missed opportunities. The first one was Diamond Head. I'm giving you a copy of that paper with just the first third of the paper, which is all about Diamond Head. The rest of it deals with other missed opportunities. Diamond Head--not much has happened since then, other than development taking place there and land prices skyrocketing.

Plans for Wailea

Levine: I would visit with Martha Gerbode about two times a year, I suppose, when she would be here. We'd have dinner or lunch at her home, and she always expressed concern about Hawaii.
My other relationship with her, which I won't go into in
depth, has to do with an Alexander and Baldwin property over on
Maui known as Wailea.

Nathan: That is an Alexander and Baldwin property?

Levine: Oh, yes. That's their property; they own that land. They decided
day wanted to develop it in the best possible way. Martha, as a
member of that family, was instrumental in convincing A & B to
form an environmental design committee. There were about five of
us on the committee. One was Vladimir Ossipoff; he is the dean of
architects in Hawaii. I believe Ossipoff went to Cal. That's an
interesting connection at Berkeley. He was on the committee and I
was on the committee for the first four years.

So that was another tenuous connection with Martha, because I
would see her occasionally and talk about Wailea. The idea was to
develop the finest resort area, which it has become, in Hawaii.
Alexander and Baldwin sold the property, I think last year. First
it divested itself of 50 percent, then all of it. Now others are
packing it full of hotels. Whether I can still make the claim
that it's a fine resort development remains to be seen.
Levine: ODC continued, and as 1987 approached I realized with a start that I was employed there twenty-five years. It became embarrassing when people asked me how long I was there, but it never occurred to anybody to ask me to leave. I was reaching the age of retirement. So I retired as president and staff director in 1987 at the age of seventy, which I felt was a proper retirement age.

The question was who should succeed me as director of the organization. In the twenty-five-year history of the organization I had become so much part of the organization that it was ODC and Levine.

Alternatives and Accomplishments

Levine: We considered a scenario of alternative possibilities: bring someone from the mainland, invite someone from here as staff director, or discontinue the organization. Bringing someone from the mainland wouldn't work; this is a very provincial place, and it would take three or four years for someone to gain the confidence to be listened to.

People who are in place here have "baggage" associated with their past history in Hawaii. The more important thing was that since 1962 many of the things ODC had striven for had come about. Environmentalism was covered in every newspaper. In fact, there were news sheets just devoted to that, magazine articles on it, radio, television.

Where we had no planners formerly being produced at the University of Hawaii, now planners are being trained, and they are receiving their degrees in planning at the university. Many of
the projects we had started or were involved in, such as Friends of the Iolani Palace, among fifty other activities, were well underway.

**Decision to Sunset**

Levine: And so the board decided along with me to terminate the Oahu Development Conference in 1987. It's one of the few cases I know of an organization sunsetting itself because many of its goals had been achieved. In planning, you seldom achieve all of your goals. Some had moved forward two inches, some two miles. Other organizations had taken on the coloration of the group. The Chamber of Commerce now has a real planning committee; there are others that have done that in part and have taken on some of the role of ODC.

I'll give you this; it's a Honolulu editorial, a very kind editorial that the newspapers ran.

Nathan: Thank you. I see the League of Women Voters was also a part of your working group.

Levine: Oh, the league was very much a part of ODC. I'm glad you mentioned that, because in Philadelphia, in ten years of heading up a citizen organization before coming to Honolulu, the League of Women Voters people and I probably met once a year. Here, it was once a week, and they were active in the ODC, very active. Both the League of Women Voters and the Outdoor Circle were.

So that's my story of ODC and Martha Gerbode and how it ties together from Philadelphia, San Francisco, to Honolulu.

Nathan: It could not be done better. If you'll allow me to ask you one other question?

Levine: Of course.

Nathan: Were you at all involved in the Seven Sacred Pools effort on Maui?

Levine: No.
VI STATEWIDE ISSUES: TOURISM, COASTAL ZONES

Nathan: So it was Oahu--

Levine: It was Oahu Development Conference, and it was Oahu that we were primarily concerned with. I must say, though, that there were some state issues in which we became involved. What is the principal economic activity of this state? What is going to impact physically, socially, and economically on everyone here? Tourism. Therefore, when the state passed its general plan, we were very active community members in formulating that plan. I was made chairman of the State Tourism Plan Advisory Committee. In that regard I had to visit each island and be concerned about each island. In that way, ODC and I as its staff director were directly involved.

There are other activities in subsequent years. There was coastal zone management, which has been a very difficult problem in California as well as in Hawaii. Here it affects every one of our islands; everybody wants the coast. There, too, I became the chairman of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee, which formulated the goals, objectives, and the actual practices and programs adopted in their entirety by our state legislature.

In the annual report that I gave you, the silver cover copy, there's a list of the organizations that I headed. Do you have it? At the end of it--ODC staff service--I'm the staff. And you'll see how there are some activities that are statewide in which I became involved, subjects in which I'm interested. But generally, on specific planning problems on the other islands, no, we were not involved.

I'll give you this. It's my card as president of the Oahu Development Conference; in contrast to the card I gave you, my current card has my home address.
Nathan: This account has been so rich and full of information.

Levine: This is all for you.

Nathan: Oh, wonderful. Did I understand that at one time you issued a newsletter about the Diamond Head activities?

Levine: The ODC issued newsletters quite frequently and would deal with various subjects. Of course, one of the subjects was Diamond Head, a very important issue. I'm going to have to gather some, if you're interested. Are you interested in those?

Nathan: I would very much like to have some.

Levine: I have them in a file that I'd have to get downstairs. We put out several hundred newsletters. I'll send you the ones that deal with Diamond Head. It will convey the tenor of the times and the level of public discussion that occurred. This is mine; this is the San Francisco SPUR material. And you're going to return to me just the names of the board of the Save Diamond Head Association; you have those. You may keep all of the rest of the material.

Nathan: Thank you. Then this will be deposited, if not bound into the memoir volume. You know we do have a method of depositing material that supports the oral histories. Your grasp of developments in Hawaii, and your insights concerning Martha Gerbode are most helpful. Thank you very much.

Levine: You're very welcome.

Transcriber: Merrilee Proffitt
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J. Russell Cades

LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE EFFORT TO SAVE
DIAMOND HEAD

An Interview Conducted by
Harriet Nathan
in 1991
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INTERVIEW HISTORY--by Harriet Nathan

J. Russell Cades, Esq., was interviewed March 13, 1991, at his law office in Honolulu. He knew of Martha Alexander Gerbode who was remotely related to him through marriage, and saw her in action beginning in 1963. He represented her and four other major plaintiffs and property holders in a challenge to proposals to develop Diamond Head. The challenges focussed on the lack of a city general plan and problems of spot zoning. The litigation was successful, and went from the First Circuit Court to the Supreme Court of Hawaii. Russell Cades also dealt with legal aspects of her purchase of the Fagan property and questions of air rights.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer/Editor

February 1995
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name: J. Russell Cates

Date of birth: October 30, 1904 Birthplace: Phila., Pa.

Father's full name: Isaac Cates

Occupation: Merchant Birthplace:

Mother's full name: Ada Francis Russell Cates

Occupation: Housewife Birthplace:

Your spouse: Charlotte McLean Cates

Occupation: Housewife Birthplace: San Francisco, Cal.

Your children: 1 son: Russell McLean Cates

Where did you grow up? In Philadelphia 1904 to 1924

Present community: Honolulu, Hawaii 1924 to present

Education:

Occupation(s):

Areas of expertise:

Other interests or activities:

Organizations in which you are active:
I'm capable now of missing a time frame by as much as five or ten years without really realizing it, but then something called to your attention will alter your entire focus in the things that you're talking about. So it became awfully important for me to at least have in my mind before I talked to you, the two incidents that really drew Martha Alexander [Gerbode] and myself together, that caused us to have the relationship that we had. And I wasn't even clear when I spoke to you by telephone.

I wasn't sure within five years what the years were, so I did what a lawyer does. I got in touch with our archives department and said, "Now first, where are the files having to do with either the Diamond Head litigation involving this so-called, quote 'Saving Diamond Head,' and secondly the files having to do with the conveyance of some air rights from Martha Gerbode or her property company to the public corporation (the name of it will occur to me in a minute) that was interested in acquiring these air rights for the protection of the public generally."

Now while they're related items, they were quite separate in my mind. One of them was a legal controversy that went through the courts and wound up in the Supreme Court in which she was one of the five parties--plaintiffs--involved. The second arose out of the first, but was somewhat independent of that. That was the fact that she (Martha Gerbode) acquired a piece of property, the Fagan property. Because things had happened in the first (the litigation), public excitement had been aroused to the point where it now seemed after the litigation that the city itself was interested in perhaps extending Kapiolani Park from its present, what we call the Cocohead, boundary, right out to and including the front of the Diamond Head area. Now that second thing was purely an incident, accidental incident of the first.
Nathan: Could I interrupt you a moment to ask, when you were saying the original litigation went up to the Supreme Court, was that the Hawaiian Supreme Court?

Cades: Yes, the Supreme Court of Hawaii. That's correct. Now I'm giving you a broad outline of my thinking as a result of your phone call. Fortunately or unfortunately many of our files we've kept intact because it seemed necessary to have the original documents. There are usually matters in which there is still some semblance of a dispute still in existence involving perhaps family members. There's nothing like that in this case so our original files in the litigation were destroyed. Under the procedure which we had then, if the lawyer indicated that it was a case which it might be necessary to refer to because of its historic interest, they then made microfiche of whatever documents could well be put into the fiche, and the rest was destroyed.

Those things were matters that were not readily reproducible. It would have been very expensive to try to get them all recorded and probably not worth doing. I had them all put downstairs and I spent an hour or two. I said, "All right, I'll go through these, I'll riffle through. They're largely newspaper clippings and editorials and stuff like that that she'll be welcome to look at." If there's anything that you want to take, you're welcome to have, if it becomes that interesting. This is only one incident in Martha Gerbode's life, I realize.

Nathan: It is an important incident and in many ways is illustrative of her style, perhaps.

Cades: I think you're probably right. I know she was excited about it, and interested. But not to the point of letting it hurt or interfere with her prudence in the expenditure of money.

Nathan: I hope in our conversation that you will explain what the issue was that was being fought out at this time.

Cades: Oh yes, I will. That part I'm prepared to explain now. I didn't realize until I riffled through the stuff yesterday what the issues were and how they grew.

I can't give you dates, times, persons, and all of that, but I can explain to you that two issues were first on the Diamond Head litigation, and secondly I know enough now to be able to say some things about how that exploded into an interest, perhaps in the city's extending Kapiolani Park. This brought on problems in Martha's mind, quite properly, to make sure that if they did extend the park and exercise the right to condemnation that the city has, that she was not going to be penalized for having tied
up the air rights, that is, penalized in comparison with other people. And that is understandable.

Nathan: Just to back up for a moment, I like very much the way you have laid this out in your mind, and this is interesting: I wondered if we could back up a little so that you might say something about how you came to meet Martha Gerbode, how long you knew her, and a little of what you saw in her before the actual processes got underway.

Cades: Yes, I can do that I think, because I had no great personal knowledge of her. I'll explain the kind of remote relationship that I have, through marriage, and then I'll begin and explain. What I'd like to do would be to come on first with the two items that I have in mind. I have no objection to your asking any questions; it doesn't disturb me. In fact I'm used to being interrupted [laughter] and see whether we can get a fairly lucid statement as to what the first, the litigation was about, and second, what I call the aftermath, the Save Diamond Head movement, which lit a big fire.

Nathan: That's a very good way to proceed.

Cades: Let me see. Just a minute. This group of clippings is helpful because it has dates and stuff like that.

Nathan: Oh excellent. I'll just say for the tape that you are picking up a handful of clippings pasted onto yellow sheets.

Cades: These can be identified as clippings that covered a period starting about August 1963, may have been a month or two before that, and continuing--somewhere within that period, ending up maybe in 1964.

Nathan: Right. And are these all Hawaii newspapers?

Cades: They are, they're local clippings, yes. They were not compiled by me; at the time the staff thought they bore on the litigation that we had undertaken to carry on, so that's why they happen to be here.

Nathan: That's very fortunate.

Cades: It is indeed from the point of view of a person trying to write a memoir.

Nathan: Right, very interesting.
Cades: Let me begin right at the beginning by giving you the ways in which you could officially, if you really wanted to write an extensive article on this, you could do that. I'm not trying to indicate whether this is important in the memoir or not. You're going to have to make that determination. But I have here the name and identity of the case and all of that, so it'd be relatively easy to write a document about the matter we're talking about.
II THE DIAMOND HEAD LITIGATION

Alice Spalding Bowen

Cades: To begin with, as I recollect, I had known Alice Spalding Bowen for a fairly long time and the reason that I knew her well was that she was born in a family that had big Hawaiian connections with the sugar families. Her middle name, Spalding, is a name well known in the sugar industry. I don't want to enlarge on that, because that's only one of the five ladies that I represented. But Alice Spalding Bowen was, I would say, my primary client in the sense that she had employed us for a number of years on behalf of the Gump Company, which she managed and operated for them in a perfectly beautiful building they built in Waikiki.

As an aside, I would think that while you are here, it might be worth your while to at least find out where the Gump Building is in Waikiki; it's still a very attractive building. It's designed very well and the name Gump was a very important name over a number of years in Hawaii because people had confidence not only in their integrity, but in their good taste. Alice Spalding Bowen, she personified all that as far as Hawaii was concerned.

Nathan: Yes, of course Gump's is an interesting and respected name in San Francisco as well, so I am familiar with it.

Cades: Let me just touch on my first meeting. The first meeting probably was with Mrs. Bowen. I don't know who it was that came in and asked me. (I don't have my original notes of meeting with them, they didn't save those.) The people that eventually were involved in the lawsuit: I'll give you their names and I'll give you the title to the case.
Five Litigants

Cades: The case called Civil Number 10274 was brought in the First Circuit Court of Hawaii in Honolulu. The five parties bringing the suit, that is that joined in and became responsible for the costs of the litigation, were the following: Alice Spalding Bowen--Alice S. Bowen is the way it appears I think. The second name was Sally Sheehan. Then there was Walter F. and Louise Dillingham, they were well known. The next name was Muriel C. Damon. And the fifth party was Martha Alexander, I don't remember whether it was Gerbode, I guess it was.

Nathan: It was by then.

Cades: But as you see, my dealings at that time were primarily with these women whom I had represented in various ways having to do with other public interest matters. I don't want to get distracted by that because Mrs. Bowen in particular was a very bright woman, a very well organized woman; she was certainly always polite and courteous, but not to be denied her rights as a citizen. She was not objectionable in the sense that we think, some people think, of feminists; I don't consider that feminism had anything to do with this. She was just a bright, well organized person who was interested in the beauty of her surroundings and she was going to see to it as well as she could, that they were in some way perpetuated.

Planning Commission's Request for a Variance

Cades: The situation was this: there had been a proceeding or there was a resolution that was proposed for adoption. (I believe it was before the planning commission.) In effect it requested that a special variance be granted from the requirements that were then existing: the existing legal requirements having to do with both the purposes and the height limitations for a property. The property involved was squarely in front of Diamond Head.

Nathan: Was this an area that was zoned for single family dwellings?

Cades: It was zoned residential, that's right, and there were height limitations. The idea was that there was to be a variance granted which would permit higher buildings, and the exact detail of how high they were to go and all of that has escaped me.

Nathan: Excuse me, did you meet with all of the parties?
Cades: No, I met with--I can't be sure. Obviously the spokesman for the group was Mrs. Bowen. I think that Sally Sheehan was in the meeting, I remember her, I remember her. Certainly Louise Dillingham was either in that meeting or another meeting; she may have been away at the time.

Well, in general I did things for various members of the Dillingham family. I was not their retained attorney or anything. And I knew Mrs. Dillingham very well and Mrs. Damon, Muriel C. Damon, I knew very well too. Her son was eventually associated with this law firm and that sort of thing. But I can't, I couldn't without notes tell you exactly what happened at the meeting, but I can give you the substance of it.

You don't mind my calling them the "five angry women"? [laughter] I used to call them in my own mind the five angry women [four plus Martha Gerbode]. They came in and they really were burned up about the idea of the proposed development. It looked to them as though in a routine manner the city was about to give a variance which would in effect block out Diamond Head. Once that started they could see no end to it.

Challenging Illegal Procedures

Cades: They asked me whether it was possible to do something as a matter of law to prevent it from happening. Their argument being that as a matter of law we had done a great many things, the Outdoor Circle had done a lot in preventing outdoor advertising. We were already a state, and in our state constitution, we had some recognition of aesthetics as a matter of concern for state government.

I'm giving you a summary of both what they said, and what I said. The concept was that this was a matter in which the courts should be able to intervene and at the very least prevent this action, which was to be done without having public hearings in which the public would be able to be heard. Because this would seem to be a violation of anything that looked like decent city planning.

Let me digress one minute by saying that I can't say we did much work in the planning field because it was a rather specialized practice, dominated by and large by lawyers who had a political complexion, let's put it that way. Lawyers, our lawyers particularly, were not working in the planning field because planning was partially political and partially involved dealing
with not only planners but with politicians and legislators and all of that. I'm not trying to indicate that there was anything improper or illegal or unethical about it, but it was a field in which you had to be prepared to really get in and work hard like you do in the criminal field if you're going to get in and get in at all.

My attitude was, and I said, that it was going to be a difficult case. I'm not interested in the case in order to make money for the firm because it's not the kind of case in which you profit much, but on a time basis it would cost money. I don't remember what the figure was, but I made some estimate. I said, "If you're prepared to go ahead and litigate it," for my knowledge, I had every assurance that we could get an injunction and that we could get some kind of a declaration that this was completely illegal.

Absence of a General Plan

Cades: But I could give them no assurance that it would result in a permanent benefit because through the political process and through other means the city might conceivably be able to get the variance through. Number one, it was possible for them to get a general plan adopted within a year or two. I gave it two years to get a general plan adopted.

Nathan: So there was at that time no general plan?

Cades: No general plan, but it was mandated by law that there should have been a general plan. The gist of my case was that the city had violated the law by not having a general plan already. That violation would be obvious to the court when we really argued the case and it was my guess the city would try to paste up a general plan as quickly as they could. But even with paste-ups, I thought that it would take a year or two to do so, and therefore in a conservative way I said that if I get this relief the only thing I can tell you is that it would probably last about two years.

From there on, it's in a political atmosphere and I can't tell you what will happen. We live in a place in which cultural changes are taking place rapidly. Without getting into much detail, from there on you're pretty much on your own. That much I had a reasonable assurance I could accomplish for them.

Nathan: So you could buy time for them.
Cades: Yes. Well, in retrospect I was younger and I was probably much more confident and cocky than I would be, say as a more mature lawyer. This is the way I felt.

Nathan: Do you, by any chance, remember whether Martha Gerbode was present at that first meeting?

Cades: I'm pretty sure she wasn't, but I can't be certain. They thought that having her a part of the group was a great asset to them, as indeed it was. I'm at a loss to give you a personal detail about that because I wasn't concentrating on that phase of it. The name Gerbode--now let me make a digression, because this will be of interest to you.

In 1938, I married my present wife. Her name at that time was Charlotte McLean Cooke. She had been divorced; I don't know exactly when, but it was probably around 1935. She had gone to Europe, had been out of the country for three or four years. But I was very well acquainted with my wife's father and mother, the Robert McLean family. And of course I had known her husband who was Douglas Alexander Cooke. Douglas Alexander Cooke was related to Martha Alexander in many ways. They are mixed several ways. The Cookes were related and the Baldwins were related and the Alexanders were related, and if you look at the charts, you can figure it out.

Nathan: I understand what you're describing.

Meeting Martha Gerbode

Cades: I had heard then and I hear now and again even yet that Martha Alexander was a personality in her own right. I think she had some ideas about how she wanted to live her life and all of that sort of thing, and I had known that, heard it said.

When I did meet her, I found her to be a woman of striking intelligence. She was perfectly clear on what she wanted to accomplish. I think she was conservative in the sense that she was willing to do an awful lot in connection with the things that she thought were the right things to do. At the same time she was very conservative in the sense that she liked people that were not extravagant; she didn't want to be extravagant herself, either in statements or in the expenditures of money.

She wanted to know where she was and I think she had some fear that when you're identified with successful family fortunes
that you're very easily imposed on. I didn't see any of that until, really until after this thing was really pretty well wound up. Some phases of it led me to believe that I was quite correct in that appraisal that she was concerned about expenses. And whether I touch on that or not is a problem you and I will discuss. Now to get on with the case.

Specifically, skipping all the preparation, when the case finally hit the court, and of course it got a lot of publicity, there was a tremendous interest in it. The issue of the case as I argued, was that it was absolutely necessary to have a general plan before you could have spot zoning under the general plan or have variances because there was no plan with which to have a variance.

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Nathan: We're talking about spot zoning among other things.

[tape interruption]

Cades: It seemed perfectly apparent that the state had to concede that we had had a great number of variances requested. All sorts of affidavits and things go into a case before it gets argued before the judge himself. It was beyond dispute that there had been no general plan. The sense of the general plan was defined by the statute which was contained in the city charter, that there should be a general plan. And of course the planning department was responsible for seeing that there was a general plan.

The Diamond Head Zoning Suit and Aaron Levine's Records

Nathan: Could I ask one point? Was this case brought by your group against the planning commission or the city council?

[tape interruption]

Cades: I think the suit was filed against the mayor, the city council, and the planning commission, and the city itself as a municipality. They were all named, it's my recollection--of course I could be checked easily--in the suit. To bring it really to a speedy head, I just happen to have been looking at the papers. I don't know whether you have interviewed Aaron Levine.

Nathan: I did yesterday.
Cades: Did you?

Nathan: He sent you his warm regards.

Cades: [laughter] Thank you very much. I hadn't looked at this for twenty-five years. When you see it, you must be able to include it in the papers. That particular file was a memorandum on what is called the Diamond Head Zoning Suit, that's the way he described it in his files, I think quite accurately. With his clear recording sense, he records things better than lawyers do, as a matter of fact.

He's had a lot of experience in the zoning field. I consider him one of the great citizens of Hawaii, he's done an awful lot here for the planning of the city. He's a man of absolute integrity and he worked for a long time as you may know with city planning in the City of Philadelphia where he had a considerable reputation. He also worked in California, and so on.

But at any rate, I have in front of me his memo which I will give you a copy of, it can be easily xeroxed. He actually attended the very short hearing that we had before the court, because there had been lots of briefs and papers and other things filed. This is really a paper case, rather than a testimony case, because it's all subject to being recorded in the documents.

It's interesting because he summarized in better form than I could, the way the argument took place at 9:10 a.m. in front of Judge Jamieson, Ronald Jamieson. He was a very good judge in the sense that he was a beautifully trained lawyer, graduated from Harvard Law School. But as a result of this case, and all the political rumpus that it ultimately resulted in, he should have been retained and continued as a judge here for the rest of his life. Instead of that he was not reappointed and he eventually made a career teaching the law.

In this memorandum, it points out better than I could, and without taking too much time, it tells pretty much what happened at that case.

Nathan: That would be wonderful. I would be happy to have it.

Cades: It's a quick summary. The actual argument did not take very long. In fact we didn't think it would take very long because we had filed briefs and all the papers were filed. I even had an appointment to handle a case that came up at 9:00 that day. At 10:30 I was supposed to be in a federal court and I asked the court to just divide the time between us for arguments so I could make my engagement at federal court. Jamieson refused to limit
the time to that, but at any rate we did finish and I ran off to my federal court case. I'll get you that copy before you leave, this is the only copy I have.

Seeking Limited Relief

Cades: Now the judge took it under advisement and then he not only asked for what we prayed for, but he actually gave us more than we asked for, and thereby you'll see some complications that arise. We asked that he enjoin them from proceeding with this variance on the ground that you couldn't have a variance from the general plan which had never been adopted. But when he looked at the evidence that we'd produced, which consisted of dozens and dozens of variances from whatever plan they had in existence, it became apparent to him that there was no way in which he could permit this practice to go on.

Therefore what he did was in effect to say that there can be no more variances granted here or any other place because you haven't got a statutory general plan adopted from which you can have a variance. Which was perfectly logical. Conceding that he was logical, conceding that that was what the law would indicate as a result the mess that had been created by the failure of the planning commission to do its duty, which in turn gets back to some politics in the city, I took the position that as a matter of law he was right.

But I tried to distinguish between the remedy which I asked for (we'd brought a specific suit to get a specific remedy) and a remedy beyond what I'd asked for, because it would put me in the awkward position at the expense of my clients of defending all of everything that came up over Oahu. That was unfair and burdensome, penalizing the people I represented who were being good citizens, by imposing on them a burden that they were not, should not be prepared to undertake.

A General Injunction

Cades: I'll just briefly tell you what happened thereafter. We prepared, as lawyers are supposed to do, what we considered to be the judgment that he ought to enter when he ruled in our favor. The city and their people took the part that, of course, there was no basis for any kind of an injunction. They were for anything that
he had no right to interfere with. This was part of the legislative process, as they called it, and the court had no room to put his nose in it at all. Everything was all wrong and they justified the fact that they didn't have a general plan by the fact that they were working on it, but they were doing it in pieces.

Of course, we had a lot of authorities that said you can't do it in pieces, you have to do it as a whole. A general plan means exactly what the statute says. You have to consider the whole, general requirements, and then get down to specifics through zoning and through specific building restrictions and other requirements, building codes and other things. That's the specificity that gets into it after you have a general plan.

To make a long story short, he [Jamieson] refused the specific relief that we requested. We filed papers saying that relief ought to be limited to what we had asked for, leaving the rest for others to take up in any way that they want to take it up. We didn't want to take up that big burden. Eventually the injunction was entered; it was a general injunction.

It did raise havoc, there is no question. Other builders and other projects were then going to be affected, their various developments that were in the course of being worked out. It put a stop to the whole planning process because they couldn't get their plans approved. So for a long time, groups of builders and developers thought we were their great enemies, that we had stopped their business in a way. In fact they realized that we hadn't tried to do it, and I was sympathetic with the people that wanted to go ahead as best they could.

There were a number of people on the planning commission who were outstanding architects and people of quality and they were not political types. In any democracy it's a very expensive way of operating a government. And, sure, there's going to be some backing and filling on big projects. There were some projects going on in Waimanalo and there were projects going on in Maunawili or Waimea. There were lots of projects that were going on. It looked like this was a great threat to these developments throughout the Island of Oahu.

I was sympathetic with the builders and the supply houses and the architects and everyone involved in that; it was not my intention to stop all of that. The logical problem was that once you had gotten into the variances, the city planning commission was granting variances like buying goods at Woolworth's store: you appear and, "You made your purchases." [laughter] You went out with your purse.
Now to bring it all to some kind of a head, I made a few notes here. On the 24th of December 1963, the city was making all kinds of attempts to get a re-hearing before Jamieson. I traveled in '63; I went to Japan and I went around the world, but James Campbell in our office, a very good lawyer, and William Swope were in charge. Campbell was the senior lawyer and Swope, the junior, had been my assistant during the case, a very good assistant.

Narrowing the Scope to Diamond Head

Cades: There were vigorous attempts to get Jamieson to re-hear and to at least cut down the scope of the injunction just to Diamond Head. Well, Jamieson, on the basis of what he saw, felt that was impossible and he refused to do it. So an appeal was taken to the state Supreme Court. Then there were a lot of preliminary hearings about getting into all the technicalities.

The Supreme Court realized that if you had stopped all the development that was going on, nothing could go forward anywhere in the state, and that people were going to be tremendously injured. Good people had no part of this, and there had to be some way to let them proceed without having an overall restriction on all the planning for the City of Honolulu. It's a growing city.

I must say that Jamieson's logic was, according to Aristotelian principle, indisputable. We were indeed sympathetic with the fact that there ought to be some way to work out not holding up everything that went on in the field of planning. We had to take that decision because we kept saying there was no way in which you could paste up a general plan in two weeks or three weeks. I had estimated it would take at least two years just to have hearings and do a decent job.

A general plan involves not only the raw aesthetic conception, but it involves having some conception of how you are going to supply all the public needs for transportation and for schools, for recreation facilities and all of that. It just seemed impossible for you to paste up anything in three weeks.

Now let me give you a few dates which will bind things up at this point. The decision was granted on July 26, 1963. The order and judgment was finally entered on July 31, '63. That was very broad. The motion denying the re-hearing was entered by him on October 21, 1963. So there was some time in which things were held up.
The Supreme Court eventually entered an order saying that the order should be limited to Diamond Head, but without prejudice to anybody else to come in and file any kind of complaints that he wants. In other words, they relieved Gerbode et al. from having to defend litigation involving places all over; we didn't want to go beyond the scope of our complaint.

Eventually, of course I haven't followed through, but I know that the judgment that Jamieson entered was never disturbed as modified by the Supreme Court. My recollection is it never had to be argued. I'll give you a little bit of sequence following that in that case. That plus whatever you see in the clippings.

Nathan: Yes, I would like that.

Cades: It would be interesting. I'll give you a few dates, too, that I got out that you won't be able to find if I don't give to you because they're on our microfilm. In doing our historic study, we did find some information, and this is of interest.

Honolulu City Planning: Historical Background

Cades: There's a document that shows that a city plan was considered in the report made by a man by the name of Charles Mulford Robinson in 1906. He was a well-known city planner and advisor from Rochester, New York. He was brought to Honolulu by something called the Civic Federation to report on the artistic side of city planning. In 1915 Walter F. Dillingham, who was one of the original members of the city planning commission, was involved. I'll give you this because he had a connection also with this suit.

In 1939 the Waikiki reclamation project and street plan was actually adopted, so they had some plan. In 1941 we have evidence of a lot of zoning variances already beginning before the war. In 1953 there was the land use plan and zoning, that's some kind of a report that was insisted on. It was prepared so that the city could qualify for federal funds for Honolulu's proposed redevelopment project, under federal law. This gives a little background.

There was a report dated June 3, 1957, by Leighton S. O. Lewis who had been appointed the director of the planning commission. In 1962 there was a legislative bill introduced--this is prior, mind you, to our suit--to save Diamond Head.
Nathan: In the state legislature?

Cades: In the state legislature. Because there was already excitement about what was going on. I give you this to show you that this just didn't arrive like a pimple. [laughter] That bill failed within the last five minutes of the closing of the 1962 Legislature. I only give that because I imagine that some of the people in the city knew a lot about that.

There are not only aesthetics involved in this. Alice Spalding Bowen to this day has a magnificent piece of property right in Diamond Head, as you may know. The Dillinghams had a property that was a little bit on the town side of Diamond Head. The Damons had some beautiful property there. So these were interested landowners. They could have profited by the explosion, too, of values if they wanted to let highrises go up all over the place. I mention that because I think it's relevant to show that they not only were interested, but they were doing it as good citizens.

Nathan: And of course there was the Alexander property.

Cades: And the Alexander property is not too far away. That's about all that I had to say.

In re-reading it all and the few hours that I've put into it, it's given me great pleasure to see what I consider to be legal principles. The principles are very simple. The application of the principle is like physics and chemistry and neurochemistry, very difficult. [laughter] They get into facts that are complex. And of course that's exactly what happened in this case. Believe you me, there's an awful lot of donkey work that had to be done digging out these records.

I must say, I don't like to speak disrespectfully, but I don't think that Martha Alexander quite understood the effort. You know it cost money to do this kind of thing. We're just as proud of our work as artists are of their work; we won't do it in a sloppy manner. We've still got some time to cover this second incident if you would like to.
III THE FAGAN PROPERTY, AIR RIGHTS AND TITLE

Nathan: Good. You mentioned, of course, the air rights question. Would that bring us into the 1967 effort to save Diamond Head?

Cades: That's correct. But if you have any questions specifically that I can throw any light on, to the extent that I'm able to, I'd be glad to try to answer them.

Nathan: I think you've been admirably clear, and as I look at your lawyer's yellow legal pad and I see the notes that you've made, I can understand why this has all gone so well. Let's proceed just as you wish.

Cades: All right. Because the second, while it's connected with it, I think it's a little bit different. There's a certain taste about it that is a little bit awkward, and I'll explain what I think it is, because I'd rather that you get my honest feeling about it.

What had happened was that as a result of probably her own property holding there plus her interest to save Diamond Head plus other things, Martha Alexander did acquire with her own money the so-called Fagan property which is very key property in the Diamond Head controversy. I can't remember which side it was, there was some Dillingham and Gaylord property down there, and I just don't remember exactly where it was on that beach. Do you have that?

Nathan: I have only the general area, and I don't know what the sequence was on the holdings.

Cades: You've seen the Alexander property?

Nathan: Yes.

Cades: I've been there several times. I know it's beyond that property.

Nathan: Is it toward the lighthouse?
Cades: Toward the lighthouse, but I'm not sure how many lots over it is, how many intervening landowners there are. It's all extremely beautiful property. If you have to live anywhere in Hawaii--. [laughter]

Focus on Saving Diamond Head

Cades: My brother Milton Cades has been connected with our firm starting in 1936. He's older than I am but he came here some seven years after I did. He was our tax partner and a well-known and distinguished lawyer, now retired. His home is right above Alice Spalding Bowen's property on that roadway that goes up, and of course he knows all about this. They asked him to act as part of the Save Diamond Head group, which he did. My record shows it was after we got our judgment from Jamieson.

Let me get to the second part. The Save Diamond Head problem was a little bit different. It seemed to grow like wildfire as you will see from all the clippings and things. It became a matter of general importance. Even Mayor Blaisdell and a lot of politicians, the governor and everybody began to become interested in Save Diamond Head. The newspapers, even though they fought about almost everything; the morning and the evening paper never agreed on anything very much, and they still disagree [laughs], but they were agreed on this, that our cause was just.

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Nathan: We are moving on to the Save Diamond Head episode of about 1967.

[tape interruption]

Cades: It might be well to say that I've just read my first portion of the letter that Mrs. Nathan wrote on March 2, 1991. I don't know whether I can blame it on the mail or on the fact that I've been haunted by temporary secretaries instead of having my secretary on hand. But specifically, under heading III, I refer to the Save Diamond Head activities, to the purchase of the Fagan property, and to the "five angry ladies" I've already covered.

Nathan: Yes you have, very nicely.

Cades: The rest of it, to the extent that I can, I'll try to come in when I finish with the Fagan property problem and its ultimate conveyance of the air rights to the Nature Conservancy.
This is what happened. I can tell you that there is such a thing as being "attorneys for the situation." That phrase arose once when the great Justice Louis Brandeis had been nominated by Woodrow Wilson in 1916 to be a member of the federal Supreme Court. There was lots of opposition to Brandeis' appointment. Some of it was inspired by cultural prejudice, some of it was inspired by the fact that he was a great activist, not unlike Martha Gerbode, in matters that he was interested in, part of which was inspired by the fact that he was a very effective lawyer. His Boston firm of Nutter, Dunbar and Brandeis was a great Boston law firm. Of course, they were involved in very serious litigation; but for a number of reasons, there was a tremendous opposition to Brandeis' confirmation in the Senate. The purpose of this story, you will see in a minute.

There was one bit of litigation involving the Shoe Machinery Corporation, it was a very important case at the time. Many, many parties were involved. Brandeis appeared for the people; he was always on the side, it seemed to me, of right and justice and decency. But they asked him, "Just whom did you represent in that situation?" And Justice Brandeis, with absolute integrity, replied, "My firm represented the situation." [laughter] In this question of Martha Alexander, I hadn't thought of this until this minute. I couldn't resist telling you that.

Nathan: It's very much to the point.

Cades: I don't think that Martha Alexander really dreamt of what would happen. When she bought that property, she had the absolute idea that she was not going to sell it without having those restrictive air rights; she had made up her mind. She was absolutely clear on that.

When she bought the property, we acted for her in her acquisition of the property. We also acted for her in getting her title registered and all that sort of thing.

Land Court Title

Nathan: Now this was the Fagan property.

Cades: Yes, the Fagan property. Other lawyers did the work. I didn't personally do it, because I was not a real property man, but we have a real property department. It's very competent, and particularly this was what's called "land court property." It meant that the title had been registered in the Torrens system of
land registration called "land court." It's a special method of registering title of the land, because it's considered to be so much more effective than the other way of having title.

To get land court title is considered to have the best title possible, because the full faith and credit of the State of Hawaii is behind it. I have to explain this because it's involved in this matter. As a result of what really seemed, even to me, to be a success in the case beyond anything that had ever been dreamt of--we not only won the case on an argument of a half hour, but we got an injunction.

In addition, as an off-product, there had already been a movement for Save Diamond Head started, but it got off the ground once this case emerged. You can imagine once this got into the papers, everybody was for Save Diamond Head. The politicians were all flocking in to be part of Save Diamond Head. It just became a very popular cause, and it was a good cause. I had not bargained on that even myself when I said, "Well, we can get you something stopped for a couple of years, but from then on, God knows what'll happen with politics being what they are in Hawaii." Which is exactly what I did say.

Now Martha got this property at a good price and we helped her to perfect the property, got the title registered, got her reservation of air rights all recorded on this very important document, which is a land court certificate; I even noted it down somewhere. I think I did. [pause--shuffling papers] Yes.

Put this in your notes, because any lawyer will understand this. A transfer certificate of title was issued to Edward Willis Scripps II [when she sold the Fagan property], and Martha's reservation of air rights was filed as a land court document, which is very important. That land court document is numbered 115721. That document, the reference to that reservation, is on Scripps' certificate of title, which means it's published to the whole world and everybody is now on notice and will be that way forever.

**The Question of Easement in Gross**

Cades: The reason I'm telling you that is, something got into some attorney somewhere that doesn't know beans about Hawaiian law, who told Martha that her reservation of air rights probably wasn't worth anything, because it has to be connected with some other piece of land and has to run with that land. Where she got that
opinion, I don't know. The reason that I know about it was that a man came down to see me. He was a nice man, I liked him, but he was not a lawyer. He was Scottish—what was his name? Mr. Gorie.

Nathan: Oh, Al Gorie.

Cades: Oh yes, Albert H. Gorie, I have it noted here. Gerbode Properties Company, 215 Market Street. He had a letter he presented to my office saying please—I think it was a personal letter—it said, "He's a very conservative man, but I want you to do everything you can to get this, because he represents my interests." So I talked with Gorie. I told Gorie exactly all this stuff about land. Is he still alive?

Nathan: Yes.

Cades: He's a perfectly good man. How she got off on this, I just don't know. Somehow or another, we had done all this work, we got it all prepared, registered, and through the court and everything else, and she said that someone in the property company or in her estate or some representative of hers questioned whether the reservation of air rights would be worth anything because it was what's called an "easement in gross." Easement in gross means an easement that is not attached to land, but is granted to a person and all of the heirs; it was granted to Martha and her heirs and assigns.

We told her that her heirs and assigns could be Nature Conservancy, it could be anybody she wanted. She was concerned whether it was better to keep it in her estate or turn it over to Nature Conservancy.

Now this is a point that I think I'd just rather not have published, but I don't mind telling it to you.

Nathan: Well, this is available to researchers.

Cades: Well then, cut it off.

[tape interruption]

Nathan: Now we're on again.

Cades: Nothing been recorded?

Nathan: No, we recorded nothing after that first statement, because we were talking privately. Now we're back on the air again.
Cades: All right. Well, I'd like to say that first I would be glad to participate in any way when the memoirs are further along or in any other way I'd be glad to supplement the thing; lots of things have occurred or could have occurred to me had I sat down and worked on it.
IV A GLIMPSE OF WALLACE ALEXANDER

Cades: I have a most interesting story about Wallace Alexander, for example, coming to my house one time.

Nathan: This is her father?

Cades: That's her father. This was purely by accident. I can't give you a date, it was after 1938, but it could have been very well in a period in which this [Diamond Head] stuff was going on, I'm not sure. Let me explain what happened. It's just an interesting story about Wallace Alexander.

We live on 2182 Makiki Roundtop, which is about on an elevation approximately equal to a house to which Wallace Alexander might have been going just across the valley, that's called Makiki Heights, and ours was called Makiki Roundtop. In any event, my wife and I didn't have any guest but we had a servant that prepared and served our dinner. We were preparing to sit down to dinner when a big car drove up and Mr. Wallace Alexander knocked at the front door. My wife greeted him, with some puzzlement and said, "Won't you come in," sat in our front room and some speculation went through my wife's mind, as she tells the story.

We seated him and asked whether he would have a glass of wine, thinking that something would come of it. [laughter] He must have recognized that he had come to the wrong place and it became obvious to us that he had probably made a mistake as to where he was headed for. He was indeed going somewhere else, which was to be on the opposite side of the valley. It was wonderful, you know, kind of Victorian courtesy.

The great puzzle in this call on us remains. We're satisfied it had nothing to do with us; it was just a mistake in address and identity.

Nathan: I wonder whether he was going to the Walls.
Cades: I have no idea. He never said, but immediately, yes, there was the Wall family over there, there are--actually not very far away was the property that my wife had lived in. It was a most beautiful house that Douglas Cooke and my wife Charlotte built together when they were married. That was the property that eventually became the property of Imelda Marcos.

Nathan: Oh yes. I know where that is.

Cades: That was the Douglas Cooke home. In which, I guess, my step-son was born and his older brother. I think they were born at home then, too.

Nathan: Probably so. Tell me just a word about Wallace Alexander. Was he a rather formal person?

Cades: Well, I didn't know him, to be perfectly honest. My impression of him was at the time that he was a rather formal person. The Baldwins, my impression is that in that family there was a real tremendous amount of talent, you know, brain power.

Nathan: Thank you for that glimpse and for your lawyer's-eye view of the Diamond Head story. You've made a complex chain of events much more clear.
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B. Martha Gerbode to Alec, Maryanna, and Frank Gerbode, December 7, 1941 (re: bombing of Pearl Harbor)

C. Loyalty Oath documents:
Statement from Martha Gerbode to the FBI, circa November 1952
Letter of support from Herbert S. Little to "whom it may concern," November 10, 1952

D. Diamond Head correspondence:
Letter from Alice Spalding Bowen (hereafter ASB) to Martha A. Gerbode (hereafter MAG), October 29, 1966; Telegram from ASB to MAG, March 13, 1967; Telegram from MAG to ASB, March 14, 1967; Letter from MAG to ASB, March 15, 1967; Letters to the Editor from Dr. and Mrs. Joseph L. Shaw, and MAG, April 17, 1967; Letters from MAG to Fred Farr, Mr. Phleger, Andre Kostelanetz, April 17, 1967; Letter from MAG to ASB, May 10, 1967; Letter to the Editor from "Louise Carroll" (Martha Gerbode) re: the "Mad Tea Party," June 22, 1967; Letter from MAG to Ben F. Kaito, June 30, 1967; Letter from MAG to ASB, August 1, 1967; Letter from MAG to ASB, October 22, 1967; Letter from MAG to Aaron Levine, January 22, 1968; Letter from MAG to Aaron Levine, March 12, 1968; Letter from Aaron Levine to MAG, March 18, 1968

E. Diamond Head documents:
Save Diamond Head Association--members and members at large of the board of directors, June 1969
"The Diamond Head Story," prepared by Oahu Development Conference, June 9, 1969
"Fourteen Years of Diamond Head," prepared by Oahu Development Conference, October 1975

F. Diamond Head articles:
"Owner Says No to Hotels," Honolulu Advertiser, July 1, 1967
"Her Saving Grace," by Bernice Scharlach, San Francisco Magazine, February 1971

G. "Make Rock a National Park," San Francisco Examiner, November 14, 1969
H. Poem written by Martha Gerbode for Penny Gerbode on her twentieth birthday

I. "In Memoriam," by Huey Johnson, 1971; and San Francisco Chronicle obituary, October 20, 1971

J. Letter from National Park Service to Thomas Layton, Gerbode Foundation, re: Gerbode Preserve, September 25, 1975; Map of Marin Headlands showing Gerbode Valley
Appendix A

MARTHA ALEXANDER GERBODE, 1909-1971,
A LIFE OF GENEROSITY, INVOLVEMENT, AND RESPONSIBILITY

By Harriet Nathan

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Background: In Search of Martha Gerbode

This brief account of the life of Martha Alexander Gerbode and her several worlds can only suggest the range of her complex personality and interests. It can, however, offer examples of her style both as a private person and as one who spoke out boldly on public issues. By nature, she was a gamine, choosing to wear the same camels' hair coat year after year, and also a great lady who understood her own powers and the way to use them in the world of private business, as well as decisions on public issues. She was a fighter for social justice, and a mischievous spirit who loved to "tweak the nose of society."

Some two decades have passed since her death at the age of sixty-one, but the issues she confronted and accepted as a matter of personal responsibility are as lively and pressing as ever. Martha's vision and ideas retain the power to startle with their prescience, and to enlist the public-spirited in the causes she championed.

This retrospective view of Martha Gerbode has benefited from the interest, help, and contributions of a number of individuals, organizations, and libraries in the Bay Area and in Honolulu. Family members, colleagues, friends, and representatives of organizations have provided interviews and conversations. In addition, several have supplied papers from their own collections. Maryanna Gerbode Stockholm provided cartons of family letters and documents, and made herself available for many consultations and explanations. Penelope Gerbode Jay and Dr. Frank Gerbode III supplied historical materials, clippings, and diaries. Georgiana (Mrs. Harley) Stevens donated papers and a copy of Martha's "Poem After a Pack Trip to Bench Lake with William Wursters and Harley Stevens." Philip Gerbode's contribution was verbal, made in a long, informative phone call.

In addition, others gave the writer access to papers from personal collections, with permission to copy selected items. In Honolulu these contributors included the granddaughter of Alice Spalding Bowen, Michelle Matson who opened her grandmother's extensive files; and Aaron Levine, who headed the Oahu Development Conference and was a leader in the Save Diamond Head organization. Russell Cades, Esq. contributed newspaper clippings and provided documents that related to legal proceedings in the Save Diamond Head effort.

Both the verbal and documentary materials have proven invaluable.

Introduction

From her earliest years, Martha was usually in motion. While her principles held steady once she became an adult, her involvements and
activities multiplied until some of her friends could hardly keep track of them. Martha, however, had no such difficulty.

This account focusses on several of her major areas of interest, beginning with the more private aspects of her life; parents, school-age years, marriage and family; establishment of the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation; observations by her adult children; and a look at some of her personal tastes. Reference to Martha's properties and financial interests serves to link her areas of privacy to those that were more publicly oriented.

The latter include her concerns for international relations; a "loyalty" issue in 1952; local community and public service, ranging from smaller but significant efforts in a number of fields to the major ecology battles in the San Francisco Bay Area and at Diamond Head in Honolulu. Finally, the conclusion takes note of two memorials that symbolize the public heritage she prized and found ways to protect for future generations.

**Martha Gerbode and Her Several Worlds**

Martha Barker Alexander was born into the pre-World War I society of Piedmont and Honolulu, the only child of prominent parents who shared a commitment to social responsibility. The setting was one of privilege, sheltered by the protection that a loving and affluent family could provide. In this setting Martha at an early age revealed endowments of her own: a knack for observation, willingness to make critical judgements, and the curiosity to look beyond the safety of her own neighborhood to see what lay outside.

As a schoolgirl she saw her mother's superb performance as a Red Cross volunteer during World War I, and a few years later caught her father's vision of international relations when she traveled with him to an Institute of Pacific Relations conference in Japan. Effectiveness as a volunteer working on community problems and the promise of international understanding opened her world in two directions. She could accept or reject either of those visions. She chose to accept them both and make them her own.

With Martha's marriage to Frank Gerbode during her last year in college and the establishment of their own family, in the 30s and early 40s the young Gerbodes put down roots in San Francisco. Martha was soon deluged with and joyfully accepted invitations to support community activities. She also shouldered her share of public service on civic boards and commissions.

These experiences taught her how to conform when necessary to achieve her purposes, but Martha and her interests were not always to be contained
in conventional molds. As her world expanded, it revealed not only the pleasures of a cosmopolitan community, but also its underside—poverty, intercultural barriers, social injustice, and threats to the ecology. She recognized these issues as challenges to be faced on behalf of her own well-loved children as well as for future generations.

Beginning in the late 30s, Martha's overseas travels with Frank, her eyewitness experience of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor close to her own Hawaiian neighborhood at Diamond Head, Frank's letters during his medical corps service overseas, and Martha's own work during World War II all added to her understanding that she was a part of more worlds than one.

In the years following the war's end, Martha and other like-minded observers recognized anew that the world's ecological balance was in danger. Martha responded quickly to the call to save at least part of the world: the sight-lines and open spaces of a Marin valley; Honolulu's Diamond Head; Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay; the Bay itself; and the San Francisco waterfront.

With all her boldness of conviction, Martha still retained some of the impress of her early years. She grew up in an era when young girls of prominent families accepted the formal tradition of a lady's privacy, specifically that her name should appear in the public press only on the occasions of her birth, marriage, and death. Martha had left many traditions behind her, but an instinctive preference for anonymity remained. When in the 60s she gave Alice Bowen permission to publish her name in the Save Diamond Head effort, Martha signaled her full commitment as a formidable fighter, and her determination that her side should prevail.

Martha's closest friends, who shared her personal life, recognized the strength of her mind and will, as well as her tender heart and dry wit. Amusing and affectionate with friends, Martha found dignified ways to provide for their needs—an affordable place to live, a vacation home for recuperation, money to live on—always with such tact that they were able to accept with comfort. For her family, Martha took pride in her husband's professional accomplishments, and in his progress from a young medical student to a world-renowned surgeon. She demonstrated her love, respect and ambition for her children by surrounding them with interesting books and banning TV from the home for years. She hoped to influence the children not by exhortation but by example, protecting them from the dangers of arrogance and the hazards that combined too much money with too little responsibility.

Parents: Principles and Style

Martha and her parents maintained a lively correspondence while she was in boarding school and they were away on frequent trips together. She
was busy with the life at school, but thought of the years ahead, when she too would be free to travel. Despite the distances that often separated the family, they kept in touch through frequent letters from Mary Alexander, and the birthday presents and special treats that reached Martha by mail. Although they were not often physically present in their daughter's day-to-day life, Mary and Wallace Alexander each defined a role and way of life with such assurance that in later years Martha could choose some aspects to emulate and others to challenge.

Mary Barker Alexander

Mary Simpson Barker--to be called Baccamama or Mama-san in her future daughter's correspondence--married Wallace McKinney Alexander in 1904, and devoted herself to the wifely role that she recognized as appropriate. She shaped her life primarily as her husband's affectionate companion and helpmate, and as one who supported his interests. She nevertheless maintained her own connections with friends, relatives, and correspondents who included such disparate persons as Lou Henry (Mrs. Herbert) Hoover and Helen Wills (Moody.)

Mary had the skill and warmth of an accomplished hostess, and the presence to entertain international guests. After her husband's death in 1939, she served as president of the Japan Society, as he had done. In addition, she was generous with hospitality to young family members and friends. When her nephew Jack wrote from Princeton in 1926, he thanked her for numerous gifts and a Christmas invitation as well as "opera, midnight feeds, hotel luncheons...." In short, during his visit, she had given him "a peach of a time."

Jack was one of many college-age cousins and their friends who counted on a visit to the Alexanders' Piedmont home to break their journey to school in the East. They came by ship from Hawaii to the mainland and straight to the Alexanders, where Mary provided meals featuring canned vegetables. The young people growing up in Hawaii knew nothing of fresh California produce, and much preferred the taste that came from the safe, familiar cans.

Both Mary and her husband were descended from missionary families, and she understood the importance of good works. She was serious about volunteer assignments, and by the time of World War I already knew how to work effectively with others, take responsibility, lead, organize, and inspire through her example. Mary served with the Red Cross as the commandant of the canteen at the Oakland Mole, the official depot for incoming and outgoing troops. In her notes, "War Days," she recalled gathering about forty women, "picked and dependable," committed to "the canteen, and entertainment of the boys at home weekends." As the canteen's leader, she, along with her colleague Mrs. Morrison, were soon at work each morning from 4 a.m. to noon.
The canteen’s original home was a car on a railroad siding, but as the need mushroomed, Mary volunteered further to build and furnish a canteen house (the "Oak-Alameda and Berkeley Canteen") with a kitchen that could serve more than 500 at a time. Her cousin Will Dickey made his own contribution by constructing the new building in the Southern Pacific yard. Men working on the railroad crews considered Mary and her band of "society women" intruders until they saw the women scrubbing floors and cooking meals day after day. The crewmen also observed the way Mary and her team showed respect for the troops by attending all the military funerals in a complete group dressed in their Red Cross uniforms.

Mary in the Red Cross canteen and Martha some thirty years later at the speakers’ bureau desk of the World Affairs Council were acting in response to the same conviction. Both were volunteers who might have hired someone else to do the job at hand, but felt the responsibility and the challenge to do the work themselves.

Wallace McKinney Alexander

Hawaiian-born Wallace McKinney Alexander was a man with impeccable educational and business credentials, and like his daughter in later years, his interests and ideals led him into some unexpected paths. He was a graduate of Phillips Andover and Yale; a member of the Pacific Union Club, the Bohemian Club, the Pacific Club of Honolulu, and the Yale Club of New York. He served on the national finance committee of the Republican Party and as president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. For fifteen years he was also a trustee of Stanford University.

Wallace Alexander was to achieve prominence in business and industry. He was a founder and later president of Alexander and Baldwin (discussed more fully below), vice president and later chairman of the board of the Matson Navigation Company, and active in the Honolulu Oil Corporation, Ltd. Examples of his affiliations include the directorship of the Pacific Lighting Corporation and other California corporations, and membership in a group that purchased the San Francisco Evening Bulletin in 1924.

Martha’s father was also a man of international vision. He saw the countries around the Pacific Rim as entities to be cultivated for friendship and cultural understanding, and linked by the mutual benefits of commerce. The method he chose was organizational; he served as a founder of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and with Ray Lyman Wilbur was a founder and later president of the Japan Society.

His drive to establish friendly relations among disparate groups extended to labor unions at home. He was identified with employers in his business and shipping activities, yet he succeeded in maintaining connections with labor leaders during the period of acrimonious waterfront strikes. In a celebrated incident decades later, Martha was to use the
family's long-term acquaintance with Harry Bridges to defuse a threatened confrontation at the World Affairs Council.

Wallace Alexander's personal interests included a love of opera. He was active in supporting the construction of the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco. Opera-goers hurrying to catch the elevator or climb the stairs to the left of the main entrance, may still see on the large metal wall plaque Wallace Alexander's name as president of the San Francisco Opera Association when the house was built, along with the names of other prominent citizens.

Allen Chickering wrote of Wallace that his style went beyond financial support of those endeavors he found important. He remained generous with his time, personal presence, and leadership in the San Francisco and East Bay Community Chest organizations, the Boy Scouts' Piedmont Council, and the Piedmont Interdenominational Church and the civic center. He attended church regularly and continued for years to look after its finances and general care.

In addition to his numerous interests, Wallace also gave thought to aspects of Martha's development. For her 18th birthday he wrote to her of his gift of Bank of America shares, and urged her to decide how to handle the income. He suggested that she "keep a little debit and credit account" and in this way gain a "clearer idea of the value of money."

Martha: Schoolgirl and Social Critic

Martha's schoolgirl letters to her traveling parents--thanking them for "darling" birthday presents, detailing classroom experiences, or recounting the events of an Atlanta social whirl--reflected her clarity of vision at an early age. Her schooling included Miss Ransom and Miss Bridges' in Piedmont, California; L'Ecole Nouvelle at Bex in Switzerland; Mt. Vernon Seminary in Washington, D.C.; and Stanford University. When she entered Mt. Vernon in 1926, Martha presented herself as a rough diamond from the West, essentially challenging the school to try to chip away the sharper edges. She reported a fight with the "reading" teacher:

I have been put into an "expression" class because they don't like my accent. I tho't it might be sort of fun, but---!
....the teacher is the most affected creature! "Mercy" should of course be pronounced "maircy," "necessary, necess-ry" etc. I know that is the way they speak in the East, but what would you do if I came home with expressions such as, "I'm going to chairch" instead of "church?" Says she, "You, girls, of course want to show that you're of the upper class." [emphasis in the original]
Along with her half-mischievous resistance to the school's effort to apply a layer of eastern polish, Martha took pleasure in the good scholarship that earned her a place on the honor roll (February 1928), and the recognition that "Madame did like my French one-act play." That same year Martha wrote the class song and played it on the piano before an audience. Somewhat abashed, she was acclaimed as both composer and librettist. Her love of music extended to singing second soprano in the Glee Club; she found it so rewarding that she asked her parents for permission to take singing lessons.

Out of doors, Martha and her classmates delighted in the excitement of riding horseback. She mentioned parenthetically to her parents that some of the girls rented a horse by the month, "but as it is $125, I'm afraid that I won't be able to afford it." However that critical issue was resolved, she reported (1926) that "We went for a gorgeous ride, and did quite a bit of jumping. Nothing I love better." Her repertoire also included long rides a few years later on her horse, Cavour, during the summer on the flatlands at Stanford, and conquering the terrain on Mt. Tantalus on Oahu, where she, Garton Wall, and other friends would ride boldly up and down the steep trails.

Martha was the right age and temperament to be thrilled and dazzled, but not totally disarmed by Atlanta's social whirl during a visit to family friends in March and April 1928. She wrote home that in one week she had attended five movies, five luncheons, two tea-dances, two dinner-dances, one dance, one theater evening, a drive "all over Atlanta, and an all morning drive that led to the aviation field in the afternoon." Further, "I didn't meet one person I didn't like at once." One of those she met was a young law student who hoped to find a summer job working for the Matson Line. As a matter of course Martha wrote to her father asking for his help, reasoning that his position then as vice president of the Matson Navigation Company might smooth the way for her new friend.

A few days later she confided in a letter to her mother:

Although I am having a marvelous time, I have decided that it wouldn't do long for me. The girls never do anything--unless they pretend to give dancing lessons and model in shops. They go out every minute until they're married and then sit down to start planning how their daughters will go out....

While she was still at Mt. Vernon Seminary Martha had begun to think about the trip to Japan with her father in 1929, and grasped the idea that it would be a grand adventure. That visit did mark her entry into the world of travel and international interests, but even that prospect did not fully fill her horizon. To her mother she wrote, "Please be thinking something about my future--after the Japan trip I warn you, I can't sit down and do nothing." Her insight was prophetic.
Neither then as a young girl having a marvelous time, nor later as a wife and mother with multiple responsibilities, nor still later as she learned to use her mature authority in public issues, could Martha simply sit at home while the world around her cried out for change. In later years, her daring, energy, and need to deal with public questions posed some difficulties for her mother and her husband. Both expressed concern that Martha was doing "too much," hinting that despite competent household help and a family backup she might be risking the neglect of her home and children. Further, at intervals they would suggest that maybe the time had come for Martha to stay at home and be quiet for a while. For her part, she never saw the need to choose between private and public claims; her commitment covered them all.

Just as the Japan experience opened Martha's eyes to international concerns, the Stanford years offered two major adventures. The first was exposure to broader learning and concern with public issues; the second was an idyllic campus romance.

**Stanford University and a Wedding**

Soon after the Japan adventure, Martha entered the new world of Stanford University. Her enrollment there as a junior placed her happily back at home in the West, and for the first time made her part of a major coeducational university with its opportunities for stimulation and intellectual growth. In January 1931 she met a young medical student, Frank Gerbode, in psychology classes. When they learned that they were both commuting from their Piedmont homes to Stanford, they agreed to make the commute together. Martha wrote to her parents at the Ritz Carleton in Boston (July 14, 1931) "I've been seeing a good deal of Frank Gerbode lately. You'd like him." She added a P.S., "Gerbode is pronounced Ger-bod-ey and is *not* Italian but German."

Martha's reference to Frank was deliberately casual, but that same month the strength of their feelings brought them together in a secret engagement. Frank had already written to his sister that "Martha is the essence of the perfect woman. All our feelings and ideas run in the same path." The young couple required secrecy at this point because Martha's parents needed to be the first to know, and they were traveling by the Overland Limited out of Washington, D.C.

Martha soon wired the news, adding "please try to reserve opinions 'til you meet Frank....Frank is everything I admire in a man...." To let the Alexanders know something about himself and his parentage, Frank's wire included the statement that they were "naturalized Germans stop [and of himself that he had] four years to study stop age 24....means limited and independent of family for years."
Frank proved acceptable to Martha's parents, and the marriage took place at her Piedmont home on Christmas Eve, 1931. The next year she graduated from Stanford with unrealized hopes of studying nursing, and Frank continued his medical training at Stanford Hospital in San Francisco. He was to become a celebrated surgeon who also took part in the development of a membrane heart-lung machine.

The Gerbode Children

Martha, an only child, and Frank who had two brothers and a sister, looked forward to having a houseful of children of their own. The first in the new family was Wallace Alexander Gerbode (Alec); next came Maryanna (Mrs. Charles Stockholm); and then Frank Albert Gerbode III (Sarge, so named when his father returned from World War II duty with the rank of colonel.) The last-born child, Susan, died in infancy.

Martha sought to influence the children's behavior primarily by example: always to be aware of the feelings of others, to be mildly self-deprecating, never boastful, and certainly to avoid acting "like a rich kid with an attitude." Sarge remembers that in shunning ostentation Martha drove "crummy cars," a Rambler, a Renault Dauphine. An Isotta-Fraschini best met her standards for ecological correctness in size and gas consumption, ideal for California. At one point she considered an Isotta-Fraschini dealership but not conclusively, and in any case the car was withdrawn from production after a few years. It was, however, well remembered; it was highly maneuverable, had a single-cylinder motor and a maximum speed of 45 mph. A door opened in front; there were two big front wheels and two small ones in back. The car's triangular shape made it appear almost toy-like, but Martha liked to drive it because it was the opposite of the big, expensive, overwhelming cars that she saw as "unfair."

At home, the children and Martha had special kinds of fun. She would turn off the lights and chase them around the house. Or she would play a Schumann-type song on the piano, with ominous chords as she narrated a scary story about a lurking figure--then one bang on the keys, and the question, "Who was this solitary man?" as they all shivered with delight.

Alec was a student at Stanford in 1953; just before his 19th birthday he was killed in an automobile accident. The Gerbodes had to find their way of dealing with irreparable loss; Martha and Frank chose silence as a way of surviving, and Alec's death was never discussed even in the family. Maryanna at fifteen was deeply saddened and upset by the loss of her brother. Thirteen-year-old Sarge felt a downhill change in his own nature. A few weeks after Alec's death Martha and Frank adopted two young children, a sister and brother in need of a home. Penelope (Penny, Mrs. Thomas Christian Jay) was then six years old; her brother John Philip (Philip) was four.
Martha determined to honor Alec's memory by organizing the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, and providing funds and designated properties for its support. This was the natural development of an informal system Martha had set up in 1951 to deal with philanthropic matters. Maryanna noted that before and during the development of the Gerbode Foundation, Martha had made donations from her own father's family trust, and also made personal gifts to nonprofit groups, a practice she continued after the foundation was in place. By 1953 the Gerbode Foundation had been established with the organization and philosophy to function effectively in selected counties in the San Francisco Bay Area and in the State of Hawaii.

Remembering Martha

As adults, Maryanna, Sarge, Penny and Philip reflected on their mother's style, sometimes with acceptance and sometimes with questions, but with full appreciation for her qualities.

Maryanna has suggested that the information and challenge her mother provided led to the discovery of her own ability to seek out and organize information, and develop a grasp of financial matters. These experiences permitted Maryanna to function effectively in such settings as the board of directors of Alexander and Baldwin. While the styles and approaches of mother and daughter might differ, both knew as they talked together that an intelligent woman could cultivate a "head for business" and act with confidence as the need arose.

Sarge found that some of his deepest interests paralleled Martha's. He felt that his scholarly bent, interest in philosophy, and lifelong love of music were stimulated by his mother's pursuits. Martha took him along when she handled the speakers' bureau desk for the World Affairs Council, and paid nine-year-old Sarge to help with the filing. With his earnings he bought a ukelele that the Hawaiian beach boys taught him to play. In later years he moved on to study the classical guitar and the lute.

Philip recognized the influence of Martha's views when he took part in establishing the Vanguard Public Foundation; and Penny also became an early member of the board. Philip was attracted, as Martha was, to the notion of funding unconventional projects that would lead to social change. (As Martha had said to Huey Johnson of the Nature Conservancy, "You can bring me projects others don't want to fund.") Philip also saw something in her humorous, mischievous nature that was compatible with an irreverent streak in his own. He recalled attending a Big Game and sitting with friends in the Stanford section, but taking care to dress in the blue and gold of the University of California.

Penny, who came to know her mother better in the last year of Martha's life, remembers her as a devoted community worker, indifferent to the limelight. At home, Penny saw Martha as avoiding direct lesson
assignments, but hoping that the children would be attentive to her principles and example. Martha gave the children plenty of books and read widely herself, but not to them. They were expected to read to themselves. When she was an adult talking to her mother, Penny developed an interest in the family's history, and gave this interest tangible form by building a house in the image of the original Alexander house at Diamond Head--Lanihau--but located at the base of Haleakala on Maui.

**Friendships and Loyalties**

Contrary to the old saw that those who love humanity often don't like people, Martha cared about her friends almost as much as her own family. Esther Pike (Fuller) recalled the way Martha thought about buying an historic pre-fab house that had traveled around the Horn. The house came to rest briefly on Vallejo Street before being settled permanently on Pixley Street in San Francisco, and it was at Pixley Street that Martha considered the purchase. She knew that Esther Pike was unclear about where she would live, and Martha asked,"If I buy that house, will you rent it for a while?" The rental terms were to "pay whatever you can, and stay as long as you like"; this arrangement continued as long as Martha lived.

Close friends had found themselves exhausted after one of their children had suffered a serious accident. Martha prescribed a vacation at her oceanside ranch on Kauai, and they accepted, finding that the sun and sea helped to heal them, just as Martha had hoped.

When Ann and Garland Farmer were expecting their second child, they moved from an apartment on Divisadero to a much smaller one in the Marina. To welcome the new baby, Martha prepared "the most beautiful bassinet, and...carried it up the stairs" herself. She was startled to learn how modestly the Farmers lived. She was not at all naive about the lives of poor people, but found it hard to think that the director of the World Affairs Council would have to live in such restricted quarters. The Farmers were touched by her concern although they did not share her views. After all, "the Marina was no slum." When they left San Francisco for Texas Martha gave them a water color of the Palace of the Legion of Honor, a picture Frank had painted, to remind them of San Francisco. The picture still hangs in their bedroom many years later. Farmer said, "Martha was a very thoughtful person."

Martha's loyalty to friends had emerged earlier, in the 30s when she was an undergraduate at Stanford, where she developed a friendship with a professor and his wife. In the uneasy political climate of the 50s he found himself summarily retired from the Hoover Institute. The professor and his wife, who was incapacitated, found their financial position shaky and their future unpromising. Martha learned of their difficulties, and helped them financially for the rest of her life.
Martha and the World of Books

Along with self-imposed obligations, Martha’s private life included numerous enthusiasms; one of the strongest related to books. She was the kind of reader who always had a book at hand at home or traveling, at the ski lodge or the beach. Further, her love of reading branched in two directions: a fascination with writing, and a cultivated taste for the art of fine book production. Her interest in fine printing led her to San Francisco’s Grabhorn Press and Colt Press among others; she gathered their books but never spoke of her growing library as a "collection." Martha also admired and supported the work of the Trianon Press in Paris, and acquired a number of their volumes. Philip in turn caught her enthusiasm for book production and design, and spent some time studying at the press.

Fine bookbinding, the partner of fine printing, also flourished in the Bay Area book community in the 30s. Martha learned that Belle McMurtry Young taught fine book binding, and with Phoebe Dohrmann and Leah Wollenberg signed up to study with the eminent teacher. The lessons continued until Belle told Phoebe’s mother-in-law that she could no longer continue with "the kids" because she was losing her hearing. Martha was disappointed but not deterred.

In 1936, she, Frank, and Alec made an extended visit to Europe, principally to Germany where Frank welcomed the opportunity to further his medical skills, and Martha hoped to continue her studies in bookbinding. In her diary she wrote an account of her experiences: "How I Did Not Take the State Examination in Art." She approached the Munich art school to show examples of her bookbinding as a prelude to admission, recognizing with a shock that she could "suddenly detect fifty mistakes." In the end she had to give up the idea of studying there for several reasons. Her command of German was less than perfect; prerequisite courses in printing and paper design were mandatory before she could begin actual bookbinding. Finally, the course demanded long, rigorous hours of study that did not fit into her life as a visitor.

Martha concluded that she had come to the art school "determined to study bookbinding with the masters, but I find there are some things I cannot do for Art's Sake!" Her wry acceptance of disappointment in Germany did not end her interest, however, and two years later while awaiting the birth of her daughter, Maryanna, Martha wrote to her mother that she was busy taking notes on bookbinding all over again.

Writing, Writing

In time other concerns moved to the center of her attention and displaced her desire to bind books by hand. Her interest in writing, however, never left her, but continued to grow and flourish year after year. Martha had begun her writing with school-girl correspondence,
diaries, and stories, and as she matured undertook short stories and articles while maintaining a brisk correspondence on private and public matters.

Martha's files included evidence of a manuscript submitted to Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, accompanied by the editors' familiar letter: "Thanks....but unfortunately...." Further, letters, manuscript drafts and lessons documented her work with the Famous Writers School. The teachers there acknowledged by correspondence her way with words and her imagination, and urged her to work harder on the nuts and bolts of writing. Some of her manuscripts seemed to be based on actual events and her own experiences, such as a household robbery; others were perhaps more freely inspired by her school days; and still others drew upon her own creativity and inventiveness.

The mixed results of these efforts apparently did not affect Martha's enjoyment of writing, but continued to provide a means of commenting on those activities she enjoyed, and some she did not--such as rough camping and pack trips. Georgiana Stevens, a friend who enjoyed her comments, provided the following poem that best expresses Martha's views in her own words.

(See Poem p. 192a)

Real Estate and Historic Preservation

Some of her contemporaries observed that Martha's views on political and social issues often seemed to conflict with her financial interests as a woman of property. It was true that the management and cultivation of real estate and financial holdings were not her primary concern, although she did not ignore them. It was also true that she often used her private wealth as a means to the public ends she sought both at international and community levels. Martha accepted ambiguities; she could advance towards more than one goal at a time.

In the field of real estate she often combined property purchases with historic preservation, defense of the ecology, or the safeguarding of natural beauties. At other times her purchases carried a single aim; to build a family home, or to create a private hideaway.

The first major undertaking by Martha and Frank was building a family house at Divisadero and Broadway in San Francisco. The young Gerbodes experienced both excitement and qualms. Martha sailed through the multiple decisions and details with humor and enjoyment, but Frank commented that the proposed house was going to be a large one for someone just starting in a profession. When it was finished in 1938, both of them found William Wurster's architectural design and contractor Sophus Stockholm's
POEM AFTER A PACK TRIP TO BENCH LAKE  
WITH WILLIAM WURSTERS AND HARLEY STEVENS  
BY MARTHA GERBODE

Flow gently, King's River, among thy green braes.  
Remind me of yonder more halycon days;  
Arcadian forest, and pastoral mead,  
A line in one hand, and a good book to read.

The air is like wine, though the breath may come short,  
And digging those trenches is laughable sport!  
No air in the mattress, but plenty of ants;  
A bear in the bushes, a rip in the pants.

The campfire's glowing, the night wind is chill.  
Undress at high speed . . . first a trip up the hill.  
Fish chowder, fish salad . . . fish, baked, broiled and fried,  
And when it runs out . . . why more fish is supplied.

Now bring up more water! And bake us a cake!  
And where is the chocolate and cheese, for God's sake?  
Who's leading this party? Look sharp with those ropes!  
Don't crowd me . . . step lively . . . hold back on the slopes!

Bucolic, agrarian, rustic, serene;  
The dishpans lend charm to this pleasurable scene.  
What's gout in the toes or a burn on the hand?  
We're efficient! Terrific! We live off the land!

Flow gently, King's River, I passionately care  
For the world's finest mountains, God's Country, I swear!  
The world's finest friends, the best trout in the stream.  
Flow gently, King's River, disturb not my dream.
interpretation all they had hoped for. Wurster and Stockholm and their wives continued to be close friends of the Gerbodes.

Martha and Frank were to acquire several houses including the Wurster-designed home at Sugar Bowl, but it was the Divisadero Street house that became the family base. Martha often made it available for committee and group meetings and for larger social gatherings. She did her own work in the mornings in her room upstairs, regularly typing correspondence, reports, and drafts of short stories, and keeping current with stacks of reading material.

In the basement, the capacious "downstairs room" housed a variety of transient occupants ranging from medical students to foreign visitors. Whoever they were, they often found that Martha had recruited them to volunteer with her at the World Affairs Council office.

In 1945, not only the room but the location of the house became significant. The position on Divisadero Street placed it across from the Russian Consulate. At the request of the federal government, Martha with some amusement allowed two men from the Office of Strategic Services to use the basement room as an observation post. Their assignment was to keep an eye on the Russians during the United Nations conference in the city.

The Divisadero Street house seemed to attract more and more activity, and Martha began to look for a personal hideaway in the Bay Area where she could retreat for privacy and get away from the telephone. In Sausalito she found a houseboat that she and friends like Esther Pike (Fuller) painted daffodil yellow; its name, naturally, was "The Daffy." Its window boxes held flowers and the rooms, antique furniture, with paintings on the walls. Martha and her guests enjoyed the Daffy until a storm with high winds and tides hit the Sausalito waterways. Albert Morch, writing in the San Francisco Examiner in 1967, recounted how the houseboat sank without warning. Penny later went to the site and did, however, manage to salvage some silverware, a rug, and an oak chest that had belonged to Martha's grandfather.

Martha served two purposes when she acted to acquire additional real estate in the San Francisco Bay Area; first to preserve historic property, and second to provide individual homes for her children as they became adults. The four houses included two in San Francisco--one on Pixley Street and one on Pacific Avenue--as well as one in Palo Alto and one in Tiburon.

In the 50s before the simmering Diamond Head issue exploded, Martha recognized the rising pressures for unregulated development in Hawaii. She looked beyond Oahu for a pristine area, a hideaway that she could preserve for the present and future enjoyment of her family. She admired the superb beauty of Kepuikai, Jack Waterhouse's large cattle ranch on the island of Kauai, and searched for a smaller version. She found her spot on 160 acres
of ranch land that the Rice family sold to her. The ranch was Papaa at Moloaa on Kauai, halfway between Lihue and Hanalei. The ranch had a small house on the beach, like one she knew on Maui and liked for its simplicity.

The lore of the Papaa ranch as remembered by some of Martha's friends, included a visit by the family of the late President John Kennedy shortly after his funeral. His widow and the two children spent some time recuperating at Papaa, enjoying the valley and the beach. Jacqueline Kennedy then wrote a graceful letter of appreciation to Martha.

The ranch also attracted the attention of real estate brokers. In 1969 one John D. Texeira introduced himself by letter to the Gerbodes, inquiring whether the Papaa, Moloaa estate was for sale. If so, he offered to represent them, adding that he had a "responsible group" who were offering $1 million for the property.

After Martha's death Frank enlarged the house to accommodate his more frequent visits, and some additional projects of his own. His interest in Hawaii's traditional cattle ranching led him to acquire a brand—a reversed capital F over a bar—issued May 24, 1974 by a certificate of Cattle Brand Registration from the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

### Haumalu and Lanihau

Through both family and historic interest, Martha was deeply attached to the homes at Oahu's Diamond Head in Hawaii, the family's other base. The Lanihau property came into Wallace Alexander's hands when he bought it from Atherton Richards in 1929, and retained C.W. Dickey as the architect for the home he built the following year. At Haumalu there was also a house, one designed by Dickey in 1931 for Ann and Jay Gould of New York. After it was damaged by fire, the house was later remodeled. In 1936 the Alexanders bought Haumalu as a vacation home for Martha and Frank, and a few years after Wallace's death, Mary turned the Diamond Head estates over to Martha. The holdings ran all the way to the water, with almost two acres of white sand beachfront.

Lanihau and Haumalu were recognized both for the beauty of their setting and the charming character of the houses themselves. During World War II Martha leased both properties to the armed forces for use as rest and recreation facilities. The way Martha opened her homes made her something of a celebrity in the war's Pacific theater. At the end of hostilities, the woman responsible for operating Haumalu wrote a personal note to Martha:

I know that you will receive thanks from the Navy and Marines for the use of your lovely home, but I feel impelled to write
also because I, as an outsider, know so much of the great happiness you made possible for the boys....there was something about the Rest Home not found in other places.

She mentioned the "construction that makes for homeyness and a feeling of intimacy," as well as the presence of Martha's own furnishings and the "lovely setting." She added:

News of your visit there spread to all parts of the Pacific and each new group asked about you. One thing that impressed them was the fact that you (and I) were pro-Roosevelt. That the owner of such a home should be, struck them as proving that you were "pretty fine."

Development issues at Diamond Head heated up again in the 60s, as they had done with increasing frequency since World War II and Martha joined in the defense of the beachfront properties and in the call for rational city planning. (Her efforts in the Save Diamond Head defense appear in greater detail below.) Here it is appropriate to note only that she used her own funds to buy the strategically located Fagan property to forestall unregulated development. She neither wanted the house ("What am I to do with this huge place?") nor used it to make a profit when she later sold it to E.W. Scripps. With others in the defense effort, she did seek to preserve the visual beauty of the Diamond Head and beachfront area, and to keep open the possibility of the hoped-for extension of Kapiolani Park.

Aaron Levine, President of the Oahu Development Conference and a champion of quality city planning, recalled a later occasion when the firm of Alexander and Baldwin was considering development of its property at Wailea on Maui. He and Martha discussed the matter from time to time, and he observed that she was instrumental in convincing the board of directors to form an environmental design committee to guide the development in the best possible way. The committee included Levine, Vladimir Ossipoff, and three others who prepared their recommendations with great care. Levine noted that Alexander and Baldwin sold the property around 1990, leaving the future quality of the development unclear.

Alexander and Baldwin, the Family Firm

In matters of business and finance, the firm of Alexander and Baldwin exerted a number of claims on Martha's attention. She was a major shareholder and kept an eye on her holdings and the ways in which board and management decisions affected them. In addition to financial issues, her own concern was shaped by family tradition. Ever since the firm's founding in 1900, Alexanders had played leading roles in its development. Martha's father, Wallace M. Alexander and her grandfather, Samuel T. Alexander, joined with Henry P. Baldwin and J.P. Cooke to found Alexander and Baldwin in Hawaii, incorporating their plantation and commercial interests.
Wallace Alexander was in charge of the San Francisco operations for thirty years. After the death of J.P. Cooke in 1918, Wallace served as president until 1930, when he became chairman of the board and felt free to spend time in his new house at Diamond Head.

Martha watched the operation of the enterprise, and during the 60s became convinced that the firm needed better leadership because management was not doing a good enough job. Around this time, the character of the business management was changing; the group of paid managers included persons who were not family members, and were less willing to deal with Martha. In addition, some board members felt disinclined to hear her views, contending that her comments and questions were not useful, primarily because she lacked a business background.

In response, Martha summoned legal advice. She offered to conduct a proxy fight to inform shareholders that management was not performing well. The board preferred to avoid bad publicity, and agreed to add two younger members: first Charles Stockholm, and a year later Carson McKissick. Both were business oriented, and the sons of good friends of the Gerbodes.

When Maryanna returned to the Bay Area in the late 60s, she and her mother spent time together discussing business matters. The longer they talked, the more Maryanna's interest grew, and the more deeply she considered style and strategies in business discussions. Later on in the 70s after Martha's death, Maryanna and her father continued to discuss the affairs of Alexander and Baldwin, and made a point of improving their acquaintance with some of the management people. Maryanna shared Martha's earlier sense of unease, increasingly after the firm's management proposed a merger that Maryanna perceived as not to the advantage of Alexander and Baldwin shareholders. On the contrary, it would do them "a lot of damage." To ascertain what would happen if the merger went through she gathered consultants to help her analyze the information and understand its meaning. She was then able to gain a measure of support from family members, and became the first woman board member of Alexander and Baldwin. In so doing, she took Martha's reforms and financial views yet one major step forward.

**Travels, World Affairs and Overseas Connections**

As a young girl, Martha had developed an abiding interest in two major clusters of overseas cultures: those of Asia, principally Japan, and those of the nations of Europe. She had developed friendships with students from several European countries during school in Switzerland, and was later able to visit some of them, but it was the trip to Japan midway in her college years that spurred her lifelong fascination with international affairs before, during and after World War II.

Wallace Alexander wrote to his wife in October 1929 that Martha was having a fine time on the Dollar Line's SS President Johnson en route to
Japan for the conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations. His motives in becoming a founder of the institute were both practical—a desire to increase commerce—and idealistic: the furthering of cultural understanding. As he said, he wanted to translate Hawaiian racial tolerance to the wider theater of the Pacific.

The 1929 conference was, as her father had hoped, a happy occasion for Martha, who radiated high spirits and good will. She was able to meet a number of young people in Japan and enjoyed several months of correspondence with two women students from Doshisha Women's College in Kyoto. In addition, when her picture appeared in a Japanese newspaper, a young man wrote to her from Kyomachi, Wakatsu City. He identified himself as a graduate of Columbia University, and head editor of the Oita Times.

Some seven years later traveling with her husband and son, Martha learned firsthand something of European cultures, principally that of Germany. The Gerbodes' two-year stay began in 1936 and Martha's diary discussed events and sights in Berlin, and many in Cologne including the fish-kitchen that encouraged housewives to serve fish twice a week and thereby use less meat. She was also impressed by a clean, well-run orphan asylum. In the side-trips to Holland, Hungary, and Poland she saw for the first time areas where the kitchens had virtually none of the expected facilities, including water. Back in Germany she wrote of visiting a number of small communities as well as the home-place of the Gerbode family. Her eye-witness account included both the upbeat—Fasching and Christmas celebrations—and the somber, early spectacles celebrating the rise of Nazi power. These images remained in her memory, and in July 1941 she commented, "The news of the recall of the Nazi consuls gives us the cold shudders. Next it will be His Excellency the Ambassador, and we will be well launched in the Second Great War."

Visitors to San Francisco kept the Japanese connection a strong one. Martha wrote to her mother (March 1940) that "Count Kabayama was passing through....and wanted to pay his respects to 'our house, the Alexanders'." In Mary's absence, he asked to pay a 5 p.m. call on Martha who found him the
dearest little old gentleman with whom it was very easy to converse. He stayed for one hour, talking about his "cultural relations" group and the situation in China and Europe and tried to make clear to me Japan's position in the Orient....very frank....food for further thought. He said that he felt sure that Father must have worried about Japan's "invasion" of China and that he would have liked to have talked with him about it, and perhaps made matters more clear. [I] thanked him for the services in Tokyo and for his eulogy. [Martha's father died in 1939.] He will be coming thru here again in May and you shall have the pleasure of hearing him then.
That summer Martha wrote to her mother the news that Prince Tokugawa's granddaughter, Madame Matsudaira, was coming with her husband and two children to live in Berkeley, "quite simply, with one maid. Mrs. Abiko thinks we would enjoy her." The next spring Martha's letter referred to the dinner party at Mary's home preceding a Japan Society reception at the Fairmont Hotel in honor of Admiral Nomura and Mr. Wakasuki, the former consul in San Francisco. Martha complimented her mother on the aplomb with which she entertained the distinguished guests and led the reception as the society's president. The admiral reciprocated by presenting a "luscious" string of pearls to his hostess.

On December 7, 1941 in Honolulu, Martha watched the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Her dismay as one deeply committed to her own country and also a long-time friend of Japan did not prevent her writing a factual eyewitness report of the day's events for her children, "for whatever use the account may be." The war was to take Frank to Europe in the medical corps, while Martha worked at home and did her best to win an overseas assignment, but without success. She nevertheless served with the Office of Strategic Services as a volunteer and made a distinguished record (discussed below).

Her views on the U.S. government's treatment of Japanese American citizens during wartime in this country found expression in the support she gave to a film and a book produced some years after the war's end. Martha took part in funding the California Historical Society's film on the relocation camps, and the book Executive Order 9066 that dealt with the internment.

The Try for a Wartime Post Overseas

In 1943, when the war's outcome was still uncertain, Martha completed her Nurse's Aide training course and took up duties as a hospital volunteer. At the same time, she believed that her rightful place was overseas, where she could share both the hardships and the experiences that Frank found frustrating, challenging, and rewarding. Her efforts to secure an overseas job appalled Frank. He urged her to consider the importance of homefront duties as well as his sense that the children needed her continuous presence. In Martha's view, their competent, long-term housekeeper, Eloise Washington, with further backup from family members, would be sufficient for the children if she undertook a limited tour of duty.

By June 1944 she was seeking an assignment with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, possibly in connection with refugee hospitals in the Mediterranean area. Martha called on the support of close friends who gave her admirable references as well as advice that warned her of difficulties ahead. Georgiana Stevens at the National Research Council sent Martha the UNRRA applications she needed, and
counseled, "Don't hesitate to claim all the experience you can," and suggested a reference to the "Visiting Nurse" contacts.

Catherine Bauer (Wurster) wrote to Dr. Henry Cassidy of UNRRA commending Martha as "a good friend of Alice Griffiths' and mine," and noting that she was active and effective in various local organizations including the San Francisco Planning and Housing Association. She also mentioned that Martha had done a lot of Nurse's Aide work, and had ample staff and family to care for the children while she was away from home. Catherine Bauer conceded that she wasn't sure how Martha's professional qualifications would look on paper, adding "But I do know that she is a very able, intelligent, and mature gal, one of the best people in this city."

Edward C. Carter, secretary-general of the Institute of Pacific Relations, wrote to Martha on the institute's letterhead, "Though you have not suggested it, I have taken the liberty of writing to Governor Lehman, the head of UNRRA..." Carter felt that such a letter from him might increase the chances for approval of her application. The reply from Governor Lehman and UNRRA was to thank him for his comments, and to state that the application form had already been sent to Martha.

By July 11 Meyer Cohen of UNRRA, in a detailed but cordial letter, pointed out a variety of difficulties, including the fact that the army would not permit UNRRA to send the wife of an army officer overseas to the same theater of operations, thus ruling out Italy and/or the Balkans; and further that the agency's policy for recruiting for overseas service specified an 18-month tour of duty, while Martha had suggested a 6-month period. In short, "...the chances for an overseas assignment do not look very good." On July 13, 1944, a "strictly confidential" letter from a friend at UNRRA advised Martha to give up her efforts.

Shakeup at the Institute of Pacific Relations

When the war was over, Martha welcomed the chance to travel to meetings and conferences in Europe, including those of the increasingly troubled Institute of Pacific Relations. The institute had dwindled in effectiveness over the years following the 1929 Japan conference, and in the 1940s a prestigious group of San Franciscans sought to rejuvenate it and its local activities. Martha was a member of the board, which was composed largely of businessmen and academics.

Conflict developed as the Bay Area chapters sought to exercise their power, and the national office under Ed Carter fought to centralize control in the New York headquarters. Local chapters saw themselves as the primary actors in a loose confederation, with the national office coordinating services on behalf of the locals who established institute policies. For his part, Carter saw the national office as the center for decisions that
would then be implemented by the outlying locals. During the struggle, Carter alienated many of those local members who, like Martha, had considered him a friend and helped out with loans in times of financial trouble. When the American Council of IPR, Inc. needed help, she provided a loan of $1,500, as others did. When he repaid the loan, Carter thanked her for "moral and intellectual backing."

Issues of centralized power and decision making were sharpened as local members judged that Carter's decisions were influenced by an ideology they did not support. Martha and others were aware that accusations of "following the party line" needed to be judged fairly on their merits; Martha was equal to that task. She was not unsympathetic to Carter as a person but she observed what was happening, and deplored the organizational imbalance that interfered with the institute's mission. Its major task was to promote nonpartisan, educational, and informational activities, and that work was not being done. Consequently, Martha supported the viewpoint of the chapters; she participated in the Coronado conference in 1947 when the Bay Area chapters seceded from the national organization.

The chapters took with them their splendid library, and formed the Bay Area Institute of Pacific Relations, soon merging with an institute at Mills College and others of similar educational interests to create the World Affairs Council. The former IPR Library was the council's first asset. Martha proved to be another.

Martha at the World Affairs Council Desk

Martha was a member of the executive committee of the World Affairs Council when Garland Farmer became its third director in 1952. He promptly asked Martha, Emma McLaughlin, Dorothy Rogers, and other council old-timers to fill him in on the early days, so he could answer the questions of those he hoped to interest in the council's work. In the political climate of the times, the Communist scare and "loyalty" investigations were well under way. Suspicions based on the old IPR connection, and Farmer's own service in the State Department had to be answered if the council was to gain new members, climb out of debt, and function as an independent, nonpartisan source of information on issues of foreign policy.

In its shaky financial position the council had reduced staff and let go the man who had worked with the associated councils and handled the speakers' bureau. Briefly, the council in San Francisco had developed outreach with associated councils in Santa Rosa, Sacramento, Fresno, San Luis Obispo, the Monterey Peninsula, and San Jose, groups that were operating with varying degrees of success. In addition, the San Francisco council's speakers' bureau had devised limited "organizational memberships" for service clubs and a variety of other associations that would give them access to the library and the speakers.
ANN LAGE

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Post-graduate studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1965-1966, American history and education; Junior College teaching credential, State of California

Chairman, Sierra Club History Committee, 1978-1986; oral history coordinator, 1974-present

Interviewer/Editor, Regional Oral History Office, in the fields of conservation and natural resources, land use, university history, California political history, 1976-present
Both the associated councils and the speakers' bureau represented important organizational functions, and the new director recognized a moral obligation to continue their support since the council had enjoyed funding from national foundations to get those functions underway. Garland Farmer accepted the obligation even though the personnel and funds had disappeared.

After an executive committee meeting discussing this predicament, Martha volunteered to come to the office half a day, three days a week. She undertook to maintain the speakers' bureau services for local groups and associated councils until a long-term solution was found. Farmer was delighted to accept her offer, although he did not know Martha well. He was far from sure that she would sit patiently at the bureau's desk, maintain communication with program chairmen of luncheon clubs and planners for adult schools, and above all, stick with the job.

To his delight Martha appeared when she said she would, returned phone calls, showed that she could help program chairmen, and did so for five or six months. She liked the contacts with people and hands-on work. Through her friendly manner and efficiency, she built up speakers' bureau demand so that she had to expand her work from three days a week to five. It seemed clear that along with her style, her name and prominence made her uniquely valuable to the council, the staff, and the clients.

Martha had trained her successor and was about to go abroad when she received a Speakers Service form dated July 22, 1953. This was a confidential report by which client groups evaluated speakers' qualities. On this occasion, the reporting organization proved to be "United Boondogglers of the World," and the subject "Mellifluous Martha." The report stated in part,

I wish to testify briefly, insofar as this report has been requested of me, and you will forgive me for being so concise, that Martha Gerbode is, and always will be the sweetheart of the World Affairs Council. In Toditem Verbis, WE THINK SHE IS WONDERFUL!!!!

(signed) Siggy and Staff, Jean Wildberg, Caryl de Groot, Barbara Mark, Garland Farmer, Anne Allison, Dawn Wisner, Peggy McAlpine, Dorothy Rogers, and J. Wilke.

As the council struggled to become solvent, one suggestion emerged periodically; since it had a number of well-to-do board members, why didn't they simply pick up the tab, pay the staff, and let the council get on with its work? The answer from Martha and other council members was this: a civic organization must have support from the community at large if it is to be useful in the long run. To subsidize an organization is one thing. To shape it so as to win public support is another. Finally, they believed that the council's work was too important to be treated as the
possession of a few people; it rightfully belonged to the larger community that found it valuable.

An Invitation for Harry Bridges

Martha honored the personal connections with her numerous friends and acquaintances from overseas, including many who had visited or dined at her house. In time a number of them became foreign ministers or other high officials in their own countries, and the World Affairs Council was happy to provide an interested and often glittering audience to hear their addresses. Martha would attend the affairs faithfully, as Garland Farmer said, out of friendship, and certainly not in order to find her name in the society pages.

She also maintained a distant but friendly sort of relationship with Harry Bridges, President of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. Martha was able to use this connection to the council's benefit in connection with the issue of which speakers should be presented in meetings open to the public, and which were reserved for council members only.

Herbert Vere Evatt, former prime minister of Australia and head of the Labor Party, was scheduled to speak at a members-only luncheon at the Fairmont Hotel. Australian-born Harry Bridges was not a member of the World Affairs Council, but asserted his right to attend the lunch and also to sit with Evatt at the speaker's table. At this point several of the younger members of the council staff came to Director Farmer to draw a line in the sand. The time had come for the council to stand up and represent something; it had long enough been cautious in statements about the Communist scare and other issues. If Harry Bridges wanted to attend he should be allowed to do so. If not, they were ready to revolt. Farmer replied that he agreed in principle, and asked, "Is everyone who wants to hear Evatt to be allowed in?" They answered, "Well, no, just Harry Bridges."

As Farmer sat thinking over the implications, Martha rose from the speakers' bureau desk where she had overheard the exchange. She said, "I'll take a table for the luncheon and invite Harry Bridges to be my guest on condition that you, the council's director, sit at my table with him." At the luncheon her table was placed directly in front of the speaker's table so that Bridges was able to turn around easily to talk with Lovatt. In between these conversations, Martha recalled old times with Bridges, and they reminisced amicably about some of the struggles between the waterfront unions and employers. By the end of the afternoon, Bridges seemed fully at ease as Martha's guest, and the tension was defused. No one appeared surprised that Martha had pulled it off, and solved the problem of the day.
The "Loyalty" Issue

When the drama of World War II was over, a new emotional focus emerged nationwide: the "loyalty" issue. Accusations of disloyalty and FBI reports that included unevaluated information targeted the prominent and not-so-prominent alike. Along with other liberals of the time, Martha felt the sting of such criticism, much of it based on the principle of guilt by association. For herself, she kept her own counsel, but when charges were leveled against her husband--based on "certain activities and affiliations" of hers--she responded with a defense that was both factual and detailed.

The loyalty board of the Veterans Hospital in San Francisco had proposed that Dr. Frank Gerbode be removed as a consultant (October 1952) based on information contained in unevaluated FBI reports on his wife's activities. Martha responded in a written statement to the San Francisco office of the FBI concerning "certain material relative to the references to me in the letter of charges against my husband." After identifying herself as the daughter of Wallace Alexander and listing a number of her father's interests and accomplishments, she cited her 1929 trip to Japan as marking the beginning of her "active interest in foreign affairs," and proceeded to answer the scattering of charges, one by one.

The accusation that she was a major supporter of the California Labor School, a night school for adults, she answered with two major points. First, the statement exaggerated her participation in what was originally set up as a wide-ranging educational institution. Second, after six years she had ceased even her limited support when the school changed its character to one more ideological in nature. Another charge called into question the propriety of her affiliation with the American Russian Institute. She responded that her connection consisted of obtaining Russian medical journals there and making three token contributions. Even this tenuous connection ended when she observed that the institute was concerned "only in propaganda."

She was accused of being a sponsor and patron of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, to which she contributed a total of $35 over three years, until she learned that the only refugees served were Communists. She also made one $50 contribution to the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy, and chose not to continue after a couple of meetings. In each case, when the nature of the organization changed or she observed unacceptable behavior, she trusted her own judgment and withdrew.

In a more vague and extended accusation, she was said to be "an associate of individuals who reportedly had contact with functionaries of Soviet Russia." Martha marshalled and presented the facts. In 1945 during the United Nations Conference in San Francisco and while she was affiliated with the federal Office of Strategic Services, she acceded to a governmental request. It was to allow two OSS officers to stay in her
basement room in order to observe the activities at the Russian Consulate across the street. In addition, the OSS had asked her to try to make the acquaintance of members of the Russian delegation; and later the Mayor of San Francisco requested that the Gerbodes allow their home to function as the meeting place for the United Nations Site Committee. The Gerbodes accepted the assignments.

Martha appended to her formal statement a letter from Herbert S. Little, formerly Lieutenant Colonel in the Army of the United States. He summarized her wartime work as an OSS volunteer. He cited her "unquestioned loyalty and service to our government and to the cause for which we were fighting" and the intelligence with which she performed her services as well as the amounts of time she had given to the work. Colonel Little also mentioned that Martha had received a commendation from her branch of service, and also a letter of commendation from General Donovan.

She concluded by saying that she was "not now or ever" a member of the Communist Party nor a sympathizer, nor to her knowledge a sponsor of or participant in any organization affiliated with it. She pointed out that any possible affiliation with organizations on the attorney general's "subversive list" was at a time before the list was in existence, and when the subversive character of those organizations was unknown to her.

The need to defend herself and to protect her husband against faceless charges and the threats they contained, failed to interrupt Martha's adventurous approach to community and international problems, or to alter her leadership in the bold initiatives of the 60s.

A Volunteer for the Community

In the 30s Martha was a bright, attractive, competent, and willing young matron new to the San Francisco scene, and fair game for volunteers on the lookout for promising recruits. The family pattern of service in the community had been established by her missionary forebears and her committed parents, and to this predisposition Martha added her own vigor and curiosity. A few of her activities can serve to suggest their range and variety, and the way her interests multiplied in the decades of the 30s, 40s, and 50s. Her taste for both group support and bold, individual action--often behind the scenes--emerged in the major ecology battles of the 60s, sharpened by the experiences of previous years.

As a new volunteer, Martha did what needed to be done, not necessarily what she would have preferred to do. In the Depression just before World War II, she accepted assignments to do fund-raising, door-to-door. She was a captain in the San Francisco Community Chest drive in 1938 and wrote about it to her father, in French to provide the reading practice he enjoyed. Her task was to "solicit in a discouraging area, the Marina.
The agencies have drawn on their capital, to the depths, and this year if we cannot refill the chest...poof!" [writer's translation]

Again in May 1941, as she wrote to her mother,

I got hooked...by the Red Cross Roll Call and was expected to form a team of six to solicit funds. As usual, I will have to do most of the pavement pounding myself. This morning Jane Brophy and I covered four square blocks in the Mission district, and collected six dollars between us. The people in our district look as though they deserved more help than the Red Cross.

By 1939 Martha had hit her full stride, busy not only with a new house and an unending flow of guests, but more particularly with her "civic activities" that she said "assumed vast proportions." These included joining the board of what was then the San Francisco Center of the League of Women Voters, and dealing with the issue of health insurance as one of the topics under study. 1939 was also the year Judge Harold Louderback named her to the federal grand jury, the first time in San Francisco's history that a woman had received that appointment.

**Learning About Public Housing**

Martha's major interest in public housing developed through her participation in the economic study group of the Alexander Meiklejohn School of Social Studies. In 1938 the group conducted a survey of housing in the city's overcrowded Chinatown to develop information on the need for federally supported public housing. Martha was one of about eighteen persons who worked on the survey, learning first-hand about living conditions there. The work produced important consequences including the revival of the San Francisco Housing Association (later SPUR). The association became an effective advocate for establishing the San Francisco Housing Authority that could receive the federal funds essential for building housing projects in the city's neighborhoods.

Martha quickly learned that it was one thing to gather information and advocate moves in governmental policy, and another to win action from the appropriate agency. Two years later she wrote in jubilation to Mama-
san:

The [San Francisco] Board of Supervisors voted $75,000 toward the building of Federal Housing Projects in Chinatown...at long last! It was the Junior Chamber of Commerce that finally put it over with well-timed publicity and the "right" names. Which all goes to prove that one has to be respectable and know the right people to get anything done in politics, no matter how hard one tries. Anyway, our survey was responsible for making
the first moves. The new projects will house some 300-400
Chinese families which is a drop in the bucket compared to what
is actually needed, but every little bit helps.

Housing continued to hold Martha's attention; that year she witnessed
the ground-breaking ceremony for the Visitacion Valley Project, and in
1941 noted that the Housing Association presented "More than Shelter," a
film about the slums of San Francisco. Two years later, Martha wrote to
her husband of her concern about housing issues and that she hoped to "sell
Mayor Roger Lapham on the need for better housing." Her letters do not
mention the mayor's response, but shortly thereafter he appointed her to
San Francisco's Social Welfare Commission.

The VNA and a Concern for Nursing

Martha maintained her interest in nursing, and shortly before this
country's entry into World War II, she joined the board of the Visiting
Nurses Association. When she became president, she found that she could
force herself to speak in public. As she wrote to her mother in February
1940, the next week would see "the VNA Annual Meeting Tea...[roll] by and
behind us...and I have to stand up and make a spectacle of myself with a
few gracious words and a page of statistics." Later she reported with
relief that the "VNA Annual Meeting went off very well--in fact quite a
rousing success." She was quick to credit Mrs. A. Crawford Green, the
former president, with teaching her all she knows "about the business."

Martha ventured further into nursing in 1943, when she completed a
Nurse's Aide course and worked actively as an aide and an organizer of
hospital volunteers. From overseas Frank wrote to Mary Alexander that he
thought Martha's work might be "vitaly useful sometime." He added, "I
wish you would keep an eye on her to see that she doesn't overwork. She
has inherited your tenacity and drive...."

Education for All Ages

After the war, the combination of theater and children's education
drew Martha to the San Francisco Players' Guild, whose founder Martha Eliot
invited her to join the board at its inception early in the 50s. Martha
Gerbode was intrigued by the view that live theater in the schools could
serve to educate by presenting adaptations of fairytales as well as
original plays, along with teachers' manuals that accompanied each play.
By 1964 near the end of the guild's span, Martha Eliot estimated that they
had brought live theater to 1,500,000 children. Guild productions used
professional adult actors, and expenses were paid partially by support from
federal grants during the Johnson administration, supplemented by
contributions from Martha Gerbode and others, and by the meetings and
fundraisers for which she opened her home. Guild colleagues including Helene Oppenheimer, playwright in residence, and Mathilde Kunin, recalled that Martha Gerbode was a staunch supporter of the venture, enthusiastic and positive in her attitude, and financially generous.

Martha also believed in the value of adult education, and through her interest in the California Labor School in its early days, ironically learned a lesson concerning ideologies and the way they can change. In 1944, she became a supporter of the evening school and its offering of classes in American history, philosophy, economics, and the arts. She wrote to Frank that the school's spokesmen were "confessed liberals" who concentrated on American unity, and were "opposed to both radicalism and reactionarism." They appeared to be doing a good job in race relations and enjoyed the support of a number of leading San Franciscans. By 1947, however, Martha had changed her opinion in view of the alteration in the school's ideology. She noted that "it had by then become apparent that the California Labor School, whatever its original conception may have been, had ceased to serve the purpose which I and others conceived for it."

Beginning in 1969, a venture in education for both children and adults provided a longer-lived and more satisfying outcome. Martha's friend Esther Pike (Fuller) worked with Frank Oppenheimer while he was developing the San Francisco Exploratorium, an innovative, hands-on science teaching and learning center. Esther Pike brought Oppenheimer and Martha together over dinner, Martha responded to his vision and plans, and became a strong supporter of the Exploratorium and its programs.

Cross-Cultural Understanding: Breaking the Barriers

Cross-cultural and interracial understanding took on new emphasis as a cutting-edge issue in the 50s and 60s, and emerged as one of the identifying components of the liberal view. Regardless of labels, Martha saw the need to develop understanding across barriers--especially those created by differences in experience, culture, race, economic status, and religion--as a continuing concern that demanded consistent attention. She acted on the assumption that when young people are open to learning from new experience, that was the time when such experience should be made available to them. Among the ventures she supported were the Encampment for Citizenship when it came to the Bay Area in 1958-1959, the Wilderness Camp in the mid 60s, and the Cross-Cultural Family Centers in the early 70s.

The Encampment for Citizenship emphasized interracial cooperation and civic responsibility. The Ethical Culture Society had launched the Encampment in New York in the 40s; in the Bay Area it recruited students 17 to 23 years old, ranging from members of street gangs to Stanford students, and provided quarters at International House in Berkeley for six weeks in the summer. Along with time for recreation and developing personal
friendships, those enrolled studied the political and economic life of San Francisco, partly through field trips and discussions. The studies focused on economics, civil rights and liberties, foreign policy, government and politics.

The prestigious program was launched on the West Coast by a luncheon at San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel; the honorary national chairman, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, was the speaker. Martha regularly attended the Encampment's advisory board meetings, but gave relatively little time to the project. Instead, her contribution consisted of steady moral support and reliable but unostentatious financing. She also continued to support Berkeley's International House although she was a Stanford graduate and had a number of family ties that she honored over the years. Her interest in I House stemmed from the housing it provided, and the opportunities for friendship and cultural exchange among students from foreign countries and those from the United States as well.

At the Wilderness Camp, a different mix of young people came together: two-thirds were hearing, and one-third were hearing impaired. They were to learn to work together in public service, with an emphasis on the environment. The Hearing Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the Society of Friends were joint sponsors. John Darby of the Hearing Society recalled that the venture was captured by a film, "Silent River," which showed how the young campers learned to work together and discovered how much they could accomplish. He said that Martha quietly paid the costs of the camp, expenses related to making the film, and the whole experience.

San Francisco's Cross-Cultural Family Centers were designed to serve children of various cultures, and to bring together both community members and the children's parents in full participation. The cooperative project integrated many low-income, lower-middle-class participants from differing cultural, ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds. Dr. Mary Lane had founded the first of the centers, and John and Ina Dearman had provided leadership.

Originally housed at the Unitarian Church, the center urgently needed affordable housing in the Western Addition. Miriam Levy called on Martha to discuss the problem in 1971, and to ask if she would help with the funding. Martha agreed strongly, and urged speedy action, saying "There isn't much time." She died only a little time later, leaving the spoken promise but no written record of her intent.

After his mother's death, Philip learned of the discussion and provided funds for building the Western Addition Center. The first center was located at 1347 Pierce Street at the corner of O'Farrell. In time, four more centers developed, including the Marcus Garvey Center on Eddy Street; Richmond Number One at 31st Avenue; a center on 30th Avenue near Balboa; and another one in the Tenderloin.
When Philip was reminiscing about the range of Martha's community service, he observed that in those efforts she found a way to give back something to society, a process that she found gave her life great meaning. She had seen that the search for the meaning of one's life could pose a major problem for people of great wealth, and by her efforts she dealt with the problem and found her own answer.

**A Champion for the Ecology**

During the 60s Martha's consistent interest in the ecology had moved to the forefront of her attention. As she said to an interviewer in 1969, "We can't cure all of society's ills, but we can preserve some of our natural resources for our descendants." Her focus and conviction enabled her to work on many of those ills, while as she grew older she acted with increasing drive to save the environment from destruction. Martha and a growing group of other experienced fighters achieved some significant victories in a field where triumphs were often ambiguous and seldom permanent.

The major struggles were based at both her home regions: Marincello and Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay Area, and Honolulu's Diamond Head in the Hawaiian Islands.

**Blocking Development at Marincello**

The efforts to block the proposed Marincello development north of the Marin Headlands gathered momentum slowly. Developer Thomas Frouge in 1964 proposed to build Marincello, a planned community of 20,000, and a multi-use development in a pristine 2,138-acre valley. The Nature Conservancy and the Golden Gate Headlands Committee, as well as individual ecologists like Martha Gerbode shared a profound belief that development in that area would be destructive to the region. Further, they held that the valley should be maintained as open land for "hiking, biking, birding, and nature study."

Huey Johnson of the Nature Conservancy asked Martha for her help. She agreed, and Johnson observed later that without her consistent response in providing funds to support a ballot measure effort and numerous lawsuits, the Conservancy and other supportive ecologists would have failed to stop the Marincello development. He recalled that Martha preferred to support tough, controversial efforts. The Marincello battle was all of that.

In 1970, again with Martha Gerbode as "basic checkbook," the Conservancy negotiated successfully with the valley's owners, Gulf Oil, to obtain an option, acted on two years later, to buy the property. The Conservancy paid $6.5 million provided by Congress so that the National...
Park Service could have the opportunity to make the final purchase successfully in 1974.

**Saving Alcatraz**

Alcatraz Island had both a spectacular location in San Francisco Bay and a lurid history as a prison for federal offenders. In the late 60s the closure of the prison sparked a variety of proposals for the island's future. These included commercial developments, a gambling casino, a space station, a sacred gathering place for Native Americans, and a national park for the public. Ecologists strongly favored the use of the island for a park, and one in particular, Alvin Duskin, found ways to focus the public's attention through a series of newspaper ads. When proposals by Texas developer Lamar Hunt advanced to consideration by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the situation demanded that someone make a counter offer.

Martha came forward to make counter offers that were effective, but oddly misunderstood. In one, she proposed to guarantee--temporarily--the maintenance fee of $1,800 a month that the federal government proposed to charge San Francisco while the city deliberated over its choices. The fee was later waived. Her other proposal was to seek out other donors who would join with her to buy the island. Instead of describing these two temporizing proposals accurately, some media accounts reported that Martha herself was prepared to pay $2 million to buy the island outright for San Francisco.

While this local activity was under way, events were moving at the federal level. San Francisco's decisions were essentially put on hold when Interior Secretary Walter Hickel moved to have the island surveyed for use as a park devoted to public recreation, or as a home for wildlife. Martha then felt that she had provided the holding action, and was free to withdraw her offers. Throughout the Alcatraz action she had followed her belief that "Alcatraz should belong to the Bay Area and to our nation." For a time, a group of Native Americans called attention to their claims by occupying the island, an effort that ended in 1972. Alcatraz then became an integral part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

**The Campaign to Save Diamond Head, 1963**

The Campaign to Save Diamond Head on Oahu highlighted issues that won attention far beyond the City of Honolulu. First, the principles of city planning and citizen participation in the process were under attack; second, tourism and the claims of ownership of private and public property were contested; and finally, alert citizens and groups joined to participate effectively under the umbrella of the Save Diamond Head Association.
Proponents of intensive development saw tourism and the island's economy best served by Honolulu's growth, including spot-zone permits for highrises on and around Diamond Head, the celebrated symbol of Honolulu. Environmentalists like Martha Gerbode had a different vision. They were determined to protect the beauties of Diamond Head and Kapiolani Park, believing that the area would best remain attractive to both residents and tourists only if development were carefully planned and controlled. Such concerns had spread to the state level, and in 1962 the Hawaii State Legislature considered a bill to save Diamond Head, but the measure failed in the closing moments of the session.

A year later, six Diamond Head residents including Martha Gerbode went to the First Circuit Court of Honolulu to defend the concept and definition of a General Plan for Honolulu, and to resist the spot zoning that would permit virtually unrestricted development at Diamond Head. In lawsuit Civil Number 10274, the six contended that spot zoning, or the variances to the nonexistent General Plan proposed by Honolulu's planning commission, would violate the law. Briefly, spot zoning and variances were exceptions to a General Plan, and Honolulu had adopted no such plan, although one was mandated by statute. Instead, some eighteen separate neighborhood plans and portions of plans were in existence, bearing no apparent rationale or relationship to each other. The city had held no public hearings on a General Plan, and the eighteen pieces assembled in 1960 did not constitute such a plan.

The planning director chose to defend the piecemeal system. The Honolulu Advertiser commented editorially (August 15, 1963) that city planning director Fred Lee

says Honolulu has to adopt separate neighborhood plans because the public just won't be able to understand a unified, comprehensive plan....That is a strange remark for a public servant.

The six litigating residents--Alice Spalding Bowen, Martha Alexander Gerbode, Sally Sheehan, Walter and Louise Dillingham, and Muriel C. Damon--heard Judge Roland P. Jamieson rule in their favor, and against the city council. When council members recognized that they did have to come up with a General Plan, they proposed to solve the problem by speedy adoption of the piecemeal neighborhood plans of 1960. At that point, Aaron Levine, president of the Oahu Development Conference urged the council not to rush into approval of the neighborhood plans, but to construct a unified plan that would recognize "the complex relationship of one part of the Island to another," and would provide an essential basis for public improvement and private investment.
The Threat to Diamond Head, 1967

The 1963 "finger in the dike" held fairly well until March 1967 when the threat of development caused the Save Diamond Head effort to intensify again. In the later developments Martha fitted her work to that of a far larger group of individuals and organizations than in 1963. The dramatic events of 1967 showed her reliance on and respect for her friend and Diamond Head neighbor Alice Spalding Bowen. Alice Bowen, a full-time resident and environmentalist, monitored daily events and knew when to alert Martha, a part-time resident and full-time owner of two major properties at Diamond Head.

At 5:14 p.m. March 13, Alice Bowen whose home was on the slope at Makalei Place sent Martha Gerbode the following radiogram:

Developers and Hechts launching campaign to zone your shore to lighthouse for highrise hotels and Makalei apartments with four-lane highway Stop We are opposing as majority property owners need your signature please wire consent Alice.

At 9:47 the next morning, Martha replied by radiogram from San Francisco: "Will back you up in anything use my name what else can I do Martha Gerbode." On the following day, from her Divisadero Street home Martha typed to Alice:

Your telegram was a shock! It is a disgrace to the city of Honolulu that after all the plans (and money spent on plans) a new highrise campaign could find a breath of support. Please send me newspaper clippings and further details. You've received my radiogram. Make the most use of it, even if it has to be quoted in the Press. If I should get in touch with Warneke's office here, let me know.

This is my statement to you and to those who oppose this move: I, Martha Alexander Gerbode, owner of properties at 2831 Coconut Ave. and 3101 Diamond Head Road, reject any proposition for the rezoning of the Diamond Head area for highrise.

(signed) Martha A. Gerbode.

Perhaps the only surprising aspect of Martha's forceful response was her willingness to have her name used publicly and to let her radiogram be used "even if it has to be quoted in the Press." This was serious commitment.

The neighborhood defenders of Diamond Head moved quickly. A petition signed by the owners of twenty-five pieces of property on Coconut Avenue, Diamond Head Road, and Market Place stated that the signers
are of the firm belief that there should be no rezoning of the Diamond Head slopes and shoreline between Coconut Avenue and the lighthouse, except for residential, conservation, or park use. We believe any rezoning for apartments or hotels would result in obscuring and defacing Hawaii's most famous landmark.

Martha A. Gerbode's name led the signer's list.

In fighting this latest threat the alarmed neighborhood was soon joined by the Save Diamond Head Association, a group that brought together important supporters including the Outdoor Circle. The Circle was a volunteer conservationist group that earlier had succeeded in banning billboards on Diamond Head and Punchbowl. The Association's own forty board members represented conservation groups, improvement and community associations, chambers of commerce, boards of realtors, hotel associations, visitors bureaus, historical societies, botanical and garden groups, labor unions, architects and landscape architects, university professors, and professional engineers.

The board also included representatives of Girl and Boy Scout councils, the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, and the Dole Corporation. Among the sixteen members-at-large were Mrs. Alice Spalding Bowen and Mrs. Martha Gerbode, listed as "conservationists." This assemblage suggests the skill with which the Association identified the areas of shared interest among disparate groups, and brought them together to defend Diamond Head.

**Escalation: Martha's Bid for the Fagan Property**

The defenders were united in their determination to beat back the challenge posed by an established developer, Chinn Ho, often admired for his rags-to-riches accomplishments. At one time, he had also been a member of the forward-looking Oahu Development Conference.

For Chinn Ho to succeed in his campaign to rezone the Diamond Head area properties and develop them for highrise building, it was essential that he purchase holdings on both sides of Diamond Head Road, both the makai (sea) side and the mauka (mountain) side. Martha and others did not intend to sell to him, but as Chinn Ho added each parcel, the hold-out residents recognized that if he could acquire certain key properties, it would be impossible to hold the line against rezoning and intensive development. The Paul Fagan property at 3241 Diamond Head Road was one of the key parcels, not far from Martha's home at 3101 Diamond Head Road. When the Fagan place came up for bidding she saw what had to be done.

The story goes that when Chinn Ho approached Martha, she asked him the selling price of similar properties, as though she were considering the possibility of selling hers. Her intent, however, was not to sell her
holdings but to discover how much to bid for the Fagan property. On May 10, 1967 Martha wrote to Alice Bowen:

This is a secret. My offer for the Fagan place has been accepted, but the sale will have to go to Probate Court and I can be outbid....I'm trying to remain anonymous, so please don't spread the word. The pity is that I don't want the darn thing, and haven't the faintest notion what to do with it. I may have to subdivide...but in low buildings of course....

Aloha, M.

Her bid was successful. The purchase halted Chinn Ho's momentum, and bought additional time for the environmentalists to rally. A massive community effort prevailed upon the city council to deny highrise zoning for Diamond Head. The victory was somewhat dampened when the council chose the stratagem of air rights rather than declaring the shore area an extension of the park. Martha later on did sell the Fagan property as a residence but retained the air rights, a concept that proved somewhat ambiguous in planning law. Nevertheless, her bold and timely bid was seen as strategically important in stopping the rush toward highrise zoning and development. As Aaron Levine observed, "Martha came through when we needed her, in a very dramatic way." In 1968, Diamond Head won designation as a National Natural Landmark.

Conclusion: Redwoods and a Valley

Martha Gerbode was an exemplary volunteer, quick to accept responsibility and indifferent to recognition and acclaim. She actively avoided occasions for publicity, but when they were inevitable and she had to grant an interview, she came across well. On the occasion of receiving the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Award as one of the Examiner's Ten Distinguished Women of 1969, Martha was interviewed by the Chronicle's Mildred Hamilton, who talked with all ten.

Martha responded to questions about her interests and activities by mentioning the early days of Planned Parenthood, saving Alcatraz from commercial exploitation, gathering signatures for Save the Bay petitions, along with work on the Save Diamond Head project, city planning, SPUR, the Players' Guild and her husband's fundraising for the Pacific Medical Center Hospital, and four children with five grandchildren. It was a graceful interview that suggested the scope of her work; it could well have included twice as many topics.

The protection of open space and parkland, and the preservation of native species formed an intrinsic part of Martha's working concern for the ecology. In California, the combination suggested redwood trees, a grove of redwoods. On July 12, 1972, the State of California accepted the major gift of a ten-acre redwood grove that would expand Big Basin Redwood State
Park. The gift of the grove was the culmination of a process that began shortly after Martha's death the previous year, when Penny made a gift to her father by means of a grant to the Vanguard Foundation. These funds were directed to the Sempervirens Fund, which in turn purchased and donated to the State of California the Martha Alexander Gerbode Memorial Grove. The name is carved on a simple wooden sign that stands beneath the trees.

Flying the green and white ecology flag over her home signalled Martha's conviction that people needed access to trees and open space, and that they should have it; they should also have the chance to hike and camp in the great outdoors, although she herself did not feel at all obligated to do so. She did persevere in effective but low-key work that eventually linked her name with some of her most successful efforts.

The Nature Conservancy had built on Martha's early and effective support, and in 1974 bought the property that the Marincello venture had intended to develop. After the purchase, the Conservancy's Huey Johnson named the area the Martha Alexander Gerbode Preserve, and later changed the name to Gerbode Valley. The map of the Marin Headlands shows the full extent of the valley, with its boundaries defined by the Miwok and Bobcat trails. Finally, in a conclusion in harmony with her own vision, Gerbode Valley has become an integral part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

**Note**

For the future, several of the more extensive interviews that contributed to this biography will be collected into a volume, the Martha Alexander Gerbode Oral History Memoir. The memoir will be produced by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Particular thanks are due to Tom Layton, Executive Director, and Merylee Bingham of the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, who have aided the development of the project in every way. For both this biography and the forthcoming memoir, the generosity and interest of each of the participants and advisors has been essential, and is deeply appreciated. Any errors of fact or interpretation are the sole responsibility of the writer.
Dear Alec, Maryanna and Frank;

Twenty years from now it may be interesting to read over some of our first reactions to our entry into the world war. Perhaps by then we will all smile to think of our inexperience and naivete. Right now it is almost impossible to believe that this is happening to us.

After two weeks of negotiations between President Roosevelt and Admiral Komura and Mr. Kurusu, envoy extraordinary to the U.S., Japan has shown her hand.

To go back a few months: last Spring Baccamamma invited Komura and Mr. Wakasuki (former S.F. consul whom we had all known) who accompanied him to Washington, to a dinner, most informally, before the formal reception at the Fairmont Hotel. In token of his esteem, Nomura presented Baccamamma with a luscious string of pearls which she of course wore to the reception. She, by the way, being president of the Japan Society, conducted the formalities that evening and managed it with much grace and naturalness.

To return to the events of today: Daddy and I picked up Barbara Sutro to drive her with us across the bay...you, Alec, were with us too. As we crossed the bridge and turned on the radio to hear a symphony we were startled to hear the program interrupted with this special bulletin: All officers and men of the Alemada Air base will report back immediately to their stations. The music came back on and we were left wondering what that could mean. Minutes later it was announced that a transport, carrying lumber, had been sunk 1300 miles off the Pacific Coast. This we could hardly believe, but a greater shock was to come. This was the news that Japanese bombers were flying over the city of Honolulu dropping bombs with Pearly Harbor and Hickam Field their obvious main goals. As more and more flashes came through we learned that bombers had fallen on Dwsett Highlands and in Kuanu and Waikiki; a barracks at Hickam Field had received a direct hit, and three hundred and fifty men had been instantly killed; the attacking force, of about one hundred fifty planes, were unchallenged until they had several times swooped down on Pearl Harbor (where the navy boats are all closely jammed together) and done considerable damage...we don't yet know how much. Of course we are all worried about the Waterhouses, Cookes, Athertons...and hundreds of other friends and relatives, and Daddy and I heartily wish we could have been there to help them if possible. It may be days before we have any news.

Lois and Fred Kleinhahn were lucky enough to get in a phone call to Jane Melnyneux who was at Red Cross headquarters. She said as far as she knew everyone of the family was alright, that she couldn't talk, but that she could hardly hear for the noise (presumably of planes overhead)

Daddy and I sat up late listening to the news flashes, but after the first two or three hours, censorship clamped down and the news was scanty and unsatisfactory.
Statement from Martha Gerbode to the FBI, circa November 1952

I, Martha A. Gerbode, make this statement to the San Francisco office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation on my own initiative and for the reasons and under the circumstances hereafter set forth.

Under date of October 30, 1952, the Veterans' Administration, over the signature of the Chairman of its Loyalty Board, addressed a notice of charges and proposed removal action to my husband, Dr. Frank L. A. Gerbode, a consultant to the Veterans' Administration Hospital at San Francisco. That letter makes reference to me and certain asserted activities and affiliations on my part. The letter states that information procured by the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been made available to the Veterans' Administration Loyalty Board and, accordingly, I desire to place a record in the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of certain material relative to the references to me in the letter of charges against my husband.

Initially, I should state that I am the daughter of the late Wallace Alexander who, during his lifetime, was President of Alexander and Baldwin of Hawaii and San Francisco, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Matson Navigation Company. His varied business and cultural interests in the Pacific area resulted in my becoming interested to a substantial degree in
international affairs, particularly as they related to the Orient, and in 1929 I first made a trip with my Father to a conference in Tokyo. My active interest in foreign affairs may properly be said to have begun at that time.

With natural reluctance, but necessarily, I point out that my family is one of means and that, because of my Father's death some years back, I came into a substantial inheritance. This fact is noted only because of its relevancy to my financial participation in community enterprises. Total contributions for the years in question have been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>$2,204.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>2,165.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2,783.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>4,184.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>5,016.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>4,519.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In 1944, my support of the California Labor School was solicited. The source of that solicitation, as I recall, was a Mrs. Austin (not known to me). I am satisfied that it was not David Jenkins because he, at that time, was not known to me, nor was it Louise Bransten, to whom further reference will hereafter be made. A group of San Francisco business and civic leaders, including Mr. James K. Moffatt and Mr. W. W. Crocker of the Crocker First National Bank, also Mr. J. W. Mailliard, Jr., who are well known to me and my family, participated in the original sponsorship of the School which it was
felt at the time would supply a community need of a night school character to people who worked but desired the opportunity for discussion groups and further education.

To my best recollection and according to my calendars which I have looked over, I was only at the Labor School twice in the year 1943 and thereafter; I once went to an "Open House" and another time I went to hear a debate between Adrien Falk, prominent community leader, and Harry Bridges. I was asked to become a sponsor to the School on one occasion and gave my consent. I was never asked again and what use was made of my name thereafter I cannot be certain. I did make contributions to the San Francisco Labor School in 1944, 1945, 1946 and 1947. I was solicited for further funds thereafter but declined, for the reason that it had by then become apparent that the California Labor School, whatever its original conception may have been, had ceased to serve the purposes which I and others conceived for it.

In the letter of charges addressed to my husband, reference is made to my having reportedly attended a luncheon in October, 1944 in company with Mary Barnes, reportedly an employee of the California Labor School; to my best knowledge and recollection, I have never known a woman of that name. Furthermore, I left for Honolulu on October 11, 1944.

It is reported that I was one of the sponsors on March 4,
1945 of a reception in honor of Paul Robson for the benefit of the Labor School. I quite definitely recall having been asked to sponsor this meeting and refused; if my name was on a sponsor list, it was without my knowledge or consent and I did not attend the reception.

Several references are made in the letter of charges to my acquaintance with Louise Bransten and of my having become affiliated with certain organizations at her suggestion. Let me say that I knew Louise Rosenberg Bransten as a small child and have seen her very few times through the years. I have not seen her at all since she moved to New York some years ago. I have for a long time had no respect for her, regarding her as a thoroughly irresponsible and unstable person. Frankly, her urging me to do something would more than likely have resulted in my doing just the opposite. To my best knowledge or recollection, I have never been in her house, nor she in mine. It is reported that either I or my husband, or both of us, attended a party at Mrs. Bransten's house on December 10, 1943 in honor of John Pitman of the Daily People's World. My husband was then with the United States Army in Sicily and I was definitely not at Mrs. Bransten's house on that occasion. My calendar indicates that I was at a party at the Martin Debenhams', which party I recall very well.
To my recollection, I first heard about the American Russian Institute in 1944. One of my husband’s medical colleagues expressed an interest in learning something about Russian medical progress. I ascertained that Russian Medical Journals were available through the American Russian Institute, and that was how and why I first learned of that organization. To my best recollection, I visited the Institute library on not more than two or three occasions and did not participate in its affairs in any other manner whatever. I ceased all support of this organization when it became known to me that it was concerned only in propaganda. My records show contributions to the American Russian Institute of $52.00 in 1944; $50.00 in 1945; and $25.00 in 1946.

Reference is made to my having been a sponsor of a series of forums entitled “What’s on your mind about Russia?”, sponsored by the Institute in May to July, 1946. I did not attend any of those forums and cannot say whether my name was used as a sponsor with or without my consent. Incidentally, my calendar indicates that I left for Honolulu on June 7, 1946. To my best recollection, I did not know at any time during which I was contributing to the American Russian Institute that Louise
Branston was active in connection with it.

It is reported that I was a sponsor and patron of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. My records indicate that I contributed $10.00 to this organization in 1943 and $25.00 in 1945. I never took any active interest of any kind whatever in this organization and it may be that my contributions were solicited by Bishop Parsons, the elderly, retired Episcopal Bishop of San Francisco, who has been known to me and my family for many, many years. If my name was used as a sponsor, it was without my knowledge or consent. Reference is particularly made to a concert under the auspices of the Committee on February 9, 1943, of which I am reported to have been a patron. I have no recollection whatever of this event and do not believe that I attended it. When it was first pointed out to me that this organization was questionable because of the fact that the only refugees being serviced were Communists, I made no further contributions.

It is reported that I was a sponsor of a meeting of the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy on the night of December 19, 1945. I have no record or recollection whatever of that meeting; I do, however, recollect having attended two or three meetings at some downtown restaurant. After several of these meetings, I became convinced that the organization was not one with which I wished to continue affiliation. According to my records, the only contribution I ever made was in 1945 in
the amount of $50.00.

The letter of charges states that I was reportedly "an associate of individuals who reportedly had contact with functionaries of Soviet Russia". The form of this charge, of course, makes it most difficult to answer. However, let me say that during the United Nations Conference in 1945, I was affiliated with the Office of Strategic Services and two O.S.S. officers lived in the basement of our house throughout the conference, our house being opposite to what was then the San Francisco Russian Consulate. With respect to my activities in the O.S.S., there is attached hereto a photostatic copy of a letter recently written to me at my request by the officer under whom I worked. I was asked by the O.S.S. to try to make the acquaintance of members of the Russian delegation at a big reception, which I was successful in doing and, after the reception, two members of the Russian Secretariat returned to my house, where not less than three O.S.S. officers were present. At a later occasion, my husband and I were asked by the Mayor of San Francisco to make our house the meeting place for the United Nations Site Committee, which we did. Present at that meeting among the delegates, was a Russian and his interpreter. On another occasion, I did attend a large cocktail party in company with my husband given by the Soviet Consul at which many
other San Franciscans prominent in civic affairs were present.

Reference is made in the letter of charges that earlier this year I tried to be a hostess at a United Nations affair in San Francisco but was reportedly turned down because of a pro-Communist reputation. Let me say in this connection that sometime before the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference, the Red Cross called me as one of its Nurses' Aides to ask if I would be one of the ushers in Nurses' Aide uniform at the Opera House and I said that I would. The morning of the conference I was called by the executive of the Red Cross to say that my name had not been cleared and that, therefore, I could not serve as an usher. Incidentally, later that day I attended a luncheon in honor of President Truman. After being advised that I had not been cleared for the Opera House meeting, I got in touch with the Secret Service at 100 McAllister Street and spoke with one, Mr. Paterni. He assured me that as far as he knew, there was no reason for my non-clearance except that there had been too many names on the list to clear everybody. I, at that time, offered to be interrogated but Mr. Paterni said that there was no occasion therefor.

In conclusion, let me say that I am not now, nor have I ever been a member of the Communist party, nor a sympathizer
thereof, nor to my knowledge a sponsor of, or a participant in, any organization affiliated with the Communist party. Whatever affiliation I may have had with organizations on the Attorney General's subversive list was at a time when such list was not in existence and when the subversive character of those organizations was totally unknown to me.
November 10 1952

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I have known Mrs. Frank (Martha) Gerbode for approximately ten years.

During World War II, when I was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army of the United States, attached to the Office of Strategic Services, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., at my suggestion Mrs. Gerbode was employed by one of the main operating branches of the Office of Strategic Services, which services, like those of most associated with this war-time intelligence agency, were of a confidential nature. At the time of her appointment, I was chief of one of the sections of this branch and later, while she was still employed, became chairman of the branch reporting to General William J. Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services.

Mrs. Gerbode volunteered her services at no compensation, just as many other similarly patriotic and loyal citizens served O.S.S. and other branches of both the armed services and the government. Her loyalty and service to our government and to the cause for which we were fighting were unquestioned, and the intelligence with which she performed her services, at considerable sacrifice in time, were such that she received commendation from the branch with which she was associated and also a letter of commendation from General Donovan.

Very truly yours,

Herbert S. Little
Formerly Lt.-Col. A.U.S.
0-919269

HSL ml
Dear Martha:

We have been waiting the Mayor's selection of some one of the plans submitted to him for the Diamond Head area: from the John Warnecke Co.; from his own "Waikiki Diamond Head Committee; and Aaron Levine's ODC plan. Pending is the Planning Director's plan and the City Council's recommendations.

And yet, all of a sudden, is announced plans for a nine-story condominium on the Paul Koy lot, opposite your side entrance, and bounded by Coconut, Kiele and Kalakaua Avenue. I enclose the story for which I gave George Chaplin the information.

The Planning Commission gave the developers their O.K. last month (very quietly) on the grounds that Koy was given a spot zoning in 1961.

At least one of the plans submitted to the Mayor calls for open space in that square area.

I have alerted the Outdoor Circle, talked with the Fire Department Chief (re congested narrow streets), urged the neighbors to petition for a delay on any building permits until an overall plan is decided upon. And I've talked to Mr. Swope. He believes that the spot zoning could be ruled out and that it is contrary to planning requirements for the condominium to be permitted before the area development plan is accepted.

The official wording defining "General" and "Development" plans is that "the development implements the general plan." Mr. Swope states he believes this present permit can be set aside legally on the above grounds.

I do not have the money to engage Cades again. Muriel Damon can't be counted on and the Dillinghams and Helene are gone. Mrs. Sheham never fulfilled her pledge.

My last hope is that, maybe, you are interested in protecting your property to the extent of investing in a
final round.

The developer announces that construction will begin in December.

Please send me your thoughts.

With much Aloha,

Alice Spalding Bowen
LT
MRS FRANK GERBODE
2560 DIVISEDERO ST SANFRANCISCO CALIF

DEVELOPERS AND HECHTS LAUNCHING CAMPAIGN TO ZONE YOUR SHORE TO LIGHTHOUSE FOR HIGHRISE HOTELS AND MAKALEI APARTMENTS WITH FOUR LANE HIGHWAY STOP WE ARE OPPOSING AS MAJORITY PROPERTY OWNERS NEED YOUR SIGNATURE PLEASE WIRE CONSENT

ALICE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE
ALAMOA 723410/EW

VIA RCA SAH0476 TF0190 MM
HRHU CO URSF 021
SAN FRANCISCO CALIF 21 14 1123A PST

ALICE BOWEN 2955 MAKALEIPLACE HONOLULU

WILL BACK YOU UP IN ANYTHING USE MY NAME WHAT ELSE CAN I DO
MARTHA GERBODE

COLL TF0190 2955
Dear Alice:

Your telegram was a shock! It is a disgrace to the city of Honolulu that after all the plans, (and money spent on plans) a new highrise campaign could find a breath of support. Please send me newspaper clippings and further details.

You've received my radiogram. Make the most use of it, even if it has to be quoted in the Press. If I should get in touch with Warnecke's office here, let me know.

This is my statement to you and to those who oppose this move:

I, Martha Alexander Gerbode, owner of properties at 2831 Coconut Ave. and 3101 Diamond Head Road, reject any proposition for the rezoning of the Diamond Head area for highrise. Martha A. Gerbode
April 17, 1967

The Editor:

Having read with interest the articles on the Diamond Head controversy (which sound all too familiar to San Franciscans) I am curious to know the estimate of the cost to local taxpayers for the widening of Diamond Head Road.

Surely it must be more than Mr. Chinn Ho's figure of $10 million for condemnation of the area by the City for a park.

Dr. and Mrs. Joseph L. Shaw

2475 Pacific Avenue
San Francisco, Calif.
April 17, 1967

The Editor:

As a property owner on Diamond Head Road, my anxiety regarding the proposed rezoning of this area is increasing.

I propose that before any decision is reached the government departments in Washington concerned with the preservation of natural beauty, and Mrs. Johnson's Beautification Program be asked to make a study of the five plans submitted for building at the base of Diamond Head.

Surely the authors of these plans as well as the Governor and the Mayor will welcome Federal advice and help.

Martha A. Gerbode
April 17, 1967

Mr. Fred Farr
Director of Highway Beautification
and Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C.

Dear Fred:

You must be aware of the situation regarding the threat of desecration of Diamond Head by short-sighted builders of high-rise, which has now come to a crisis.

In open disregard of public opinion, a small group of influential property owners in the Waikiki district have overridden four previous plans for preserving the area, and have managed to "persuade" a number of local officials that their project of building 2000 units in apartments along the shores of Diamond Head would be of benefit to Honolulu.

The leader of the so-called "Diamond Head Improvement Association" is a very sharp character named Chinn Ho who, financially and politically, controls much of the County of Honolulu.

The deadline for the decision on rezoning this area from residential to hotel and high-rise apartments is in less than 40 days.

Public opinion is on our side, but politics for gain seems to offer a stronger incentive, and I regret to say that the opposition is deeply entrenched in the Democratic Party.

If the government would intervene to postpone
any decision on rezoning for one year until there can be made a thorough Federal study of the situation, it would be definitely in the interests of conservation throughout the country.

Fred, I hope you know Hawaii and understand what Diamond Head means as a symbol of this State.

Whatever advice or help you can offer will be greatly appreciated.

Aloha,

P.S. I wire you today hoping one of your people could be available here with whom I could talk. I have only two more days before flying home. If there isn't someone on the job from your department, there should be.

MG
April 17, 1967

Dear Mr. Phleger:

I understand that the Fagan property on Diamond Head Road is up for bid and the deadline is April 30.

I will be back in San Francisco on the 21st and should like to make an appointment to talk with you about this as soon as possible.

Aloha,

Martha Gerbode
April 17, 1967

Maestro Andre Kostelantz
10 Gracie Square
New York, New York

Dear Andre:

The situation regarding the Diamond Head area being rezoned for high-rise has reached a crisis. A decision will be reached in less than 40 days and it is obvious to us that local unsavory politics will prevail unless the Federal Government intervenes. We are asking for a year's postponement of any decision on rezoning in order to give those in Washington concerned with the preservation of natural beauty and resources time to study the problem. Mrs. Johnson's committee for the Beautification Program should be alerted too.

Being familiar with Diamond Head, I beg you to use any influence you may have in Washington, D.C. to help us. Time is of the essence!

The Shaws and I are having a lovely time as usual, and send our Aloha to you both.

Love,
Mrs. Frank Gerbode  
2560 Divisadero St.  
San Francisco 15  

May 10th, 1967  

Dear Alice:  

This is a secret....My offer for the Fagan place has been accepted, but the sale will have to go to Probate Court and I can be outbid. If the Ho Hui wants it badly enough they will certainly raise the ante, and then I'll have to stop. I'm trying to remain anonymous, so please don't spread the word.

The pity is that I don't want the darn thing, and haven't the faintest notion what to do with it. I may have to subdivide...but in low buildings of course. However, if I get it, and if the rezoning goes through, there'd be no point in holding a green spot of about one acre so I might have to go along with them.

Aloha,

[Signature]
The Editor:

The "Mad Tea Party" at Diamond Head.

This time Alice had come a long ways induced by picturesque ads of Diamond Head.

Unaccustomed to the languor of the tropics, swaying palm trees and murmuring waves, lapping at old Leahi's feet, she dozed while reading the local news.

Suddenly she found herself lost in a kaleidoscopic maze of recommended "improvements" for this famous landscape, to the sounds befitting each, very like a "sound and light" production.

An impressive business leader commanded eight green acres into concrete skyscrapers "at least twelve stories high". And another "improvement" was a tunnel right through Leahi's famed profile to funnel the thousands who flocked there or who only wished to hurry by.

The sounds became chaotic, issuing from every competitive holstery -- wedding songs, *Kock* and *Woli*, hula, Samoan cries, and the drum beat of frenzied Tahitian dances. Each bar sent out its merry makers; and added to the din was the crash of frequent traffic collisions and sirens along the winding way and in and out of tunnels.

Through oversight, an old recording carried the soothing voice of the leader promising quiet for these eight golden acres -- "just soft music -- violin music."

Alice's old acquaintances, the March Hare and the Dormouse, squeaked through barely with their lives and another friend, the Hatter, ran by shouting, "Mad! Mad! Mad!"

Turning horrified eyes to the inscrutable face of Leahi, Alice became engulfed in still another strange scene directed by a second prophet who said, "I don't blame you for not liking that last plan -- now just see mine."

And before she could say NO, old Leahi was engulfed with masses and masses of hotel apartments running up and down her slopes and spilling over into the nearby picnic park. A devious, encircling road went up and down hill and, at times, fell off into precipitous ravines, because the designer from far away Denmark did not know they existed and so had left them off his plan.
Again it was a tumultuous scene and the whole populace by that time was weeping mock turtle tears for poor Leahi, buried deep and covered with confusion, while the Hatter continued to reiterate his refrain of "Mad! Mad! Mad!"

Just then a sprinkle of liquid sunshine awakened Alice who, with cries of relief and joy, found the beautiful sight of Leahi untouched and intact, still guarding "the loveliest fleet of islands that lie anchored in any ocean" and radiant in the beauty which draws so many travellers to Hawaiian shores.

As the Duchess told Alice, "Everything's got a moral if you only can find it." And so, dear reader, listen not again to the siren song of every prophet and get busy fashioning an indestructible Kapu sign, around and all about Leahi.

Louise Carroll
3101 Diamond Head Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

June 30, 1967

The Honorable Ben F. Kaito
Chairman of the Public Works Committee
City Council of the City and
County of Honolulu
City Hall
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear Councilman Kaito:

There is absolutely no doubt that the character and natural beauty of Diamond Head would be destroyed by the construction of more apartment and hotel buildings around its base. Therefore, to ensure the proper setting for Diamond Head, I have purchased the former Fagan property at 3241 Diamond Head Road. I intend to keep it, as well as my other property at 3101 Diamond Head Road, in single-family residential use.

This is a gesture that I hope will be followed by my neighbors. I certainly hope that our Mayor and the Members of the City Council will take note of the spirit in which this gesture has been made. And I hope that they will have the foresight to retain the present single-family residential zoning in the blocks makai of Diamond Head Road so that Kapiolani Park can eventually be continued to the Lighthouse.

I realize that this park extension will not happen overnight. It will take many years. But in the meantime, residential use around the base of Diamond Head would retain the character of the area until arrangements can be made for the eventual park development.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Martha Gerbode
Mrs. Frank Gerbode  
2560 Divisadero St.  
San Francisco 15

Aug. 1st.

Dear Alice:

Aaron Levine did call me from the airport, to give me the good news. He says that Russell's "brief" will be valuable in other cities and states, and hailed it as a major victory. I am not at all surprised, but expect some of my relatives and friends to write their congratulations. Yes?

Dear Alice, you have done the best part of the work, for which we thank you. I will return Aaron Levine's part of the scheme, but would very much like to have Russell Cade's "Brief", because I think we could use it here! I shall write to his firm about this.

Carry on, my dear. Right shall triumph!!!

(Please excuse my typing...i'm still not used to this electric machine.)

People here are, as of today, very interested in what you have done in Honolulu. I think this will spread in the right directions!

Aloha mai,

[Signature]

PS I don't think a "Memorial Park" cemetery would be so bad, if it were like Punchbowl. It would save a nice green belt.
This is short as we just returned from the Argentine last night.

Mrs. Frank Gerbode
2560 Divisadero St.
San Francisco 15

Oct. 22nd.

Dear Alice:

Many thanks for the report and clippings.

Like you, I feel that this, although a compromise, is not too hurtful a plan.

The safety of the Diamond Head silhouette lay in your hands, and what is being preserved is entirely to your personal credit!

Our financial adviser, Al Gorie, has been in Honolulu and will make clear to me the exact boundaries. We'll be down over Thanksgiving... for three days only...and if time permits I'd like to see you.

Aloha,
Dear Aaron:

Thanks for keeping me up to date with the good news!

If Mr. Chinn Ho thinks his property is so valuable, why didn't he bid more for the Jagan place? Somebody should write a letter to the papers. At that time he wasn't prepared to spend $10 per square foot. He did bid on it you know.

Also, would it be any good to confront the advertising firms on their out-of-date photos of Diamond Head...to wit, an enclosure from a recent Monterey Cruise brochure. Should Matson play this kind of game? And if so, shouldn't they give some financial assistance to our side?

We'll be down on Feb. 15th. for about ten days and I hope to talk with you then.

Aloha,
March 12th, 1968

Dear Aaron:

Mrs. Marion Blair, real estate broker, called this morning to ask if she could show the Fagan property to two clients...Mr. Scripps (of Scripps Howard) and Mrs. Getty (daughter-in-law of Paul Getty). They're both looking for first residential property. I told her that I would impose restrictions...or buy air-rights...and she seems to think they would agree to that as they want a first residential home. Mrs. Blair also talked with Alice Bowen who gave her blessing.

As you know, the cost of upkeep and taxes is quite a burden, and I'm pretty frantic to get rid of it. Huey Johnson and Mr. Richards will be seeing you. I think they left for Honolulu this morning. Would it be possible for me to buy the air-rights, and donate them to the National Conservancy movement? Or what sort of restrictions should I demand?

If something could be spelled out for Mrs. Blair I'd appreciate your help. Perhaps I need a lawyer? Or to consult my tax man.

I'm sure the Conservancy people will be disappointed that I'm not giving them the property, but I hope you'll realize that I simply can't afford to do that.

Aloha,
March 18, 1968

Mrs. Martha Gerbode
2560 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, California  94115

Dear Martha:

Your letter of March 12 arrived while I was in Chicago, therefore this somewhat tardy reply.

By now you probably know that the City Council voted last week to retain the entire Diamond Head area in Single-Family Residential zoning and authorized Planning Director Skrivanek to prepare an application to the Federal government for matching open space funds to purchase the air rights in the area. The two actions are inconsistent, since it is not necessary to purchase air rights if Council intends to keep the area in Single-Family Residential zoning which does not permit development above the second floor anyway. But it is probably too much to expect them to be consistent!

At any rate, I have serious question as a taxpayer about the Federal government or my City government spending limited public funds for the purchase of vertical development rights that the current property owners do not possess. How do you valuate a right that does not exist? This may be the same question that the Federal government will ask the City.

Psychologically, however, their action is another step in our direction since it proclaims a public policy of no high or even medium-rise structures on the slopes of Diamond Head. To that extent, it is another victory in our battle to deny Chinn Ho permission to build his 10-or more story apartment-hotel structures.
In regard to the former Fagan estate property, I have two suggestions to offer. First, in discussing the problem with Milton Cades (brother of Russell and a tax expert here), he informed me that it is probably possible for you to realize from 75% to 100% of the total value of the property as a tax benefit if you wished to donate it as a gift over a period of time to an organization like the Nature Conservancy.

I was surprised that the entire value might be recovered, but he assured me that it might be possible under certain tax conditions over a few year period. So, before disposing of that property, and I can fully understand your desire to unburden yourself of it, you might want to explore that solution if the final dollar return could be the same as though you sold it.

My other comment concerns the sale of the property to people of the type mentioned in your letter. If you do not find the tax gift proposal satisfactory, sale to people like that, with a protective easement over the air rights, would certainly be the next best action for this community's standpoint. In that case, you might wish to retain the air rights and donate them to the Nature Conservancy to ensure their permanence. There should be a reverter clause that would enable you to sell them at a later date on first option to the new owner if the adjacent area is rezoned for medium or high-rise apartment or hotel use. This would make certain that if the City double crosses everybody and rezones it for Chinn for high density use sometime in the future, you won't be providing the open space for Chinn's new buildings next door.

On Saturday I discussed this latter approach with Frank Damon and he authorized me to say that he is receptive to considering further the concept of giving the air rights of his family property on Diamond Head Road to an organization such as the Nature Conservancy. He wants to know more about that organization and, of course, would have to obtain the consent of his two brothers and his mother. Under present circumstances, it would certainly make an impact on the City and the general public if any of the property owners there were to donate their air rights, rather than sell them.

Yes, I did meet with Tom Richards, President of the Nature Conservancy, and Huey Johnson when they were here this week. I believe that they realize how much you have expended already in this battle, and would be agreeable to any proposal you might wish to make to the Nature Conservancy. I would hope that if the tax gift arrangement does not meet with your approval, you would consider donating to that organization the air rights prohibiting
any further development of the property. I hope that the Damons and the Ben Dillinghams will do the same. Also, the residents of Makalei Place area might be induced to make the same gift to demonstrate their seriousness in preventing further construction on Diamond Head slopes.

Huey Johnson informed me that Putnam Livermore of San Francisco is one of the many attorneys used by his organization. Perhaps it would be wise to discuss this problem with him. If you wish to consult Milton Cades, I am certain that he would be glad to advise you of possible tax arrangements.

In any case, Martha, I am certain that you will do the best thing! Please do not hesitate to call upon me if there is anything I can do. You may be assured that both the ODC and I will continue to press the City and State to move toward an eventual park around the base of our most distinguished landmark in Hawaii. It may take several decades, but we will not stop.

Aloha.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Aaron Levine
Executive Vice-President
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## SAVE DIAMOND HEAD ASSOCIATION

### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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<th>Name and Address</th>
<th>Organization/Affiliation</th>
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(Rev. 6/69)
THE DIAMOND HEAD STORY

On Tuesday, June 17, 1969 at 2 p.m., the Honolulu City Council will hold a public hearing in Honolulu Hale to gauge public sentiment once again on "saving Diamond Head" and considering whether steps should be taken to eventually extend Kapiolani Park to the Lighthouse. In the belief that it would be helpful to know the background of the problem, the staff of the Oahu Development Conference prepared this summary of the numerous activities pertaining to Diamond Head.

Over a period of many years The Outdoor Circle and other citizen organizations devoted vigilant attention to the question of further development of Diamond Head. In September, 1961, these groups submitted to the City Council a petition requesting immediate preparation of an overall Development Plan for the Diamond Head area before permission could be granted for construction of any more high-rise apartment or hotel buildings on the lower slopes of Diamond Head.

Citizen Advisory Committee

In April, 1963, former Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell appointed a Citizen Advisory Committee to assist the City Planning Department with the preparation of a detailed plan for the Waikiki-Diamond Head area.

Meanwhile, the 1965 session of the State Legislature declared Diamond Head a State Monument—several years after former Governor William F. Quinn performed the same action by Executive order.

The Mayor's Citizen Advisory Committee completed its assignment in April, 1966. Although the plan recommended that the area makai of Diamond Head Road from Coconut Avenue to the Lighthouse should be retained in single-family Residential use, several members of the Committee also wanted to retain that use in the adjacent area from Coconut Avenue to Poni Moi Road. However, the plan indicates medium density Apartments for that latter section.

REPORT 14

June 9, 1969
In July, 1966, the Oahu Development Conference published its proposals for the Diamond Head area, strongly urging extension of Kapiolani Park to the Lighthouse in order to:

(a) meet the rapidly increasing recreation needs of Honolulu residents;

(b) permit expansion of overcrowded Kapiolani Park;

(c) ensure an appropriate natural setting for the most important landmark of Hawaii; and

(d) maintain Diamond Head Road as a scenic drive.

As an initial step, the ODC proposed that the single-family Residential zoning in the area be retained to prevent further apartment or hotel construction which would make the future park development even more costly to the general public.

It outlined a priority program of acquisition, recommending prompt public purchase of the thirty-two small properties in the Diamond Head Terrace (bounded by Coconut Avenue, Diamond Head Road, Poni Moi Road and Kalakaua Avenue). It also had preliminary appraisals prepared professionally to estimate the probable public cost of a park around the base of Diamond Head if the City moved expeditiously.

The ODC suggested that the park proposal be accomplished through a combination of financing methods. It recommended that the City seek State and Federal matching funds along with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy and other local and Mainland organizations and foundations concerned with conservation.

It suggested that tax benefit programs be explored to lower the eventual public acquisition cost of the larger makai properties whose owners might wish to retain them for several more years. If this were done for at least three of the property owners who expressed a strong interest in preserving the single-family Residential character of the area, the ODC estimated that the public cost of its park proposal would total approximately $6 million dollars, half of which might conceivably be obtained from the Federal open space program over a period of several years.

In May, 1967, despite its staff recommendation that the area makai of Diamond Head Road from Coconut Avenue to the Lighthouse be designated for two-story Apartment or Hotel use, the City Planning Commission voted to retain that area in single-family Residential use.
At the Planning Commission public hearing one week earlier, three property owners in the area (M. Damon; B. Dillingham; M. Gerbode) requested that the single-family Residential use be unchanged. Thirty other persons in the crowd of three hundred testified in favor of retaining the residential use to make a future park possible.

An important public sale of a large makai property also occurred in May, 1967, when Mrs. Frank Gerbode purchased the former Fagan home at 3241 Diamond Head Road. She bought the 57,248 sq. ft. property for $572,500 to ensure that it would not be purchased for speculative apartment, hotel or small condominium purposes.

Since the transaction was a public sale open to all, it established a significant market value for other property in the area. Incidentally, the sale price confirmed the ODC earlier cost estimate for the park proposal.

On June 30, 1967, the City Council Public Works Committee reviewed the high-rise development proposals and model for the area makai of Diamond Head Road to the Lighthouse.

At the request of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Planning Consultant Robert Van Dorpe prepared a Visual Preservation Plan for Diamond Head. Submitted to the State in October, 1967, the comprehensive report has received little implementation.

In its comments pertaining to the makai slopes of Diamond Head the report stresses the need to maintain the existing tree cover and shrubbery in order to provide a proper setting for the natural craggy appearance of the famous landmark. The report points out that further construction would seriously damage that setting.

Few people who were present will forget the public hearing on December 12, 1967, when the Honolulu City Council considered a proposed Detailed Land Use Plan for the Waikiki-Diamond Head area. The major controversy centered on whether the lower slopes of Diamond Head, on the makai side of Diamond Head Road, should be designated for Apartment and Hotel use, or whether the area should be retained in single-family Residential use to permit eventual creation of a park strip around the base of Diamond Head.

Out of the crowd of five hundred persons that overflowed the City Council meeting room and lobby, forty witnesses testified in favor of the park proposal. Thirteen speakers were opposed to the park concept.
Nationally prominent in their testimony for the park proposal were Mr. James Biddle, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, chartered by the U.S. Congress, and Mr. Huey Johnson, Western Regional Director of The Nature Conservancy. Mr. Biddle had come from Washington, D.C. to testify for five minutes at this hearing; as had Mr. Johnson from San Francisco.

The City Council was so impressed by the display of broad community and Mainland interest in "saving" Diamond Head that it retained the single-family Residential use for the makai area. That session of City Council has received national recognition as one of the most dramatic examples of "citizen power" in planning.

In January, 1968, a representative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) indicated that there was an excellent possibility that Honolulu could receive as much as 2.5 million dollars in Federal open space funds for the extension of Kapiolani Park around the base of Diamond Head.

As a result of that Federal indication of interest, the City Council directed the City Planning Department to prepare an application to HUD for open space funds. The application stated that the funds would be used either for the purchase of property in fee simple or for the purchase of air rights.

The City's application was submitted to HUD in April, 1968 with a total cost estimate of 14 million dollars to accomplish the park proposal. That high cost estimate resulted from the inclusion of La Pietra (2.1 million dollars) and considerably higher property appraisals than those received previously by the ODC, even though the City employed the same appraiser.

Subsequently, taking of La Pietra was deleted from the City's application.

During the same period, twenty-one property owners in the area on both sides of Diamond Head Road indicated in response to a postcard poll by the City Planning Department, that they would be willing to donate to The Nature Conservancy the air rights to their properties if the area were planned and zoned for single-family residences and/or park.
After reviewing the City's HUD application, the Save Diamond Head Association adopted a policy statement opposing the use of public funds for the purchase of air rights on the slopes of Diamond Head. The Association believes that even if the City owned those development rights above the second-story level, further construction of low-rise hotels, apartments or condominiums could occur, thereby preventing eventual extension of Kapiolani Park. Also, further construction in the area would destroy the tree cover and natural setting for Diamond Head.

Subsequently, public announcement was made of a proposal to construct eleven condominium units where only one large home presently exists. It illustrates the validity of the Save Diamond Head Association objections to the purchase of air rights, since that proposed condominium development could take place even after the public pays large sums for the air rights above the second-floor level.

In February, 1968, the U. S. Department of Interior confirmed that it was designating Diamond Head as a registered National Natural Landmark. Although that designation indicates Federal recognition of Diamond Head, it does not protect it from further development. That protection can be assured only by the City and the State.

However, in behalf of the State, Governor Burns has said, "May I assure the Secretary of the Interior, as I have done in writing, and the people of the United States that the people of Hawaii will preserve and enhance Diamond Head for future generations."

In response to public request that no further improvements be made within the Diamond Head crater, the 1969 Session of the State Legislature did not include funds for expansion of the National Guard facilities in its newly adopted Capital Improvement Program.
In February, 1969, Mayor Frank F. Fasi appointed an Advisory Committee on Diamond Head. Within six weeks the Committee submitted its first report, urging that the necessary steps be taken promptly to extend Kapiolani Park to the Lighthouse. Mayor Fasi endorsed the report and transmitted it to the City Council. Among its several recommendations, the report urged:

(a) prompt application to HUD for open space funds under a new application;

(b) retention of single-family Residential zoning and official designation of the area makai of Diamond Head Road, from Poni Moi Road to the Lighthouse (with the exception of existing high-rise structures), for eventual park use;

(c) declaration of a moratorium on applications for building permits that would change the character of the area from single-family Residential;

(d) adoption of a priority program of property acquisition, beginning with the purchase of the thirty-two small properties in the Diamond Head Terrace area, -- bounded by Kalakaua Avenue, Poni Moi Road, Diamond Head Road and Coconut Avenue.

On June 3, 1969, a City Council resolution was prepared directing the heads of the Planning Department and Department of Parks and Recreation to confer with community groups and individuals, including residents of the Diamond Head area, in formulating a Development Plan for the Waikiki and Diamond Head area.

Before acting on the Mayor's Advisory Committee recommendation to prevent further development in the area, the City Council has scheduled a public hearing for 2 p.m., June 17, 1969 to gauge once again the public sentiment on "saving Diamond Head" and to consider whether Kapiolani Park should be extended eventually to the Lighthouse.
Fourteen Years of Diamond Head

September, 1961 - 26 organizations petitioned the Honolulu City Council to have a development plan prepared for the Diamond Head area and a special zoning district regulation enacted to protect it.

April, 1962 - By Executive Order #2000, former Governor William F. Quinn declared Diamond Head a State Monument.

April, 1963 - Former Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee on Waikiki and Diamond Head.

May, 1965 - The State Legislature designated Diamond Head a State Monument.

May, 1967 - After holding a public hearing attended by 300 persons, the City Planning Commission voted to retain the Diamond Head area in single-family Residential use despite the City Planning Director's recommendation that the area makai of Diamond Head Road be designated for Apartment or Hotel use.

December, 1967 - At a City Council public hearing attended by 500 persons, strong sentiment was expressed to retain the Diamond Head area in single-family Residential use with an eventual park strip around the base of Diamond Head on the makai side of the road. The City Council voted in favor of retaining the single-family Residential use instead of granting approval to a high-rise hotel/apartment proposal.
February, 1968 - The U.S. Department of Interior designated Diamond Head as a Registered National Natural Landmark.

August, 1968 - A new Comprehensive Zoning Code was enacted for Honolulu. It included an innovative "Historic-Cultural-Scenic" zoning classification specifically designed for areas and landmarks like Diamond Head.

February, 1969 - Mayor Frank F. Fasi appointed an Advisory Committee on Waikiki and Diamond Head.

June, 1969 - With 350 persons present at its public hearing, the City Council designated the entire area makai of Diamond Head crater for Park purposes instead of imposing the building moratorium which had been under consideration.

December, 1969 - The State Defense Department Task Force on Future Use of Diamond Head Crater published its report calling for eventual recreational use within the crater.

May, 1971 - After holding a public hearing on a proposed "Historic-Cultural-Scenic" zoning district for Diamond Head, the City Planning Commission and Planning Director approved the district proposal and transmitted it to City Council.

January, 1975 - The proposed Diamond Head "Historic-Cultural-Scenic" district Bill #11 was introduced to City Council.

February, 1975 - City Council held a public hearing on the proposed Diamond Head "Historic-Cultural-Scenic" district.

October, 1975 - City Council unanimously adopted the "Historic-Cultural-Scenic" zoning district for Diamond Head and its environs.

It was a long journey from September 1961 to October 1975, but the citizen interest was persistent and the public policy decisions significant, all along the way.


At least three property-owners in the area between Coconut Ave. and the Lighthouse favor continuing the area in single-family residential zoning. Their holdings, marked A, B, C and D, total 4.2 acres.

Members of the Diamond Head Improvement Assn., favoring hotel-apartment development, favor the single-family and mid-density dev.

By BILL COOK

Mrs. Martha Gerbode, owner of two large Diamond Head parcels, said yesterday she would not permit her property to be developed for hotel or apartment use. She bought one of the properties last month for $372,500 expressly to keep it out of high-density development, she said.

In a written statement to the City Council's Public Works Committee, Mrs. Gerbode urged her neighbors and City officials to keep the slopes below Diamond Head Road in single-family residential use so Kapiolani Park eventually can be extended to the Lighthouse.

The Council committee yesterday heard two hours of arguments for and against high-density development on the slopes of Diamond Head.

George K. Houghstalling, representing Diamond Head Improvement Assn., spoke in favor of extending 1,000-unit hotel or apartment development between Coconut Ave. and the Lighthouse.

Mrs. Gerbode's announcement means the association's plan will have to be reduced in size. Her property includes a 74,527-square-foot parcel at 3101 Diamond Head and a 57,248-square-foot lot at 3241 Diamond Head.

Only last month, Mrs. Gerbode acquired the latter parcel from the Fagan Estate.

The lot is part of the area the Diamond Head Improvement Assn. hoped to consolidate for a $40 million hotel or apartment development. Also to be subtracted from the association's plan would be Ben Dillingham's 28,495-square-foot property at 3227 Diamond Head and Mrs. Muriel C. Damon's 23,468-square-foot holding at 3219 Diamond Head.

Frank Damon, representing Mrs. Damon, said yesterday he opposed high-density development and that ultimately the area should be acquired for public park use. He told The Advertiser he was pleased at Mrs. Gerbode's stand because it "helps cause" of eventual acquisition for park use.

Damon had made the same stand at an earlier City Planning Commission public hearing on the proposed detailed land use map and development plan for Diamond Head.

Ben Dillingham, who could not be reached for comment yesterday, also has said that the area between Coconut Ave. and the Lighthouse should be acquired eventually for park purposes.

Those in favor of developing hotels or apartments on Diamond Head have said the high value of the land is better suited for high-density development.

Houghstalling estimated the value of the property at between $6 and $7 per square foot. The price Mrs. Gerbode paid for the Fagan property substantiates the higher figure.

The State Tax Department set the 1966 assessed valuations on the Fagan Estate property at $206,189, but Mrs. Gerbode paid $372,500 for it.

The other Gerbode parcel was valued at $377,589, the Dillingham property at $152,017 and the Damon property at $199,594.

The text of Mrs. Gerbode's statement:

"There is absolutely no doubt that the character and natural beauty of Diamond Head would be destroyed by the construction of more apartments and hotel buildings around its base.

"Therefore, to ensure the proper setting for Diamond Head, I have purchased the former Fagan property at 3211 Diamond Head Road. I intend to keep it, as well as my other property at 301 Diamond Head Road, in single-family residential use. "This is a gesture that I hope will be followed by my neighbors. I certainly hope that our Mayor and the members of City Council will take note of the spirit in which this gesture has been made.

"And I hope that they will have the foresight to retain the present single-family residential zoning in the blocks makai of Diamond Head Road so that Kapiolani Park can eventually be continued to the Lighthouse. I realize that this park extension will not happen overnight. It will take many years. But in the meantime, residential use around the base of Diamond Head would retain the character of the area until arrangements can be made for the eventual park development."
The Paul Fagan Home Has
A Historic Background

The site of the old Fagan house at 3241 Diamond Head Road—now the property of Mrs. Frank A. Gerbode and on the market—is a historic one.

The land first was deeded by King Kalakaua to Kahololilo in June, 1879, and was bought in 1889 by Sanford B. Dole, then president of the Hawaiian Republic, and later the first governor of the Territory of Hawaii.

Dole named the property "Aquamarine"—probably because of its sweeping view of sea and sky.

In the ensuing years between 1903 and 1927, the large property was broken up and sold to several owners, but was brought back together under the Bishop Trust Co. in 1927.

In 1930, the estate was bought by Mrs. Helene Irwin Fagan, and comprised 88,000 square feet of land fronting on 500 feet of beach. The sale price of $200,000 included a new $50,000 house built by Herbert Tuslow, president and manager of Insurance Factors.

The present house was originally designed by Charles W. Dickey, one of Hawaii's outstanding architects, who also designed buildings for Alexander & Baldwin, Castle & Cooke, the Queen's Hospital and the Halekulani Hotel. He planned the new structure around the "original house," and it was built by contractor Thomas Lishman at the cost of $250,000.

All of the interior details then were Hawaiian, with a great deal of tapa and koa included. Furnishings included antique calabashes, the king's poker table, Queen Emma's bed and significant collections of royal china and glassware. The latter were given to the Friends of Iolani Palace and the Bishop Museum after Mrs. Fagan's death.

Later renovations were undertaken by Albert Ely Ives, widely-known Island architect who also designed the new educational wing for the Honolulu Academy of Arts, many elegant Island homes and Barbara Hutton's $2 million residence in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

The renovations included the removal of one wing of the original house, so that a part of the property could be sold. Ives also lowered the ceiling in the living room and paneled it in natural wood, to give a more intimate feeling. He updated the kitchen and added a wine cellar and bar.

This large beach property was a "second home" for the Fagans, who lived in Hillsborough, Calif. They also had homes on Molokai and in Hana, Maui, where the ex-shipping magnate, ex-baseball promoter and rancher was called the Host of Hana.

He was the founder of Hana Ranch and the Hotel Hana Maui, and did much to prevent the sleepy Maui village from becoming a ghost town; Mrs. Fagan came from a wealthy Island sugar and banking family, and was widely known here for her charitable and social activities.

After Mrs. Fagan's death in 1966, the estate, now a 57,248-square-foot property with 285 feet of beach, was sold to Mrs. Gerbode for $572,500. She purchased it, according to reports, to protect Diamond Head from the threat of high-rise development.
Conservationist Martha Gerbode helped save Diamond Head; now she's working to preserve the Waterfront here.

by Bernice Scharbach

A FEAT FLIES IN FRONT OF THE imposing Pacific Heights mansion where Frank and Martha Gerbode live: an eight-foot green banner with white stripes and a peace symbol where the stars usually are.

Dr. Frank Gerbode is a world-famed open heart surgeon; Martha Alexander Gerbode has a reputation for saving open space. She has helped save the Bay from fill, Diamond Head from Hawaiian developers and now wants to preserve the San Francisco Waterfront.

I rang and a maid ushered me through the entrance hall, past a graceful, circular staircase into a large living room. There are several comfortable lounges, bowls of fresh flowers and the walls are hung with works of art. Through a Bay window, I can see the hazy outlines of the bridges and Alcatraz blurred by the fog. Then I notice the petite, gray-haired woman on the sofa.

It's 9 a.m.—she set the time for the meeting—and, as I look at the lady in the smart navy crepe tailored with its short-cropped jacket, I think about that couturier who lost a customer when he said, "I do not design for women who get up before noon." I expected a self-assured socialite with eloquent opinions loaded with quotable quotes from many public appearances. Instead, as I fumble with my tape recorder going through the opening formalities, Mrs. Gerbode tells me how nervous she is about being interviewed. She lights a cigarette. A few quick puffs and she is ready to talk about two of her favorite subjects: Save Diamond Head (a fait accompli) and Save the Waterfront.

Why the interest in Diamond Head?

"Hawaii is as much home to me as San Francisco and Piedmont, where I was born," smiles Mrs. Gerbode. "My great-grandfather, William Patterson Alexander, was a missionary who sailed to the Islands from New England with his bride in 1832. My father and grandfather were born in Hawaii."

Little Martha made her first journey to the Islands at the age of two and has lived over there part of every year since. "When I was a child, I used to ride my horse down Kalakaua Avenue. We played robbers and police on horseback and we used to make trails through the jungle. I wish my five grandchildren could ride horses 'round the Island and see it the way we knew it. I wish they could go ti-leaf sliding the way we did..."

Mrs. Gerbode helped save Diamond Head. The picturesque backdrop behind Waikiki Beach in a 10-year battle with developers.

"We have a house on Diamond Head. It has a magnificent view on one side and a smothering highrise on the other. It was naturally concerned," she explains. "The city made a mistake in the early Sixties when it allowed the first highrise to be built on the Diamond Head side of the Waikiki Natorium. Once the line was broken, it became increasingly difficult to hold it farther on. Save Diamond Head Association was fighting to keep the slopes below Diamond Head Road in single-family residences. Then over a period of time, as the state could afford to buy up those private homes, Kapiolani Park would eventually extend out to the Lighthouse at the other end of the road."

That was not what the Diamond Head Improvement Association had in mind. A group of some of her neighbors along the road, thinking more of finance than conservation, wanted to consolidate 8.3 acres of properties along the 11-mile stretch so a five-building, 1000-unit development could be built on it. Financier Chinn Ho, developer of Peacock Gap and China Camp in Marin, headed the association.

"He's my belle noir," laughs Mrs. Gerbode. "He's perfectly charming, unfortunately. We lived next door to each other in Honolulu. We'd all go to dinner before this came up, and they'd come over for cocktails and we were on the friendliest terms. I've never seen him since all this. But I'm sure he would be charmed about the whole thing."

She snuffs out her cigarette, folds her hands in her lap, and continues:

"Once we got organized, we had a lot of people behind us: The Outdoor Cir-

icle, a group of ladies who banned signboards around the periphery of the Island (See San Francisco, February 1970); the Chamber of Commerce; the Waikiki Jaycees; the Oahu Development Company; Alice Spaulding Bowen, who's in her eighties, was the key leader. Very soft spoken. 'Now gentlemen,' she'd say quietly in the midst of a terribly heated argument, 'we are not going to have this!'

"But the one group that was most important of all in achieving our victory—and this I must point out to Harry Bridges—was labor. I remember Jack Reynolds of the Honolulu AFL-CIO Building and Trades Council saying that though construction was their bread and butter, just creating jobs was no justification for bad planning. With that kind of support here, we can save the waterfront."

In May 1967, when the Diamond Head Improvement Association's highrise plan was up for approval, Mrs. Gerbode flew over just to attend a public hearing on the matter. But she didn't get up to speak.

"I simply cannot speak in public. I get up and it doesn't come out. I shake and it's very embarrassing. I would love to be able to speak because I feel that I want to express myself. (She even declined to allow a photograph of herself to be taken for this article.)"

Martha Gerbode found another way to express herself—her pen. A month after the public hearing, she wrote a letter to the chairman of the public works committee of the Honolulu City Council that very neatly cut Ho and his highrise developers down. She wrote that she would not permit her property to be developed for hotel or apartment use. This was not news. The kicker in her message was that the amount of her property had suddenly nearly doubled. Besides the 75,000-square-foot parcel at one end of the road, she had, in the intervening couple of weeks, purchased another key lot—57,248 square feet in the midst of Ho's proposed eight acres. (Continued on page 51)
The property was the estate of her friend, Helen Irwin Fagan, widow of the Hana Ranch on Maui. In addition, the persuasive Mrs. Gerbode was backed up by the promises of two other friends, her neighbors on either side of the Fagan property, the Ben Dillinghams and Mrs. Muriel Damon. Together, the three landowners accounted for a total of 4.2 acres.

That gesture cost Mrs. Gerbode a little over half a million dollars.

For Chino Ho, it was a TKO blow which halted the fight. The city council enacted single-family residential zoning for the area and, to date, four of the residents, disgruntled at not being able to sell to highrise developers, have sold their parcels to the state. Mrs. Gerbode has since sold the Fagan property to Edward Scripps II, board chairman of the Scripps League of Newspapers, owners of the Hawaii Press Newspapers, among others. But just to be on the safe side, Mrs. Gerbode reserved all the air rights above 30 feet. Financially, she "just about broke even" on the deal.

Martha Gerbode is reconciled to the fact that eventually she will have to sell her own home on Diamond Head to the state. "But we still have a little house on Kauai. It's a farm. We lease out various acreage to Japanese growers. We grow papayas, bananas and avocados there. It was very lovely until we began having a pollution problem. You know, highrises are only one of Hawaii's problems. Pollution is another one. I don't think the people of Hawaii have shown their concern enough about ecological problems.

"Once we had a beautiful, clear beach right in front of the Kauai farm, but now it's muddy. The stream that came down to the beach from the Lihue plantations above was being polluted. They were dumping things from the cane fields into it and down to the ocean. It killed all the fish and the birds that were around and it was terrible.

"I wrote letters to public officials and I asked everyone about pertinent statutes. Finally, I located a copy of a law enacted in 1899 in regard to dumping in streams that were navigable. I took it to the manager of the plantation that was dumping in our stream and it has been clear ever since."

Now she is trying to untangle another ecological problem in regard to that beach: how to give it away so that it can be a bird sanctuary.

"It's very frustrating. We have all these lovely Hawaiian birds and we feel the area should be preserved in its natural state. I've talked to Huey Johnson of the Nature Conservancy about giving it to them, but for several technical reasons they can't accept it. We've been over this time and again and I still don't understand. They say if they accept it, they have to line up the legislature money. To improve it, they have to widen the stream. And that is impossible because if they widen the stream, when the heavy rains come the stream will overflow and flood. But I wanted them to have it as it is."

"She glances up to the pictures of her five grandchildren in their frames on the piano. "We're getting our grandchildren started on ecology. We talk a lot about clean water and pure air and no smog and we point out smog when it comes in. They all love my green flag. I've given them each one, but I feel that they must know what it stands for before they fly it."

Her current project is Save the Waterfront. "What I am against is any Bay coverage or Bay fill." She speaks slowly, emphasizing each word. "If the Bay Conservation and Development Commission changes its law about Bay fill, we'll have it all over the Bay, not only in San Francisco. Marin County will want to fill. El Cerrito, Alameda, Oakland. I'm poor at statistics, I can't tell you how much of the Bay is left from what it used to be, but it's frightening."

(George Reed, senior planner at BCDC, says one-third of the Bay has been lost to fill since 1850. Salt ponds, piers, airports, garbage dumps, oil fields, yacht harbors, rotting ships and urban development complexes have reduced the water area from 700 square miles to 420.)

"The argument that because somebody had already built highrises in the Diamond Head area the same privilege should be accorded to others was not valid in Hawaii. If carried to its ultimate conclusion, we'd have had apartments perched along the rim of Diamond Head. Similarly, if we allow Bay fill along the waterfront of San Francisco just because it has been done in the past, we'll ultimately wind up with no more water to front."

"We must preserve some of our natural resources for our descendants. That is very important to me. Come here, I'd like to show you something."

I follow her into the library. "This is an oil done by my friend, Rev. Howard Thurman, when he was on a recent trip to the islands with his wife."

"She held up a painting of Diamond Head in all its virginal beauty. Not a highrise marred the scene. "Howard thought I'd like to have a picture of it the way it used to look. I'm glad to say it won't look too different from my descendants."

I notice on the library desk a large Haggadah (the narrative of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt read at the Seder during the Jewish Passover). It is in portfolio form with illustrations by Ben Shahn.

"Isn't this lovely? It's quite a rare edition. Only a few of them were ever made. The illustrations are magnificent. I came upon it quite by chance."

I mention that the Judah Magnes Museum in Berkeley is having an exhibition of Ben Shahn's works in March. She responds immediately.

"I wonder if they'd like to show this. And if you think they'd like to have it for their collection, I shall make a note in my will. I was looking for a suitable permanent home for it."

Mrs. Gerbode's generosity is well-known. Sometimes it proves embarrassing, as in the case of Alcatraz a year ago. When the Supervisors were considering the Lamar Hunt commercial development plan for the old prison—just prior to the Indian invasion—Mrs. Gerbode intervened. Trying to halt the project, she offered to guarantee temporarily the $1800 a month federal maintenance fee the government was then asking the City. (The fee was later waived by the General Services Administration.) She also offered to seek assistance of other public-minded groups to join in buying the island for public recreation— at a cost of $25 million. But something was lost in the translation of her offer and suddenly Martha Gerbode was hailed as the angel of Alcatraz who, single-handedly, was going to pick up the $2 million tab to save the island from neon blight.

Later, she withdrew her offer when she discovered that the Department of the Interior could acquire the island at no cost providing it was used for public recreation or wildlife purposes. Then came the Indians, and talk of recreational purposes ceased.

She glances out her window over to Alcatraz and says, "The Indians had a romantic idea, but they are dismal on the island. They will be given land elsewhere, I am not at liberty to say where. It will be announced shortly. Then Alcatraz can be made into a park. But, frankly, I don't know why anyone would want to go there. It's much too rugged and frightfully cold."

It's 10 o'clock now and the lady has a full day of letter-writing ahead for Save the Waterfront.

"We were delighted when the Supervisors didn't decide on the U.S. Steel project in December. We were afraid we wouldn't have the time we needed to get our forces in motion. There's a lot of work to be done—flyers to get out to all the conservation clubs in the area urging their support, petitions to be drawn...the same sort of campaign we waged to save Diamond Head."


By Mildred Hamilton

Mrs. Frank Gerbode, San Francisco's Alcatraz "angel," has withdrawn her offer to help buy the island and has wired Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel her support of his suggestion to study its national park recreational future.

The petite conservationist, just back from a month's Far East trip with her internationally known surgeon husband, described herself as still suffering from jet lag while trying to bring herself up to the minute on Alcatraz.

"I've never heard from anyone yet about my offer—and it wasn't $2,000,000 or even $1,000,000, but an offer to seek assistance of other public-minded groups to join in buying the island. I don't think the city took my offer seriously, but would anyone joke about $2,000,000?"

* * *

Martha Gerbode left with her husband on his medical lecture tour just as the Board of Supervisors was approving the since sidelined Lamar Hunt commercial development plan for the old prison. She did offer, she stressed, to guarantee temporarily the $1,800 a month federal maintenance fee—since waived by the General Services Administration. And she did offer substantial financial aid to help buy the island and deed it to public recreation use. "But why should we buy it when Mr. Hickel can get it free?"

The conservation activist, descendant of the wealthy pioneer Alexander family of Hawaii, today is urging Secretary Hickel to turn Alcatraz over to the National Park Service and she is eager to channel her energies and funds into a "simple" park development.

Mother of four and grandmother of five, the white-haired blue-eyed veteran civic worker looked from the window of her handsome Pacific Heights home toward a smog-obscured Alcatraz and said, "We can't cure all of society's ills but we can preserve some of our natural resources for our descendents. That is very important to me."

That dedication has her practically commuting between here and Hawaii where she is also one of the leaders in the "Save Diamond Head" movement. "They've built too far on it already," she displayed a photograph of the march of the high rise. "It's quite illegal and we are fighting it tooth and nail."

Mrs. Gerbode, who will pay her first visit to Alcatraz next week with SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association) leaders, has strong feelings about the island's use.

"First, it should not be deeded to the city—who knows what future supervisors might do?—but to the entire Bay Area and its development should be a project of the whole Bay Area."

"I'm not opposed to the idea of monuments but this is an area in which we should go slowly. Fishing, picnicking, recreation uses are the important ones.

"The public could make contributions, possibly for gardens. One of the letters I received has a marvelous suggestion for planting much of it with the kind of Persian carpet multi-colored ice plant we had on Treasure Island during the 1939 Fair."

"We could have a French garden, an English one, a Japanese, an Indian camping site for picnics—I thought the Indians' visit was lovely—perhaps a Spanish cloister. There's an old one abandoned somewhere in Golden Gate Park that William Randolph Hearst gave the city."

"The dangerous deteriorating buildings could be fenced off and left to crumble away with ivy covering them like the ruins of the old castles in Ireland. I've heard it would cost $1,300,000 to demolish and carry away the rubbish. We certainly don't want it dumped in the Bay!"

"This year's earlier Save-the-Bay campaign had a vigorous worker in Mrs. Gerbode who hiked over her neighborhood obtaining 700 signatures for petitions she sent to the Legislature."

Mrs. Gerbode was born in the East Bay and her earliest memories of Alcatraz recall it "was pointed out as a place for naughty boys." She and her husband met and were married while both were Stanford students. They have lived in their window-on-the-Bay home for 31 years and her leadership in the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, the ancestor of SPUR, goes back to 1935. A long list of conservation and community activities have benefited since her efforts.

Now she is welcoming ideas and offers from other citizens who share her determination to save Alcatraz from the neon commercial crowd.

"I like to be thought of as one who believes in birds and flowers and bees."
2560 Divisadero St.  San Francisco 15

To Penny, on her twentieth Birthday:

When a maiden is twelve, it's the end of the world.
Most important thing then is to get her hair curled.
When a girl is sixteen, and never been kissed,
It's most awfully been hard...but we doubt you were missed.
What's so important at eighteen's not so at twenty
There are fields to discover, exciting and plenty,
Of things to be done...for happy young girls
With rings on their fingers...and round their necks...pearls.
he flew the green flag before the public understood what it meant. Today it hangs at half mast. Mrs. Martha Gerbode, a pioneering conservationist, is dead at 62.

She was the new environmentalist: the total activist who understood, and responded to a broad range of challenges. Her life was a response to young environmentalists who believe that the system won’t work. She used her position within the establishment to fight the evils of the system.

Mrs. Gerbode was one of a rare breed: the environmental patron. She gave so that ghetto kids could visit the wilderness. She gave to create an alternative waterfront plan. She gave both money and her own personal energy to groups seeking legislation to protect San Francisco Bay. In those days, conservation philanthropy was not fashionable. Conservation activists were written off as kooks. But neither social pressure from friends nor insults from enemies affected her decisions.

Nor could her enemies ignore her. Lawsuits, land purchases, radical eco-activities, and support for hard headed land planning threatened many who profited by abusing the land.

Diamond Head, in Honolulu, was the finest example of her resourcefulness. Singlehandedly, she stopped the highrise effort when it looked unbeatable.

The strip of land between road and shoreline at Diamond Head is an attractive, buildable area. It is covered by a number of large estates. Mrs. Gerbode’s among them. One day, a neighbor expressed a desire for a serious visit with Dr. and Mrs. Gerbode. Pressed by Mrs. Gerbode, he divulged that he and some “friends” had bought a number of estates along that strip and were hoping to buy hers as well. She asked him why, and he described a highrise plan for the area. Hers was a key parcel, along with another which at that time was in probate. The latter parcel would be bought by sealed bid at auction.

Mrs. Gerbode wasn’t sure; what did he think her land was worth? What, for example, was it worth compared to the property in probate? Her neighbor had indeed bid on that piece, and felt sure of getting it. Mrs. Gerbode pursued:

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Courtesy Tom Layton, Gerbode Foundation

Clear Creek, circa November 1971

she would have a better idea what her place was worth if she knew what they bid for the other. She finally ended up with at least a close estimate.

She hung up, and wrote a check for a bit more than the half million dollars the syndicate was offering. Her bid for the key property was accepted, ruining the syndicate’s hopes of highrise at Diamond Head.

At subsequent hearings, it became clear that Mrs. Gerbode had started something. A tremendous public turnout, ranging from union chiefs to school children to corporate executives, focused their wrath on the Honolulu City Council. To ignore their voices was political suicide. Highrise zoning was turned down. The same kind of outcry has continued and a new concept, historic-cultural-scenic zoning is now being proposed for Diamond Head.

One woman’s determination had reversed an impossible situation, and pointed the way toward public control of the public destiny.

Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay was a similar situation. A dollar-heavy Texas tycoon felt that a fake, highrise stainless steel rocket to commemorate space technology would be appropriate for the site. Repelled by this monument to distorted national priorities, Martha Gerbode moved against the Texan on city and federal levels. She privately offered funds to the City of San Francisco to lease the island or, if necessary, to consider buying it outright. The Texan backed off and the government is working to make the island a park.

Later, when the Indians occupied Alcatraz, she wished that an American Indian embassy could be established on private land far more pleasant and accessible. Had she lived longer, she would have brought it to pass.

She was beautiful, tough and committed. Because of her, a great many new ideas and environmental results came from the San Francisco area. There are few like her, and no one to replace her. We serve her memory best by continuing the struggle to achieve her vision—our common vision—of the quality environment.

---

Huey D. Johnson
Conservationist

Martha Gerbode Dies Here at 62

Martha Alexander Gerbode, one of San Francisco's leading conservationists and philanthropists, died here yesterday at her home at 2560 Divisadero street after a long illness. She was 62.

The petite conservationist, a leader in the Save-the-Bay campaign and the fight to protect Alcatraz island from highrise development was the wife of Dr. Frank Gerbode, the internationally known heart surgeon.

"Mrs. Gerbode has been the leading conservationist in Hawaii and Northern California," said Huey Johnson, western regional director of the Nature Conservancy, one of the groups in which she was active.

"She was committed to the cause of a better environment in a lifetime work that was of national importance," said Huey Johnson.

Johnston said that Mrs. Gerbode "almost single-handedly saved Diamond Head in Hawaii from highrise development and was directly instrumental in saving Alcatraz from the same fate."

STANDARD

A native of Hawaii, she was a longtime resident of San Francisco and a graduate of Stanford University.

She was descended from a missionary family that settled in Hawaii. Her father, the late Wallace M. Alexander, was a founder of the Hawaiian firm of Alexander and Baldwin and later a publisher of the old San Francisco Bulletin.

In addition to her conservation interests, including a recent battle to save Pacific Heights as a neighborhood for family dwellings, Mrs. Gerbode had a deep concern with other civic and social causes.

She was a founder of the Planned Parenthood chapter in San Francisco and the first woman to serve on a federal grand jury here in the early '30s, according to the newsmen.

"Her modern campaign against the anti-birth movement for population betterment," Johnston said, "was presided over by her husband, who was publisher of the San Francisco Chronicle."
Mr. Thomas C. Layton
Executive Director
The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation
149 Ninth Street
San Francisco, California 94103

Dear Mr. Layton:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the present status, use and management of the Gerbode Preserve. We appreciate and share your concern for the protection of this magnificent area.

Prior to acquisition of the property for Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Park personnel had identified problem areas as well as the resources which would be attractive to the public. Our earliest efforts were to prevent adverse uses. Park protection personnel continue to be alert to prevent unacceptable practices.

Preparations for public use of the area are also underway. Hiking and horseback riding trails have been identified and signs and gates are being installed. Use of the area for environmental studies will be emphasized. Agreements with school districts have been prepared for this purpose. Damaged areas will be restored to a natural condition where possible.

Our objective in the management of the Gerbode Preserve will be to protect and preserve the resources while providing for public use and enjoyment of the area.

Thank you for your interest in the Gerbode Preserve and in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. We would be pleased to provide additional information about the area if it would be helpful to you.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry L. Schober
Superintendent, South Unit
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