

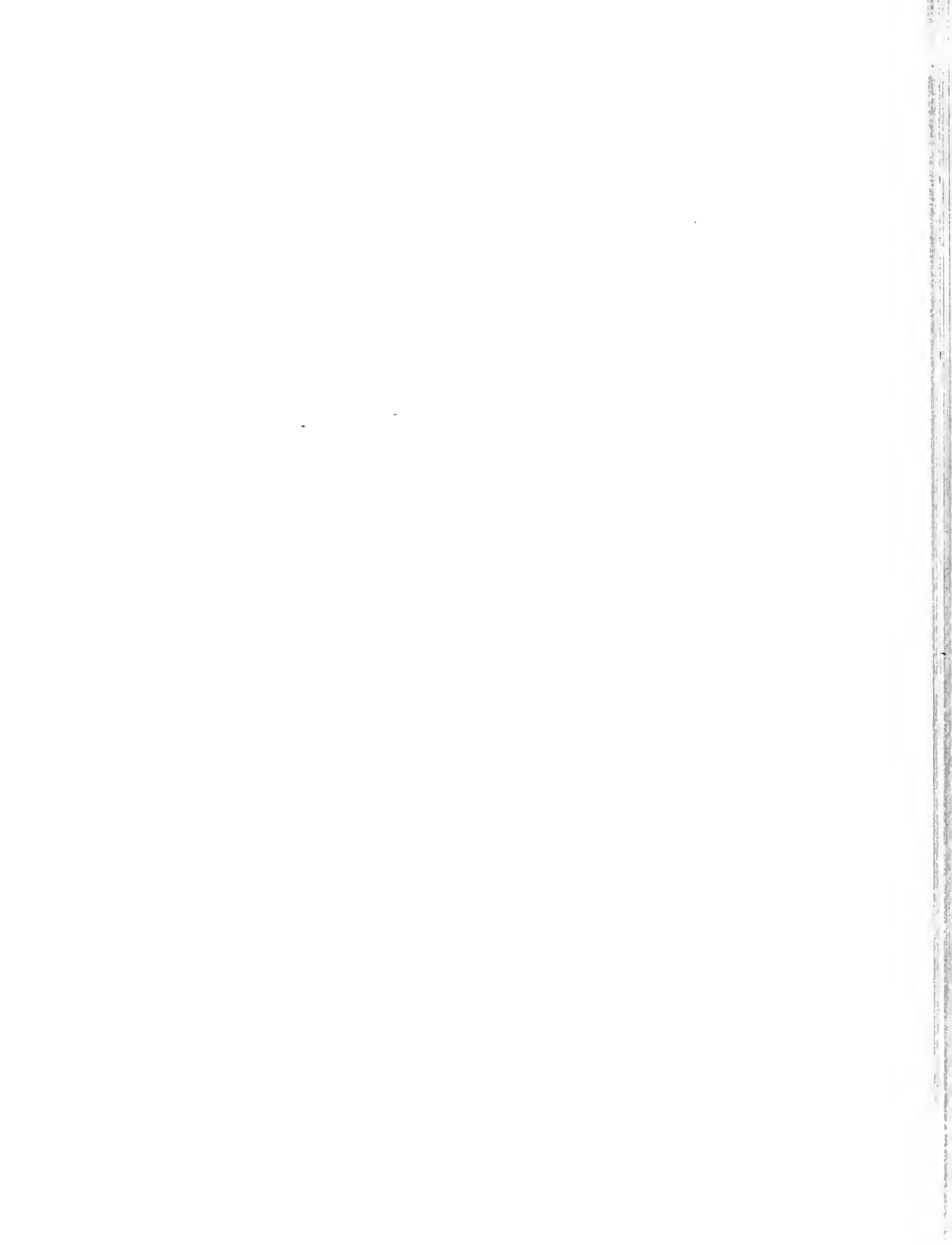
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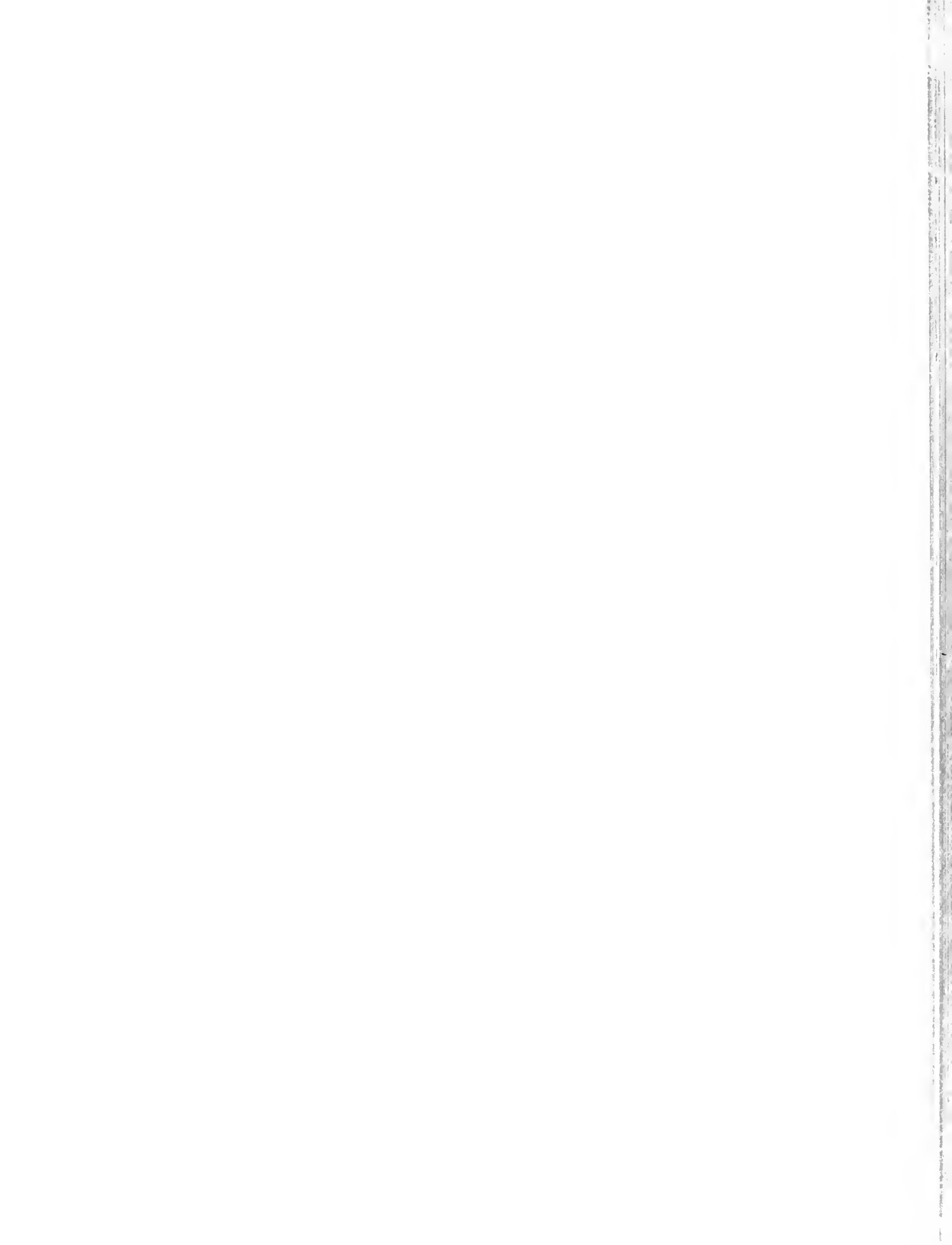
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Regional Oral History Office

The Arts and the Community Oral History Project

Harold L. Zellerbach

ART, BUSINESS AND PUBLIC LIFE
IN SAN FRANCISCO

With an Introduction by
Jacob K. Javits

An Interview Conducted by
Harriet Nathan

Copy No. 1



Harold L. Zellerbach

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PREFACE

The Arts and the Community Series was undertaken by the Regional Oral History Office to document the state of the arts in the San Francisco Bay Area--especially in San Francisco--and to note the public and private patronage the arts have received in the past. In addition, the purpose is to trace new developments in federal, state and local governmental support stimulated by the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts and the emergence of state and local art councils and commissions. Early discussions with Harold L. Zellerbach and Philip Ehrlich, Sr. during 1970 presaged the on-going interest in and support of the project by the Zellerbach Family Fund of San Francisco. The Fund for many years has contributed to both traditional and community arts activities. Mr. Zellerbach provided the first memoir, "Art, Business, and Public Life in San Francisco" and served as chief consultant and advisor for the series from its inception until his death in January 1978.

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

The series on the arts and the community, with its focus on San Francisco, will supplement memoir collections produced by the Regional Oral History Office in such fields as Books and Fine Printing; Arts, Architecture and Photography; memoirs of individual artists; and the Social History of Northern California. The Regional Oral History Office is under the administrative supervision of Professor James D. Hart, the director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum, Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

Harriet Nathan, Project Director
The Arts and the Community Series

30 March 1978
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California at Berkeley

THE ARTS AND THE COMMUNITY INTERVIEW SERIES

Zellerbach, Harold L., Art, Business and Public Life in San Francisco.
1978.

Boone, Philip S., The San Francisco Symphony, 1940-1972: An Oral
History. 1978.

Asawa, Ruth, Art, Competence and Citywide Cooperation for San Francisco.
1978.

Neighborhood Arts Project interviews in process:

Snipper, Martin

Goldstine, Steve

Other staff members of the Neighborhood Arts Project

INTRODUCTION

This memoir of the life and experiences of Harold L. Zellerbach deals with a much beloved gentleman of our times. He is uniquely a Californian, with the sun and open spaces in his eyes, and the frontier spirit, innovation, and unyielding determination in his head and heart -- all so characteristic of the State.

Mr. Zellerbach is a highly personal man, deeply involved with his friends, his family, his business associates, his colleagues in public and political endeavors. He is a man who is not content to deal with others only with that facet of character, interest or activity that interfaces his own. He believes, in turn, that his friends are interested in his life. He is a man extraordinarily gifted in winning friendship. His friends love him dearly, because he himself is such a constant fountain of interest and takes such a lively interest in them. He has a sense of history, both in his business affairs and in his civic responsibilities.

In his business affairs, he joined first with his father, Isadore, his brother, David, and later with his son, Billy, to develop the Zellerbach Paper Company (which later merged with Crown-Willamette to become the Crown Zellerbach Corporation). As an institution, its extraordinary record of achievement and incomparable record of amity with its customers and suppliers are eloquent testimony to this facet of his character.

In his public responsibilities, Mr. Zellerbach's long-sighted understanding of the cultural and artistic needs of his beloved city of San Francisco have put the city years ahead of most of the other great cities of the United States.

Finally, he knows better than most that man does not live by bread alone. He understands truly the quality of artistic expression in people's terms, in theatre, music, the opera and the visual arts; and, in the sheer symphony of a city of broad ethnic diversity.

Mr. Zellerbach's unique relationships with the university community, both at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Pennsylvania are also significant aspects of his life and career. They include both his unending enthusiasm for collegiate sports - especially of the University of California, and his profound understanding that learning means building upon experience and reality, upon hypothesis and dreams. Hence, his diversity of interest ranging from schools of journalism to college theatre.

Finally, no appreciation of Mr. Zellerbach's life and character would be complete without noting his deep concern for and love of family and of youth. His children and grandchildren mirror their father's and grandfather's enthusiasm for them, his own sprightliness, and his constant interest in the future.

And, as to his wife, Doris, she is not only a dear wife, she is the "Doe" of his life and chronicles.

His planning and building and working for tomorrow, while enjoying thoroughly every bit of today, are splendid demonstrations of his inner spirit. Harold Zellerbach remembers every good meal he has ever had anywhere in the world, at which restaurant or hotel and with whom, and he is much travelled. He is greatly admired by his host of friends, and, by way of assessment, by his own wife and children.

Jacob K. Javits
United States Senate

5 January 1978
Washington, D.C.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Harold L. Zellerbach was interviewed for the Regional Oral History Office as part of a series on "The Arts and the Community." The interviews were conducted by Harriet Nathan, interviewer and editor for the Regional Oral History Office.

Time and Setting of the Interviews:

The thirteen interviews were held at Mr. Zellerbach's office on the 18th floor of the Crown-Zellerbach Building, 1 Bush Street, San Francisco:

Interview 1 - June 18, 1971	Interview 8 - November 19, 1971
Interview 2 - July 30, 1971	Interview 9 - December 17, 1971
Interview 3 - August 20, 1971	Interview 10 - January 28, 1972
Interview 4 - August 27, 1971	Interview 11 - November 17, 1972
Interview 5 - September 17, 1971	Interview 12 - December 8, 1972
Interview 6 - October 8, 1971	Interview 13 - March 30, 1973.
Interview 7 - October 29, 1971	

Conduct of the Interview:

Interview sessions usually began at 10 or 10:30 a.m. and lasted until shortly before noon. Incoming phone calls related primarily to Art Commission affairs, the arrangement of meetings with local political figures on commission business, or lunchtime gatherings with a wide variety of friends and associates.

Mr. Zellerbach's office, which commands a panoramic view of the Embarcadero area and the Bay, displayed memorabilia reflecting some of his most vital interests. They included a tied-wire sculpture and wedding-anniversary dough-plaque by sculptor and Commission member Ruth Asawa, photos of four generations of family members, and pictures of Presidents, Senators and other political personalities. There were also framed letters of commendation and awards citing his service and contributions to the city of San Francisco, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California.

Conduct of the Interview: Always fresh in aspect and elegantly tailored, Mr. Zellerbach responded readily to questions concerning his characteristic effectiveness in marshalling civic support for the arts, developing his philanthropic interests, helping his friends, or focusing on business affairs. He illuminated discussions of political theory and practice with personal experiences, expressed his views with clarity and briskness, and salted it all with humor.

Asked specifically how public-spirited citizens could increase their chances for political success, he considered his own technique and said, "First, talk to each member of the board (commission or committee) that will vote on your proposal. Next, fill the public hearing with genuine supporters from as many different groups as possible, people who really care. And finally, never let the matter come to a decision without sufficient 'yes' votes in your pocket." With a grin and a dry chuckle he added, "Just do your work first, and remember how to count."

After transcription, the interviews were lightly edited and submitted to Mr. Zellerbach for his review and approval. He provided a few editorial corrections.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer-Editor

30 December 1977
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California
Berkeley, California

Editor's note:

Mr. Zellerbach died on January 29, 1978. Obituary notices on following pages.



HAROLD L. ZELLERBACH
Industrial, cultural leader

Harold Zellerbach Dies on Ship

Honolulu

Harold Lionel Zellerbach, for decades one of San Francisco's most prominent industrialists and patron of the arts, died in Honolulu yesterday while vacationing on the cruise ship *Mariposa*.

Mr. Zellerbach, 83, was found dead in his stateroom early yesterday by his wife, Doris. The cause of death was not known immediately.

For a half century, Mr. Zellerbach had been a top executive at Crown Zellerbach Corp., the paper company founded by his grandfather in 1870.

He was appointed president of the firm in 1928. By 1969, when Mr. Zellerbach retired as chairman of the company's executive committee, Crown Zellerbach had become the world's second largest manufacturer of pulp, paper and paper products.

Among his most significant contributions to the Bay Area was his generosity in time, skills and money to the arts.

As a member of the San Francisco Art Commission for some 30 years — 28 years as president — Mr. Zellerbach had a long and profound influence on the cultural life of the Bay Area.

As president of the Zellerbach Family Fund, he was instrumental in the \$1 million gift to the University of California, Berkeley, to help finance the Zellerbach Theater in 1967.

A few years later, a Zellerbach Theater was erected on the University of Pennsylvania campus, in part because of a \$500,000 contribution by the Harold and Doris Zellerbach Fund, of which he was president.

In 1974, Mr. Zellerbach pledged \$1 million toward the construction of the proposed San Francisco Performing Arts Center.

Chronicle Art Critic Alfred Frankenstein, vice president of the Art Commission, said last night that during Mr. Zellerbach's presidency, which ended in 1976, "the commission completely changed its character.

"When he assumed its presidency, the commission was very little more than an architectural advisory board.

"During his years as president, the work of the commission continuously expanded until today, it directs activities of a large and very busy network of neighborhood arts centers, runs the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra's summer concert season, underwrites numerous musical, theatrical and dance events, and supervises the activities of the city's street artists . . ."

Mr. Zellerbach was also active on an international scale. In 1957, he headed the Zellerbach Commission that conducted a study of the post-World War II refugee problem. Two years later, he was a U.S. delegate to the Atlantic Congress that met in London under NATO auspices.

Mr. Zellerbach's service to the state government extended over more than a decade, first as a member of the California State Park Commission, appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Sr., then as a member of the successor State Park and Recreation Commission, appointed by Governor Ronald Reagan.

He served in varying capacities on other cultural bodies: vice president of the San Francisco Symphony; and director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the San Francisco Art Institute, the San Francisco Ballet Guild, and the San Francisco Opera Association.

He was also president of the Crown Zellerbach Foundation and the Newhouse Foundation, a local fund set up to provide financial help to graduate students at the University of California and Stanford. He was director of the Laguna Honda Home Auxilliary.

He was an emeritus trustee of the University of Pennsylvania and an alumnus of its Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, and was long active in their alumni affairs.

Before the merger of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor and the M.H. de Young Memorial Museums, he was a trustee of the former, and was also a trustee of the Saints and Sinners Milk Fund.

Mr. Zellerbach was born here on March 25, 1894, the son of Isadore and Jennie Baruh Zellerbach. He attended the University of California, but took his Bachelor of Science degree in economics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1917.

On graduation he joined, as personnel manager, the Zellerbach Paper Co., which his grandfather had founded in 1870.

In 1928, he was elected president and ten years later was also named executive vice president of Crown Zellerbach Corp.

In 1956, he was named chairman of the corporation's executive

San Francisco Chronicle ★★ Tues., Jan. 31, 1978

HERB CAEN



ONE WAY to go: The peaceful death at 83 of Civic Leader Harold Zellerbach aboard a cruise ship in Honolulu brings to mind the time a friend said to Novelist Kathleen Norris, then in her 70s: "Did you hear about Emily? She had lunch with her niece at the Mural Room, then she went to the Symphony matinee and after that she had tea with her sister at the Francisca and dinner with her children and grandchildren, and that night she died in her sleep" ... "My," sighed Aunt Kate. "Doesn't it just make your mouth water?"

committee, serving until 1969. He also served as acting chairman of the board during the term of his brother, J.D. Zellerbach, as Ambassador to Italy from 1956 through 1960.

He was elected chairman of the board of the Zellerbach Paper Co. in 1957.

He served as president of the National Paper Trade Association and in 1961 received the American Marketing Association's highest honor, the Charles Coolidge Parlin Award, as "an eloquent spokesman of the marketing concept."

He served on the boards of, among others, the Pacific National Bank, Rayonier, Inc., Niantic Corp., and Fiberboard Products, and was a member of the San Francisco Stock Exchange, the U.S. Council, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and in 1958 headed the United Crusade.

He served a number of terms as president of Congregation Emanu-El and of the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association. He also served on the board governing Hebrew Union College in New York and the Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, the oldest theological seminary in America.

He was honored by Congregation Beth Israel in 1960, on the occasion of the temple's observance of its centennial anniversary, for "bringing great honor to our city and the Jewish community."

Among his clubs were the Commonwealth, Commercial, Press, Stock Exchange, Variety, Concordia-Argonaut, Villa Taverna, the St. Francis Yacht Club, and the Beach Club of Pebble Beach. He was also a Mason and a Shriner.

Survivors include his wife, the former Doris Joseph; a daughter, Mrs. Stephen N. Loew Jr.; two sons, Stephen and William, president of Zellerbach Paper Co. and a senior vice president of Crown Zellerbach Corp.; seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were pending.

Harold L. Zellerbach, 83, Dies; An Industrialist and Patron of Arts

Special to The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 30—Harold Lionel Zellerbach, a prominent industrialist and patron of the arts, died yesterday while vacationing on a cruise ship in Honolulu. He was 83 years old.

He was found dead in his stateroom by his wife, Doris. The cause of death was not immediately known.

Mr. Zellerbach had been a top executive for 50 years of the Crown Zellerbach Corporation, a paper company started by his grandfather in 1870.

He was appointed president of the concern in 1928. By 1969, when he retired as chairman of the corporation's executive committee, Crown Zellerbach had become one of the world's largest manufacturers of pulp and paper products.

Mr. Zellerbach contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to the arts. As president of the Zellerbach family fund, he arranged a \$1 million gift to the University of California at Berkeley to help finance a campus theater.

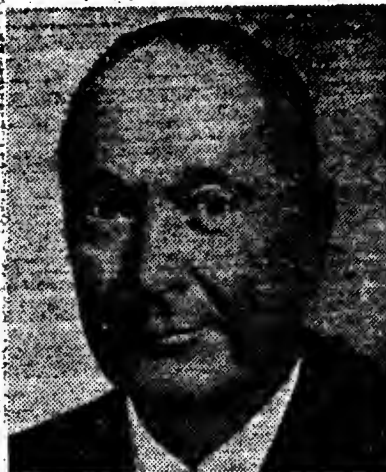
Contributed to Pennsylvania U.

A few years later, the Harold and Doris Zellerbach Fund contributed \$500,000 toward a campus theater at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1974, Mr. Zellerbach pledged \$1 million toward the construction of a new performing arts center in San Francisco.

According to local art critics and observers, Mr. Zellerbach's contributions, which went beyond monetary gifts, were instrumental in establishing San Francisco as a major cultural center in the United States.

For 28 years he served as president of the San Francisco Art Commission. He also served as director of numerous local cultural associations, including the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the San Francisco Ballet and the San Francisco Opera Association.

He was an active, energetic man whose international interests led to his being named in 1957 to head a commission set up to look into ways of solving the post-World War II refugee problem. Two years later, the commission recommended that the United States admit 50,000 refugees within two years as part of an international "crash program" to solve the problem.



Fabian Bachrach

Harold L. Zellerbach

In 1959, he was the United States delegate to the Atlantic Council, a private, nonprofit organization set up to promote communications between countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He was a member of the War Production Board, the Office of Price Administration and the Civilian Production Administration.

Began as Personnel Manager

Mr. Zellerbach was born in San Francisco on March 25, 1894, the son of Isadore and Jennie Baruh Zellerbach. He attended the University of California at Berkeley and earned his bachelor's degree in economics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1917.

He started at the Zellerbach Paper Company as personnel manager and in 10 years was elected president. He was elected chairman of the board of the company in 1957.

He served on a number of civic and business organizations and was the president of a number of them, including the National Paper Trade Association and the United States Chamber of Commerce.

He served on the board of the Hebrew Union College in New York and the Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati.

He is survived by his wife, Doris; a daughter, Mrs. Stephen N. Loew Jr., and two sons, Stephen and William.

FAMILY LIFE AND SCHOOL DAYS

(Interview I, June 18, 1971, and Interview II, July 30, 1971)

Zellerbach: Being a San Franciscan, I was born at 1550 Fell Street on March 25, 1894. It was right opposite the Panhandle. At that time, my mother Jennie and father Isadore and my brother Dave and I were living with my father's parents, Anthony and Theresa (Mohr was her maiden name). They had a big house. My father and his father built it. In those years it became customary to have separate houses. Before that, families always lived together. After my sister Claire was born, which was two and a half years later, my mother decided that there was no house big enough for two families. So we moved up the street to 1730 Fell St., which is also opposite the Panhandle. It was only a couple of blocks away from my grandfather's. From there the first school I went to was Dudley Stone, which is still in existence on Haight Street.

I forget the name of a young kid I used to run with. At that time there was a lot of construction going on of frame houses. I used to go out with this fellow. He was older than I was, and I was climbing through these new frame houses, and once I didn't get home in time to suit my mother, when I was supposed to be in. My father came out after me.

Of course he found me where he found me; then he got hold of me, and when he had me in the stairway (we lived in a flat, we were in the upper flat). I'll never forget. He gave me a swift kick on my bottom. I think that's the only time in my life that my father ever punished me. He never punished any of the children. My mother did all the disciplining in the family.

Nathan: That was a rather dangerous place for boys to play.

Zellerbach: Yes. Well, I understand that, but this was one of the things I never forgot. I guess the next incident that came along was the earthquake and fire. Of course that was years after we had moved.

Grammar Schools and High School

Zellerbach: We moved out of 1730 Fell Street, I think, when I was in the primary schools. We moved over to 1812 Broadway, which is still standing and now Federal Judge Harris lives in it. After Dudley Stone, I went to Pacific Heights School. That's where I graduated from grammar school. From there I went to Lowell High, which was located on Sutter Street, between Gough and Octavia, which is now the Red Cross building.

Nathan: Do you remember any of your teachers in grammar school?

Zellerbach: Oh sure. There was one, Archie Cloud. He taught English. He became, eventually, the principal of the school, and then I think was superintendent of schools for the board of education. Then there was a Miss Stinson. She was an old maid, and she taught Latin. I'll never forget her. I had a teacher in history by the name of Clark, and he also became, later on, the principal of Lowell High. Of course, this is where I met a great many of my fellow students. I guess I've known them all my life now.

Nathan: Have many stayed in San Francisco?

Zellerbach: Yes. Well, quite a few of them. We lived right near the May's, that's Dodie May. I forget who she married. Then the Dorns. I don't know if you remember Camille Dorn. She married. They were all out in that neighborhood. It was a pretty high-class neighborhood over the years. They lived opposite the Panhandle.

In high school I went at the same time as the Koshland boys were there, and Fred Gans. I've got a list of the old alumni. My brother was there too when I was there. I went three years there and then I went to the University School, a private school, to get my fourth year. I wasn't doing too well in my studies, so away I went to private school the last year, and graduated from there.

Nathan: Were you interested in athletics at all? Did you play any of the sports?

Zellerbach: I used to play, but I was not what you would call an athlete.

Visiting Grandparents in Nevada City

Nathan: Right. Would you like to tell me a little more about your memories of your parents and your other grandparents?

Zellerbach: When my brother and I were young, when we were going to primary school, my mother used to take us up to visit her parents, who lived in Nevada City, where my mother was born. The house is still there, and is still owned by a member of the family. Those were the years we had just six weeks vacation. That's all we got in San Francisco. So we went up there, and my grandmother took care of us, also my grandfather. He probably was retired, but he used to sell lottery tickets. That was his business in Nevada City.

Nathan: Was he also in the mining business?

Zellerbach: No, he wasn't in the mining business. I don't know what business he was in earlier. My grandmother was a wonderful cook. She cooked us all kinds of things to fatten us up, before she shipped us home. In those days, we went there on the train. It took us from nine in the morning until five at night to go 144 miles.

Nathan: What train would that be? Southern Pacific?

Zellerbach: We went Southern Pacific up to Colfax. Then we took the Nevada County Narrow Gauge from Colfax. We went through Grass Valley to Nevada City. I think it was a twenty or twenty-five mile narrow gauge railway. I think it took them to go that distance about an hour and a half. In those days they had wood-burning locomotives.

Nathan: So they'd have to chunk the wood into the firebox. What did you do for food? I'm sure boys would have to eat during that long trip. Did you take a basket of food with you?

Zellerbach: Oh yes. We had box lunches, and my mother gave us a lot of lemonade. In those days they didn't have long distance telephones, so they didn't know when we got there. My grandmother would have to write letters home to say we had arrived. So we went there until--I don't know when we stopped going. I think after we were in grammar school, and my grandmother was just too old, and we wanted to do other things in the summer.

But I had one experience. They had a big cherry tree right in the yard, a big tall cherry tree, so I used to climb up the tree. My grandmother used to be very frightened of it and used to try to get me out. I was up there picking cherries and eating them. Well, one day, I fell out of the cherry tree and broke my wrist. There was quite a bit of excitement. As soon as that happened, she shipped us home, so my mother could take care of us. I was always getting into some kind of trouble like that.

Nathan: Yes, I'm beginning to get a picture of you as a little boy. What else did you do when you visited in Nevada City? Did you help sell lottery tickets?

Zellerbach: No, no, no. I didn't do that. We used to go down to the old National Hotel, which is still there, and watch the stages come in; old stagecoaches, coming down from Downieville and the upper mountains. We'd watch them come in, and see them unload.

In the daytime we'd go swimming in the swimming holes with the local kids. Then every once in a while we'd go watch the train come in or go out. It was something to do. They finally put in an electric train that went between Nevada City and Grass Valley, and so that used to be a treat for us when we had the money. We'd ride over there and ride back. We used to enjoy it up there.

Nathan: Yes, it would be a nice place to go.

Zellerbach: It was very memorable.

Nathan: The lottery that you speak of, was it a statewide lottery?

Zellerbach: No, no, no. It was private. The M & F lottery. It was Metzger and Franklin. That was one of them. I don't know whether there was another one, but that was the big lottery at the time.

Nathan: And if you won, did you win a money prize?

Zellerbach: Sure.

Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco

Zellerbach: I don't think I've told you about the earthquake and fire.

Nathan: No. I'd like to hear about that.

Zellerbach: My mother had to get out of 1730 Fell Street, so just before the earthquake and fire, about six weeks before, we had moved into a new home on California Street between Franklin and Van Ness Avenues. You know where Hanni and Girard is, on California Street? Well, that was where our house was. My father and mother had a big celebration when they moved in. At the time I was not yet in high school, in 1906.

Nathan: Would you be about twelve years old then? You may still have been in the end of grammar school. Sixth grade?

Zellerbach: Probably. I used to go to Pacific Heights School then. I had a room up on the third floor. My sister Claire was down near her mother, and my brother, I think, was up on the top floor too. I was asleep when it started to shake. I buried my head in the pillow; it felt like this was the end of the world. I really did some praying. I went to Sunday school, so I used my Sunday school knowledge, and did some praying. When it finally settled down the side of the house had gone out, right alongside of my room. It opened up the side of the house, and here I was, looking up in the sky.

Nathan: It was lucky it had fallen out rather than in!

Zellerbach: Yes. It fell out. It didn't drop down, but I mean it just opened up and leaned out. My father of course went down to check the business records, and said, "The fire has started." So he moved us out to my grandmother's. We went back to 1550 Fell Street.

Nathan: How was her house? Did her house stay in one piece?

Zellerbach: No, no. I'm coming to that. The fire was moving up, and at that time the soldiers were starting to set up a backfire, and blasting houses and buildings to try to stop the fire from crossing Van Ness Avenue. Of course, Van Ness was saved, quite a bit of it, but the fire did cross Van Ness Avenue at Geary Street, and went all the way up to Washington Street. I know it stopped at Broadway, but I think it stopped at Washington and went up to Franklin. It didn't go any further than Franklin. I know it stopped at Washington, because the old Goldberg house is still there, at Pacific and Franklin. That was from before the fire. Unfortunately, we were in the one block, so our house was burned out, the same as the old Spreckels mansion. I don't know if you remember that or not.

Nathan: Yes, I do.

Zellerbach: That Spreckels mansion was burned out and gutted, and many beautiful homes were lost, many fine homes on Van Ness Avenue. So our place burned down. My brother and my father went down to get the books of the business, because they didn't know whether they could save any of the warehouses. They did save one of the warehouses, which was in the Houghtaling Block on Jackson Street, between Sansome and Montgomery. Out of all the structures, which you might call occupied, business-occupied, it was the only one that was saved. My brother got the smart idea that we may need something to get money to live on, so he had all of my mother's flat silverware packed up, and we took the silverware with us. We didn't take anything else but the silverware. So we were out in the park.

We used to sleep out in the Golden Gate Park, because everybody was afraid of the earthquake. They kept us out in the Panhandle, right opposite my grandfather's house on Fell Street. The old Jewish Orphan Asylum was on Divisadero Street and Hayes Street. Anyway, they still ran their bakery, and my father and mother knew the superintendent, Henry Mauser. His daughter is still alive. In fact we used to go down there and play every once in a while with the orphans. So that's where we got bread. I forget what other rations they had left. We lived in the park until, oh, I guess, for over a week.

Nathan: That long?

Zellerbach: Oh yes. 'Til the fire was out. The fire was pretty well under control at the time. We were out there for a week or ten days,

Zellerbach: and then the Red Cross was in, and the city was under martial law. Then the Southern Pacific made up trains to get as many of the citizens out of San Francisco as they could. You didn't have any money, so they rode you free. In the meantime, my father went over to Oakland. He'd just bought a branch over there, or bought out another company, so they had an Oakland branch. He found an ark down on the estuary, and he bought the ark in which to live. So that's where he made his headquarters. He shipped my mother and my brother and sister and myself to Los Angeles, and we stayed with my mother's brother, J.Y. Baruh and his wife Alma, out on Gratton Street. That was way out at that time. Now, of course, it's in town.

Nathan: Did you have to sell any of the silverware that your brother carried out?

Zellerbach: No. Anyway it was a good idea. At least he saved us something. That was the only thing we saved!

Nathan: Yes, how would you know what to save if you have to leave your house?

Zellerbach: Well, we couldn't. What were we going to take it in? The streetcars weren't running, nothing was running.

We did business with the Englander Drayage and Warehouse Company, which was owned by the Englander family. My uncle Jake married an Englander. They hooked up several of their drays, and that's how they got the books out of down town. Then they came out and that's how we loaded the silverware into the dray, and took it out to the park.

Nathan: So your father did save the books?

Zellerbach: Oh yes. The books were saved. Of course nobody knew how far the fire would go.

Nathan: When you were in the park, did you feel any of the aftershocks?

Zellerbach: I don't remember that. I don't think they lasted too long. There were a few for a couple of days. I think we stayed at the California Street residence a day or two until we thought it was time to get out, so then we moved out to the park. Of course the park was full with refugees too. Every place.

Nathan: What a thing to remember.

Zellerbach: Then we went to Los Angeles. We got there in April, and we came back home in the middle of August because school opened August 15.

Nathan: Did you have any place to stay then?

Zellerbach: Yes, well my mother had gone back. She left us down there with my aunt until she could find a place. She found a home out on Clay Street, Clay and Broderick. After the fire, the family lived there; then they moved down to 1812 Broadway; and we lived in 1812 Broadway until my father bought a house out at 3524 Jackson Street, I think in 1915, which my mother lived in until she passed away. So that was the story of my youth.

Two Years at U.C., Berkeley

Zellerbach: I went to the University of California after I got out of high school. I entered California in 1913.

Nathan: That's U.C., Berkeley?

Zellerbach: U.C. Berkeley. I stayed there two years although I wanted to go East. So my mother made a deal with me that if I went two years to Berkeley, why then I could go East. She, I think, figured in the back of her mind after I got into Berkeley, that I would probably stay the full four years.

Nathan: Did you commute, or did you live on campus?

Zellerbach: We lived at 2411 Durant Avenue, in Berkeley. That was an old boarding house. That was quite a gang of young boys in there at that time.

Nathan: Are they people you remember?

Zellerbach: Well, I remember some. There was, for example, Julian Weston. His name was Weisbein. Julian Weisbein was there, and Les Jacobs, I think was another one, and Ed Fuld, who was Mrs. J.D.'s brother, he was there. And my brother lived there. And quite a few others. It was only a few blocks from campus.

Nathan: Do you remember any of the professors particularly? Did any of the professors make an impression on you?

Zellerbach: At California? There was only one who made an impression on me. In those days you always tried to take one cinch course.

Nathan: [Laughing] That hasn't changed too much!

Zellerbach: And the best cinch course was a language course in Japanese. There was an old Professor Kuno, and he was a little skinny fellow. One of these twitchy kind, you know. Most of the students used to tease him all the time. I don't think he ever failed anybody. Always passed them. So I took Japanese for a year.

Nathan: Did you learn any Japanese?

Zellerbach: I learned at that time, but it's so long ago that I wouldn't remember it. Of course one of the sad things in the United States is that whereas we had to take languages--I took German both at high school and college--after you learn the language, then you have nobody to talk to after you're out of school, so you forget it. This is one of the sad things in my time. Now, of course, more people talk foreign languages, so the younger people now are in that. I don't know whether they continue talking or not. I have a grandson that's been taking French for almost all of his life, and I've never heard him speak any yet.

Nathan: Which grandson is this?

Zellerbach: Gary. At California I used to go out for track. That was my athletic effort, but I never got any place. I used to go out for athletics, so I went out for track, but I wasn't fast enough to make the team.

Nathan: It's fun to be part of it, and not worry about it.

Zellerbach: That's right.

University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School

Nathan: Were you taking a business course?

Zellerbach: Well, no. At that time at California the only business course they had was economics. California had no business school. One of the reasons I wanted to go East was that I wanted to go to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. At that time, Wharton School was the only undergraduate business college in the United States. Harvard was graduate, and Amos Tuck at Dartmouth was graduate. And also they required Latin and Greek--

Nathan: For business?

Zellerbach: Well, for entrance. And I took Latin of course. That was prescribed in high school. But as soon as you could make your requirements, you stopped taking Latin. And I never took Greek. So when I was looking around for universities to go to in the East, the only one was Pennsylvania that didn't have those requirements. So that was a second reason I went. The first was of course, for the business course.

I went there in 1915, and I graduated in 1917, right at the beginning of the First World War. There I remember quite a few of my old professors very well. I still quote them. We had a professor in insurance who taught stock exchange operations and things of that kind, by the name of Solomon Heubner. I guess he was one of the greatest authorities on insurance in the country. For many years he used to teach life insurance classes for insurance companies' salesmen.

Then I had a man by the name of Conway in banking. I had Professor Hess in advertising and salesmanship. Then I had Joe Willitts. His forte was marketing, but from a different point of view. In other words, he analyzed markets, population and movements and things of that kind.

Nathan: This seems very advanced for that early date, doesn't it?

Zellerbach: This whole thing was advanced. They were one of the top schools. Many of their graduates went on to become very substantial business people in the country. Then I had a professor called Simon Patten, who taught economics. I think of all the professors I had, he probably left the greatest

Zellerbach: impression on me, the way he taught. I often think of some of the stories he told us, so that you would think, you know. He taught you to think.

Nathan: Can you remember one as an illustration?

Zellerbach: Yes. I remember he was talking about how two people can get different points of view. One day he described sitting up on top of the hill overlooking an industrial city in a valley, the valley below. One young fellow, all he saw was the beauty of nature and that's what his reaction was. The other saw all the industry and the smoke and said, "Must be a prosperous community." So he merely outlined that, showing how two people sitting and looking at the same thing can get completely different views on the same scene.

Nathan: Particularly a good story for the present time, isn't it?

Zellerbach: Yes, well, that's what I say. This is just one example of the way he taught. Primarily of course economics, but to make you think economics.

When I was in high school, we took American history and the book was written by a Professor Hart. He wrote the textbooks that we used in high school here in San Francisco on American history, and he was one of the great authorities on American history. I thought this would be a wonderful course for me to take, to have the privilege of being taught by this great professor of American history.

So I signed up for the course the first year I was there, not knowing anything about it except his reputation. Well, I found out it was a cinch course, and he was--oh, he was about, I think, five foot two, had very thick glasses, and couldn't see, and talked in a low monotone. And so, his classes were always filled with football players and athletes and all the boys that wanted to take cinch courses. And of course, I was very much interested in hearing him, so I used to sit down in the front row so I would get everything, because I was very serious at that time. The instructor would come in and take the roll call, and as soon as the instructor left, half the class left. The professor couldn't see, and so he didn't know who was there. I stuck it out, but any time I felt like I needed something else to do, I used to sneak out too. I don't know how many failed, but anyway I passed the course.

Nathan: Did you go on with American history, or did that just finish the subject for you at school?

Zellerbach: No, that finished it. I graduated in '17, and I had to do two and a half years of work in two. Some of the credits I had from California didn't count there, so that meant I had to make them up in order to graduate with my class. This was my senior year. I had some very good friends. I made a lot of good friends there. I lived in the dormitories. One of my friends was my wife's boyfriend when they were young. She came down to Philadelphia to visit, you know, on weekends. She probably had her eye on me, and so eventually--well, it was early in the first part of my senior year that I met her.

Engagement and Marriage

Zellerbach: I always tell the story on her. Her mother used to drive one of these old carriage electric automobiles, and we went out one night to a party in Cleveland. I was there visiting, and so we were going or coming--I don't know, anyway we got into a thunder and lightning storm. Of course I was never used to thunder and lightning in San Francisco, so I guess I was a little facetious, and said, "We don't get this in San Francisco, and if you lived out there, why you wouldn't be bothered with it." So with that, she fell in my arms and said, "I accept!"

Nathan: [Laughing] Poor innocent young man that you were!

Zellerbach: That's how we became engaged. She of course won't admit to it. Well, anyway, when the war broke out, we were announcing our engagement in Cleveland at a big party, so the families all decided, as long as we were at war the thing for us to do was to get married while there was time. So we got married, in April of 1917.

Of course I had to finish college, so we went back to Philadelphia. We didn't have any honeymoon. We just got married and went back to college. The first day I was in Dr. Willits' class, he heard that I just got married, so he announced it to the class. One of my most embarrassing moments!

Nathan: [Laughing] Yes! How terrible!

The Taylor System

Zellerbach: Anyway, then after I graduated, I went back to Cleveland. Her father was one of the owners of Joseph & Feiss Co., manufacturing clothiers. They had what you call the Taylor system of management. J & F were the first plant that introduced time studies into manufacturing, and also introduced manufacturing in a line.

Nathan: An assembly line for clothing?

Zellerbach: Yes. I'd studied that, the Taylor system, closely, so I was anxious to see it work. I went out there, after we graduated, and we lived with her parents. I worked there until November.

Nathan: Can you tell me a little more about how this assembly line worked? The cutters would start at one end--

Zellerbach: The cutters started, and then one person made a sleeve, and another person made the body of the coat, and one person put the lining in it, and another person put the sleeves in, then they put the collar on--whatever the sequence was. Finally it got to the finish line where it was pressed.

Each worker had one specific function. No worker ever made a whole suit or a whole coat. One worker put on buttons, another worker made buttonholes, and another one sewed two pieces of pants up, and passed it on. One thing was added, just like one of these automobile lines. They were all time-studied, so they all had quotas to make. And then if they went over their quotas, they received bonuses.

Nathan: Were these workers men or women?

Zellerbach: Mostly women. The only men around were when they got to the pressing and cutting cloth. The only problem was that they made just two or three models, in navy blue, brown and gray. Of course they were very inexpensive suits, because of the way they manufactured them, but then when styles started to come into men's suits, they couldn't change. So as a consequence, they had a reorganization, and they put in modern cutters, and they put in new designers, and they made suits in many colors instead of just three colors. That's when they had a change of management, in order to revive the business. The company is now part of Van Heusen. They took

Zellerbach: over the Joseph & Feiss Company just a few years ago. So that was my first experience.

Then my father wrote me on the first of November and said he thought it was time for me to come home and learn the paper business. So I took my bride back to San Francisco the same month. For months we lived with my parents. My mother told us there was no house big enough for two families, so we should go find our own as soon as possible, which we did. We lived in a flat at 3543 Washington Street.

We had our first two children there, Rollie, my daughter, and Billy. Stephen was born after we built our own home at 3410 Jackson Street. We lived in that til 1958. Then the children were all married. We were running around in a five story house with all kinds of room, so my wife decided we would go into an apartment. That's when we moved into 2288 Broadway. In fifty-five years, we've only lived in three residences. That's a pretty good record.

Nathan: Yes, it is. How did you work out housing arrangements with your own immediate family, when the time came?

Zellerbach: As I said, my immediate family consists of my wife, a daughter, and two sons. During my active days in business, I had a great deal of traveling to do, and when our children were young my wife had the major burden of raising the children. Being that she was a student of kindergarten training, it gave her a very excellent background.

The family has had very close ties, but our philosophy has been that when they were old enough and wanted to live by themselves or get married, we raised no objections as we knew there would be a time when they would live their own lives. Ever since they were born I had deep feelings that as long as I brought them into the world it was my obligation to take care of them. One of my idiosyncrasies was that I didn't want them waiting around for me to pass away in order for them to live a comfortable life. As a consequence, I have put each of my three children in an independent position financially, which is one of the best things I personally have done for them. Also, it did have the results I was aiming for.



Jennie and Harold L. Zellerbach
1961



Seated: Doris, William and
Harold L. Zellerbach
Standing: Margery, John and
Nancy Zellerbach
1977



Honolulu
Dec. 23, 1963
S.A.Z., M.B.Z and S. Wilson - missing

Left to right: Guide, William J. Zellerbach,
Doris J. Zellerbach, Margery H. Zellerbach,
Rolinde Loew Bloom, John W. Zellerbach,
Charles R. Zellerbach, Rolinde Zellerbach
Lowe, Michael Stephen Wilson, Stephen W. Loew,
Nancy Zellerbach, Susan Loew Wilson, Thomas
H. Zellerbach. 1963
(Stephen A. Zellerbach, Merla B. Zellerbach
and S. Wilson missing)

Zellerbach: The family gets together for special anniversaries, such as my 80th birthday when I took the family to Honolulu for a week. And in 1963 I took the family, including all my grandchildren, to Hawaii and we had quite a get-together. In the spring of 1972 I again took all my children to Europe to help Doris and me celebrate our 55th wedding anniversary.

Life is not worthwhile without family and friends, and we have been very fortunate with our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

THE FAMILY PAPER BUSINESS: SOME EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

Nathan: I wondered about how your father established his business again after the earthquake and fire?

Zellerbach: My father of course had some very good manufacturing connections in the East. One company, the Champion Coated Paper Company--we were their agents--shipped us almost a train load of paper and said, "Pay us when you can."

Nathan: They must have trusted him.

Zellerbach: Well, that's what I mean. That happened with quite a few of our vendors. He didn't know whether he had any money or didn't. He didn't know whether the banks had books that survived. I was a little young then to know the details, but I do remember that this one outfit shipped them I don't know how many cars of paper, printing papers. So between the San Francisco warehouse and the Oakland, they were back in business. In the meantime, we already had a branch in Los Angeles.

Nathan: Right. At this time was the business serving as jobbing agents? You didn't do any manufacturing of paper at this time?

Zellerbach: No; purely wholesale, or jobbing. The first paper mill we bought was in 1917. That's when they bought the Carthage Mill. That's another long story.

Working for the Zellerbach Paper Company

Zellerbach: During World War I everybody was drafted, but unfortunately my hearing was impaired, so they didn't take me. The war didn't last long enough to really get down to the numbers of some of those that had marginal difficulties. So I worked in the

Zellerbach: business, as soon as I got back from Cleveland. At least, I was on the counter, selling, and then I organized an export department, which during the war was very successful. We made a lot of money out of it. Then I was a salesman on the street, and then I came inside and went into management of Zellerbach Paper Company, the San Francisco Division. I became manager of that I think it was 1927 or '28.

Nathan: You were already starting to use the things you had learned in the Wharton School, probably.

Setting Up a Personnel Department

Zellerbach: Yes, I did. We were the first ones to set up a personnel department. When I went into business, the foremen hired all the laborers, and the sales managers hired the salesmen, and the head bookkeeper hired all the bookkeepers. They just talked to them and they were hired to go to work. There was no training, nothing.

So I instituted a full-fledged personnel department, where they had to come in, write up their history. We didn't give them examinations, but we did some testing and interviewing in quite some depth. We managed the personnel in one area. All the hiring and firing was done in the personnel department. Where there was a superintendent who was firing anybody or hiring anybody in his department, we stopped that, because one of the things we found was that our superintendent was a member of the Catholic faith, so we had a hundred percent Catholics in the operating departments.

Nathan: That's quite a story!

Zellerbach: Well, that's not the only one. We bought a Salt Lake division that was owned by Mormons, and our manager was a Mormon, and I don't think we had a Gentile working in our Salt Lake division until we retired the manager. We just couldn't get him to hire anybody but a Mormon. That's all. A hundred percent. I used to say to him, "There are a lot of Gentile customers!" You know, a Gentile can be anybody but a Mormon. Any religion. I used to say to him, "You've got to hire some Gentiles." After he finally retired, we put in a Gentile manager.

Nathan: You were far ahead of the times, really.

Zellerbach: Why yes. That was due to my knowledge from college. The same thing applied in getting into the export business.

Nathan: Right. The personnel practice that you're describing, is of course very interesting, because it's still a big problem in any business right now, too.

Unions

Zellerbach: When I went into business, there was no such thing as a personnel problem. We had no unions. That is, in our warehouse the only union we had were Teamsters, and the Cutters, who cut paper. Otherwise, we weren't bothered with unions until during World War II, when everything was put under control. President Roosevelt and his famous pronunciamento on this War Production Board. That's when he put in a paragraph that there should be no discrimination because of union membership. This gave the impetus to organizing. Without that--I don't know, I guess we would have them by now, but this would be a grave question if we'd have them as much as we do now.

Nathan: Was the paper industry slower in becoming unionized than some others?

Zellerbach: Yes. Our mills weren't unionized until after the war.

Nathan: Do you have any opinion about whether it is desirable or not desirable to have a union?

Zellerbach: Well, I guess it's fifty-fifty, like all these things. One of the problems of course, in unionization today, is that the Congress, legislature, city governments--they kowtow too much to unions. In other words, things are not equal. Unions have more privileges than businesses. Unions can make deals, businesses can't. Unions are not under anti-trust. Businesses are.

Of course, there are a lot of bad practices that have crept into unionism, such as featherbedding, which you know is still going on in a rampant way. I read about it in this

Zellerbach: morning's paper with the cemetery workers. One of the demands is that when the strike is over, they've got to pay time and a half for burying more coffins than they normally did in a day's work before the strike. They limit the number of coffins they can bury in a day. So if they bury any more, they've got to pay over time. That's what we call featherbedding. That's the same thing with the musicians' union. If you bring an outside band in, you've got to have a standby band. I don't know the minimum number of standbys you have to have, but you have to have them, and you pay them, and they don't do a thing but just sit there.

And then of course, there was the big fight over firemen on locomotives, and these work rules that were passed by the Legislature many years ago: the full crew law. Of course that's not good for the free enterprise system, because the free enterprise system is really based on volume production at the lowest cost. In order to do that, you've got to do it with a minimum of labor and a minimum of handling the merchandise. That's why you're getting all this automation. Unionism put a lot of firms out of business. That's what they did to the New York newspapers; put five of them out of business. Today you have three newspapers in the city of New York.

Nathan: Right. I would also like to ask you about the other side; what may be desirable about unionism, if you feel there is something?

Zellerbach: What's desirable about unionism? Of course it does protect the workers from management abuses which they had in the old days in the needle industry, the sweatshops and things of that kind. I don't say it's all one-sided. There can be abuses on both sides. Under the present law, there are still more abuses on the union end than there are on the management end. Of course a lot of small businesses get away with murder, because they haven't got enough employees. But they throw up a picket line around a business because a man's family works there and none of them are unionized, even though that place is not being struck.

THE DOCK STRIKE (1971)

Zellerbach: I'm having to do a little politicking and get my friends back in Washington busy.

Nathan: Do you think they'll be able to do something helpful about the dock strike?

Zellerbach: If they don't, they're going to declare this a disaster area, because supplies run out in manufacturing operations, and everybody in the whole chain is feeling the pinch. Look at these boats sitting out there, twenty-four, twenty-five boats sitting out there now for over a month. You've got the whole West Coast shut down. Can't ship anything out or in by water. You can imagine what this is doing to the international trade that comes in here.

Nathan: Does this affect Crown Zellerbach?

Zellerbach: Why sure, we're affected. After all, we're on Southern Pacific railroad tracks. That's the way we get most of our freight. We're dependent on Southern Pacific. Now, they've got to Santa Fe. We could use Santa Fe, but that's now out. The only thing that's running is Western Pacific. That's all we've got here in California. Up north, it's probably not quite so bad. They have Great Northern, and Northern Pacific. Union Pacific is down. Southern I think is down. Back East I think they've had I don't know how many more. If they don't start doing something, Mr. Nixon will be an ex-president.

Nathan: When you mention that you're going to talk to your friends in Washington, do you mean legislators?

Zellerbach: Yes, certainly, legislators. Those are the only ones that can do anything. The President of course can initiate it, but he has to have the cooperation of Congress. They're just coasting

- Zellerbach: along. I guess they're waiting for the hue and cry of the public, which they're commencing to get. The unions, union leadership, have no feeling for anyone else but themselves.
- Nathan: What kind of action would you like to see?
- Zellerbach: Well, I think eventually, you're going to come to compulsory arbitration with any of these unions who are serving the general public. It means one thing to have the railways and all the shipping shut down. It's another thing to strike a couple of restaurants. There's a big difference. It would even have been a disaster with the American Tel. and Tel. on strike, except that they're so automated, and they've got all their supervisory people that come in and take over. So the effect on the general public is not very great unless the strike lasts a long time. Then things start to break down, and your phones are out of order. Then you've got a different problem.
- Nathan: In this big transportation strike, do you try to get other people to act with you in order to get your voice heard? Or do you like to act by yourself?
- Zellerbach: If I answer that question, we may be treading on the anti-trust laws.
- Nathan: Is that right? Well, I don't want to lead you into prison!
[Laughter]
- Zellerbach: You won't lead me into prison because I've had too much experience with anti-trust regulations.
- Nathan: I take it that you still feel a great responsibility toward the Crown Zellerbach operation?
- Zellerbach: Well, after all, it was the only job I've ever had, and the only company I've ever worked for. I have a substantial interest, a family interest in the company. The family's fortunes have been in this company for a hundred years. So, until Uncle Sam gets most of it in the next two or three generations, why then that's something else again. Then it won't be the same interest. It will just be another public company. Well, it is now, for that matter.
- Nathan: It's really primarily a western enterprise still?

Zellerbach: Well, it's based here, but we're nationwide. We're also overseas now. As I said, I was delayed this morning trying to reach Washington.

Nathan: That's rather exciting. You're really involved in big doings.

Zellerbach: Well, after all, I'm a consultant yet in the company. They still pay me, so as long as they pay me, I do a little work!

GOVERNMENT: COMMISSIONS, POLITICIANS, ISSUES

Nathan: Right. And of course you do a lot of work with various public agencies. What kinds of problems do you deal with there?

Zellerbach: First of all, I wouldn't accept an appointment, unless I knew the man that appointed me personally and knew him very well. There was only one exception to that.

California Beaches and Parks Commission

Nathan: What was the exception?

Zellerbach: That was when I was on the California Beaches and Parks Commission. I was appointed by Governor Pat Brown. This is one commission that I never aspired to be president of, because I didn't want the responsibility. It took up too much time and I didn't have the time to do it, with the Art Commission and all the other things I was doing. I didn't want the responsibility anybody has who is president of the commission, especially if you haven't got proper staff. When I was first appointed on the Park Commission, we had a director, Charlie de Turk, who was a very good conservationist and a good teacher, but a very bad administrator.

After I got on the commission, it took me about three years, about two and a half years, to convince Pat Brown that we had to have a new director. The commissioners were doing practically all of his work. We couldn't get sufficient funds out of the administration, and the department of finance, because they didn't trust the administrator. He got the state into several problems because of his wanting to please everybody and never

Zellerbach: saying no. One of them is this Haslett Warehouse thing that's going on now.

Nathan: What is that?

Zellerbach: I'll tell you about another one where he had written a letter to a friend of mine, by the name of Gil Foote, who owned a very large farm and acreage up at the base of Mt. St. Helena. The administrator was very anxious to have it go to the state, so he wrote Mr. Foote a letter, just a friendly letter, and said he thought it was worth a couple of million dollars. Under the law, when the commission votes to purchase the land, it goes to General Services, and they have to appraise it. You're not permitted to purchase it for any more than its appraised value. The appraised value came in at around \$850,000. Then we were in trouble. There was a big law suit on, and finally the state withdrew. Of course that cost us lawyers' fees, his lawyers' fees, our own fees, and everything else. We didn't buy the land. But he was suing us on the basis that he had a commitment from the director that it was worth two million dollars.

Then we got in trouble over here at the Haslett Warehouse by leasing it to these people, and letting them put up a million dollars in it on the assumption that when the lease ran out it would be renewed. Under state law, the California Park and Recreation Commissions are not permitted to hold any property unless it's for recreation purposes. So now the Park Commission has turned the property over to the General Services Administration to sell.

Nathan: That's really quite a story.

Zellerbach: Well, that's what you run into. I was chairman of the finance committee, and I used to sit in the meeting with the director of finance of the State of California. I was making all the commitments for the State Park Commission, telling him what he had to do to fulfill them. After he retired he became a professor at one of the state colleges, teaching conservation.

Nathan: Well, now that we're on this very interesting California Park Commission (perhaps we can talk later about how you became the family Democrat), how did this appointment come about?

Zellerbach: The appointment came about because I was very good close friends with Pat Brown for years. I supported him when he was district attorney here, and I supported him when he ran for attorney general, and I've known Pat I guess for forty years.

At that time I was pretty active in the Democratic Party. When he was elected, he talked to me one day and said, "I want you on one of my commissions." I said, "Well, I don't want to get on one of these commissions that's going to take a lot of time, and I don't want to get on one of these commissions that get into nothing but controversy. I want something that would be a good thing." So I suggested the Park Commission. When Joe Knowland resigned I took his place, on the commission.

Nathan: That was Joe Knowland, Sr., wasn't it?

Zellerbach: Yes. He was head of the commission for years. Pat was the first Democrat to be governor in many years. The Knowland Republicans were pretty influential up there with Warren, so as long as Warren was there, Joe was there. When Warren went to the Supreme Court, Pat came in, and he won. He won twice, so it was eight years. The third time he didn't win.

Pat Brown as Governor

Nathan: Right. What do you think of Pat Brown as governor? Do you have some opinion on that?

Zellerbach: Yes, I do. I think Pat was a very good governor. There wasn't a dishonest bone in his body. The trouble with Pat was, his prime trouble was, that he was also a person that would never say "no." So it was the last man that saw him, the one he remembered for what he had promised to do. It may have been the complete opposite of what he had promised many others that he would do. This got him into quite a bit of trouble.

I had an experience with him myself that was not to my liking. When I went on the commission the Legislature (I didn't know this until after I got on the commission) had just stripped the Park Commission of all its powers. According to my understanding they had become merely advisory. When I found this out,

Zellerbach: I went to Pat and told him, "Listen, Pat, what the hell. I don't want to stay on the commission to be an advisor, and spend a lot of time and effort for just advice. It's no good unless the commission has some power of setting policy at least." Of course Knowland and his group administered, and they had to approve every bill, and it irked the legislators.

Tidelands Oil Funds and Commission Powers

Zellerbach: Of course there was the Democratic ascendancy in the Legislature. They didn't know how long Joe Knowland, Sr. was going to be the president of the commission. The move was made in order to get back at Joe, because he was very arbitrary on how he distributed the tidelands oil funds. When that was settled I think there was around \$80 or \$90 million in that fund, which the commission had the power to distribute. And Joe distributed it where he wanted it. Of course this got him in wrong with a great many legislators because they felt that it should be equitably distributed in different areas, some of the areas of their own provinces. So what they were after was Joe Knowland. In order to get even with him, they stripped him of his powers.

But then right after that happened, Joe resigned, and then I went on just a few months after Pat was in office, maybe three or four months. Anyway, when I took his place, I didn't know that the commission had no powers. Finally, I guess I spearheaded a move with the governor to amend the law, to give the commission some powers back. This goes back to when the Park Commission was run by Swede Nelson. He is a very able fellow, but he went off after about a year or so. After I got on, he took over the head of the forestry division.

We got this amendment drafted and approved by everybody including the governor, and we had legislators who were all for it, and we had [Eugene] McAteer who was the one that introduced it for us. We did our politicking up there. I said, "Now, Pat, we're going to work on this, and you'll back it a hundred percent?" I said, "We'll get this through and I expect you to sign it." "Oh yes!" No question. He said, "This is what I want. You're entitled to it, and you're not asking for more than you should have," and so, he committed

Zellerbach: himself. The next thing I knew, the bill went through and he wouldn't sign it.

The bill was passed in the last minutes of the Legislature, when everything is crowded in and they slip things over on you. It seemed that one of the things that the legislators were pretty sore at was the way that the State Fair was being run. Of course the Sacramento Bee was the mastermind. Anyway, the legislators were very put out about it.

So what they did was to slip a couple of amendments onto our bill, which stripped the State Fair commission of their purchasing power. Well, they curtailed it. Of course in the meantime I was on a cruise, just after the Legislature was over, in January or whenever it was over. Before I left, I said, "Now, Pat, I want to be there when you sign it. I want my picture taken with you." He said, "Well, I'll have you up here. I'll let you know."

When I got back home, I started to inquire, "What the hell happened to the bill?" I called up, and they said they'd let me know. I wanted to know whether Pat signed it or not. A few days later I got a telephone call from the press reporter from the Examiner, one who handled the Legislature. He said to me, "Mr. Zellerbach, did you know that Pat vetoed your bill?" I said, "No, I didn't know that. I just can't believe he vetoed it." "Well, he did." So I immediately got in contact with his assistant up there, and I said, "I just got this report that Pat vetoed that bill. I want to know, because after all he promised that he was going to sign it." So he said, "I'll have to investigate."

For several days I didn't hear. They knew but they were afraid to tell me. Finally I called again, and I said, "What happened to the bill?" He said, "Mr. Zellerbach, Pat had very good reasons that he had to veto it." I said, "He had no good reasons to veto it, and you can tell him from me I'm very unhappy about it, and I think that when he said that he was going to sign it he should have signed it." "Well, he got so much pressure from the Sacramento Bee, and he was afraid if he didn't veto it he'd be in trouble with the Sacramento Bee." I said, "Well, that's a pretty bad excuse after all the work we put in on that. I want to know the next time the governor comes to San Francisco. I want to see him."

Zellerbach: Pat didn't come to San Francisco. It was a couple of months before Pat could face me. I made a date to see him. I went out to the State Building.

Nathan: That was in Sacramento?

Zellerbach: No. In San Francisco. I wouldn't go up to see him. I said, "I'll see him in San Francisco when he comes down here. I'm not going up to see him." So anyway I went out to see him. When I came in, oh boy, he was so apologetic: "I'm terribly sorry. I made a big mistake." In the meantime I found out why he did it. I said, "Well, Pat?" He said, "We'll put another bill in right away, and we'll get this one through." I said, "Why didn't you sign the bill and tell the Fair people and the Sacramento Bee that you'd put a bill in deleting the amendments? That's what you should have done." He said, "Yes, I guess you're right. I should have done that. It's too late now." I said, "Yes, I know it's too late now, Pat. I'm damned disappointed. You don't do things like that with me, Pat. When you tell me you're going to do something, you better do it!" "Well, Hal, I'll never do it again."

But that was Pat. Now, I wasn't the only one, because I've heard stories that would knock your eye out with Pat, you know. The trouble with Pat, he didn't have his assistant there writing down the things he promised, and that made him a lot of enemies. One thing about Pat: Pat tried. And as I said, there wasn't a dishonest bone in his body. Whatever he did, he thought he did the right thing. Pat was, you know, a hell of a nice guy and you couldn't help but like him. I still do, but I never forgot that experience.

From then on, anything that he said, I put it in writing, so that whenever he said he'd do something, by golly, he did it.

Nathan: What happened finally about the measure? Did he put through another bill?

Zellerbach: We finally got a ruling from the legislative counsel. There was one word that gave us the power to set policy. The interpretation was one word. I forget what the word was. I've got the whole thing stashed away, but this one word gave us the power that we were seeking. In other words we had the

Zellerbach: right of policy making. As long as we had the right of policy making there was no need of any further action. We had it confirmed by the attorney general too. So that was my experience with Pat.

Managing the Bond Issue Campaign: Two Types

Zellerbach: During Pat's administration, they put two bond issues on the ballot. One of them was, I think, for \$100 million. The first one. That was pushed through the Legislature.

Nathan: This was for a purchase of park land?

Zellerbach: Well, yes. For acquisitions and things. The bill was pushed through, to go to the public for the bond funds. So again I was not consulted. I was away, on my usual holiday in the early months of the year, and when I got back I was appointed the campaign manager for Northern California. When I read the bill, it was so full of pork that you could smell it cooking. I said, "Being on the commission, naturally I'll support it, but not vehemently." Naturally I'd have to be for it, but if I was asked any questions about it, I would tell the truth. The only money we raised for the campaign came out of Crown Zellerbach. I sent my personal contribution.

Nathan: You wouldn't ask anybody else?

Zellerbach: I asked some, but we got a nominal amount. I don't think we spent over a couple of thousand dollars up here. I wouldn't spend it because I didn't believe in it. I went around and interviewed the heads of the newspapers here, Charlie Gould [Examiner], and also we saw Scott Newhall [Chronicle]. They asked me what I really thought of the bill. I said, "I've got to be honest with you. The bill's so full of pork it smells. This is like the bills that Congress passes, you know, for the U. S. Engineers. Harbors and all that."

Nathan: Oh right. The Corps of Engineers.

Zellerbach: Yes. Same kind of types, you see. The Legislature was going to spend the money. They put it on the ballot for June. I think they only had sixty days to do any work on it. But of

Zellerbach: course, I went up and interviewed them. I said, "Don't quote me, but if you'll just read the bill yourself, you can editorialize on your own conclusions." Which of course they did.

Nathan: [Laughing] After you had pointed the way!

Zellerbach: Yes. They were against it. It went down to defeat by over a million votes. Then we said, "Well, we'll go for another one." We started right after this was defeated. When I talked to the administration I told them, "The only bill that I will support is one where the Park Commission controls the spending of the money. And if the Park Commission controls the spending of the money, I'll go out and work for it. Then it will be a legitimate bond issue."

So this was for \$150 million. And politicians put something in for everybody. So there was \$40 million in it for the counties, for the additions to their present park system. Any request had to be approved by their own planning commissions, and it was subject to approval of the State Park Commission, and Recreation Commission. In other words it was still controlled by the state. The Recreation Department had the approval of it, after the counties, and the money was divided on the basis of population. I think it was seventy-five cents per capita. I'm not sure.

Then we had \$5 million I think--for Fish and Game. That left us \$105 million. I think there was \$80 million in it for land purchase and the balance was for development. There were three areas that could recommend: the governor could recommend, the Legislature could recommend, and the Park Commission could. But every recommendation had to be investigated and a study made, and a recommendation made from the commission. The only way it could get by was if the commission recommended it. If the commission vetoed it, that was the end of it. The Legislature couldn't get any of the bond money, nor the governor. Of course the Legislature had to approve it. When we put in a recommendation to buy, then they had to approve and appropriate the bonds. Some of them we got tussles over. But every bond issue, every purchase, was approved by the commission.

Nathan: That's quite different from just recommending.

Zellerbach: That's right. We got the approval. So if the Legislature really wanted to put a park in someplace, we said, "All right. Go ahead and take it out of the general fund. Give us some money, and we'll go buy it." [Laughter] That's all.

I was the finance chairman, but I could really run the whole thing. Ray King did the work. He was the campaign professional. He did a very fine job, a wonderful job. He was the secretary for Assemblyman Z'berg. We got him out of Z'berg's office, so he knew the legislators very well himself, and had very good connections up there. He was very knowledgeable.

We started the campaign in October and we didn't go to a vote until a year from the following November. They suggested June, and I said, "Nothing doing! We want plenty of time." We went up and down the state, and I went with them, to the editors and publishers and all that I knew. We went to every chamber of commerce, every sport club, to get their endorsements. I don't think we had any opposition, practically.

When the people voted, we came out with a plurality of a million and a half. So if I didn't do anything else while I was a commissioner, I did that.

Nathan: You got right to the heart of things, which is the control, and had honesty in your proposal.

Zellerbach: Well, yes. In other words, I didn't look for money or anything. All I wanted to know was, Who signs the checks? That's the guy I want to see. All the rest is periphery. This was the same thing on the commission. The bond law was written that way. It wasn't introduced until I gave it my final approval, so I had plenty to say about it. Some things I compromised, naturally.

Nathan: Thinking again about that first measure, you said it was so full of pork you could smell it. What was wrong about the first one that was right about the second one?

Zellerbach: The first one was that the Legislature spent the money. The Park Commission had nothing to do with it. They told us what to buy. I consider that pork. In other words, parks weren't being purchased on knowledge, they were being purchased on politics. The best way to stop that was to just say, "Nothing doing." So that's what happened.

Zellerbach: That's the end of the bond story. Then of course, you know, the commission met in different cities, different areas near the parks every month. Our meetings used to last for two days. The first day we used to look at different sites, and what was going on and the second day was the meeting.

After Charlie de Turk, we had a young fellow by the name of Jones. He was with us until Reagan became governor. During the legislative session of the year that Reagan was elected, they consolidated Recreation, Beaches and Parks. Both commissions had seven members. Part of the law was that the new Park and Recreation Commission had nine members, so that meant that five of us would be left out.

I didn't know Reagan, and I didn't care one way or another in fact, because, not knowing him, I'd have no influence at all, and that makes a big difference. I don't like government jobs where I haven't an open door to the boss. My feeling on that is I don't want to be one of these lame ducks, and I won't be. In other words, every time there's a change of administration, I put in my resignation. It was up to them whether they wanted to accept it or not. If they didn't accept it, then I said I wanted a new appointment. I wanted a letter to the effect that they wished me to stay under their administration. Of course I always tell them as far as I'm concerned, I'll work for you, I'm your man, and my job is to do a good job plus making you look good. I'm one of the commission, and I'll work with you, but understand that if there's anything you don't like, you talk to me. Anything I don't like, I'll talk to you. That's the way I work."

When we were looking for somebody to replace Charlie de Turk, we went after William Mott, Jr. but Bill Mott wouldn't take the job at that time. Then when Reagan came in office he appointed Norman Livermore, the director of Resources, and William Mott, Jr. became the director of Parks and Recreation under him. We were waiting around to see what the governor was going to do to fill the nine positions on the Park and Recreation Commission. In the meantime the two commissions still ran solo. I received a letter from them asking me if I would continue to serve.

Nathan: That's surprising. Don't you think it was?

Zellerbach: I thought Reagan was going to drop somebody, and I didn't know any reason why he should keep me. But anyway, he appointed me for the longest term of the Pat Brown holdovers. I was the last of the Pat Brown holdovers to leave office.

Nathan: How long into the Reagan regime did you continue?

Zellerbach: Let's see. It was a year ago March when my term expired. So I was there with him for two years. No, more than that. Three. I was very glad he didn't reappoint me; I would have had to resign, because I couldn't have gone against Pat Brown. I mean, I couldn't have supported Reagan in his campaign for re-election. He didn't appoint me, so that was fine.

Anyway, before I accepted I tried like hell to see him. He was always too busy. He couldn't. He'd say, "I'll let you know," and then I'd call again. "Oh we know. He wants to see you, but he's so busy," and I got stalled and stalled and stalled. Then when Mott took office, I told Mott. I said, "Bill, I have to resign, because I won't work unless I know the man I'm working for. I've no influence with him. I can't be of any great help to you."

"Oh, yes you can. You're the key between the old commission and the new commission. You can be a great help to me. As a favor to me I'd like you to stay on." I said, "That'll be the only reason." I did, because he's the best in the business. There's nobody better than William Penn Mott, Jr. So that sums up the main incidents of my career. There were a lot of others, but they're minor, personal stuff.

One thing I will put in the record. I never took a dime of expense. Nothing. The only free thing I ever received was when we were having the meetings. If they went on a tour I rode in their automobiles.

Nathan: [Laughing] I see. You're a very unusual man.

Zellerbach: Yes. I want to be independent. I didn't want anybody questioning me. One time the commissioners' expense accounts were questioned, because we had one who was taking his family on vacations and putting it all in on the state. Of course everybody's name was listed. Mine had no expenses.

Nathan: [Laughter] That must have been quite a surprise!

Zellerbach: So I wasn't called upon to answer anything. And the same thing on the Art Commission. I've never taken a dime out of it. Anytime I go to the Pop Concerts, I pay for my own seats.

I started in giving Thanksgiving Luncheons for the Park and Recreation Commission when they met in San Francisco in November. They always meet here so I gave them one last year, after I'd gone off the commission. I want to give them another one this year. You know! I receive all their minutes and Mott's in touch with me all the time.

Nathan: I see you have an unofficial influence.

Zellerbach: Oh yes. I know Bill very well. It was a great experience, to work with all the conservationists.

Father, and the California Fish and Game Commission
(Interview III, August 20, 1971)

Nathan: You talked last time about your activities as a member of the State Park Commission. I wonder if we could talk about some of your other political beginnings, perhaps going back as far as your father, Isadore, who I understand was a member of the State Fish and Game Commission? How did he become interested in that?

Zellerbach: My father was always interested in politics because he was one of the great salesmen of his time. He always connected everything he did with seeing if he could get more business. Never overlooked a thing. Even when he received requests from people to do things for them, he always looked at the watermark in their letterhead. If it wasn't on Zellerbach paper, he always notified them that "If you want favors from me you'd better use our paper." He did this all the time, and of course, he was a hundred percent correct.

When I was first in the business I did the same thing. After all, if people wanted you to help them, there's only one way they can reciprocate, and that was to give you their business. We didn't ask them for anything more, but just the

Zellerbach: courtesy. If we're their friend, they should patronize their friends. They don't get anything from their enemies, so they should patronize their friends. This is the philosophy I've had in my lifetime with people.

In other words, my friends are my friends. As far as I'm concerned, I'll do everything I can for my friends, and as far as I have enemies, I can't worry about them. Let them get their favors from their own friends. That's the way I look at it. My father was in business, and of course the State of California buys a lot of paper. It's one of the largest accounts in the state. So my father was always well acquainted with the governors and the purchasing agents, and the state printer. He always used to have a very substantial business from the state. And he always kept that up. This was one of his own hobbies, to watch the state business.

The Lunch Table

Zellerbach: My father used to have a lunch table over at what he called "Dirty Dick's." That's a little restaurant, which was on Leidesdorff and Sacramento, called the "Cold Day" Restaurant.

Nathan: Isn't that Tadich's?

Zellerbach: That was old Tadich's. Tadich's Cold Day Restaurant. He ate there every day, and all his cronies showed up, including all the politicians; he was appointed Fish and Game Commissioner by Governor Richardson.

Nathan: Friend Richardson!

Zellerbach: He was a very old friend of his. He also was a very close friend of the secretary of state, Frank Jordan. Frank Jordan used to buy the ballot paper for the state. Our company used to get the ballot paper. In those days it was a stamped ballot so everybody had to use a big sheet of paper, and of course, it had a watermark in it, which was secret, so that the paper couldn't be faked.

Nathan: So that you couldn't substitute other ballots?

Zellerbach: Yes. It was like money, you know. You had to have it so that the watermark was secret, and nobody knew what it was until the ballots were printed, except my father, and the manufacturing company and Frank Jordan. When the state came to accept bids for the ballot paper, my father always had the watermark, and no one else had it. There wasn't time enough for anyone else to get it and make the paper, so we always got the order.

When Governor Young came in, that's when my father got acquainted with John Francis Neylan, the attorney. John Francis Neylan was the governor's right hand man. I forget what they called them then, but he was the same as the director of finance.

Nathan: Right. I had a note that he was the state director of finance. I guess that would be it.

A Son for the Democrats

Zellerbach: And so my father got very well acquainted with him, so that he would continue on. Then when Merriam was elected, he was still very friendly too.

But then being a very astute politician my father noted this was when Roosevelt had come into office, and the Democrats had started to take over the government. Merriam ran again for a second term against Olson, Culbert Olson. Of course, I'd always been a registered Republican. In those days whatever your father was, you followed. We were Republicans. I didn't do much in politics. In fact, I hadn't done anything in politics up to that time, so my father suggested that I re-register and become a Democrat and get into the Olson campaign. Which I did.

Nathan: What did you do in the Olson campaign?

Zellerbach: Well, I raised money, and went out on the campaign trail for him and became acquainted with all his aides, and people that were in his campaign. Judge Matt Tobriner was the one that introduced me into the Democratic Party. Then I got acquainted with George Killion. He was right next to the governor, and he

Zellerbach: handled finance and stuff of that kind. We put up plenty of money for the campaign, and then of course when Olson won, one thing my father wanted to continue was the Fish and Game Commission.

I thought I had that all set. Also I indicated that, after all, being in the campaign and everything being equal, I felt that our company should be favored with the paper business. Well, Mr. Olson was not to be trusted. He had made certain commitments. One was that he would appoint my father. Well, he didn't. He came out right away: anybody that did business with the old Republican administration couldn't do business with the new administration. So my father was out, and the Zellerbach Paper Company was out.

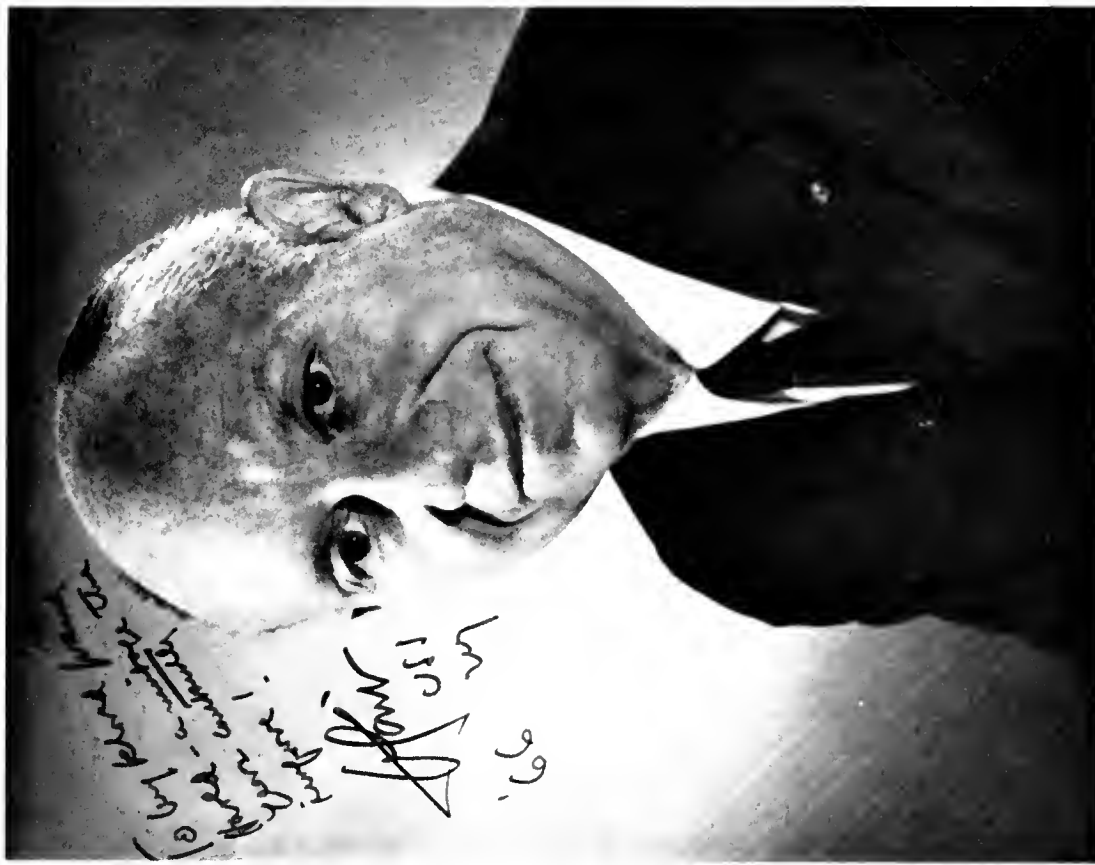
So I started to go to work, because these fellows kept asking me to do them favors all the time. I said, "To hell with you." I said, "I don't play games. I was in your campaign, raised a lot of money for you. I don't expect anything that I'm not entitled to. I don't want a dime or half a cent more than anyone else. If we're not competitive, that's all right. But if we're competitive I expect that we should get the business. Not only that, but people should help us get the business."

Well, I had many sessions with George Killion about it, because they were trying to elect a Democratic Assembly. They needed money for the campaign. I told them as far as I was concerned they weren't going to get one red dime, not a thing from me or anyone else that I knew, unless they fulfilled their obligations. When they fulfilled their obligations, I would then go to work again.

It didn't take long for Mr. Killion to set things right, although they never did reappoint my father. That's how I got into politics. That's when I became a Democrat. I've been a Democrat ever since. I won't say that I admire all their philosophy, but there isn't much difference between the Republican philosophy and the Democratic philosophy except that the Republicans are a little more conservative and more favorable for business. The Democrats are not as favorable. They are more favorable to labor, and they're quite a bit more liberal in giving away money, tax money.



With Edmund G. Brown, Sr.
Ca. 1959



Inscription: To my kind friend Harold -
a vintage the years constantly improve!
J. Javits, USS, N.Y. '66

Supporting Jack Javits

Zellerbach: But I was young enough so that it didn't bother me any. So I stuck to the Democratic party, and I have ever since. I think the only Republican that I've ever put up money for was Jack Javits, because of my personal friendship. When the list of campaign contributors came out for Jack, my name was on it, and of course all the boys in the party said, "What are you doing? Are you playing games?" I said, "No. I don't play games. After all, Jack Javits is one of my closest personal friends. Whether you like it or not, I'm going to support him. If you don't like it, then you can throw me out of the party."

Nathan: [Laughter] How did you get to know Senator Javits?

Zellerbach: I got to know Senator Javits, oh, when I was first active in business. It goes back to I guess about 1931. That's forty years ago. '31 or '32. I was one of the directors of the National Paper Trade Association, which was the trade association for the wholesalers, the paper distributors. The association had an old time secretary who was also a lawyer. He passed away, so I went out hunting for a new lawyer and a new secretary. We had a committee out. I wasn't on the committee. They were hunting for a New York lawyer, and at that time I didn't know any New York lawyers.

They had Ben Javits, who was Jack's older brother. He was of the law firm of Javits and Javits. Jack at that time had just entered the law firm. Jack was twenty-seven years old. Ben came and he addressed all the assembled members who were there on their annual convention. Everyone was taken with him. Ben is a very good speaker. So they hired the firm.

We had our meeting in February, right over Washington's birthday. We always used to get lots of heavy snow and heavy weather in New York. This year, I guess it was 1932, Ben went to Florida for the winter, so Jack substituted for him. Jack made a speech, and everybody was so taken with Jack and thought he was so much better than his brother, that we sent word that we would have Jack Javits as the firm's representative, to do our work. Of course Ben was still out of town, and so Ben was very delighted that Jack got the job. And that's how Jack and I got acquainted.

Zellerbach: In 1935, I was the president of the National Paper Trades Association. The first time we met we became very close friends. Jack during the Second World War was in the chemical warfare division. He left the Army as a colonel. Then he decided he would try out for representative from New York. Of course, New York being Tammany-ridden, the only way he could get into any politics at all was to change his registration. So he became a Republican.

He became a Republican and he ran--I forget who was the first fellow he ran against, but he was an old time Democrat that had been in the House from this district for many years. Jack being young, and virile, went out and rang doorbells, and made speeches every place. He got his name in the paper for his liberal attitudes. He was even more liberal than the Democrats. Of course to Republicans he was a renegade. But when the election was over, he won it.

Nathan: His first try!

Zellerbach: He won it. Of course he was in a Jewish district. He became a member of the House. He continued as a House member. He then ran for attorney general of the State of New York. After the election--I think the governor at the time he was running was a Republican. The Democrats were swept in, just like when Reagan ran he swept in all the Republicans except the attorney general. So Jack ran and he won the attorney generalship. He was the only Republican that won in the state ticket. He became the attorney general, and that was a four year hitch.

So after that was over, then they wanted him to run for mayor. Whenever he ran, he always talked to me about what I thought he should do. I had to take the attitude, "Well, after all Jack, it's up to you, but I feel if you want nationwide support--" In other words, I was collecting campaign funds out here for him, and other places in the country. "If you become a local candidate, like attorney general in New York, I'll send you a contribution because you're a personal friend, but I have no reason to go out and ask anybody for money. This is a local office. This is not a national office.

"If you're a member of the House, or become a member of the Senate, then you're a national figure. Then we can collect money for you."

Zellerbach: Anyway, I think after his four years, two or four years, they wanted him to run for governor. I told him I thought he'd better go back into the Congress. I think this is when he ran the first time for the Senate. And he ran against the mayor, you know--Wagner. He beat Wagner.

Nathan: That was giant-killing in those days, wasn't it?

Zellerbach: Before that, when he ran for representative, he beat young Mr. Roosevelt, who ran against him.

Nathan: Which Mr. Roosevelt was that?

Zellerbach: It was Franklin, Jr. He beat him--Franklin ran in his district, but Jack won. And when he ran the second time for United States Senator, he was the only Republican that came out of New York City with a plurality. He pulled more votes in that election in New York State than President Roosevelt did. In fact, I think he pulled more votes than Governor Rockefeller did.

Then this last time, when he ran the third time, he was practically a shoo-in. One time there before he ran the third time, they were pressuring him to run for mayor. He thought that would be a stepping stone. I said, "That's a stepping stone to no place." I told him, "I've had so much experience with mayors in San Francisco. Anybody that becomes the mayor of a big city ought to have his head examined. What do you want that grief for when you're in the Senate, and you're one of the elite? (At that time there were less than a hundred senators.) You fellows are one of the most powerful groups of men in the whole United States, practically in the world. For you to give that up to get into a mayor's job, I'm going to send you to the psychiatrist. That's absolutely crazy."

So finally they pressured him, and he called me and said, "Well, I've thought it over, and I'm going to run for re-election to the Senate." I said, "That's fine, Jack. You've made the right decision. You'll never regret it."

Nathan: Right.

What is there about being mayor that destroys one politically?

Zellerbach: Well, look at any of them. Look at what's happened to the mayor of New York. He wants to be President. He's got as much chance to be President....I think Roosevelt was not in the Senate. Truman was a senator. Following Truman came Eisenhower. Eisenhower wasn't a senator. Then came Jack Kennedy, senator. Then came Johnson, senator. Then came Nixon, who was an ex-senator, and a vice president. And the way they have it stacked now, the Senate's got it bottled up, unless some great hero comes along--like Eisenhower--that they just can't lick. You really didn't have a choice of Presidents last year. Two years ago. Three years ago. We haven't had a choice in candidates for higher office in fifteen, twenty years. We vote for the lesser of two evils. That's how you vote today. You're voting for a man, but whoever he is, he's the lesser of two evils.

Nathan: Do you think this is going to change?

Zellerbach: After all, when you voted for Reagan, you had Reagan and you had "Big Daddy" [Jesse Unruh]. So you voted for the lesser of two evils, didn't you? I assume you did. That's what I did.

Nathan: I didn't vote for the greater evil, I can tell you that!
[Laughing]

Zellerbach: They talk about popular candidates. The only way they can do that is to do like they do in the South, have run-offs.

Nathan: Right. You're thinking of a primary election, that would really be a nominating primary?

Zellerbach: Yes. Well, everybody runs, and then the two top highest run, and the one that gets the most wins. That way you get an opportunity to at least vote twice. The first time you can vote for the candidate you really want. The second time, you vote then for the lesser of two evils.

Some Political Pictures and Personalities

- Nathan: Have you ever gone to a national convention?
- Zellerbach: No, not really. We had the Republican convention here. At the time, we rode the Republicans around. In fact, I've got a picture over here of Eisenhower. Did you ever see it?
- Nathan: No, I haven't.
- Zellerbach: Haven't seen it? I have a lot of presidents over here (on a cabinet in the office). There. I'll tell you a story on this too.
- Nathan: Oh yes. There are a lot of familiar faces in this picture.
- Zellerbach: Yes, sure. Many of them have passed away. This fellow here--
- Nathan: This is Eisenhower in the front row on the left.
- Zellerbach: Yes. That's me. This is Dave Sachs. And this is Goldenson, who was the president of ABC. He gave a luncheon. Here's Rudolph Peterson.
- Nathan: Is that the Bank of America president?
- Zellerbach: Yes. And here's a lawyer, big lawyer, Herman Phleger. He was Eisenhower's personal attorney when he was in office. Here's John Eisenhower. Here's Jim Black.
- Nathan: Jim Black of PG&E?
- Zellerbach: Yes. He's dead. Here's Gwyn Follis. Robert Watt Miller. Here's Bill Crocker. Here's that movie star that gave Ike elocution lessons.
- Nathan: Oh, Robert Montgomery?
- Zellerbach: Yes. I was the first man, right after James Haggerty there. Here are the names on the back. Oh, here's Sol Linowitz. I didn't remember him. He's the big Xerox man. And Montgomery. Ed Littlefield. Littlefield is over here.
- Nathan: Oh yes. Which one is Phleger?



Harold Zellerbach with President Truman



Seated: General Eisenhower, Harold Zellerbach, David Sachs, Sol Linowitz, Elmer Lower, Leonard Goldenson. Standing: Edmund Littlefield, Robert Montgomery, William Crocker, George Montgomery, Robert Watt Miller, R. Gwin Follis, James Hagerty, Francis Martin, James Black, John Eisenhower, Herman Phleger, Rudolph Peterson, Christian de Guigne.

July 15, 1964 at the St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco

Zellerbach: Herman Phleger is here. This is Chris de Guigne. Elmer Lower. I don't know who he is.

Nathan: Now, what were you doing with all these people?

Zellerbach: I was invited. I was very close to friends of his--very close to Dave Sachs. They wanted some prominent people of San Francisco. I think Dave was a Democrat too. I'm not sure.

But anyway during the campaign, the second Eisenhower campaign, that was when Stevenson was running.

Nathan: What did you do?

Zellerbach: I was in the Stevenson campaigns. Both of them. I was all for Stevenson. I liked Stevenson. So did my wife. We got very well acquainted with him, you know, very well. Of course it came to President Eisenhower's notice that there was a Zellerbach in the Stevenson campaign. So he asked my brother, who was a very good friend of Ike's, "Who is that Zellerbach that's in Stevenson's campaign?" My brother said, "That's my renegade Democratic brother."

The first time I met Eisenhower was here. When he met me, of course I said, "You knew my brother very well." He said, "Yes, I certainly did know your brother very well." So I said, "Well, I'm the renegade Democrat that you asked about." He laughed like hell. "I'm glad to know you!" He said, "I don't mind knowing Democrats."

Ike sat down first and everyone was standing around. They didn't want to sit next to him. I went over and I said, "Mr. President, is it all right with you if a renegade Democrat sits next to you?" He said, "Sure! Sit down here. Nobody will sit next to me."

Nathan: So, that's you in that very good seat!

Zellerbach: That was the story. I used to be in Roosevelt campaigns. I used to be very high up. And I used to give a lot of money.

Here's another one I received from the early years, from Truman.

Nathan: Oh yes. That's a picture of President Truman looking very lively, and you looking equally lively.

Nathan: How did Truman impress you?

Zellerbach: Oh, I think Truman will go down as one of the great Presidents of the United States.

Nathan: Tell me why you think Truman would be one of the greatest?

Zellerbach: Well, because Truman was a man of the people, as you know. That's how he was elected. That's how he beat what's-his-name. [Thomas Dewey] He was earthy. He could communicate. He made decisions. Truman never weaseled. He made some of the biggest decisions of any President. The atomic bomb. Getting rid of Douglas MacArthur. You can go back over many of his great decisions, and they were great. Yet he used to like his liquor and he used to like his poker games, and his old cronies. There was one thing about him. He liked his friends and he trusted his friends. I didn't know him too well, you know. He never appointed me to anything. He appointed my brother as the Marshall Plan man in Italy.

Nathan: This was J.D.?

Zellerbach: Yes. J.D. Of course I sent word back. I said, "What the hell's the matter? I'm the Democrat, and you appoint my brother?"

Nathan: What a good answer!

Zellerbach: So I stayed home and worked while he was over there for two years, giving away a billion dollars in Italy.

During the last campaign of Roosevelt, I was back there. He was having these teas, you know, for the faithful, the contributors, and those that got money for him. I was asked to come down. This was the time he wasn't too well, as you know. George Killion was high up at that time, going way up the ladder. George said, "Come on down." Jim Farley said, "Come on down, Harold, and see the President, and have a chat with him."

I said, "Well, you know, there's nothing I'd like to do more, but how can you put that man through this? Has he the strength to do this? It's an imposition." He said, "Well, you're going to have to swallow it. If you want to come, you can come. If you feel you're doing him an imposition, don't come. But you might as well, because he's going to have it

Zellerbach: anyway." I said, "Well, if that's the case, I'll be there." I was. I had a nice chat with the President, and of course he was re-elected. He didn't last long, as you remember. Three, four months. Truman took over. So I met him.

Nathan: You were saying that Farley invited you to come. How did Farley operate? Did he work on this "friend" system?

Zellerbach: Well, no. I knew Farley. I'd been in two campaigns with him. Out here I was one of the leading Democrats. When it came to local candidates I used to sit in on who the party was going to support. I knew my way around very well.

Nathan: Was Farley effective as an organizer?

Zellerbach: Oh, Farley was one of the great organizers. He was one of the most able guys in the business. He was a real pro. Believe me. Never forgot a name.

Nathan: Did he travel out to the West?

Zellerbach: He traveled all over. He ran the President's campaigns. He was his public relations man, his press representative when he was in office. Sure. Farley was right up at the top. Nobody was any closer than Roosevelt and Farley. Anyway I was right up there. I never received any appointments from any of them, which didn't bother me any.

Nathan: You were saying why you liked and admired Truman as being very down to earth and not changing his quality. Why did you like Adlai Stevenson? What was there about him?

Zellerbach: Adlai Stevenson had a great personality. He was very smart, very witty. You were attracted to him more by his personality than anything else. I mean, he was a lot different from Truman. Truman was friendly, but he was a tough friend. Do you know what I mean? He didn't gush over anybody. He wasn't the outgoing person that Stevenson was. I haven't seen very many that are as outgoing as Stevenson was. The mayor is outgoing.

Nathan: Alioto?

Zellerbach: Yes. He's the same type. Certainly you couldn't call Eisenhower outgoing. Ike in his administration isn't going down as a great President. He's a great man. There's no question about

- Zellerbach: that. It grows out of his being a wonderful person and a military hero.
- Nathan: You were saying a little bit about Adlai Stevenson and what there was about him that you liked.
- Zellerbach: He was just very personable, and smart, as you know. He made a very able governor. He was, I guess, more one of the literati. He was a little above the people. He didn't communicate in people's language, you remember. He always had a smart answer. He always had to have a laugh. He had more of that in his speeches, whereas Truman was down to earth.
- Nathan: Of course, perhaps it had something to do with which person you're running against too. For example, Eisenhower may have been a harder person to beat than, who was it? Tom--
- Zellerbach: Dewey. Yes. There's no question that Eisenhower was an idol.
- Nathan: Right. And you don't accomplish much against the idol, no matter what you do.
- Zellerbach: That's right. Oh, I think that Adlai Stevenson would have made a great President.
- Nathan: Yes. I'd like to go back again to Javits, whom you were discussing earlier. Senator Javits. What was there about him that made him able to appeal to the voters and to go up the ladder?
- Zellerbach: Well, there were several things about Jack. Jack, in the first place, was honest. Mentally honest, as well as honest in every other way.
- Nathan: What is "mentally honest"?
- Zellerbach: He doesn't say things that he doesn't believe in. In other words, he won't get up and say, "I'm for this," when he's not. So when he says something, this is what he believes. Now, he may change his mind, as every person has a right to do, and he has in several instances, but this is one of his qualities. Not only that, but he's a very able speaker too. Very fast. He's got a quick mind. Brilliant. He knows the law. Hard worker. One of the hardest workers there is. I'm remonstrating with him all the time, (after all, Jack is

Zellerbach: sixty-seven years old) that he has no business playing competitive sports like tennis and handball, jumping in swimming. In other words, he should get into noncompetitive sports. He loves tennis, but he doesn't have to play against top stars and try to beat them. He shouldn't be doing the work that he does.

I'll give you an example. Last time I saw him he was going to make a trip around the world in two weeks. He had to hit Paris at a certain time for a meeting. He wanted to go to Vietnam. He had meetings in Japan. I said to him, "Jack, if you've got to go to a meeting in Paris, what the hell do you want to go around the world for? Go over to Paris and take a few days off." "Oh, I don't think so," he said.

He was leaving, and instead of leaving on the day he was supposed to leave, he didn't, because we had the railway strike. Jack being the ranking Republican on the Labor Committee of the Senate, he had to stay. He was the one that drafted the compromise law. Jack's law took precedence over the President's. He stayed, and he didn't go until midnight. I talked to him on the phone just the day before in Washington because I didn't expect him there. I was going to be in Washington and I didn't know whether he was going to stay there, or whether he was going to get out. I said, "Jack--" (this meant that he had a week less.) I said, "Jack, you're crazy. What are you going to do?"

He said, "Well, there's a plane that leaves at 7:30, takes me to New York at 8:30. I get on Northwest Airlines, and it takes me direct to Tokyo." Of course you leave at 8:30 New York time, and there's eleven hours difference between Tokyo time and New York time. So you get there the day after, but it's the same sun day. You know, you're moving with the sun, so you arrive in Tokyo at 5:00 the morning you left, I mean, by the sun. Not by the date line.

So, he says, "I don't know whether I'll go or not. I'll have to see." They didn't finish his work in the Senate, they didn't adjourn until 12:30. Then he went back to his office, he worked 'til 2:00 (I got this from his secretary). God knows what time he got up to get the 6:30 or 7:30 plane to New York. Then he transfers over to the other, gets to Japan, is met by a delegation. He has a meeting with ministers that evening. And all the next day he's meeting officials in Japan.

Zellerbach: The next day he flies to Vietnam, stays there a couple of days. Then he flies from Vietnam to Paris, and he's in Paris for four days and he comes home.

Now this isn't just one instance, this is what he does. He says, "Well, this is my life." I said, "I know it's your life, Jack. After all you're now sixty-seven years old. You aren't forty-seven. You're not as young as you used to be when you and I first met. I used to do a lot of things too that I don't do now."

Just the other day I sent him a couple of clippings from papers. Mike Friedman on heart failure; the things that can cause it. I don't know whether you read the article.

Nathan: Yes, I did.

Zellerbach: Then Friedman delivered a speech at Yale on the same subject. So I sent Jack these two things. I said, "Jack, I'm sending them to you because I love you, and I don't want to see anything happen to you." So I got a nice letter back from him thanking me very much for the interest I take in him. He said, "I know it comes from the heart. I'll try to do better."

Nathan: Well, you never know. Sometimes these ideas sink into a man's mind, and he may act on them a little.

Zellerbach: The way he goes, at his age, he could drop over like McAteer.

Nathan: That's right.

Zellerbach: McAteer--they picked him up off the floor.

Nathan: Yes. Yes, that was a pity.

Zellerbach: He was saying, "That's my life." He's one of my very closest personal friends. I used to go to New York all the time and he would come down and have breakfast with me. Monday morning at 8:00. The two of us.

Nathan: You keep your friends a long time.

Zellerbach: Oh sure. I keep them a long time. I think I have a lot of good ones. I do.

Nathan: Do you ever try to talk politics with him? For example, would you try to lobby him on behalf of, say, the National Endowment for the Arts?

Zellerbach: Oh, he was the one that started it. Sure. I lobby him on anything. I sent him a hell of a telegram when we had the rail strike and the dock strike here. I sent him a wire and I said, "Unless you fellows do something back there, California's going to be a disaster area."

Nathan: I think you were doing some of that the last time we met. You were getting some telegrams out on the strike.

Zellerbach: Sure. I got an answer from him. I got an answer from all of them that I wired to. I wasn't asking anything for myself. I was lobbying for the good of the people. Jack has always taught me the axiom: whatever decisions you make, say to yourself, "Is this in the public interest?" If it's not in the public interest don't do it. That's the philosophy I live by--his philosophy. If it's not in the public interest, don't do it.

So that's my association with Jack. That's what I've done--that's the way I get myself in politics. Start with the members of the board of supervisors. As they go up in the world, you keep with them. A lot of leaders have come out of the supervisors. Judge [Alfonso] Zirpoli. McAteer. Leo McCarthy. [George] Moscone. These are more recent. I could take you back when Christopher was a member of the board of supervisors. Jack Shelley. I remember Jack when he was a member of the board.

Pat Brown was never a member of the board. He came out of the district attorney's office. I knew him. I was with Pat for twenty-five years, the whole time he has been in politics.

I knew "Big Daddy" pretty well, but "Big Daddy" [Jesse Unruh] was a little too much "a politico" for me. Do you know what I mean by "a politico"?

Nathan: Yes, I think so. I didn't know that would bother you.

Zellerbach: It bothered me because he was too much of a force. You couldn't get anything through the Legislature unless he okayed it. He was like Samish, Artie Samish.

Nathan: Oh really? You think Unruh and Samish were comparable?

Zellerbach: Oh, damn right they were. You didn't get anything through the Legislature unless they said so. That's how I got pretty well acquainted with Mr. Unruh. When I was on the Beach and Park Commission, I was doing some lobbying for them. I used to go pay my respects to Mr. Unruh all the time.

Now of course, I'm not as active as I used to be. I don't say this facetiously, but my name stands for a great deal. It has a lot of prestige behind it. I don't endorse candidates very lightly. I've got to know them pretty well before I endorse them. I'm going up to sign for François. I'm going to sign for him because I like [Terry] François. I'm very fond of him. I think he's a very excellent man. I'll show you something else.

[Showing picture] Here's my good friend, Tom Lynch. Well, there's my friend Jack [Javits]. I got that for a birthday present. That's his family.

Nathan: Oh, isn't that great? That montage is very cleverly done.

Zellerbach: Here. See, I'm out there signing up for Tom Lynch. He was running for attorney general. No, he was running for district attorney. I forget what year this was.

Nathan: I see McAteer's face in the background.

Zellerbach: Yes, sure. You can see a lot of them, a lot of the old guard. Here's a cute line by Tom Lynch on the picture: "Harold: What the hell are you running for?"

Nathan: [Laughing] I think that's marvelous! Your hand is up and you're swearing to something. You do look like a candidate there!

Zellerbach: Sure.

Nathan: And you were signing his nomination papers?

Zellerbach: I was signing as sponsor.

Political Principles

Nathan: Oh right. And that's what you're going to do for Terry Francis? Are there any other members of the board of supervisors that you feel eager to support?

Zellerbach: Well, when I say "eager to support"--being in the position I am, president of the Art Commission, and always having something to do with city hall, budgets and everything else that goes along with it, I've made a habit of always supporting the incumbents. Period. Some that I don't like too well, I don't give them as much. I give them a token contribution. Those that I admire a great deal more, I do substantially more for.

Nathan: I see. I'm learning a lot about politics from you.

Zellerbach: This is what you have to do. In other words, it's an old adage in politics, "If you ask a favor, you've got to expect to give one." Never forget it. If you don't want to do a favor for anybody, don't ask him for anything. This is like me and the Burtons. I've never donated anything to the Burtons, I've never given them anything, and I've never asked them to do anything. I get letters every once in a while from Phil. He calls me "Dear Hal." I don't think I ever met him. Maybe I have met him when he was supervisor. I'm not sure. But I don't like their policies, I don't like their attitudes. His brother John up in the Legislature introduces a bill to change the inheritance tax laws so that nobody can leave more than a million dollars. That's all you can leave. The rest they're going to take away in taxes. Well, that's worse than socialism. You may as well go all communistic. We're going socialist anyway, more and more, but we're not going communist. There's a big difference.

There's one thing you learn, when you're at this a long time. When you go before any board or commission, and you want something, you never have it brought up unless you know you've got the votes. If you haven't got the majority, don't bring it up. Never get defeated. That's the worst thing you can do.

Nathan: We're going to have a handbook on practical politics here before we're finished!

Nancy Hanks and an Appointment

Zellerbach: Well, I've advised many on practical politics. Even my good friend Nancy Hanks.

Nathan: Have you? Yes, well, we do want to talk about Nancy Hanks.

Zellerbach: Whenever she wants practical politics she phones me.

Nathan: Really? All the way from--New York is her base?

Zellerbach: Washington.

Nathan: I will say you and she have done quite well lately.

Zellerbach: Well. After all, you help if you believe in a person, what they're doing. In fact I had a discussion with Jack about her. Jack had a candidate of his own for the chairmanship of the National Endowment.

Nathan: Javits?

Zellerbach: Yes. Jack. He had a candidate of his own. Of course I was pressuring him for Nancy. He was giving me some arguments, and I was giving him arguments. She was the best qualified person in the United States in the arts, of anybody. And I know a great many of them who have lots of experience. She, in my mind, was the best qualified. That's what I based my pressure on. Therefore, let's get somebody who is well liked, knowledgeable, smart, able, and who will do some good for the arts. She won't be playing games. So I got after everybody I knew. Jack was one of the keys. Finally he came around. He found that his candidate was not going to be passed. Then he started to agree with me. Then he got behind Nancy.

And of course Alan Cranston was for Nancy. There were other senators that I know pretty well, and I got onto them. Anybody that was close to the President that I knew, I let them have the word. I couldn't write the President. I know him. I met him when he was vice-president, but--. So, the thing was nip and tuck. I was really putting the heat on. She had a lot of really good sponsors. She had the Rockefellers. That's where she came from: The Rockefeller Brothers' Fund.

Zellerbach: She had the experience. She was president of the Associated Councils of the Arts. She was very well known to a great many people in high places in the East. She wasn't unknown. I did my share out here. I just gave her one piece of advice, which she followed to the letter. After she was asked by Nixon, I got hold of her and I said, "Now Nancy, before you accept, don't accept through a second man. Insist that you want a meeting with the President himself. You want to know what his politics and feelings are towards the arts, and whether you will get his support. And if you don't get that promise of his support, you just say, 'Well, I'm terribly sorry, Mr. President, I'm not interested.'"

So she sent the word. They said, "Well, you don't have to see the President." She said, "I must see the President so I can have a talk about my responsibilities and his relationship to me and what he wants me to do. This is what I want." After several weeks, he made an appointment for her out here at San Clemente. She flew out here. She was supposed to be with him fifteen minutes, and he kept her two hours. When she came out, she came out with his full support and knowledge of what she believed. They had an understanding, a complete understanding. She accepted. Every time she sees me, she says, "I can't thank you enough for that piece of advice. This was the thing that made it go." "I can only tell you, Nancy, with twenty years of experience with mayors, and everyone else, I never served under a mayor unless he appointed me or asked me to serve himself. I'm no lame duck for anybody. Not me. I want access to the top man. I want to have a rapprochement with him."

Picking and Backing Candidates

Nathan: Can we talk about national politics again? I'd like to ask about your friend Scoop Jackson, who has announced that he is going to run for President, and how you feel about him, and maybe whether you're going to support him or not.

Zellerbach: Why is that germane to the history?

Nathan: It's germane to your interests. You see, a number of your connections and activities have had to be connected to politics, and you've been a very active and very effective politician, usually sort of behind the scenes. So now I'm

Nathan: interested in how you see a candidate for President. How you pick one.

Zellerbach: I'm not going to pick him. I'm just going to back him. There's a big difference between "picking" and "backing." I used to sit in the councils and discuss candidates, and who the group should run, but I'm beyond that now. I'm an elder statesman, and let the kids pick who they want. If I don't like him, well, I don't support him. That's all. I've got a problem right now with Roger Boas, who I supported for supervisor for a long time. I've known him since he's a child. I'm very fond of him. Of course he's been after me to come in his campaign, oh, months ago. So I told Roger, "Roger, I'm sorry, but this is too early. I'm not going to commit myself this early. This is over a year and a half away."

Nathan: This is for Congress?

Zellerbach: For Congress. Yes. Well, you've seen in the papers. He's announced. The other day, I see that several of my other good friends are now contemplating running. Mr. Pelosi, Mr. Mendelsohn are thinking of running, and who else? There's a third one. All members of the board of supervisors. Well, in my position, with them all running for Congress, I probably won't come out for any of them. You see, I'll probably give them all a donation. But I probably won't come out for them, because if you come out for one, you've got to come out for them all. And of course that you can't do.

It's different if someone is running for supervisor, and there are five supervisors to be elected. You can come out for five of them, but you can't come out for twenty of them. That you never do. If you back a person, you've got to back one. Like the mayor. You know, Dobbs and Feinstein wanted me to endorse them. So I said, "Well, it's too bad, but you're too late. I'm already committed to Joe Alioto. He's got my money, and that's who I'm going to stick by. I wish you well, but you got started too late." And that was the advice I gave. I think I told you that story.

That was the advice I gave Fred Goerner.

Nathan: I haven't heard that. Tell me about it.

Zellerbach: You remember, Feinstein came out for mayor the last day of filing, which was on a Friday. I was going over to the Oakland baseball game in the Oakland Arena, or Coliseum, or whatever they call it, on Saturday, with Fred Goerner. Fred and Merla are very chummy with Dianne, and I know her too. I'm very fond of her. She's a very nice woman, very attractive of course. I've worked with her as supervisor. I think she's very able. But Fred was going to take charge of her radio and television campaign. He would be one of her top advisors. So he asked me what I thought about her. I said, "You really want to know, Fred?"

He said, "Yes." So I said, "As far as I'm concerned, you can repeat what I tell you. In the first place, she's too late. All the big names and all the big money are committed to Alioto." He announced back in June, or July, a couple of months before the others came out. So all the money was committed, and the names were committed. He had lots of support among the big business and big Democrats. He gathered up the support. After all, he was the incumbent, and he's done a good job.

I think the ones that I contacted to get money for him, were all pleased with his attitude, and what he's done. Maybe not a hundred percent. You can never be a hundred percent.

So I said to Fred, "My advice to you in the first place is, I don't know why the hell she wants to run for mayor. It's the worst job of any I know. This is the fourth man I've been through. I wouldn't have the job if they gave it to me. If she takes the job and she's finished with it, in four years she'll be an old woman. I don't think she can ever stand up to the job that has the demands on it, with as little power. She's only been in office two years. She has no record. Her greatest asset is her good looks, and her pleasant manner, and all. But when it comes to experience in depth, what is she offering? Look at a couple of her backers.

Nathan: Who are they?

Zellerbach: Mr. Willie Brown and John Burton. A lot of candidates back away from endorsements. They don't want certain endorsements even if they're giving money.

Zellerbach: [President] Johnson didn't participate in Hubert's [Humphrey] campaign. These things are a matter of political judgment. Anyway, she ran. I saw Fred a couple of days after it was over. He was in a blue funk. He was so shocked that she ran third, and a poor third. He thought she was going to win. In fact he told me a few days before election, "We've got a winning candidate." "Well," I said, "you'd better wait and see what it says in the polls."

"Well, look at the polls. We've got polls that show that she's ahead." I said, "You can't believe some of those polls you get. I've got a poll, a postcard poll. I've got two of them. I filled them both in for Alioto. You can make a poll look like anything you want."

Nathan: Are you at all troubled, or bothered by Alioto's present problems?

Zellerbach: Troubled with what?

Nathan: Alioto's court difficulties about fee-splitting?

Zellerbach: Well. The trouble here, you know, is the press comes out and finds you guilty before you're tried. After all, in American jurisprudence, they have to prove you guilty. It isn't like in French law. In French law you've got to prove yourself innocent. So as long as he's not proven guilty-- I think Joe is too smart to do something like that. Anybody can make a mistake. Basically I think he's just too smart, and too great a lawyer himself to get himself boxed. But if you read the papers today, the headlines all come out and say, "Joe did this," and "They can't trace that," and all of the rest of it. They don't give you the whole story, they just take it the way they want it. They're trying to give the public the impression that there's something fishy about it, you know.

There's the additional fact that both these cases against Alioto, I think, have been politically inspired by the administration.

Nathan: By which administration?

Zellerbach: By the Republican administration.

Nathan: Nationally, you mean?

Zellerbach: Nationally and statewide. You remember when he was running for governor, the article appeared, that very timely Look article. But he withdrew. He announced he was thinking about running. This article came out about his being charged with the Mafia connection. Do you remember that? And now of course, Look wants to settle with him. They've already said that the information about this meeting at the Nut Tree was not true. So Joe was sticking to it. He's not going to let them off. They disagreed on what kind of announcement they'd make. They won't agree that it was malice. Well, you know, with libel suits in this country, you've got to prove more than that the statements are not fact. You've got to prove that there was malice.

Nathan: It's almost impossible to prove libel against a public figure, anyway, isn't it?

Zellerbach: Sure, malice is a tough thing. Once in a while they can get it, but it's damned seldom. It's a tough thing to prove. They can prove that what they wrote was not true, but they say there's no malice in it. "We thought it was correct, and we verified it," and so on. But you can't convict them on the fact that what they said was untrue, and damaging to his reputation, unless you can prove malice.

Now, of course, this thing has been dragging for over two or three years. And of course they brought it to life just when he was running for mayor. They decided to discredit him for mayor. Well, he won, so the public isn't worried about it. These are situations that you get into.

Now what was it we started to talk about?

Nathan: I just wanted briefly to ask you about your old friend Scoop Jackson.

Zellerbach: Oh, Scoop Jackson. Well, I've known Scoop Jackson for many years.

Nathan: Why is he called "Scoop"? Was he a newspaperman?

Zellerbach: That's a nickname. I forget. It's been in the paper many times about Henry. The nickname is Scoop. He comes from Everett, Washington. He was a Congressman up there. He

Zellerbach: represented the county that our mill is in, Port Angeles. I got acquainted with him. We're very friendly. I've supported him. When he ran for Senator I supported him, even though I can't vote for him. When I was lobbying for the National Endowment for the Arts appropriation I had written 'Scoop'. I got a very nice letter back from him. He was all for it, and would do everything he could.

I would have seen him in Washington, except he wasn't there. He was out campaigning already. Of course when Scoop was first Representative, up in Seattle, he was considered a red-hot. He was. He's not now. He's now considered much more conservative. He's able, and he's a good talker, and he's got a pretty wife, nice children. Anyway, I know him, so what else? I support him like anybody else.

Nathan: Did you feel during the time he represented the area around Port Angeles that he was friendly to the lumbering industry?

Zellerbach: Oh yes! He's done some fine work, all the time, on the problems of the whole paper industry. There's a lot of it up there. He and Magnussen, both of them, have done very, very good work with our problems.

Nathan: What kinds of problems would come to their attention?

Zellerbach: Well, sometimes the labor laws they would want to enact, sometimes pollution or forestry practices. It could be anything that affects the total industry.

Nathan: And you thought that he was essentially sympathetic to the problems of industry?

Zellerbach: Sure, he's sympathetic. After all, you know, you have to be sympathetic to your constituents. There's a group of them. There's Mr. Tunney, you see. When he was a member of Congress, he represented Imperial Valley, so he shied away from the Farmworkers Union. You never heard of him coming out for Mr. Chavez. He was way in the background. He had nothing to say except that once in a while he criticized the way Chavez was doing, but after all, that's where his support was.

YMHA AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
(Interview IV, August 27, 1971)

Zellerbach: I was appointed, I did my service on the Art Commission, but I don't know whether I indicated that my first job in public service was when I went on the board of the YMHA [Young Men's Hebrew Association].

Nathan: Oh, let's talk about that.

Zellerbach: That's the first time I did anything on the outside at all.

Nathan: Who interested you in that activity?

Zellerbach: Let's see--Mr. Kahn, Ira Kahn. That was Sydney Kahn's father. Mrs. Kahn was a Clayburgh. He was in J. Barth & Co. He was one of the partners. I knew him. He was on the board, and he asked me to go on the board. That was when the YMHA was on Haight Street, in an old house. I was on that board quite a few years. In fact, I think I told you the first job I did in raising money was building the present Jewish Community Center. I was chairman of the finance campaign.

After that, I was the one that--Emma Loewe came later... I brought her husband, Blumenthal, to San Francisco to run the place. He was the one that started Camp Tawonga. Then I think I got off the board. I'd done my stint. In fact, I served under Jesse Steinhart, who was president for many years after I first went on. That was my first public service.

Nathan: Did you find that you liked it?

Zellerbach: Well, you know, it was very enjoyable. Like anything else, it was a challenge. I was president for quite a few years. I don't know how many.

Nathan: What did the YMHA do?

Zellerbach: It did some of what the community center does now, but they just changed the name. It was like the YMCA. The same kind of thing: athletics and education and lunches and dances. Same basically as the present community center. That's when we changed the name--when they built the new building--from the YMHA to the Jewish Community Center. The Art Commission followed later.

I think we dedicated that building out there, the Community Center, in 1925. I'm not sure. I think I told you that Archbishop Hanna was there. Mayor Rolph was there. It was snowing.

Nathan: In San Francisco!

Zellerbach: The first time in my life the snow was on the ground and stayed there. We laid the cornerstone. That was my first fund raising, doing public work.

THE SAN FRANCISCO ART COMMISSION

Nathan: How would you like to talk now about the San Francisco Art Commission? How you came to it and what you have been up to? Let's see, you were first named to the commission in 1948, is that right?

Zellerbach: Well, I'd have to go back and check on that, but I think I was named by Elmer Robinson. I saw him yesterday at lunch. He was having lunch at the Palace Hotel, with the fire chief and one of his assistants. You know, he has very bad eyesight, so he doesn't see you until you get close to him. So I went over and greeted him, and he introduced me. I turned to the chief and I said, "You know, this man's responsible for putting me in public service. He appointed me to the Art Commission, and I've been on it ever since." Robinson said, "Well, that's the best thing I ever did."

Nathan: Very nice. Was Elmer Robinson a Democrat?

Zellerbach: No! He was a Republican.

Nathan: How did he name the family Democrat to the Art Commission?

Zellerbach: Well, I don't know if I was a Democrat then or not. But that wouldn't make any difference. The mayor is a non-partisan office--so, after all, I've served under two Republicans, and now my second Democrat. They would prefer a member of their own party, but it's a good thing for mayors to take a few from the other party. Just like the President took Mr. John Connolly.

When I was running the Zellerbach Paper Company, the San Francisco branch, Mr. Herbert Fleishhacker, Sr. and my father were very close friends. Every time I got into trouble,

Zellerbach: wanting to influence an order to come to the Zellerbach Paper Company, my father would say, "Go up and see your friend Herbert Fleishhacker, and I'm sure he'll get you the order." So I became acquainted with Herbert, Sr., and we became very good friends. I think he was involved in a race track, Tanforan Race Track. They use a lot of paper cups and everything. We weren't getting the business, so I told him about it, and he said, "Well, I'm sure I can fix that." And he did.

Every time I asked him, he was always very gracious about it, and I always got the business. Of course he used to ask me too. If a friend wanted some business from Zellerbach's, he'd call me, and I'd say, "You've got it." You know, the old story, if you ask a favor, you've got to give one.

Then he was very close to Elmer Robinson. So was my father, for that matter.

Appointment as President

Zellerbach: One day while I was talking to Herbert Fleishhacker, he said to me, "You know, I think it would be very good if you did some public service. I'm going to talk to Elmer Robinson about making you the president of the Art Commission." At that time, Herbert was the president of the park commission. He was the head of the park, San Francisco Park and Recreation. He was president of that thing for many years. He spoke to Elmer, and I got a phone call. I went up to see him. He said he'd like to appoint me, and I should be the president of the Art Commission. I said, "That sounds very intriguing, as long as it wasn't onerous." It was pleasant work.

So the mayor appointed me, and I have been president of the Art Commission now through Robinson--and then came [George] Christopher, and then came [Jack] Shelley, for his four years, and now this is with [Joseph] Alioto. This is the end of his four years. I think that's the four mayors. Robinson had eight years, and so did Christopher. Shelley had four. That's twenty. Alioto has now had three, so I guess I've been with the commission twenty-three years.

Nathan: Right. Now are these appointments for a given period of time?

Zellerbach: For four years, and at the pleasure of the mayor.

Nathan: It seems somehow that this was a very quick rise. You were appointed and made president at the same time!

Zellerbach: Well, yes, you know, it was his commission and he could do as he wanted with it. I guess he felt that I probably could do a good job for him because anytime I take any kind of a political appointment I always am very sure that I have the mayor's or the governor's support.

When I was appointed to the commission, Joseph Dyer was the executive director. His father used to be one of the senior executive vice presidents of Southern Pacific Company. His father was the operating man of the Southern Pacific for the whole system. A very close friend of Herbert's. Of course that's where Joe got his job. He was the first secretary of the Art Commission, when they changed the city charter. I have the charter here. If you want to know the date, I can give it to you.

Nathan: Oh, fine. I have the present provisions, but I don't have the original.

Zellerbach: It was adopted on March 26, 1931, and effective January 8, 1932. That's the original charter. Joe Dyer was appointed on the commission at that time.

Nathan: So Joe Dyer was in right from 1932.

Zellerbach: He was the first secretary. So I inherited him. Joe was very arty. He was a fine character, a fine person. The Dyer family here was socially prominent too. Joe always knew the right people, and was well acquainted with the Burlingame crowd. Joe's forte was music. Anything you suggested to Joe that was within the category of something new, you may as well talk to the wall. Joe always had an excuse that we couldn't do it. So as a consequence, we just went along. I didn't push Joe too hard, because after all the only way we could have changed the activities on the commission, would have been to change the secretary. I wasn't for getting into

Zellerbach: that political hassle.

Of course for Mr. [Alfred] Frankenstein [of the Chronicle]-- we were his whipping boy. He really was after us for years.

The Municipal Band

Nathan: What did he want you to do differently?

Zellerbach: Well, for example, there was the Municipal Band. The Municipal Band was getting \$20,000 a year, and it was a pick-up band, at the call of the mayor. If the mayor didn't use them enough during the year, two months before the fiscal year was over, which is June the 30th, why then the boys all had to toot out the money, so they wouldn't have anything left. They used to go out and give concerts at the old people's homes, and the hospitals. They'd create events. They always played when the fisherman were blessed. The Municipal Band was always there. There were certain other holidays, when they always gave a concert. He was always very critical of that. I don't blame him. I was critical too.

Every time we went up and the mayor wanted to do something with the budget, I said, "Why don't you lower the budget and forget the band?" But we never forgot the band, because we had Pop Kennedy who was the president of the Musicians' Union and was a member of the Art Commission for many years. The first time that he was off in all the years that I was on the commission was when George Christopher became mayor. He and Pop didn't get along, so when Pop's term expired he wasn't re-appointed. That caused quite a hassle.

Then when Jack Shelley went back as mayor, then Pop got back on the board.

Nathan: I see! [Laughing] When Pop Kennedy was off the board, you still didn't get rid of the band?

Zellerbach: Oh no.

Some Critics

Zellerbach: I just learned to go along. You can always do the things that you can justify. Of course, this area is where Mr. Frankenstein used to go after us.

Also when we started these open air art shows, he used to criticize us unmercifully on the pictures that we bought. He always was after us. Of course he was after me too, because he didn't think I did anything.

Nathan: Did you ever get acquainted with him and talk to him?

Zellerbach: Frankenstein? I know him very well. Sure. Any time he wanted anything he came to me, and I'd help him, but then he'd still lower the boom. One instance was, he was publishing a book, in Honolulu. He needed money to get it finished, so I put up the money to finish it. And of course he was very nice and appreciative and all that, till the next time. Then Bingo!

We started to think about concerts, pop concerts. He used to raise hell with Fiedler and the orchestra. He didn't take into consideration that we didn't have the whole symphony.

When the symphony season was over, we used to hire the San Francisco Symphony, but they were hired as casuals. Now, we have a contract with the Symphony, and we get the Symphony orchestra, with all their first chair men. In those days we didn't get the whole Symphony. We got probably from 60 to 70 percent of the symphony personnel, but we very rarely had any of the first chair men.

Nathan: They would go off and do something else?

Zellerbach: Yes. They would go off on vacation, or they would have concerts of their own or something, so the second chair or the third chair men became the first chair men. Of course they were trying to operate with 25 percent of the musicians that were not used to playing with the orchestra. He used to go after us for that.

Zellerbach: So finally the Chronicle changed his job. He's now the critic of painting and sculpture. Robert Commanday is now on music. We've had a better break from Commanday.

Nathan: Is he more sympathetic?

Zellerbach: Well, Commanday I think knows more about music than Frankenstein did.

Nathan: He was an art man, primarily, wasn't he?

Zellerbach: I don't know. He hated everything, you know what I mean? Nothing could please him, unless you had a Raphael. Anyway I used to give interviews. He always wanted to have interviews with me, and then of course he'd pick the things that he could pick on. Finally one day he called me and wanted to see me right away. I said, "I'm terribly sorry. If you want any interviews, you go see Joe Paul, who is the public relations man. I haven't got time." So I quit giving him interviews. I wouldn't talk to him. That was one of my instances.

But Fried was very competent.

Nathan: You think Fried was good?

Zellerbach: Very judicious and very fair. Fried wasn't the kind that tried to stir up controversy. To my way of thinking, the whole Chronicle editorial policy is to stir up controversy. In this area, they did the same. Fried was very nice, always cooperative in every way. If I gave him a story where he could help us, he'd write it up. As a consequence, I used to give him exclusives. Of course that used to get Frankenstein madder than Hell.

Nathan: I can believe it!

Commission Membership

Nathan: Now as for the members of the Art Commission, do they serve for a fixed term?

Zellerbach: Four years at the pleasure of the mayor. It's not a fixed term. From that point of view, the mayor can always dismiss you. I think it's in the charter some place.

Nathan: Perhaps you could explain one thing in the charter provisions for me. It says that there shall be six ex officio members.

Zellerbach: That's right.

Nathan: This is the list of the ex officio members: the mayor, chairman of the public library commission, recreation and parks, city planning, de Young Memorial Museum, and the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Now, when the de Young and the Legion of Honor are put together, then will another ex officio person be named?

Zellerbach: No. How can there be another one? This is the charter. The only thing that will happen is that the president of the combined museums will be the president, and they just won't bother changing the charter. All it is is they just won't appoint somebody.

Nathan: Yes, I'm sure you're right, and maybe this isn't important. But you need sixteen people, and you won't have sixteen.

Zellerbach: You don't need sixteen people. During my term of office, out of sixteen, it took nine people to get a quorum.

Nathan: I see. Well, in here it says you only need six for a quorum.

Zellerbach: I know, the charter was amended. That's the charter amendment that I had passed.

Nathan: I wondered about that, because it seemed like an odd number.

Zellerbach: Well, the reason is that, you see there are ten regular members and six ex officio. And of course the mayor never shows up, and some of the other presidents don't show up. Some are very regular and some of them we've never even seen, so as a consequence many times we couldn't get a quorum. I kept attendance records and I showed what happened: that we just couldn't do business with having to get a quorum of nine every time because that meant some of the ex officio's had to show up. As a consequence I got it down to where six was a quorum so we could always do business. In other words, all we need now is four.

Nathan: Four to approve?

Zellerbach: Yes.

Nathan: The majority of the quorum is what you need?

Zellerbach: Sure. I didn't have any trouble putting that through. All I had to do is demonstrate that we couldn't get quorums. If they wanted a viable commission we had to get relief. So it went right through. The mayor recommended it, and the board of supervisors passed it, and it went on the ballot, recommended to pass. No one objected. Who was going to object?

Nathan: Were there any ex officio members who were interested over the years?

Zellerbach: Oh yes. Sure. Walter Haas, when he was president of the park commission, attended practically every meeting. And Bill Wallace has been very constant. He is the president of the Legion. Now since the consolidation Ransom Cook is president. He was my Wells Fargo banker, he used to lend me money all the time.

Ever since he has been president of the de Young, Ransom Cook has been more active. But his predecessors never showed up, or only when I used to call them and say, "I need you, so please come on down." They would show up only because I asked them to. After Walter Haas got off, Walter Shorestein went on, and he showed up once. After Walter went off, then Lori Di Grazia was on. He's shown up twice. The president of the library commission shows up all the time. The planning commission--once in a while, if I need the president's vote I get him over, but he sends Mrs. Porter. She's been on all the boards. She acts as representative of the planning commission. She has no vote. She's the liaison. Of course I've been urging the planning commission to send somebody, because we do a lot of business between the two commissions.

There is a lot of overlapping. The Art Commission has a lot of buildings to pass a yes or no on. The same thing with the planning commission. The planning commission has to work with us because all structures going on city property have to be approved by the Art Commission. Anyway that's the way it works. I've been doing my best over a period of years, and I've been fairly successful in stopping the mayors from appointing political hacks. In other words I've tried to upgrade the quality of the members.

Nathan: What are you looking for in the members?

Zellerbach: I'm looking for qualified people. For example, you know the make-up of the Art Commission. You have it right there. We have two architects, one landscape architect, a litterateur, a musician, an artist, sculptor, and three lay members. Before the mayor appoints them, the commission is supposed to confer with the people in this particular field. For example, when we appoint an architect, we usually get recommendations from the A.I.A., the local chapter of the A.I.A. The same with landscape architects. Of course the two architects and the landscape architects are very important. I've had members on the commission who were really "commercial" architects. Do you know what I mean? Anything was all right as far as they were concerned. They weren't particularly interested in seeing that the city got quality buildings.

But we have Ernest Born, who I guess is really an architect's architect. I think he is one of the most knowledgeable of the architects we have, primarily for his education in the arts, and in architecture. He is really very fine.

We have Alec Yuill-Thornton who is a little more practical than Ernest. Ernest is an idealist. He has upgraded what's been going on. Then we have Mr. Mayes, who is a landscape architect.

Nathan: Oh yes. David Mayes.

Zellerbach: You see, it's sometimes difficult to really get some of the top flight people, because they have to live in San Francisco. A lot of top architects don't live in San Francisco. It's somewhat the same thing with the other members that have to be qualified. We have Ruth Asawa; she's our sculptress, a very able sculptress. She's well known. And of course Tony Sotomayor. He's I guess one of our best-known artists, a painter. The only trouble with Tony is I can't understand him. He's lived here practically all his life, but he still talks with a very Spanish accent. He's a devoted person, and he does a fine job, and he knows his business.

For litterateur we have the old stevedore--

Nathan: Eric Hoffer?

Zellerbach: Eric Hoffer.

Nathan: That's an interesting appointment.

Zellerbach: He's all right. He was a little tough at the beginning, but Eric has proven himself very well. Another architect is not an architect member, but a public member, Tom Hsieh. He's Chinese. He's very good. He's a young fellow, very able. He has a very fine reputation, a good reputation. He studied under Ernest Born. Ernest Born thinks very highly of him. Hsieh takes his job very seriously, and considers it a great honor to be on the commission. That's what we try to make it.

Nathan: Is there a conflict of interest problem for architects?

Zellerbach: Well, if you're on the commission you don't do any San Francisco public works.

Nathan: That could be a sacrifice.

Zellerbach: That's right. We've had architects that went off because they just couldn't afford to stay on. They do a lot of public work. But anyway, that's the way it is.

Of course there is the episode of Mr. Jeremy Ets-Hokin--.

Nathan: Oh yes, tell me about that.

Zellerbach: It seems that Jerry's father, Louis Ets-Hokin and Jack Shelley were very close friends. When Jack was a congressman, Louis used to get a lot of government business. Jack used to be one of the senior men on the Military Committee, where they had a lot of business to pass out. They were very, very good friends, politically primarily. When Jack was running for office, of course the Ets-Hokins and Jerry, were all behind him. After Shelley won the election, or even before, Jerry said, "Well, I'm going to be the next president of the Art Commission."

I took the position that I served under a mayor and I was in his camp, or else I didn't serve him. In other words, he gave me support or else I wasn't interested in the job. Each mayor that I served under, I always sent in my resignation. When Elmer got off and Christopher came on I sent in my resignation; and I did with Jack Shelley and I did the same with Alioto. I said, "You can be free to do what you want." Of course I always had a conference. They called me right up to see them and hoped I'd stay. I said, "Oh yes. I'd be very

Zellerbach: glad to stay under the condition that I get your support. After all, I'm working for you now. I'm planning on working for you, and my job is to do a good job on the commission and make you look good. That's what the commissions are for, to be for the public, between the public and the mayor."

Each one of them then re-appointed me. I went up to see Jack, before he was sworn in, in his office. He was still a congressman. He came out here and was getting oriented to the job. I went up to talk to him about the Art Commission, gave him a list of the members, who they were and how I felt about them. I had my resignation there for him. He took it and wrote on it, "Not accepted!" and handed it back.

Nathan: [Laughing] Nice and quick!

Zellerbach: I still have it. So then I talked to him about the appointees; if he had any changes, naturally he'd do as he pleased, but I hoped that before he made an appointment he would talk to me. I felt very strongly that the commission should be a strong commission. I said, "Jack, I don't want you to appoint a lot of political hacks. Because if you appoint political hacks, you may as well disband the commission." So when he appointed anybody I was always called into consultation. When I was first up there and spoke to him, I told him, "I understand that Jerry Ets-Hokin's going to be the next president of the Art Commission."

He said, "Who told you that one?" I said, "Jerry's got the story all over town that you're going to accept my resignation, and that he's going to be the next president." We got into quite a discussion over Jerry. I said, "Now, Jack, he's one person that if you appoint--it's your privilege, but--you're going to rue the day when you do. He isn't going to do you any good, and he's going to do you a lot of harm. He has a brother-in-law (married to his sister), Robert Lauter, a very fine young fellow. Lives right next to Steve and Merla, on Presidio Terrace. Anyway, I said, "If you want to do Louis a favor, you appoint his son-in-law. The son-in-law is a very able young fellow, and I like him very much. He'll do a good job. If you appoint Jerry, God help the commission."

We went over all the rest of them, everyone else. He wanted to put Kennedy back on. I said, "Well, personally I would prefer that you don't put the president of the union on,

Zellerbach: he wears his union hat practically all the time. In other words, he's there to protect his boys, and inasmuch as the bulk of our money is spent on music he can't exert judgment in the public interest. I have nothing against Pop Kennedy, I like him very much. He's a fine fellow and he's served under me a long time. But I just want you to know how I feel about it. I think the commission would be better served if a good musician, a reputable musician was put on the commission instead of the president of the union."

He said, "Well, I think you're right. I think you're right. I'll think about it. I'll think about it." Anyway, he put Pop back on.

Nathan: Had Shelley enjoyed rather strong union support?

Zellerbach: Well, Shelley's a union man. He was head of one of the unions here. Certainly. He was union through and through. But you could always reason with Jack. Jack may not have been one of the most able guys in the world, but he was a nice guy. I was very fond of him. So I went off on a cruise, which I normally do in January and February, go away for a time. On the way, I received word of Jerry's appointment.

Jack had appointed him. So when I came home I went up to see him and I said, "Jack how did you happen to appoint Jerry? You told me that you weren't going to appoint him. You were going to appoint his brother-in-law."

"Well, Louis and his wife Rosie came to me and they literally cried: This was Jerry's great ambition to be on the Art Commission." It was the only favor they wanted. Would he please do it? He said, "I just couldn't--I just couldn't say no."

"Well," I said, "you've appointed him. So he's on. Now you'll see what happens."

Nathan: What did happen?

Zellerbach: What happened, it was unmerciful. The first crack right out of the box he was very acrimonious at the meetings. He was very vocal. Anything I said or tried to do, he would insist I didn't know anything! Every time he got into one of these things he upset all the rest of the commission. Very few of them ever voted with him.

Proposal for a Music Festival

Nathan: This sounds sort of self-defeating.

Zellerbach: Sure, well that's always the case. Anyway, first Jerry was going over to Europe. He wanted to stop at the different cities where they give these performances--festival cities. He thought he had a good idea to organize a festival for San Francisco. I didn't know this. He goes to the mayor and asks the mayor for one of these official letters. The mayor gave him an official letter that he was a member of the Art Commission and was over there investigating music, with a big build-up in the letter. In the meantime Jerry had his own public relations people. The first thing we see, when he's leaving, he's standing on the top of the stairs going into the airplane, with a big coat on, fur-lined with the fur collar outside and a muffler, ready to go. Jerry's headed for Europe. Big article. He's going to investigate all the festivals and bring something good home.

So anyway Jerry went, and soon he was sending home stories, which the public relations people had printed, about all the people he'd met and what he was going to do. When he got home, at the first commission meeting he said that he had some very fine ideas, and he thought we ought to organize and have our own festival, of course in the summer.

In the summer months we have the Ice Follies coming in, we have the Pops Concerts, we have the Civic Light Opera, and so everything was pretty well taken up with what was going on. So anyway, the commission in general was not very much interested. He waxed forth. He said, "Now, what we have to do is we have to raise \$500,000 to finance this. What I want is the Art Commission's endorsement."

So of course this is where I came in. I started to question him. I said, "Well, Jerry, this is fine. This is a very good idea. You're going to need \$500,000. Have you any idea where you're going to get it?" "Oh yes! I'm going to get \$50,000 from Pan American, \$50,000 from TWA, and \$50,000 from United Air Lines. Oh, we'll raise the money. It'll be very easy."

Zellerbach: I said, "Well that's fine. I find it quite difficult even getting money out of the city for anything we want to do. But if you can raise the \$500,000, I'm sure that the Art Commission will be glad to endorse it." "Well, they can endorse it now. It's a cinch. I'll raise it. You don't have to worry."

I said, "Jerry, I don't think you should put the Art Commission in that position. I think you should at least do a little preliminary work and see if you can get some promises for the \$500,000."

Nathan: This would have been beyond the normal budget?

Zellerbach: Sure. After all, we were spending pretty close to a \$100,000 on concerts, we had \$25,000 for the band, we had a chorale--

Nathan: Your budget was already committed?

Zellerbach: Yes. Believe me, everything we received took blood, sweat and tears to get. He said, "Oh, well I'll get some from the supervisors, the mayor." I said, "That's fine. You go talk to the mayor and see what he will do." So anyway we got by that meeting. Then every meeting for a while he kept bringing it up and I kept saying, "Well, what commitments have you, Jerry?" "Well, I'm about to get them. I'm about to get them."

He had all the pieces in the paper, and the critics. He always had interviews with the critics and brought everybody in and had his picture taken. I don't know whether I've got his picture and stuff left or not. Finally it just faded out.

Mayor's Proposal for a Bond Issue

Zellerbach: Then the next incident came with the bond issue for the new symphony hall and the re-doing of the opera house. The mayor came out for it. He had a meeting with his art commissioners and naturally asked them to support it. Naturally, if this was the policy of the city, we went along, or if we didn't like it, we should resign. That's what I said to them myself. I said, "If you can't support the mayor's program, then you

Zellerbach: should keep your mouth shut and say nothing. If you don't then you should resign. Then you're a free lance and you can say anything you want."

Anyway that was fine. Then they started the publicity. Louis Lurie came out against it, and then Louis got hold of Jerry and said, "This was for the rich," you know, and all that stuff. They put out all that propoganda which was very telling.

Jerry came out against the mayor and called him all kinds of names. I called the mayor up and said, "Well, Jack, how much of this are you going to take before you throw him off the commission?" "Well," he said, "he makes one more statement and I'm going to throw him off the commission." I said, "My advice is you'd better do it now."

Jerry waited for another couple of weeks, and then he took another blast at the mayor. He said that the mayor was incompetent. When I got hold of the mayor and said, "Well, what are you going to do?" he said, "I'm going to throw him off." "Fine! Hurry up and throw him off and get rid of him." Which he finally did. So of course Jerry was going to bring a law suit that it was illegal. Anyway, after the mayor threw him off I said, "Well, Jack, I told you so." "Yes, you did. I should have taken your advice." I said, "You didn't, so it serves you right."

So that was Jerry. That was the episode of Jerry. There was a lot in between, but those were the main incidents. It put the Art Commission in a terrible light. It really almost wrecked us. We had to do some re-building.

When other commissioners' terms expired, I suggested to the mayor that he just forget them. They really tried to undermine the work of the commission. I used to say, "I may lose a few battles but I never lose the war." That's been my reputation. Everybody says that I rule the commission with an iron hand. I don't say I rule with an iron hand, but I influence them. If I find I have any commissioner that's double-crossing the policies of the commission, then that's when I start after them. I'll say this, with Shelley and even with Christopher, I always conferred with them before they appointed anyone. I've even had much better cooperation with Alioto. He knows the arts better, and understands it. As a consequence, when I suggest these things--once in a while



Zellerbach: we disagree on a name--I never just recommend one, I recommend two or three. If he has somebody, then he talks to me about it. As I said before, we have nearly all the elements of the city represented.

Mrs. Martinez represents the Spanish-speaking people, and then we have Asawa, who is Japanese, and we have Hsieh, who is Chinese. We have our litterateur who represents the stevedores!

Nathan: Do you have any Black members on the commission?

Zellerbach: No, we haven't a vacancy. There are a couple of Blacks I have ready. We still have a vacancy on music.

A New Commission Secretary

Zellerbach: Mrs. Agnes Albert was the music member. Alioto appointed her. She didn't get along with Martin Snipper. She used to tell me, "You can't work with him. You can't believe him!" All this kind of stuff. So I once had to tell Agnes, I said, "Now Agnes, Martin Snipper's been around this commission putting on the art show for twenty years. He knows the work." (This was after Joe Dyer died.)

We had quite a to-do on that one, too, getting Martin, but anyway, I said to her, "As far as Martin's concerned, he knows the work, he does what he's told. He may not do everything that you like, because Martin is not a great administrator. He has to have somebody with him that can administer. But Martin has great ideas. He's an artist in his own right, and he knows music. He does a good job. He's the one that got the brainstorm on the Neighborhood Arts program. We've done much better with him with the Pops Concerts. And all the expansion that we've had since Joe died, it's been Martin's doing. Now I think the Art Commission is better known, and has a better reputation." With Joe Dyer--I could never get Joe Dyer to do anything, so when Joe passed away--

Nathan: That's not a civil service job?

Zellerbach: Oh no. He's appointed by the commission, with the concurrence of the mayor. You always ask the mayor first, so when Joe passed away, Jack Shelley was the mayor and I talked to him.

Zellerbach: I told Jack, "Jack, I don't know who you've got in mind, but after all, the best person is Snipper. He's been around for twenty years, he knows the work, he's an artist. I know him, and I'm not for breaking in somebody new. I'm too old. I don't want to take the time and the responsibility."

So we had a difference of opinion on the commission. The rebels were headed by Sally Hellyer. She just married a Lilienthal. She was on the commission. Sally was able. She was always politicking. She was behind the scenes.

Nathan: What was her aim? What was she trying to accomplish?

Zellerbach: Well, she didn't think that we were doing what we should as a commission. Sally and a couple of the other "artistic" commissioners wanted a change. They didn't want Snipper. They felt that we should look around the United States and get some very fine artist or somebody that would represent the arts. So I argued with my commissioners and said, "I'm terribly sorry, but as far as I'm concerned the mayor's approved, and I've recommended Martin Snipper. He has the experience, he knows the commission, he knows the people in City Hall. I'm not going to break in somebody new."

The thing heated up. Finally when it came time to elect Martin, I was counting my votes. I had to counteract the artist group, Sally and a couple of the architects--I think she had about four votes, four or five votes. Not any more than that. I then got busy and talked to all the other commissioners, especially some of the ex officio's who were all very good friends of mine: "I'd appreciate it if you would come to the meeting, listen to the arguments, whatever you want, but I'd appreciate it if you would vote for Martin Snipper for secretary." I explained the reasons, and they said, "Fine. If you want him, that's fine. We'll be there." I said, "Now don't fail me!"

So I had my majority all checked off. I had the votes. Then of course we had a very private meeting.

Nathan: Because it's a personnel matter?

Zellerbach: If it's a personnel matter you can have a private meeting. This was a private meeting of just the commission. Sally got up and made her speech and so did a few others. I told them

Zellerbach: my story again, and said, "This is the way I feel." After all the discussion I said, "Will somebody please move the appointment of Mr. Snipper?" It was all cut and dried, and the motion was to appoint Mr. Snipper the executive secretary of the Art Commission. It got a second. "Was there any further discussion?" So I said, "All those in favor--call the roll." They called the roll, and when they called the roll he was elected.

That's why I said I never go into a meeting unless I know I've got the votes.

Nathan: How did the others take the result?

Zellerbach: Well, that's all right. The majority voted. It didn't bother me. If they didn't like it, they could get off. After that episode, for the confidential record, Sally didn't know why she wasn't re-appointed. I knew why she wasn't re-appointed. I just had my say to the mayor. In fact it was Alioto. I said, "Well, I would prefer that she wasn't re-appointed. I think we can get somebody else." So then we got Ruth Asawa. A very fine reputation. Just as good as Sally's, or better.

Nathan: How do you encourage people who bring in new ideas to the commission? I gather you do?

Zellerbach: We do. Sure. They can bring in any idea they want. For example at the last meeting there was a motion passed that we should ask the board of supervisors for \$50,000 to have a commission by Darius Milhaud to celebrate--is it his 30th anniversary, or his 65th birthday, or his retirement or something? I forget what it is.

Nathan: I think he's retiring and going back to France.

Zellerbach: Well, anyway, we thought it would be a wonderful thing if the city would put up \$50,000 and have Darius do the work, and then we'd get the Symphony to perform it. I said, "Well, I agree, it's a very fine thing." So we passed a resolution. "Now, who's going to get the money from the supervisors?" [Laughter] Well, all right. It's all right with me. They can pass it for \$100,000! But I said, "Now this is your responsibility to get this money from the board. You've passed the resolution, so you go right ahead. If you get it you'll have my full support. I'll do anything I can to help you get the money."

"Design" and Location: Senior Citizens' Center

Zellerbach: It's a very good idea. I never object. I'll vote for anything of that kind. I've no problem on that. But when I find--like this hassle we had just recently about that Senior Citizens' place out on 6th Avenue--there was a difference of opinion on the board, I let them battle it out. It's all right with me.

Nathan: What is the issue?

Zellerbach: Well, the issue is that the members of the Civic Design Committee do not want the thing located in the park. And of course, under the charter, we have the right to say where it goes. In other words we can approve or disapprove it. Now there's a schism between Born and Alec Yuill-Thornton. Alec upholds the Park Commission; they have the right to say. Mr. Born says that when you have a "design," the design includes placing, and it includes landscaping, and all the rest of it. The Art Commission has the authority, under the definition of design.

Probably before we get through we'll have to have a judge. We'll have to go to court to get the definition of "design," to determine whether we have the right. One of the questions they asked, I discovered in a two-page letter which Alec Yuill-Thornton sent to the commission, after Born sent his opinion. If the Park Commission brings this up again, this will be the question: What is the definition of design? One of the questions Born asked Yuill-Thornton: "If they have the right to place the building, and we don't like where the building is placed--in other words, we think the front should be this way instead of that way, do we have the right to change it?" Alec says, "Yes, we have that right, we have the right to say where the building is to be placed."

Nathan: I see. Do I take it then that the Park and Recreation Commission does not want the building in Golden Gate Park at all?

Zellerbach: No! No. Park and Rec want it there.

Nathan: But who is opposed to having it there?

Zellerbach: The Civic Design Committee and the Art Commission.

Nathan: They think it should not be in the park?

Zellerbach: Not in the park at all.

Nathan: I see. So the ex officio member from the Park Commission is not involved in the fight?

Zellerbach: Sure. He was there.

Nathan: But he's for putting it in the park.

Zellerbach: He was for it, and there were two other members, Alec Yuill-Thornton, and then we had one other member--the president of the Library Commission. There were three of them. They voted in favor of putting it in the park. All the rest of the commission voted it down.

Nathan: Do you have any personal view about it?

Zellerbach: Well, I feel that 6th Avenue in the park is not the right place. The old people themselves were out there saying they don't want it in the park.

Nathan: They don't want it in the park?

Zellerbach: No. They say they have enough recreation in the park. Right there they have the museums, they have the aquarium, all that stuff. They have plenty of seats around there right near the playground. They don't need that there. They want it someplace where they can get better use out of it.

Nathan: You would think their view would have some effect.

Zellerbach: Well, the thing was railroaded. I cross-examined the manager, you know, the director of the Park and Rec. What's his name? Caverly. I asked Caverly, "Have you had a survey made? You know, one of these demographic surveys, where all these people live? Have you had any hearings so they could come and express themselves?" Of course his answer was, "This is my business. I've been working with the elderly for twenty years." I said, "Well, that's fine, but you have everybody here, and only one of the older persons talked in favor. Everybody else talked against it. They didn't want it. This was their own meeting."

Zellerbach: He explained how many places he looked. He looked at, I think, seven locations, places in the park. I said, "Did you look at any other places?" He said, "Yes, two on the outside. But the Park Commission ordered me to select a place in Golden Gate Park." I said, "Then they ordered you to select a place. Your hands are tied. You can't go outside the park."

Then of course there were a lot of pros and cons in the papers. In fact the Examiner was right in there. They had a couple of editorials. They said the Art Commission shouldn't use a subterfuge of their power to stop the building from going in the park, because the charter says we have no right to locate any of the buildings, but we have the right of approval. They said, "Notwithstanding that fact, we are also against the thing going in the park."

Nathan: I see! Are they really putting it up to the Art Commission to fight the Recreation people?

Zellerbach: Well, of course everybody put it up, because the senior citizens came in and said, "This is the only place we've been able to express our opinion. The Park Commission wouldn't let us." Toward the end of the meeting, I said, "Well, according to the law, they have the right, but my advice is, you go to the Park Commission. They are having a meeting." I told them the date and the time. "Now you go out there to that meeting, and you put your protest in right out there."

Nathan: I see. You had a delegation of the senior citizens?

Zellerbach: Yes. I told this delegation, "You go out to the Park Commission, and do your fighting out there." Of course the whole thing now is up in the air. I don't know what the next step is. I'm not going to worry about it. My attitude has always been to support other committees, whenever possible. Ernest Born called me and wanted me to see a couple of people and talk to them about the location. He said, "I'd appreciate it if you would see them."

I said, "Ernest, you know I'd like to do anything for you, but this I'm not going to do. As far as my supporting the Civic Design Committee goes, you don't want me to say I don't agree with the Civic Design Committee. You expect me to support you, don't you?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Well if I get into the act, how can I support you?" He said, "I didn't

Zellerbach: think of that." I said, "Well, you'd better think. You just tell them that I'm terribly sorry, but I always--usually--support the commissioners' recommendations." Once in a while I have a say, if I don't think they're right.

Nathan: This is the way I understand it. The Civic Design Committee, and the Art Commission, do not want the building in the park. Is that right?

Zellerbach: All except one of the members on the Civic Design Committee.

Nathan: How many are there on the Civic Design Committee?

Zellerbach: Let's see: three, four, five, six. Ruth Asawa is on because we combine the Civic Design Committee with the other artists. I fought for eleven years to get an ordinance passed to give us 2 percent of the total building cost of public buildings for embellishment. So as a consequence, artists have to be on the Civic Design Committee when they start talking about the usage of the 2 percent embellishment.

So that was another long, hard struggle.

Nathan: I bet it was. It took eleven years?

Zellerbach: It took eleven years to get it through the board.

Nathan: And is it in force?

Zellerbach: Sure. It's in force. We are getting the 2 percent. I mean, it's somewhat voluntary, but it's public policy. They don't have to do it, but they're all doing it.

Nathan: Embellishment would mean paintings, sculpture, fountains--?

Zellerbach: Yes, sculpture outside, fountains, anything like that. Working with Park and Rec, I've noticed it hasn't been too good ever since the other fellow retired.

Nathan: The director? Kimball?

Zellerbach: Kimball. Yes. Kimball was very good, but since Kimball, there were some nonentities. The man that succeeded Kimball was retired early. And then, of course, the president of the commission is very important. Since Walter Haas, they've run through quite a few.

Zellerbach: One of the problems has been that the mayor is giving it to very active businessmen, and they don't spend the time. It takes a lot of time and doing.

The Question of Approval and Certification

Zellerbach: You know, there is the question of when we get into doing a public building. If they have anything pertaining to grass or trees, then it's turned over to the Park and Rec to maintain. Of course the Art Commission is in on the original landscaping design. We approve of it. We had a big fight over that once. They said that landscape design was not our business. Our business was to approve the building, and it was up to them to approve the landscaping. We won the argument, and the design includes landscaping. Not only landscaping, but it includes the plot. It includes the whole.

We had a big argument over Portsmouth Square. They were going to build an underground garage there, and the Art Commission said that it had to be approved by us. They brought their lawyer, and they said, "That's not to be approved by you. We're just building underground, and the park comes over it." I said, "You just try to build and see what happens to you. You see if you can get by--getting your plans through, without our approval, because you're building on public property. I don't care if you're just building walls." So then the attorney cooled off right away, and he said, "Yes, you're right."

Nathan: Did the Art Commission approve that bridge from Portsmouth Square to the Chinese center?

Zellerbach: Yes, we approved that.

Nathan: Are you happy with it?

Zellerbach: Well, you can't say that we're happy with it. We thought that it shouldn't go up. It's not our business to say that you can't put it up. We made them redesign that I don't know how many times. This we're in charge of, what they put up, and how it's decorated. But the Planning Commission approves it--not necessarily the design of the building, but the fact that they can have it. This is what the Chinese wanted, the ones that were building it. Now the Chinese wish that they didn't

Zellerbach: do it. We told them that before they put it up, because it takes up a piece of Portsmouth Square, and that's the only square in Chinatown that they can use. We indicated that to them. So of course, when they put it up, then we had to re-landscape Portsmouth Square. They said we had nothing to do with it. We said, "Well, you go ahead and see if we have nothing to do with it. We'll never approve the bridge. You can do what you want. It's part of the design." So, that's what we do, you see.

Unless we approve it, the comptroller can't certify. If the comptroller can't certify it, they can't get a contract, because the comptroller won't pay any money. That's how we get control of it. That I learned very early in the game, when I first was on the commission. My predecessor used to get the designs for public buildings and pass them without even looking at them. The same with these canopies that come out over the city streets, these electric things. My good friend Harry Ross was the comptroller, so he advised me how we should do it, and he would back us up. He said, "I won't certify any plans unless they're approved by the Art Commission." It took some of the other agencies a little while to find out. Then when they found out that they couldn't just bully us into doing things, because if we didn't approve it, they took it to the comptroller, and the comptroller said, "I won't certify without Art Commission approval." They found out in a hurry. So those are the kinds of things that creep in.

Nathan: This decision of the comptroller to act--there's no ordinance that requires it?

Zellerbach: No, no. If the Board of Supervisors passes something, and there's no money, the comptroller won't certify it, and the Board of Supervisors has to go and raise the money.

Nathan: But the decision of the comptroller about what he will or won't certify, that's entirely at his discretion?

Zellerbach: No. His discretion only comes based on what the charter says. Now, the charter says public buildings must be approved by the Art Commission. If the Art Commission doesn't approve it, he can't certify it. It's not discretionary with him.

That would be the same thing with a bond issue. If the Public Works Department wants to do something, to spend money, to get a contract, it's got to be certified by the comptroller.



Zellerbach: He has the money. When the bills come in, he's got to have the money there to pay them, so he can't certify anything unless he knows he has the money. If he hasn't the money, then they'll have to put an appropriation through the Board of Supervisors, and if there's enough in taxes, he can pay it out. If there isn't, too bad. He can't certify, unless he knows he's got the money.

Nathan: Right, now just thinking again about this Inter-Agency proposal that's going to go into effect, do you foresee that it will require extra funding?

Zellerbach: Over a period of time it's bound to require extra funding. The more activities they get into, the more funding it's going to require. It's just like anything else. It's Parkinson's Law. When you start something, it's very hard to stop it. That's why the mayor's always very loth to add anybody to the payroll of any of the departments. If they once get them in on civil service, they can't get rid of them. It's a position, and they keep filling it whether they need it or they don't need it.

(Interview V, September 17, 1971)

Nathan: We were just talking about Martin Snipper coming in to succeed Joe Dyer as the executive secretary of the Art Commission. I was about to ask you how you found Martin Snipper.

Zellerbach: How we found Martin Snipper? I think we were hunting for somebody to run the open air art show. I don't know how we got acquainted with Martin. I don't know whether Joe Dyer found him, or who found him. Martin ought to know. He has his own history. He always had a desk in the Art Commission, and kind of worked out of there, even though he was teaching art at one of the high schools here, and also the senior citizens' classes that they gave down at the school on Fillmore Street.

I think I said before, all that Joe was interested in was music and the arts. As for doing anything beyond that, Joe always had excuses; he couldn't do it. He didn't have the time. Joe was a wonderful person. He came from a good family. He always had a certain mystery about him. I would ask him for lunch: Oh, he was busy. Then I would go to the table at



Zellerbach: Trader Vic's and Joe had his table there every day, a little single table, and there he'd be, sitting drinking his martini. He was not what I call a dynamic person. He knew his music and he knew his art. He had a lot of talent. And he knew his society people. But that's all he did. I never could get him to do anything else.

Nathan: Were you thinking of going into the neighborhoods, like the Neighborhood Art festivals?

Zellerbach: Well no, but we had other areas that we could have gotten into, especially in the musical areas and the art areas. The only thing we did outside of Pops Concerts was this open air art show. Of course he was interested in that. We had a chorus, and the same thing with the Municipal Band. I tried to get him to do something with it, to make it more representative. But Joe said, "Oh, we've been doing this for all these years--the union, you know. So, let's not disturb it."

Well, I wasn't going to fight with him. He'd been in the office since the Art Commission started. He was a nice guy and my wife loved him. I was very fond of Joe too, as a person. But as a business associate, he was a blank.

When he passed away, Martin was a natural successor, because he'd been hanging around the office for twenty years, and he knew everything that was going on.

Neighborhood Arts and the Arts Council

Zellerbach: Martin is the one that started all these new programs. Martin is very good at that. He had imagination and he knows art very well. Martin has one weakness: he's not an administrator. It took me three months to find out what he's spending on the Neighborhood Arts program. I'd say, "Where's the budget? I want to see what you are spending." They just spent it, and then all of a sudden they're running short, and what are they going to do? Well, I don't run things that way. That's what got my old friend June Dunn into trouble. I told you about that, I think. That's in the record too.

Nathan: We hardly went into that.



Zellerbach: Didn't we put that in the record about June Dunn?

Nathan: No, we really haven't discussed Neighborhood Arts very much, and that's very important. I'd like to hear what you have to say about that. How did that begin?

Zellerbach: It began, I think three or four years ago. It seems that San Francisco State was giving a course in civics and wanting their students to have experience in the neighborhoods. Dr. Arthur Bierman--I don't know whether you know Dr. Bierman--

Nathan: I know of him.

Zellerbach: He was the head of this. He and Martin got together. I guess the whole idea at that time was the beginning of the Associated Councils of the Arts, and they were expanding that all over the country, starting new organizations. At that time there was a Bay Area Arts Council. It was headed by a Doctor McKenna out at State. He's the head of dramatics there. A very nice gentleman. He was very much interested in this whole area. I was interested in it because we were trying to organize all the arts around here for this council. They couldn't get the financing to keep the thing going. I helped them, the Zellerbach family, the Zellerbach Family Fund helped them as well. And I got some other contributions to try to keep them going. If they depend too much on one person, it's not good.

Nathan: Did your interest in this develop after you were on the Rockefeller panel? Is that what got you interested?

Zellerbach: This was almost the same time as the Rockefeller panel. I think it was one of the first around the country. McKenna saw the value of it, to try to coordinate the arts activities, especially with the state college interested in this whole field of developing arts. Bierman and Snipper got together, and we started the Neighborhood Arts program.

The first basis was to try to organize Neighborhood Arts Councils in order to get them to support the arts in the neighborhood. Then we started to send out help from the students out at the San Francisco State University. They were supposed to be doing the leg work and developing this thing.



Developing New Support for the Arts

Zellerbach: Then it got moving. There was another fellow in with Bierman. He became the manager and the director. In other words, we tried to get an organization going. We had this idea of developing arts in the neighborhoods, especially trying to get the mature people out, to see if we could get them to the ballet or symphony or things of that kind; to see if we could stimulate any appreciation, so we could have a more favorable attitude by the majority of the people in the community for the arts, vis à vis the view that the arts were only for the rich.

So we went on this theory that you have to spread your base, because we could see the troubles that the Symphony and the Opera and the Ballet were getting into. In the first place they became expensive, and in the second place, the average person was afraid to go into the Opera House. They didn't have the proper clothes.

This was the start of the deterioration, because as the large donors started to pass away, their children, their successors, weren't as interested in giving money away, and of course had less to give away after they paid death taxes. This has been a constant erosion of large individual donations, not only to the arts, but also to the UBAC and the Welfare Fund. They don't receive too many large contributions any more. At one time, my mother gave the largest individual contribution to the United Bay Area Crusade. Well, when she passed away, we were doing our share, but we didn't pick up what she gave. Until the estate was settled and the Zellerbach Family Fund was in funds, that was another loss. Mr. Alexander, of Alexander and Baldwin, was the head of the Community Chest here for years. He was a very large donor. The Crocker family, the Haas family were the large individual donors. There were a great many others. As they passed away, the agencies had to look to other sources and broaden their base.

These are all the movements of the times. Anyway, this director lasted about six months; he wasn't so good at organizing, and getting the thing going in the first place.



Focus on Youth

Zellerbach: The first mistake was, we were trying to attract the elders. Well, the elders couldn't be less interested, but we found that the children were interested. So we dropped the elders, and we went to the youth. We figured that we'd better spend our efforts on the new generation rather than on the old generation who were too set in their ways to try to change. You couldn't develop the interest because they didn't have the background. They didn't have the chance for the education, musical education or art education. Of course the youth these days, since we've been going, are much better educated. There are more of them in college than there were when I was in the same category.

When we changed our whole basic program to get the youth of the city interested, we then had to look for another director. Bierman recommended June Dunn. We went on the premise that we were not going to patronize any of the neighborhoods. In other words, we would stay out unless they could organize within the neighborhood themselves, and get the artists or the people who were interested in the arts to become an indigenous part of the neighborhood. We would help support them and help the supply situation. If they needed a projector or a loudspeaker, or some flyers, we'd supply those. But we didn't say, "We want to send a rock band in; now you fellows go get the audience for them." We didn't do any of that. They had to do the work themselves. It has to come from the people themselves.

June was a good organizer. She knew that group, the group that we were after. She used to be in union labor circles, so she knew this whole gang. It took a person that knew them to get in there. So June organized it.

Last year, I think I told you, we were coming to the end of the line with June, because she and Snipper couldn't get along. June became a little Hitleress. It was either her way or no way. Becky Jenkins got into the act. I don't know if you know who she is. She substituted for Gloria Unti on our Arts Resources Board for the study we made. She was one of the members of the group that the mayor appointed. I think you've read that, haven't you? Have you read the regional Arts Resources development report?



The Hanks Report and the McFadyen Report

Nathan: Yes. And am I right in thinking that the study was financed by the Zellerbach Family Fund? And the city has adopted a number of the recommendations?

Zellerbach: Yes. This was done for the City of San Francisco, in other words, for Mayor Shelley. It's called The San Francisco Arts Resources Committee Report to the Honorable John F. Shelley, Mayor of San Francisco. It's all done through the city, although we co-sponsored it.

We have some recommendations here from the resources committee. Here's the paragraph, "Arts in the Neighborhoods." That's what we've been doing now. It says, "Neighborhood art is art generated spontaneously in the community. It includes all forms of visual performance and represents the most direct expression of contemporary civilization. It is extremely important to recognize it as art."

It goes on to tell about it: "Our Rec Commission conducts commendable arts and crafts programs the year around.... These efforts are worthy of support, but they still fall short of the goal for art that is generated spontaneously in the neighborhood. The orientation of art as a recreation is primarily instruction, the transfer of specific technical disciplines from teacher to pupil. The orientation of the artist is characterized by the exchange of ideas.... The distinction raises a problem because the spontaneous is hard to define, and tends to elude organized programs. However, effective neighborhood programs do emerge."

Then it goes on: "Arts Instruction in the Secondary and Elementary Schools--Arts Resources Authority." What we would like to have is a Bay Area Arts Resources Authority, which would include the schools, but the minute you get into that, you get into all kinds of legislation. You have to have legislation from the state to include the schools. Then you'd have to have charter amendments, and then you'd have to have a lot of these independent areas like Park and Rec and the schools give up their authority over spending money. Well, the minute you do that, you're in trouble.



Zellerbach: So we avoided that, and we're going for voluntary cooperation among agencies.

Anyway, this report is the basis upon which the Art Commission is operating. There are a lot of things in there on further recommendations which we haven't been able to implement. We can't move as fast as we'd like to on these recommendations. We have to get the people ready for it. This is like ecology, you know. It was years and years before all of a sudden everybody thought they were going to die the next day from the fumes of the automobiles, and that had to be cured tomorrow. Well, it's the same thing with this Arts Resources idea.

You see, this follows the Rockefeller report. That's how I met John McFadyen. This report is the result of Nancy Hanks' report to the mayor.

Nathan: Nancy Hanks did a separate report earlier, for the mayor? How did you get that going?

Zellerbach: After the bond issue was snowed under in 1965, I thought we ought to have somebody come out here with knowledge of the arts to tell us what happened. You know, we were licked, but good. I'd really like to find the basic reasons, although I think most of us knew them. We felt we should have some expert advice. So knowing Nancy as well as I did, I asked her if she would take on the assignment. She said she didn't know whether her bosses would let her.

Nathan: Her bosses are the Rockefeller family?

Zellerbach: The Rockefeller brothers are her bosses. The Rockefeller Brothers' Fund. Not the Rockefeller Foundation. The Rockefeller Brothers' Fund. She was working under Laurance. So I wrote Laurance a letter, and said it would be a great service to the San Francisco community if he would permit her to come here and make this study for us, tell us how we could do it.

Laurance is the one that is always interested in parks and ecology; Rockefeller Grove was all done through Laurance, John D. III, who headed this committee on the arts, gets into the music and the paintings and the performing arts. That's his domain. They were very gracious, and permitted Nancy to come out.



Nathan: Who paid for her to come out?

Zellerbach: We paid all her expenses.

Nathan: When you say "we" is that the Art Commission?

Zellerbach: No. The Zellerbach Family Fund put up the money. We paid all the expenses and we wanted to pay her for her time. She wouldn't take any money for her own services, but we did pay all her expenses. After all, you couldn't ask them to do it.

Nathan: No. It was quite a compliment to you that she wanted to come.

Zellerbach: That's right. She went around and talked to all the important people, including Lurie. Nancy was the one that recommended we go into fine arts a little more deeply. As a result of her report, we decided to go ahead with it, to go into it more deeply, as you will find in that McFadyen report. Neighborhood Arts is one of the things that they highly recommended, and especially with what happened to the bond issue, one that was needed. If you wanted people to put up money and vote for bond issues and things of that kind, they'd have to be part of the action.

It was the same thing when we started to try to get any money out of the board of supervisors; art was the last item that was down at the bottom of the totem pole. If you know politics, you know that unless there is a demand, they couldn't care less. If there's anything to be cut out of the budget, they'll cut the stuff that people don't care about. This has all had its effect on the board of supervisors and the mayors and everybody in public office. They go out in the neighborhoods to win votes, and they find out what's happening here and the demand for this, and what it's been doing. With the arts in the neighborhoods moving very rapidly the fact is that we've had a couple of people out here from the National Endowment, and one from the General Services Administration from Washington. They spent three days here. First, they were only going to spend one day and they were so fascinated and so involved that they stayed three days and when they left they said, "This is the greatest thing that's going on in the United States. There's nothing like it." A lot of people have tried it.



Zellerbach: We've had people up from Los Angeles. They want to do the same thing, but they don't know how to organize it. And so as a consequence none of them have been successful. We're the model for the whole country. And of course, that pleases everybody. This Neighborhood Arts Program is now known. There's no secret about it in the city. Everybody knows about it and we're receiving, as I said, more demands all the time.

Nathan: You educate a lot of people as you go along.

Zellerbach: I hope to be around a little while longer, but this thing must go on. Somebody, especially representing the family, has to get hold of it. Up to now, any time they land in any kind of trouble I'm the guy that has to personally handle it.

Ruth Asawa and Art in the Schools

Nathan: How does the rest of the Art Commission regard the Neighborhood Arts Program?

Zellerbach: They're all for it. Ruth Asawa, a member of the commission, the sculptress member--she's done a terrific piece of work out in the schools herself. I don't know if you've heard of it or not. I'll give you an example of it. Here's a couple of postcards you can use to write your friends.

Nathan: Oh! Isn't that charming. This is a mosaic playground mural at Alvarado School.

Zellerbach: That was done as a result of an award to Ruth Asawa.

Nathan: Ruth Asawa worked with the students, parents and teachers on it?

Zellerbach: She worked with the parents of the kids, and with the people who were in the area there. She knew the ones who were interested in art and she knew the ones who knew art. She got the principal of the school interested and the teachers. She had to have their cooperation. It was all done by the kids. Go out there and take a look at this. This is fantastic. I was out there when it was dedicated. They had the pieces of the mosaic here. They had to chip them into the sizes and fit them in, draw the designs first. This is the result.

Nathan: You know, it's the most colorful, lively piece of art, and I see all the people here--

Zellerbach: This is done by children from about seven years up to ten. I gave Ruthie her first money. You know me, a soft touch. I gave her her first money to buy supplies and things. Nothing for a salary or anything. She didn't have any money to buy supplies for the kids to work with.

Nathan: The school district didn't provide it?

Zellerbach: The school district? No. They found a room for her to work in. That's what they did. They cooperated with her, the teachers, and others. They permitted the children to take the time out of their classes to go into this. But she had no money for supplies or anything like that, so we've been still helping to finance this. Now she's been getting, I think, some school money and some other outside financing. She's doing such a hell of a job. Whenever she runs short, we make it up for her.

Nathan: She's going to do something like this in another school, now?

Zellerbach: She started there, now she's trying to move into the high schools.

Nathan: Right. Now, this is Alvarado Elementary School?

Zellerbach: Yes. That's up on Castro Hill. It's primarily a white school. Very nice, nice principal.

Nathan: And now she's going to try the high schools?

Zellerbach: Well, she's now expanding it. Eventually the school department's going to have to take over. This is what she's after. What the school department has to do, is overlook the fact that these artists that do the teaching are not Ph.D.'s or haven't gone through college. They're going to have to make exceptions, otherwise this thing would fold right away. It would be the same if we had to hire civil servants on our Neighborhood Arts Program. Take examinations, then you'd take them from the top of the roll, then you could kiss the whole program goodbye. They just don't have those kinds of qualified people.

Nathan: You're really going after the artists?

Zellerbach: This is what they're developing. They're trying to develop in the youth an understanding of what art means. A lot of these kids have latent talents. This is bringing them out, and they all love to do it. They're very proud of what they've done.

You can see now in just the last three years what's happening in arts all over the country. The [National] Endowment [for the Arts] this year has received \$30 million. Last year they had \$15 million. The Congress has been handing out money only for the last four years. Up to that time they couldn't have cared less. When the appropriation came through this time, the House of Representatives voted 400 to 5 in favor. So that gives you some idea of all the work that the Associated Council of the Arts has done in organizing these state councils, putting the pressure on their own officials.

Associated Council of the Arts, and State Councils

Nathan: Now, you've been involved in this Associated Council of the Arts?

Zellerbach: Right from the beginning.

Nathan: How did you get started with the Associated Council? Was that after or during the Rockefeller study?

Zellerbach: It was after the Rockefeller Brothers' report came out. I was a pretty close friend of Nancy's, and we got to talking about it. When she was out here working for us, I said to her, "Nancy, what are you going to do with this Rockefeller Brothers' report? Are you going to send it out and put it in the libraries and let it stagnate? After all the money that Mr. Rockefeller has put into this thing, you ought to do something to implement it."

The Arts Councils of America had started down in North Carolina, I think. I said to her, "What you have to do is develop this thing as a kind of an 'industry association.' Like the paper merchants, the steel institute. It has to be organized along the same lines. There's the Mama and the Papa sitting at the head, and then spread the gospel around."



Zellerbach: After three years, from a start of three state councils, now they have state councils in every state of the union, and all of the commonwealths. That's why you have a vote of 400 to 5, because these people in the state arts councils are seeing what's doing. That was part of this whole program. Then you saw where they organized the pressure group. I think the group is called Partnership for the Arts.

Nathan: I had a copy of that paper. It's called "Write to Your Congressman." I think Phil Boone sent it out.

Zellerbach: Yes. Phil Boone is the head of that out here. Anyway, that was all the symphonies and the operas and the museums and everybody. This is the only way you can get things done. Any time you want to get public funds, always remember a politician answers to where he gets his votes. If he thinks he has a program that the public wants, he'll rush to it.

I've seen it here in the ecology movement. Everybody's in the act. Half of them don't know what they're doing. It's the same thing you saw in the paper--they said, "Get rid of all phosphates." So now they come back and they say, "Well, phosphates are much better than some other things--you can't get rid of them until you find something better." What they have now is worse than the phosphates.

You see, this is jumping to conclusions without knowledge. This is what's going to do more harm than good. That's one of the problems with the Sierra Club today, too. I was just reading their bulletin about their program. Now they're going to petition the National Park Service to have the Hetch Hetchy Dam torn down and turn back the Hetch Hetchy Valley to the public, and let San Francisco get their water supply someplace else. Well, [laughing] when they start to talk about things like that, they commence to be out of their minds! They don't know that the Hetch Hetchy and all this complex up there is supplying water for practically the whole Bay Area. If they think that they're going to tear this down and just say, "Let them get their water from someplace else--." You know, it's very easy to say, but to have it done--. This is like tearing down the Embarcadero Freeway. That Embarcadero Freeway will be there for years after all the people that are complaining are dead and buried. This is what they call public pressure.

Zellerbach: I don't say that everything that the Sierra Club does is wrong. Their trouble is, like all these institutes of that type, they only can see one point of view. Nothing else counts.

After all, there are always two sides to a story and the best thing to do is listen. This is what happens when you want to get anything done as far as the government is concerned. If you can produce the votes, pressure groups, they'll listen. That's why business is always the whipping boy, because they don't control the votes that the unions do. They figure all the union votes are voting one way. Well, of course they aren't, but the threat is there from the union leaders. They say, "We're coming out after you." Like the president of--what's the old boy's name in Washington, head of the AF of L? Meany. Meany comes out and says, "We're going to fight you. We're not going to obey the freeze," and all that kind of stuff.

Of course business is supporting it, because they feel it's--

Nathan: Supporting Nixon and his policy?

Zellerbach: Yes. Sure. Because they think what he did was long overdue. For that matter the unions agreed. A poll was taken right after that of union members, of those who were in favor and those who were against it. Eighty-five percent were in favor of it.

It's like Mrs. Feinstein who is going to run for mayor. She gets a poll of 600 people, a cross-section of 600 people. She's only behind the mayor by ten percent. By the time election time comes, she'll be behind him a lot more than that, if I'm not mistaken.

When people get into politics, they become victims. I guess you'd call them the victims of their own importance. Politics is like a fever. You like to hear yourself talk, and you want to be in public places. Feinstein and Dobbs and Newhall have as much chance of becoming the mayor of San Francisco as--I'd almost lay you ten to one they won't. How can they start six weeks before the election?

Nathan: How long do you have to start, before an election, if you want to win?

Zellerbach: Well, if you want to do something, sometimes you have to start eighteen months ahead of time. Nixon was electioneering for four years before he became President. What did John Tunney do? He was around for over a year, getting himself acquainted.

Anyway, this is off the subject.

Nathan: Perhaps, but this is certainly speaking to the point of "What constitutes political power?" You're saying that the same problems apply in the field of support for the arts?

Zellerbach: That's what I'm saying. You see, this is the same thing with myself. I go up before the finance committee of the board of supervisors, which I have to, to get our budget through.

Nathan: That's for the Art Commission?

Zellerbach: Yes. I am listened to, because when it comes to election time they want my endorsement, they want my money, and they need my help. So, the old saying is, if you give a favor, you have to expect to give one yourself. You expect to pay it back.

Neighborhood Developments and the Black Writers Workshop

Nathan: One thing I did want to ask you. Did the origin of the Neighborhood Arts Program have to do with the need to broaden the base for public support for the more formal art happenings, the Symphony and Opera, and Ballet?

Zellerbach: Oh, not exclusively. No, because in the future arts are going to be performed more in the neighborhoods than they are in the central areas. The central area will be the apex, like the Opera and the Symphony. If you want to have a city noted for its art, you have to have a drawing card, you have to have an apex. People who will fill theaters out in the Hunters Point neighborhood might never go to the theaters out in the Sunset district. It becomes more localized.

By the same token, the Black Writers Workshop group produced a play, and it was very successful.

Nathan: Were they associated with the Black Light Explosion Company?

Zellerbach: Yes. And they were invited back East to put on a show at the Lincoln Center.

Nathan: Isn't that exciting!

Zellerbach: We (the Zellerbach Family Fund) helped finance the trip. This group was developed through the efforts of the Neighborhood Arts Program. They're invited back East to produce their show, and now from there on, they can go up. They then too, can broaden their base, and they can take their show anywhere. When it becomes a city-wide thing, or a country-wide thing, then it can go anyplace. But it first has to be popular in its own area.

The Apex and the Base

Zellerbach: But in the meantime, they have to have something as the apex, like the Opera and the Symphony and the Ballet, the museums, the library. You have to have all these things. These are the bulwark.

For example, if you can develop a very good musician in one of the neighborhoods, or a singer, then they can go to the Merola Auditions. The same thing with the orchestra. The same thing with the ballet. We don't care where they took ballet, they can audition any time. This is what you have to have. If you don't have that, you have nothing for them to look forward to.

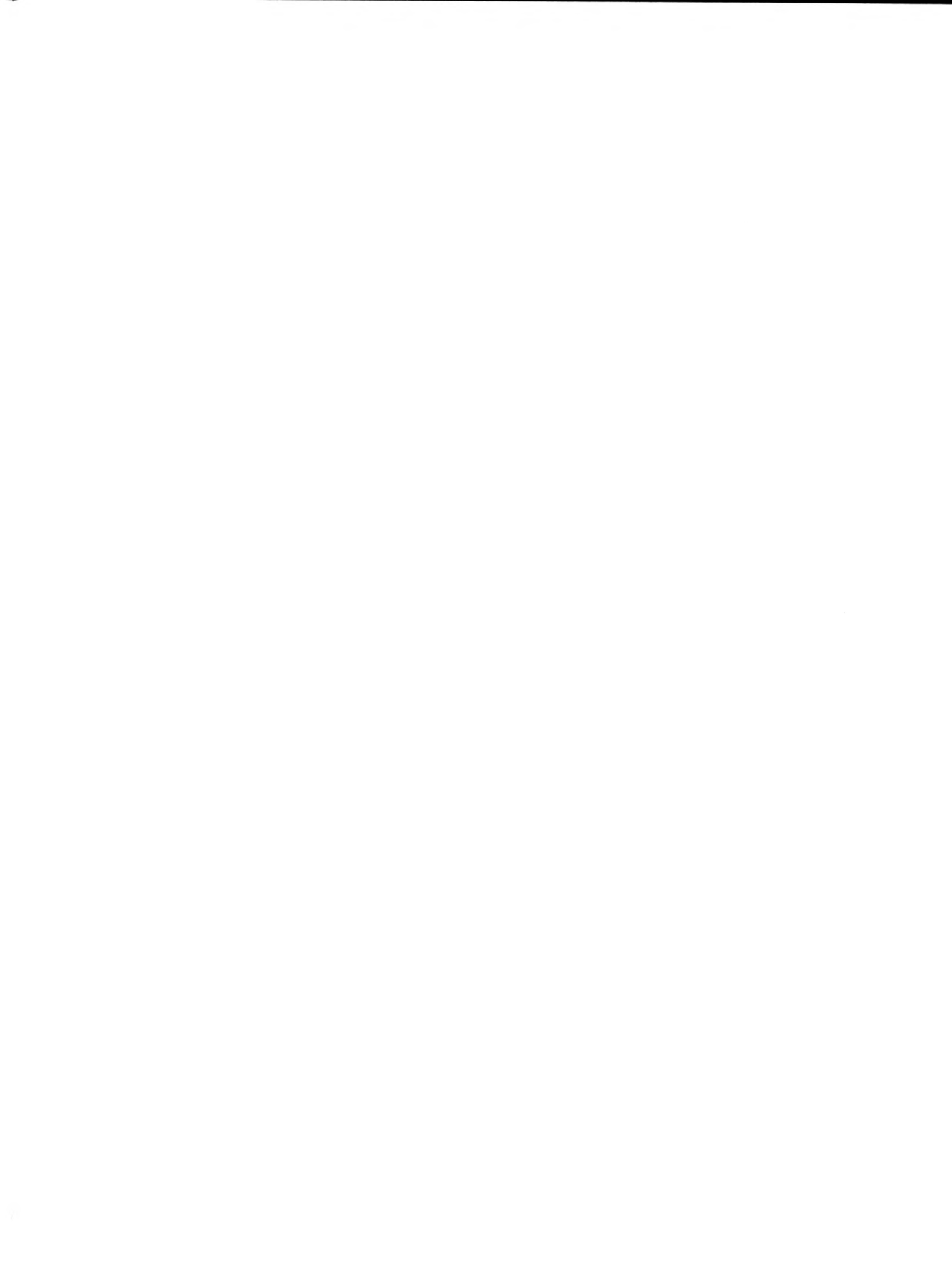
Nathan: So you see a number of levels operating at the same time.

Zellerbach: That's right. But the basis has to be in the neighborhoods. That's where you have to find your talent and develop it. Then after you do that, the more you develop it and the more they see it growing, the more they see the success of their own people, the more they feel the Opera's good. All you have to do is go out and go to the Opera, and go to the Symphony and see the kind of an audience you're getting now. You should see some of the dresses, some of the costumes that came into the opening night.

- Nathan: You feel that you are now seeing a different mix than you used to see?
- Zellerbach: Certainly we are. You can tell the Establishment from the others. If you want to see a different mix, come out on Wednesday night, students' night at the Symphony. But this is the basic concept. This is why this whole thing is succeeding the way it is.
- Nathan: Well, this is really quite a new thing, this whole intensive neighborhood development.
- Zellerbach: Yes, and it's growing like Topsy. Just the other day, as I mentioned, they had a group of people come up from Los Angeles to look over the Neighborhood Arts Program, because they made an application to the Endowment (National Endowment for the Arts) for help for their neighborhood programs down there. Mr. Whitfield, who is head of that section of the Endowment, said, "I won't consider any grant to you, because you have no organization. You've got nothing to show. If you want to get ready to apply for a grant, you'd better go up to San Francisco, because that's the finest neighborhood arts program there is in the United States."
- Nathan: That's exciting! You should be very proud.
- Zellerbach: I am. After all, when you start something, and you see it develop, and grow, and be successful, that's what you're interested in. Then after it's all done and going, then it's time to turn it over to somebody else to run.
- Nathan: That's really something, to originate it and get it launched.
- Zellerbach: Sure it is. As long as you see that you're not throwing your money away, that it's a needed thing. Whenever I appear before the finance committee [of the board of supervisors], and they say, "Well, look at all the demands we have on welfare and everything else," I say, "I know. That's fine. But there are a lot of people that aren't on welfare. That goes back to the saying that you can't live on bread alone. You have to have something for the mind. You have to educate the mind and bring them up to where they go off of welfare." So then they look at me and don't give me any argument.

The City Budget Process

- Nathan: Now, to refresh my memory on this--when the Art Commission determines the budget it's going to need, what is the process? Do you go to the Chief Administrative Officer next?
- Zellerbach: Oh, no. Every department in the city government puts in their budget for the next fiscal year, which starts July 1. It goes in about six months ahead. We put our budget in for what we think we should get, and then we start doing the compromising. We say, "What's the minimum?" This is where I have to do my work. This last year we put in a request for \$265,000, and we finally got \$50,000. The fifty we got out of the city was \$15,000 more than we got the year before. We did the same thing with the Chief Administrative Officer. He gave us \$35,000 last year. Now this year he gave us \$50,000.
- Nathan: Now, is the \$50,000 that the Chief Administrative Officer gave you the same that the supervisors give you?
- Zellerbach: Well, it's city money; two parcels of fifty each.
- Nathan: I see. So, you have to go through both.
- Zellerbach: Yes. The board of supervisors has to approve the recommendations of the Chief Administrative Officer as to what he gives the money to. I have to have the members of the board of supervisors indicate that if he grants the money, they will approve it. This is my challenge.
- Nathan: Right. Now, how many votes do you have to have on the board to get the budget approved?
- Zellerbach: Never worry about the board if you get through the finance committee.
- Nathan: Ah. And how big is the finance committee?
- Zellerbach: They have three, so all I need is two votes.
- Nathan: And who's on the finance committee?
- Zellerbach: They are Terry François, Mendelsohn and Dorothy Von Beroldingen, who's the chairman.



Nathan: Right. So out of those three you need two.

Zellerbach: I need two. And I never go into the meeting, unless I have the two promised.

Nathan: [Laughing] I see! So you always have two votes.

Zellerbach: I work on the third one, but as long as I know I've got two sure votes, I don't worry. I've got enough members of the board of supervisors that are for this program, so the minute that the finance committee approves the budget, sends it in to the board of supervisors, it's all right. I don't think it's been changed in years. The minute they start to change one item, that opens a whole Pandora's box. So as a consequence, it goes through without any question. If there's any question on anything in the budget, it's got to be done at the finance committee level.

Nathan: You take it as your responsibility to get that budget through the finance committee?

Zellerbach: That's right. That's my job.

Nathan: I see. Now you got \$50,000, is that right?

Zellerbach: Yes, \$15,000 more than last year. I always get a lecture from Dorothy. She always opens the meeting and says, "Unless it's something extraordinary, don't expect anything. We have to keep the tax rate down." She goes through a long harangue, which I've heard now for years. Every time, there's always something. So after she gets through making her speech, I usually get on first. The Art Commission then is called in. I always bring a group there.

Nathan: Are these staff people who come with you?

Zellerbach: Staff, and friends, and anybody. I pack the audience. I don't go in without support. We're all there. The Blacks, the Chinese, the whole kit and kaboodle, they're all back there. You've got to make a show. The press is there.

Naturally no one knows that I have two votes, so I go through the performance.

Nathan: Do you read a statement?



Zellerbach: No, no. I don't need a statement. I go with the budget, you see. We have a budget. 'Will you put in \$265,000? I want a minimum budget. We have to have a basis. The city must support it. We won't get any outside support for this without the city sponsoring it. It belongs to the city. It's a city activity, and they should take the full responsibility."

"Knowing how tight things are," I've heard this speech many times. I can recite it by rote. Then they all laugh, and I go on and I say, 'Now, we've got so many demands and are being pushed so hard, because of a success, we've just got to have more money. Last year, the Zellerbach Family Fund came to your rescue, but we aren't going to come to your full rescue this year. Our contribution this year is going to be \$30,000 instead of \$60,000, and you're going to make up the difference; so I expect \$15,000 out of you, and I expect to get \$15,000 out of the CAO, providing you tell him that you approve it."

Nathan: I see. Now, does the CAO have separate funds?

Zellerbach: Yes, sure. This is the hotel tax.

Nathan: Oh, of course.

Zellerbach: So then I go through my harangue and they all say, "It's wonderful. It's great." They start to sell themselves. Knowing that lots of times there's a slip between the cup and the lip, they never tell you that they approve it.

Nathan: They don't take a vote right there?

Zellerbach: They take a vote, but then they say, "It means we will consider it." I learned my lesson over the years. Now I say, "I have to know that when you go into committee, that you will support this, because I have to let my people know whether they're going to eat after July 1st or not. I'd rather give them enough notice, either way. So, if you don't tell me you'll support it, I'm going to give notice and I'm going to close the thing." Then I poll them. I say, "How about you?" He says, "Yes." "How about you?" He says, "Yes." And then of course von Beroldingen says, "Yes."

Nathan: She does?

- Zellerbach: Oh yes. Sure. The other two I know. Then I go away and I don't worry, because when they tell me they're going to do it, if they don't do it, then believe me, I'm back after them.
- Nathan: Right. Now, let me go back a minute again to the amount. I just heard you say \$50,000 and I thought you started with something like \$265,000.
- Zellerbach: Yes, we asked for that. When they come out with a total request for all departments, we've got \$265,000 in there. So when it comes back to what they gave us, they gave us \$50,000.
- Nathan: And then they look as though they have pared it down?
- Zellerbach: You've always got to give them--
- Nathan: [Laughing] I see! I thought I had lost \$200,000 in there somewhere!
- Zellerbach: No. No. I knew we were going to receive \$30,000 from the Zellerbach Family Fund. I felt quite confident we'd at least get \$20,000 out of the Endowment. I asked for fifty and got thirty.
- Nathan: You got thirty from the Endowment?
- Zellerbach: And I got thirty from the San Francisco Foundation. They had given us a grant the year before, but due to the June Dunn episode, they didn't know whether we were reliable. So after we brought our new management in and things were moving, I went to Mr. White, through his assistant. I had them up to a meeting with all the new staff. He was out with Martin and he went out with Eric Reuther to see what was going on. He became very enthusiastic, and he got us \$30,000 from the San Francisco Foundation.
- Nathan: The foundations are really putting up quite a large share, aren't they?
- Zellerbach: Well, between the Zellerbach and the San Francisco, we're putting up \$60,000. The Endowment is putting up thirty, so that's \$90,000. The city puts up a hundred, so that's \$190,000.
- Nathan: The city puts up a hundred?

- Zellerbach: Between the two, the CAO and the Board of Supervisors. So we have \$190,000. We did get an extra ten from the city for summer work. Now I'm going out there for some other money from some other funds.
- Nathan: Now, this summer work that you spoke of, what was this?
- Zellerbach: The \$10,000 was an extra grant that the city obtained from the federal government, for summer activities. So they gave us the ten to use for summer activities, which we spent.
- Nathan: This is not Endowment for the Arts?
- Zellerbach: No. This was another grant from the city. They had this to dispose of and they gave it to us instead of the Park Department.
- Nathan: [Laughing] I see. Now, let's see, the chairman of the Park Commission is an ex officio member of the Art Commission?
- Zellerbach: He may have known about it, but this one other person had the say about it.
- Nathan: You knew the person!
- Zellerbach: I knew him very well. He knows us and he wanted to be helpful, so he gave us the money. He said, "You can do more good with it than the park." I said, "I know damn well we can." Because basically what we're doing should be part of the Park and Recreation Department. If Park and Rec could take the staff and do it, this would really be where it belongs.
- Nathan: Oh, you mean Neighborhood Arts Program?
- Zellerbach: Yes, it's recreation. We're doing it, because we're the Art Commission and we say it's ours. I wouldn't turn it over to them because they haven't the capacity to handle it. So we'll probably keep it for a few years. Maybe always, I don't know.
- Nathan: Just see how it develops from there.
- Zellerbach: I'll give you five more minutes, and then I've got to meet the supervisor for lunch.*

*The following portion of the city budget discussion was inserted here from the interview of March 1973.

- Nathan: Now you're working on the supervisors one by one. Is this how it goes?
- Zellerbach: I work one by one. I don't want two of them at a time. One by one and then we can talk.
- Nathan: Is this the Performing Arts Center that you're discussing?
- Zellerbach: Well, I'm talking about it, but the main thing is the Art Commission budget. I have to get that fixed.
- Nathan: So, you're not talking only to the budget committee members, but to the whole board of supervisors, one by one?
- Zellerbach: Oh, yes. First I get to the mayor. Then I get to all the members of the budget committee, if I can. Then, after the budget committee members, I go for the rest of them. Because that informs them and when it comes up before them there is never any question. I always figure that you give them the information, they know how the budget is made, and what we're doing. We keep them fully informed all the way; we send them all kinds of stuff. Yesterday I was up with John Molinari. So, we went over the budget. It didn't take long to go over the budget because I'm only asking for \$46,000 more from the city. That's very little for me to ask. [Laughter]
- Nathan: Why are you so modest in your request?
- Zellerbach: Because I've got them up to where I want them. I just want now to get the Neighborhood Arts Program in a position so that we're getting a minimum of \$200,000 a year out of the city. And with this new budget this would bring it up to \$200,000, so I don't have to depend on outside foundation money.
- It gives us more money than I get from the foundation-- it gives us money to do some of the things that I wanted to do. This is the basic budget. Of course, next year I'll be back for 5 percent or so because of escalation. I didn't have any problem with Molinari. He said, "I'll buy this right away. I don't want you to raise your sights on me."
- Nathan: I see. [Laughs] Well, that's only fair.

Zellerbach: Yes. So I said, "Don't worry." Then, of course, we got into a discussion on the Performing Arts Center. He says that the mayor is railroading it, but he wants to be satisfied himself. He's not taking the mayor's word. See, John is a good Republican.

Nathan: Well, you know how to get along with them.

Zellerbach: I get along with all of them. They don't bother me. I'm in a position where I don't want anything. We've given a lot more. After all, we've been damned good, and they all know it. So, I have no qualms.

Nathan: When you have these little individual meetings, do you take them to lunch?

Zellerbach: I take them to lunch if they're available. But I have to talk to them before the budget gets over to them. I don't want to wait until after the committee is starting to meet. I don't take any chances. I want to know that I have the votes. I count my votes, and then I'm all right. Then, they call me to appear, and I appear and give them the story at the meeting room with our people and make a show. That's what they like. You know my philosophy; I never go into a meeting where I want something unless I have the votes in the pocket and it's my pocket. If I don't have the votes in my pocket then I don't bring it up.

Nathan: I see. [Laughs] This is very fine. The five minutes are up. I could listen to you all day, but I know you have places to go.

Some Speculations on the Future

Zellerbach: Have you all the Art Commission stuff you want now?

Nathan: I do want to ask you about what you see as the future direction of the Art Commission activities. Do you think they will continue to emphasize the Neighborhood Arts Program? Or is there something cooking that you see as a new development?

Zellerbach: This Neighborhood Arts Program can spread in all directions, like in the schools. There's no limit to where it can spread. The Art Commission, of course, supports music and things of that kind; we're cooperating with the Symphony and cooperating with the museums, cooperating with the Park Commission. This is one of the things we try to do, to organize a joint committee. We had an ordinance ready, trying to get it through the board of supervisors, but we were advised by the powers that be that it was the wrong time.

Nathan: What did the ordinance provide?

Zellerbach: One of the things was that the heads of all the departments spending money on the arts would work as a committee--a city committee, recognized by ordinance, and appointed by the mayor--to cooperate on all arts programs so that we could get rid of a lot of overlaps. We could coordinate programs so that everybody wasn't trying to do the same thing. We would try to recommend where money should go; not to control it, but coordinate through some sort of Inter-Agency Council. After what happened on this Crime Commission, they were afraid of what would happen if they tried to put this through the board of supervisors. We'd have people asking, "Why isn't the public represented? Why isn't this done? Why isn't that done?" So they advised that we'd better wait a while. When we get the election over, we may take another shot at it. We had everybody's approval, all the commissions' approval. Everything was set, with the ordinance all written and all approved. So we had to write letters and tell them that we had to postpone it temporarily. This is what you've got to do.

That would go further towards the control of the development of the arts in the neighborhoods in every department that would have an interest. This includes the schools.

It took us three years to get this to where everybody agreed it was a good thing.

Nathan: That was quite an accomplishment.

Zellerbach: You're telling me! I really had to twist some arms.

Nathan: I'll bet you did! Well, you manage to get your way in the long run usually.

Zellerbach: If I know I'm right, I'm going to fight for it. I was ready, willing and able to fight for it, which I did.

Nathan: Probably it will happen eventually.

Now, I might ask you to think back to your participation on the Rockefeller panel, when you went back east to take part in the Rockefeller panel on the Performing Arts. Were you invited to take part in that because of your interest in the Art Commission?

Zellerbach: I imagine because of my reputation out here in San Francisco as being the most knowledgeable in the field of the arts. I've been through all of it, from the top to the bottom, and being president of the San Francisco Art Commission gives you stature.

Nathan: Right. I have a note that last year the National Businessmen's Committee for the Arts rated San Francisco as the weakest in businessmen's leadership in the arts.

Zellerbach: That's true.

Nathan: How do you account for this?

Zellerbach: When they say we're the weakest, that can't be very much weaker than any other place, because there are damned few doing anything. We get very little money out of business. This is why this panel was organized by David Rockefeller.

He was trying to get business to be conscious that they must support art. San Francisco business does support the arts. They support the Symphony and they support the Opera. Now they have to spread a little bit, you see.

San Francisco Art Festival

Nathan: Does the Art Institute have a direct relationship with the San Francisco Art Festival?

Zellerbach: No. They sometimes participate; some of their artists show their work, but that festival is all the Art Commission's.

Nathan: What is the Institute's main aim? Is it to train artists?

Zellerbach: It's a school for training artists. They've developed some of the finest artists in the country today, like Siegrist. They've got a long list of artists they've trained. In fact, most of the artists have come up through there and have exhibited over at the art festivals. Some of them haven't, but a great many of the local artists that have made good originally exhibited at the San Francisco Festival, the open air festival. That's why I get annoyed at Frankenstein, because he thinks it should be professional.

I don't know why a fellow that makes good, and has his own agent here, and exhibits at any one of the galleries needs the festival. If he has a work that's worth \$500, or \$1000, \$2000, \$3000, there's no purpose in his hanging it out there.

The purpose of the open air festival is to provide a place for the amateur, who has no other place to show his work. Give him an opportunity for the public to see it. These art critics criticize the festival because we have few professionals showing works.

Of course the whole thing is screened before the show is hung. Otherwise we wouldn't have room to put up all the paintings that are offered and the other things. That's the only connection we would have with the Institute. Some of the students show their works out there.

Nathan: Your thought then is that the Art Festival helps people who really haven't gotten launched yet?

Zellerbach: That's right. Sure.

Nathan: Do you feel that the artists that are at the next stage, who are professional but who are having some kind of a struggle selling their products--do you feel that the city should aid them in any way?

Zellerbach: Well, after all, the city puts up \$5000, usually. They didn't put up the five this year. They cut it, and put up \$2500, and the Zellerbach Family Fund put up the difference.

Nathan: That's for the festival?

Zellerbach: Yes, for the purchase awards. They buy the paintings for what the artist prices them. When the works are judged, if they're part of the prize winners, we buy them. Then this year for the first time, we had money from Ahmanson, in Los Angeles. I think it's the Home Savings and Loan. They made us a grant of \$50,000; \$10,000 a year for purchase of paintings for themselves, which they expect to exhibit in their different branches. They're taking part in the affairs of the places in which they're operating. They just came north, and they're very much interested in getting some publicity. So, we had \$15,000 to buy with this year, which is the most we've ever had.

In the meantime, the artists sell paintings at the show. I think they sold \$5000 worth out there this year. So that's a total of \$20,000 worth of paintings bought this year. For the struggling artists, that's pretty good. This year I think we had another 250,000 or 300,000 people go through that place. Four days. You have never been to one, have you?

Nathan: Yes, I have.

Zellerbach: Of course, this was the biggest one, the best one we've ever had. Bob Howard, you know, had a retrospective. He showed a couple of his works out there, and also he showed quite a few of them in our art gallery, the San Francisco Art Commission's Art Gallery out there, right next door.

Nathan: Yes. Capricorn Asunder.

Zellerbach: Bob Howard was one of the original art commissioners when I went on. He was very able, and a world-renowned sculptor. He moved to Europe for a few years, and retired from the commission. He was a very able, a very fine gentleman.

Art Commission Gallery

Nathan: Tell me a little more about the Art Commission Gallery. Does that operate all year around?

Zellerbach: Yes, sure. It's just running now for about six months. The artists did it all themselves, all free labor. We didn't have any money to fix it up. I forget if we paid for the materials. Anyway, the materials weren't very much, like the paint on the wall.

Nathan: Do you pay rent?

Zellerbach: No, it's city property. That's where our Art Commission office is. It used to be the offices of Zelinsky Paint Company. They had a garage right next door. The front half we're using for a museum, and in the back half we store our own trunks and other materials that we own.

Nathan: Who actually runs the Art Commission Gallery? Who decides what pictures to show?

Zellerbach: Snipper has the responsibility, and I guess some of the people up at the Neighborhood Arts program work with him. Elio Benvenuto, who runs the art show, is, I think, running the gallery.

It's all part of what we're doing. If you read the San Francisco Charter and read what the Art Commission is doing, we have usurped a lot of powers that were not written there. There's nothing written in the charter that we should run a Neighborhood Arts program. We feel that's part of the work that the commission should do. Anything pertaining to the arts, we say is our field. So we add on to it.

Nathan: I was interested in this gallery (which I think is a great idea), and the way it runs. Does the artist get the full price of his pictures? The gallery doesn't take any operating expenses?

Zellerbach: I don't think they do, no. It's a service. We get applicants coming all the time. I think they're booked ahead already for a year.

Nathan: Yes, I can believe it. Getting shown in galleries is a big problem for artists.

Zellerbach: Well, sure. You know, a lot of things are going on in the art field. I guess I have a reputation as being probably one of the most knowledgeable in the art field. Not that I'm an artist, because I'm not. When I say knowledgeable, I mean I know what's going on in the different areas. I'm in them all. I have a feel for it now, from long experience, so I ought to know something.

Nathan: I'm sure you do.

Zellerbach Family Fund

Nathan: From time to time you have mentioned some of the activities supported by the Zellerbach Family Fund. Could you tell something about the Fund and its purposes?

Zellerbach: Yes. The Zellerbach Family Fund was established during the latter part of my mother's lifetime so that her three children could handle the donations to charities in which she was very interested. This was done, of course, because of my mother's poor health. During the years she was alive, the corpus of the Fund was only large enough for current donations, and it wasn't until she passed away that, in accordance with her will, one half of the estate was given to the ZFF--a substantial amount of around \$14 million. The fact that my brother and sister had pre-deceased my mother left me as the only child alive. I then increased the Board of Directors to three family members and three outside members, and we hired Mr. Edward Nathan as the Director, and Miss Rosemarie Zilka continued as the Secretary.

What the Family Fund wants to accomplish goes back to short pieces of advice that my father gave, while he was alive, to all three of his children, and I quote, "Remember in your lifetime that the people of San Francisco and California have been very good to the Zellerbachs, and you should always be good to them." Basically, that is what we have aimed to do. Also, knowing my mother to be quite a religious woman, we feel that the Fund should support Temple Emanu-El, where she was a member and a devoted Jewess. She attended Temple every Saturday when she was able, and she raised her three children in the Jewish faith. As to my father, he was born a Jew, period.

So from my point of view, we have been very interested in supporting the arts; both the performing arts, and the artists and their organizations. We also do a lot of innovating of grant support, as well as other established charities that serve the people, as that is our primary thrust.

PROBLEMS OF FINANCING AND ORGANIZING FOR THE ARTS

Nathan: You were saying earlier that the big individual philanthropists, the big donors, are leaving the scene, and that in general their children don't support the arts to the same extent that their parents did. Is there a lot of variation?

Zellerbach: Listen. I've got a son, Billy, who couldn't care less. I have another son, Stephen, who is a devotee. In fact, today he'll be elected President of the San Francisco Ballet.

Nathan: Oh really! That's great.

San Francisco Ballet, and Artists' Attitude

Zellerbach: Yes. They're having a reorganization, and he headed the reorganization. Since I've been on the ballet board there have been two parts to it: the Ballet Guild and the Ballet Company--a two-headed monster. The Ballet Guild supplies the money, and the Ballet Company spends it, but you can't always hang on to it, you know. You've got to have one boss. I've been fighting for it for some time. They had a blow-up not so long ago between the two elements. I went to the meeting as the senior member.

Nathan: You're a member of the guild?

Zellerbach: Oh yes. As the senior member I laid down the law. I said, "Either this thing is going to be one, or else as far as any more Zellerbach support is concerned, you are finished. We've had all we're going to take. Now if you want our support, if

Zellerbach: you want my support, this thing has to be put in a businesslike condition, and run like a business. Just like the Opera and the Symphony." So this is what's happening. We're waiting for the final signature on the agreement. When that's done, Stephen will serve. If it isn't done, Stephen won't. It will probably be called the San Francisco Ballet Association.

Nathan: And there will be, what? An artistic director?

Zellerbach: Oh, it will be the same thing as the way the Opera is run and the Symphony's run. They have a business management, and they have artistic management, but the president has to have the last word. It's like trying to let Mr. Kurt Adler be the business manager for the Opera. The fastest way to go broke I know of, is to let the artists handle the money. They have to handle it, but it must be under supervision, tight supervision.

Nathan: How is the Ballet reorganization going?

Zellerbach: They're in the throes of doing it now. I read the proposed contract with the Christensens on the consolidation. The Christensens originally owned the school, but then they turned it into a nonprofit organization. They are still running it, of course. They've been at it for years. What we all have to do is make it proper in writing. Lew Christensen is sixty-two years old. If they go out of a job, they've got nothing to eat on. So they feel that they should be protected, and we agree with them.

Now the question is how much protection, because the Ballet funds are not so great. You have to go out and get the money.

Nathan: Does the city help support the Ballet?

Zellerbach: I think the city this last year gave them \$55,000 or something like that. Maybe a little more. But it's in that area of \$55,000 to \$75,000. They've had a Ford grant that ran for ten years, I think. It's only got a year or two to go. Then they've got to get some more financing. They're always in debt, because when they give their spring season it's a losing deal. The only thing that they make money on is the Nutcracker, at Christmas. When they put on the new Nutcracker, you know, they had all new costuming and scenery so they went into hock. They're still paying that off. That has to come out of their revenues from the Nutcracker, so they have nothing to fall back on, unless the Ballet Guild goes out and raises the money.

Nathan: Do any large corporations underwrite productions for the Ballet, in the same way that they do sometimes for the Opera?

Zellerbach: No. So far none of them have. Our problem with the Ballet has been this divided authority.

Nathan: Can you explain a little more about the divided authority?

Zellerbach: With the Christensens running the school, and the Ballet Guild raising all the money, the Ballet Guild has had very little control over the Christensens. If they put in a budget and the Ballet Guild approves it, there's nobody from the Ballet Guild that really can ride herd and say, "Do this!" or "Do that!" There has to be one boss. It will be the president of the Ballet, who will be the boss. Mr. Christensen and the rest of them will have to take orders.

That's the only way you can run these things. I've had too much experience, and I know unless there's one boss, you're in trouble. It's the same thing at the Art Commission. Everybody says I'm a tyrant. Well, that's good. I'm running it, and I have the responsibility. When it comes to the policy matters, I'll make the decisions. I'll listen to both sides, but I'll make the decision.

Nathan: Are you thinking in terms of drawing up budgets and accounting for expenditures?

Zellerbach: Certainly. After all, most artists don't understand money. It comes off of trees. They think it's a deep well.

(Interview VI, October 8, 1971)

Nathan: We were talking about artists, and you were saying that they sometimes had an unrealistic attitude toward money.

Zellerbach: Artists have some of this attitude. When we give them a budget, we want to see that they don't go over it, and that they're spending it in accordance with so much a month. This business of borrowing--"We'll take a little from this month, and we'll cut down next month." They never cut down, and you wind up with a deficit. If you budget for a deficit and it's approved, then it's up to the directors and supporters

Zellerbach: to go out and raise the money. But I'm not a believer in that. I believe if you have a budget, and you have the money, it's perfectly all right to spend it.

When Kalamos was the business manager--

Nathan: What was his name?

Zellerbach: Leon Kalamos. He was a good man as far as promotion goes. He would submit a budget for a tour, and the Ballet Guild would approve it, and then by the time he got back off the tour, he was over his budget, ten, twenty, sometimes thirty percent. So then we'd say, "Where are you going to get the money?" "Well, I had to do this. This emergency came up and I had to do this, and I had to do that." All he did was give excuses. In the meantime, the Ballet owed the money, which he had committed.

This was the same thing I had when I ran the campaign for the bond issue, for the state of California, for Park and Recreation. \$150 million. I was the treasurer, and nobody could spend anything unless it had my okay before they spent it. I had to know what it was for and know the money was in the bank. So when we finished that campaign, there was one pledge we had but we didn't get the money. I think it was a thousand dollars. I put up the thousand, and that was all. We were just that close.

Now, the same thing with these politicians. My good friend John Tunney has a deficit now, he still has a deficit of about \$250,000. He's been trying to liquidate it now for the second year. In fact, the deficit was a great deal more than that after his election. He spent money, and if he hadn't been elected he'd have been paying it off the rest of his life. There's nothing so dead as a defeated candidate. It's a good thing he won this election, because there's a good chance of getting the money.

Nathan: Was he one of the people you supported?

Zellerbach: Yes, I supported John. I think very highly of him. He ought to be a very good representative of California. He's a high class young fellow, smart, able, very pleasant. He was in here with me for an hour before his election, asking support. It was the first time I really sat down and talked to him.

Nathan: What kinds of issues were you interested in?

Zellerbach: I wanted to know what his attitudes were, naturally, on private enterprise and taxation. I wanted to know what his feeling was on labor, and the different things that affect our daily lives. Now, you've been here [in the office] time and again. You can see all these boats sitting out here. I've seen them sit here now for ninety days. It kind of makes you sick that one man can shut down the whole water transportation system on the West Coast. That's too much power for one person.

Nathan: I see. Well, I'd like also to go back a little more to the Ballet Guild. It's now called just The Ballet?

Zellerbach: It's not quite finished, but my son expects it to be.

Nathan: And has he been elected?

Zellerbach: Yes. He's the president now of the San Francisco Ballet, whatever the new company is. He was elected president of San Francisco Ballet Guild. I don't know which one will be the surviving group name, but whichever it is, he is the president.

Nathan: How did you become interested in the Ballet to begin with?

Zellerbach: I think Joe Dyer got me interested in it. I'm not quite sure. I forget who was the president at the time. I've never taken an office. I never aspired to be the president of the Ballet.

Nathan: I wondered. I was finding your name in lots of places, but I didn't find it there.

Zellerbach: No, that's right. Same thing on the Beach and Park Commission. I did not want to be president. There was too much responsibility, and it took too much time.

Nathan: But you had some feeling for it, you liked it.

San Francisco Art Institute

Zellerbach: Oh yes. Well, that's it. It needed support and I was breaking into the arts. Having been the president of the San Francisco Art Commission, I felt it was one of my duties to take an active interest in these different areas. As a consequence, I was elected to the San Francisco Art Institute board of directors.

Gurdon Woods, who was the head of the school, was on the Art Commission with me, so he asked me if I would come on the board. I was taken to lunch by Prentis Cobb Hale, and Jane Neylan. She was there and so was Selah Chamberlain. There were a couple of others. They wanted me to come onto the San Francisco Art Institute board. I said, "I'll think about it," which I did, and I said, "Well, I'll join."

In June, I attended my first meeting. At the time, Selah Chamberlain was the president. Jane Neylan was there and Prentis was there. I forget who else, but it was sort of a potent group. Gurdon Woods came in and I sat there listening, naturally, as a neophyte. Gurdon made the announcement that he would have to have \$25,000 within two weeks, or else they would have to close the school, because he had to give assurance to his teachers that there would be money to run the school.

I of course was a little bit shocked, not too badly. I listened to the debate as to how we were going to raise the \$25,000, and whether they'd sell off a piece of the land, and they'd do this and that. They did everything except say, "I'll put up some money myself." They were all evading their responsibility. I listened for quite a while, and then of course, I had to have my say, which I usually do.

I said, "I'm just on this board for the first time. There's no use arguing about selling a piece of land when you need the money in two weeks. How are you going to sell it in two weeks? The school will be closed by the time you sell it. The answer is, you have to raise the money right here." I said, "I'm new on here, but I'll tell you what I will do. I'll underwrite \$5000, and I'll have it up within a week, if four others will also put up \$5000, or underwrite the five." So Selah put his up, and so did a couple of others. When it came to Prentis, Prentis hemmed and hawed. I said,

- Zellerbach: "Prentis, either put up or shut up. You know, you're the ones who put me on here. Now, I'm on here, and you're not taking the responsibility. I don't know why I should put up my money at the first meeting. If you're really interested in maintaining the school, then you have to put up your money."
- Nathan: When you say "underwrite" you mean either you will get the money from someone else, or you will at least guarantee that it will be there?
- Zellerbach: You guarantee it. That's an underwriting. Sure, you guarantee the \$5000. So Prentis, reluctantly, very reluctantly, agreed. We got the \$25,000 together, and the school was saved. So that's one thing I saved.
- Nathan: Is the Art Institute a private school?
- Zellerbach: It is a private school. Sure.
- Nathan: Right. So the board of directors appoint members to the board?
- Zellerbach: Yes, that's right. It's a self-perpetuating board. They have a connection with the University of California; the University of California was trustee of the property. They owned the old Mark Hopkins home. That's where they started. Then they sold that land, and they went down here and built the original school. The school was in disrepair. I'll tell you who else was on, I think at the same time too, Elise Haas, and Mrs. Helen Crocker Russell [Mrs. Henry Potter].

NEED FOR FACILITIES: A PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Nathan: Now perhaps one more question looking back at the Ballet. Of course financing is a problem, but do you think it is desirable for the company to tour?

Zellerbach: Well, yes. One of the great problems with the Ballet has been that it had no home. We have a school with a dance floor, and they can put up folding chairs and probably seat around 100 or 150 people, so that they could put on new ballets, but that's not really enough. After all, when you train from a child, and become a good ballerina, this is your life's work. You have to have a chance to go ahead.

Unless they can be seen, who knows whether they're good or bad? One of the things I've been struggling with, is to try to get the Ballet a home, a place where they can have their school and have an auditorium. We work in the Nourse Auditorium. We had that fixed. We had a contract all ready, and the school board had approved it. It would have cost us about half a million dollars to fix it up. It would have been a perfect setting.

Nathan: What happened?

Zellerbach: In the first place, we had quite a protest from the Opera, because the Opera uses that and the gymnasium, which is right alongside it, for their rehearsals. Without that, they'd have to buy a rehearsal hall. That would have put them into bankruptcy. It's just that close. The other thing is, we could get it financed all right by the nonprofit bonds. We had a corporation already organized, but then we'd have to get the board of supervisors to underwrite it. You have the question of feasibility. If you don't take in enough money to pay off the bonds and the interest, you couldn't sell

Zellerbach: them unless the city took them on as a general obligation. We could have collected some private money, but one of the tough things about that would be that you could only get a twenty-year lease. They would grant us a lease for a dollar a year if we'd put in all these improvements. But after twenty years it would all belong to the city.

Nathan: Oh, great.

Zellerbach: Do you see what I mean?

Nathan: I certainly do.

Zellerbach: So, that's kind of difficult to raise money under those circumstances. So in the meantime we've got this Performing Arts Center under consideration. I've been working on that now for five years. We get closer, but yet further away.

Nathan: Where would you like to see such a center located?

Location and Feasibility

Zellerbach: The site is already there. It's right behind the Opera House. The site is in redevelopment and it's being held for cultural activities. Which this is. They say, "Well, we can't hold it forever." They're just having a feasibility study as to how much income we feel we can get, and how much it will cost to finance it.

Nathan: Who's doing this feasibility study?

Zellerbach: Some outfit in Los Angeles. The mayor appointed a group for this, and Bob Hornby is acting as the director general, and coordinator. Bob is an engineer. He retired from Pacific Lighting, so he's the perfect one for it. He's done a lot of work for the Opera. He was Prentis's assistant when they were raising money. Also, he was in when they attempted to get that bond issue for the rehabilitation of the Opera House.

Lessons from the 1965 Bond Defeat

Nathan: You were saying a little earlier that the Performing Arts Center was both closer and farther away. Why is that?

Zellerbach: There was the debacle of the bond issue in 1965. It was supposed to have two-thirds majority, and I think all they had was between thirty and forty percent "yes" votes. Louis Lurie and his group were against it, and that's when Jerry Ets-Hokin got into trouble with Jack Shelley, because Jack was for it, and Ets-Hokin came out against it.

Nathan: On what basis did Lurie and his colleagues oppose the bond issue?

Zellerbach: Well, Louis felt the amount of money they asked was too big. I think it was \$29 million.

Nathan: Close to that I think.

Zellerbach: \$29 or \$30 million. I forget the sum. They were building another monument out there. They were going to build a classical building, the same as the Opera House is now. And they were going to do a lot of things there that really weren't necessary. They weren't worrying about the public's money. They didn't have much preparation. That's one of the things that is always wrong.

I went through that with the state bond issues, so I have that experience. Anyway, it was defeated badly. They wanted to know, "Now, what are we going to do?" That's when I had Nancy Hanks come out here, which I told you about.

So anyway, we got the McFadyen-Knowles report, and that indicated what was needed. Of course the thing that really killed it was the fact this was "for the Establishment." Why should the poor people put up money for the Establishment to go there with their diamonds to the Opera House? The average voter, I guess, felt, "Why should we put up the money?" So they voted it down, notwithstanding the papers and everybody who were behind it.

After getting this McFadyen-Knowles report, there was no question that if we ever wanted to get this thing off the ground you had to get to the neighborhoods.

Impetus for Neighborhood Arts and the Booking Crunch

Nathan: So that was really what started the Neighborhood Arts?

Zellerbach: That was the start. Now, basically, what we felt was, you need preparation. I said, "You have to prepare for this, and you have to get the public interested, make them a part of it, make them feel it's theirs. It's not just the Establishment's, it belongs to the public." This is how the Neighborhood Arts program got started. It started on the premise of trying to educate the public that they needed a new Symphony Hall, a new Performing Arts Hall. The city lacked one, and we were missing all kinds of good shows that couldn't come in here, because there was no place for them to show.

Nathan: I gather the Opera House is booked.

Zellerbach: It's booked all year, practically. There are only a couple of weeks in the year that you can get there. Booked straight. The Opera takes over the middle of August starting rehearsals. They open September. They close the end of November, and two weeks later the Symphony opens. That runs through May. So the only time you have it open is June and July. It's the same problem we have with the Nutcracker [ballet]. You can get in the Opera House after the Symphony is out. The Symphony performs Wednesday night, Thursday matinee and Friday night. So you can't get in Thursday night, because you can't afford to move that shell in and out. Everytime you move the shell it costs \$300 or \$400. So really then, it's open on Saturday afternoon, Saturday night, Sunday, and Monday, because the musicians don't work on Monday. You have Tuesday. Then you're out. So you can't bring these big ballets in here and expect them to run four days and sit for three.

You miss a lot of good stuff that can't get in here. We started out on the premise that we'd have to see just what reaction we could find from the public. We started in cooperation with San Francisco State. That was Dr. Bierman. He held that class out there. We put this cooperative effort on at the beginning. As I said before, we first were going to try to educate the adults. Well, that lasted three months and we found out they couldn't have cared less, so we knew we were on the wrong track. Then we shifted to the children and the youth. We decided that the only way you could reach the adults was through the children and the youth. This is the way it's been going ever since.

Nathan: Right. Now this is very interesting, because you are building interest in the neighborhoods. In what way will this help you develop facilities downtown?

Zellerbach: Because the people themselves become interested. We have the Black Writers' Workshop now, so they need facilities. They all need different facilities, you see. This is what we're encouraging. Today you educate people. The Opera and Symphony and the Ballet are attracting people to the performances. Well, you see what the Symphony is doing. I received a letter that Mr. [Philip] Boone just wrote to the CAO telling him all that they are doing, and how many people are involved, and how many of the youth. And also, as you know, the Symphony is in the schools now, which it has never been before. They're out in the neighborhoods, which they've never been before. And the parents come to hear the children work with the Symphony. Also the Symphony performs with the children there, and they bring the parents. And there is the Children's Opera. Also if they have any spare tickets, they give them away.

And the Ballet--we usually cooperate and send the ballet dancers out to the schools. So it's a general education, including what the Neighborhood Arts Program is doing, and the San Francisco Art Institute is also working on it. Both museums are sending a truck out to the neighborhoods to entice children to come to the museums. Well, you see, the renaissance that's happened in the last five years in the arts all over the country. The fact is that the National Endowment for the Arts received \$30 million this year. That's the biggest appropriation yet. New York State gives over \$12 million. This chintzy state here gives \$165,000.

Then you have the same thing going on in Los Angeles. They have their center, but they have nobody to fill it.

Now, in San Francisco, the Zellerbach Family Fund and myself personally were encouraging all this. Making grants, to encourage this development. Because the more of this you get done, the less opposition you will have when the time comes. Of course the question is the escalation of cost. If this center had been properly engineered, and the architects were modest, they could have built what we want today probably for about \$9 million, maybe \$8 million. It's going to cost twice that.

An Interim Committee

- Nathan: Right. Now, Robert Hornby is interested in a simpler plan, I gather.
- Zellerbach: Yes. After all, we have a group. The mayor has a committee appointed, and Bob Hornby was named director general of the group. This includes all the facets of the arts: the Symphony, Ballet, museums, all have representatives.
- Nathan: So in a way, you're almost gathering a nucleus of what was described in the studies.
- Zellerbach: We have the nucleus standing by, this interim committee. They're all standing by, waiting. What are we doing to do? Well, we're about ready for the feasibility reports. They were going to take three months. It's been damn near six. I don't think we're going to like what we're going to hear.
- Nathan: You think it'll be very costly by this time?
- Zellerbach: I know it. I don't think the income is there. That's my own intuition. I think the revenue won't be there, not revenue enough to pay for operating the center.
- Nathan: But the agencies are also scrambling for funds.
- Zellerbach: Sure. Sure. The Opera House showed deficits last year, of over \$450,000. This year it will probably be more. Of course their deficit isn't anywhere near what this new thing is going to show.
- Nathan: What do you see as the way to solve the deficit problems?
- Zellerbach: To solve it?
- Nathan: Yes.
- Zellerbach: The only way that you're going to solve it is either being subsidized by the federal government, or the state government, or the city government. You won't be able to raise enough public funds to carry it. You can raise some. You can probably raise several million. But that's going to be a drop in the bucket. The land's going to cost almost \$2 million.

The Fox and the Orpheum

- Nathan: Would the land be cheaper if it were not at this central place in downtown San Francisco? Or wouldn't that help much?
- Zellerbach: You'd have to go to some empty lot. You can't build a thing like this out in the slums. You have to build it where people will come, that's handy. We may have an alternate. I think we should take another good hard look at the Orpheum Theater. As you know, we did have the Fox Theater. We could have opened the Fox Theater for a million dollars. Mr. Christopher said no. They had the cash to pay the million, too. I was with Harry Ross, and we were doing our damndest to persuade the mayor and everybody to buy it. They said, "Oh, it's a mill stone. What do they need it for?"
- Nathan: Isn't that a pity?
- Zellerbach: That was the crime of the century.
- Nathan: Did they feel that it would bring in more tax money if it were privately developed?
- Zellerbach: It wasn't a question of that. They just didn't know what they were going to do with it. Well, of course they would have had to put up money to fix it, but they weren't far-sighted enough to see it. You can go back to St. Louis and see the same darned thing. They took an old movie house, and, I think, for \$2 million they rehabilitated the whole thing, and it's the most magnificent thing you've ever seen. Marvelous acoustics.
- Nathan: Where is the Orpheum that you are referring to?
- Zellerbach: Right there at Market and--what is it? Hyde? Right there at the BART subway station.
- Nathan: I see. You think this is a possible alternative.
- Zellerbach: There's a possibility there, yes. They'd have to do a little engineering, but using a thing like that would certainly be a hell of a lot less expensive than buying new. So, we'll have to see. I figured this would be my last big effort.
- Nathan: There's no such thing as a last big effort!

- Zellerbach: If I ever get this off the ground while I'm alive, and see it built, then I'll rest happy. But you see, I've already indicated the Zellerbach Family Fund would put up \$1 million, providing the city would guarantee that it would be finished. I think I could raise other monies too, on the same premise.
- Nathan: Surely this location near the BART station makes a lot of sense.
- Zellerbach: It does, you know. It makes a lot of sense, but you don't know whether you can make it work. You have to have the whole thing engineered to see whether you can include the number of seats you need. We already know that they would have to extend the stage. The stage isn't big enough. The height of the stage has to go up. You probably could do it for maybe around \$5 or \$6 million, including the property. It would be a lot different from this. This, I estimate will cost between \$18 and \$20 million without the real estate.
- Nathan: Now, we'll assume that this is eventually going to be developed, one place or another.
- Zellerbach: No. Let's say it's our hope.
- Nathan: Right. Now, it would house the Ballet? What else would go into it?
- Zellerbach: Yes, the Ballet, and it would probably house the Symphony.
- Nathan: So that would free the Opera House?
- Zellerbach: It would free the Opera House, and also, the Symphony would be interchangeable. If they needed this, the Symphony could move over to the Opera House for some of their performances. No reason why they couldn't. They have the shell there. But you just couldn't handle the Opera in the Orpheum.
- Nathan: Right. And were you thinking that touring companies would also come?
- Zellerbach: Well, sure. Definitely.
- Nathan: Because right now, Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley is getting a lot of the touring companies who might like to come to San Francisco.
- Zellerbach: Well, certainly. They're showing a lot of that. Cupertino now is getting them. Even this little thing they put over here at San Rafael with 2200 seats--

Nathan: How many seats would you ideally like to have in this place?

Zellerbach: They have to have not less than 2700, up to 3200, in order to make it feasible. We may have to settle on 2700, even though they'd like 3200. Every time you put another seat in it, it costs you more money. But this is a question of engineering.

Nathan: Right. Do you have any idea when this report is going to be made?

Zellerbach: It will be made when we decide. I'm afraid to release it. It won't be released until after election, that's a cinch.

Polling the Community

Nathan: I see. It's had one very interesting development; it has brought together all the people who are interested.

Zellerbach: Oh yes. There's no question about it. And it's going to take time. We've had polls taken. I've had two polls taken. I'm going to have another one taken pretty soon.

Nathan: What sort of polls?

Zellerbach: Polls on the question of the attitudes of the people towards the Performing Arts Hall.

Nathan: Now, you're polling people in San Francisco? How about other parts of the Bay Area? Are you polling them at all?

Zellerbach: We can't depend on them. They aren't going to pay the bill. They aren't going to underwrite it. We have to get the votes here. Oakland votes won't do us any good.

Nathan: I see. I was thinking possibly some of your paying customers might come from the surrounding areas.

Zellerbach: Well, we may be able to have some of our big customers make some of the contributions, making grants, giving funds. But we can't get them to underwrite it. I mean, this is not a BART.

Nathan: No. [Laughing] Maybe it's just as well. How are the polls coming out?

Zellerbach: Well, the last poll we took was a little better, but not much. There wasn't much change. So I think before long we may take another one, and see if we've had any change in attitude.

Look at what happened as far as ecology is concerned. All of a sudden, it's in the air. Everybody's for it now-- this is popular, so the Legislature can't pass bills fast enough. Now if they could do the same with the arts, you could have all the money you want. After all, the European countries have supported the arts for years.

Nathan: Yes, and they expect to subsidize them.

Zellerbach: Well, sure. After all, Italy supports all the opera houses, and England does the same. Ballet--they have the Royal Ballet. They have Covent Garden. They have the London Philharmonic. They have all these things. The European governments have been doing it for years. For that matter, so has Russia, even under the czars. If the Commies can do it, there's no reason we can't. After all, the Commies are supporting the arts. That's the story.

This has taken time. I've been working at this now right from the start of the Rockefeller Brothers' report. That was the shove-off. I've been in it right from the beginning, and watched the whole thing develop. I've seen a lot in the arts in my lifetime.

Nathan: Right. And a tremendous change, really, from an appeal to the elite, to an appeal to everybody.

Zellerbach: Well, it has to be everybody, because there are no big fortunes like there were. I mean, where are you going to find the Huntingtons and the Stanfords? There are the Rockefellers, yes, but that's only a question of time. Ford Foundation. Today, the only millionaires that can be developed are the people like Hewlett-Packard, who start from nothing with an idea, and all of a sudden they're multi-millionaires.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ASSOCIATION
(Interview VII, October 29, 1971)

- Nathan: We have touched on a number of art activities, but there are still a few that I would like to ask you about, if you have some observations to make. We were talking last time about performing arts facilities, and the need in the city. So perhaps we could talk about the San Francisco Opera Association. Is this something that you have been interested in for some time, and are you still involved with it?
- Zellerbach: As far as San Francisco Opera Association is concerned, I've only been a member of that board for the last two years. Prior to that time, my brother was a board member. So my connection with the Opera was not quite as close, except the last couple of years, because then they needed a little money. The Zellerbach Family Fund was importuned to give them a substantial grant so they could get the curtain to go up.
- Nathan: That new gold curtain?
- Zellerbach: Yes. This last year. So we did make them a grant of \$50,000. We paid them \$25,000 at once, and we thought we'd give them the second \$25,000 when the curtain went up.
- Nathan: That was to guarantee that it would go up. [Laughing] I see!
- Zellerbach: The curtain went up, and they received their grant. The Opera now is going ahead. When Prentis Cobb Hale took over the presidency, he asked me to go on the board, which I did. Of course, I've always been pretty close to Prentis, before I even took the job. I think I've told you a lot about him. Anyway, now Bill Orrick, Jr., is the new president. I've known him very well for a long time. He's a very fine acquisition to the Opera Association. I think he'll do a good

Zellerbach: job. I think very highly of him. He's strong, capable, thorough. These things have to be put in the hands of the younger people. Of course, that's what I've been trying to do, get rid of some of them. I think I'm probably about ready to be rid of the Ballet, since my son Stephen was made president. So he has a job on his hands, to straighten out the Ballet. I think he will. If he does, this will be all in his favor, as far as taking over some of the burdens of the family in the arts sphere. I'm sorry to say that my son, Billy, has not acquired the tastes yet.

Nathan: How about your daughter? Is she interested in the arts?

Zellerbach: Well, my daughter is, yes. But she lives in Los Angeles. I know she's active in a number of things, but I don't think she's active at all in the Orchestra or the Opera. After all, they have no Opera down there. As for the Orchestra--they have enough people without my daughter, so she wouldn't have the same incentives down there.

The 1971-72 Opera Season

Nathan: I understand the San Francisco Opera, this season, is regarded as having hit a new high. The Opera season this year has had really great successes.

Zellerbach: I think so far, the Opera season this year has been the best season we've had in many years. I mean, the opening night with Manon with Beverly Sills and this tenor that was with her--

Nathan: Nicolai Gedda?

Zellerbach: Yes. Nicolai Gedda. I thought it was the best opening we've had in years, and the audience showed it. This last Tuesday night we went to see Il Trovatore with Leontyne Price. They had a Spanish tenor come out from the Met, who came on twenty-four hours' notice to take the place of a tenor by the name of King that was supposed to have the job. I think his name was Placido Domingo. He was out here last year. He sang opposite Price. In fact, he stole the show. Price was terrific, but this guy was really--people stood up and cheered and hollered. This is really one of the greatest Trovatore's I've ever heard

Zellerbach: in my life. And the music is beautiful. Not only that, but each participant has a lot of arias. So you get a chance to hear the stars--it's almost like a concert, you know. There's very little crowd chorus work, and there's no dancing in it.

It went off very well. They condensed it into two acts and six scenes.

Nathan: How did that strike you?

Zellerbach: I liked it very much. The first act, even though it lasted an hour and a quarter, you didn't realize it. The thing was moving, and the voices were great. They had one intermission, and the opera was over at a quarter to eleven. Usually, when they go the full score of three acts and all the scenes, you're out at midnight. They didn't cut any of the opera. They just made the scenes different.

That was great opera. When you have a season with thirteen operas, and if you have two good ones, you consider that a very successful opera season.

Nathan: Yes. We've already seen two good ones: Manon and Eugène Onegin.

Zellerbach: I had tickets, but I couldn't go. I had a cold. I understand Eugène Onegin was not so good.

Nathan: Is that right? I was thrilled with it. I thought it was great.

Zellerbach: Yes. Well, it's a different type of an opera. Of course Tchaikovsky's music is so--

Nathan: It's true, it's a little softer. I like blood on the floor in an opera. Eugène Onegin is not like that, but it's good.

Zellerbach: Sure. Everybody to his taste. Of course, you have some other good singers coming up. You have Joan Sutherland coming up.

Nathan: Oh yes, in Maria Stuarda.

The Star System

Zellerbach: You have several others coming up. Of course this year we used the star system.

Nathan: What do you think of the star system?

Zellerbach: There's no question that if you have great voices like Price and Sutherland and Sills, and the tenors that are equal to them, you have great opera. All you need is leads, and the rest of them usually warm up to it. That's what happens in a good opera. Everybody's in the act, you know.

If you want to read a critic, read Fried's critique in last Wednesday afternoon's Examiner. I never read a more raving notice than Fried gave that opera. Which it deserved. We were thrilled. My wife was so exhilarated that she couldn't go to sleep.

Nathan: Good for her! It is thrilling. No doubt about it.

Zellerbach: That's right.

Nathan: I wanted to ask you one more thing about the star system that you touched on at first. You bring these marvelous people and you pay them a good fee. What do you think this does to the next generation of performers? Does it hold them back, or do you think it helps them?

Zellerbach: After all, look at this Grace Bumbry. She was educated down at Santa Barbara, by Lotte Lehmann. Her first concert was given out at the Legion of Honor. That's where I heard her first. She was big. She had a great voice. One of these deep, full voices, like a Negro spiritual. Look where she's come, in apparently a very few years.

In the meantime, now she's thinned down, and she's married to a rich German. She's living primarily in Germany, and comes over here and sings. She's made a great reputation in a few years. In other words, if they have it, it doesn't take long. If they don't handle their voices properly, and don't take care of themselves, don't keep on taking lessons and improving themselves, it doesn't take long before their voices start to fail. The public knows it right away.

Nathan: Do you think the spring opera season--Spring Opera and Western Opera Theater--helps bring along the new singers?

Zellerbach: Sure. That's one of the purposes of it. They have the Merola competition every year, and the winners of that are given contracts with the San Francisco Opera. They usually use them in the Spring Opera and the Western Opera Theater. This brings them along. That's the way you have to do it.

Opera in Los Angeles

Nathan: Right. You were saying a little earlier that Los Angeles does not have an opera company of its own.

Zellerbach: They don't have their own opera company. They hire the national company of the Met. We used to send our opera company down there to the Shrine Auditorium. The Shrine Auditorium held 6000 people, and they could make money. Then, when they went into the Opera House at 3200, they had all the additional expenses. The last time they went down there, they lost all kinds of money. The Los Angeles Opera Association had to underwrite them. So they didn't feel as though they wanted to underwrite it any further.

We're still negotiating, but it should be like the San Francisco and Los Angeles Civic Light Opera. It's the same thing. When they go down there, they should call it the Los Angeles Opera, and when they come here it's San Francisco. You know, there's a little jealousy, because the San Francisco Opera is, next to the Metropolitan, the finest in the country. No question about it. People come out here from New York, from all over, to hear our opera. So that's why it costs so much money. I think they expect a deficit this year of close to a million dollars.

Nathan: How do you think that a first-rate opera ought to be financed?

Opera in Europe

Zellerbach: Over a period of time, the government must take over the bulk of the deficits, like they have in Europe for years and years and years. If you go to the Vienna Opera and see the way they produce it, somebody's putting up money, because they can't take it out of the house. The house is too small. I'll never forget it. I went over there once, some years ago, and we heard Turandot. You know, where she runs down the stairs--

Nathan: Yes, wearing the peacock gown?

Zellerbach: Birgit Nilsson was the lead in it. You've never seen such costuming. They had the horses, they had everything. You've never seen a production like this in your life. Every scene was a real scene. Not like they have out here; by magic lantern they give you different changes of scenes. That's the modern way of keeping costs down. But not over there. Over there, everything is right on the button. If you want to see opera produced, this is where you see it.

I've been in La Scala, and I've been in the Rome Opera; I was at the Paris Opera, and the Paris Opera smells to high heaven. It was so bad. The French are very particular. They only like to have French singers. People don't go over just to hear the Paris Opera. It's a great sight to go into the Opera House. It's a magnificent opera house. It's very baroque, lots of gingerbread in it. But the Paris productions don't hold a candle to ours.

Nathan: Did you think La Scala, the opera in Milan, was good?

Zellerbach: Oh, Milan, yes. No question. They put on great opera. Their productions are good, but not as lavish as what we've seen in Vienna.

Nathan: You were saying that government eventually has to put up a larger share of the budget?

Zellerbach: They're doing more and more all the time in San Francisco, with the hotel tax.

Nathan: Yes, this is the way the city helps support it. Do you feel that the National Endowment for the Arts should come through with money for the Opera?

Zellerbach: They have. For example, the Russian opera is imported by the National Endowment. They have put up \$100,000 a year.

So, of course they need a lot more money than they had this year to do a real job, but at least spreading the money around could make some of these things much more viable. If people tell their representatives that they must support art, why, this becomes popular like ecology. In the last four years I've heard more about ecology than I had all my life before. It's a different philosophy.

We used to build a paper mill. No matter how much odor we spewed out of our stacks, they came and they hunted for enterprises to locate there. They'd give you tax breaks to locate in their town, in order to get the payroll and the industry. So if you emitted a few mercaptans, the people that lived there started to get used to it. When they could smell those they knew the mill was running, and everything was fine.

That's not so, now. Our company is spending over \$80 million in five years for cleaning up streams, and the air, cleaning up pollution, you know.

Nathan: Is that in California and Washington?

Zellerbach: All over. Of course, we don't earn anything out of the \$80 million. In fact, it costs us money.

Nathan: Yes, I see why you're very alert to this.

Zellerbach: How many years did you used to go over to Berkeley, past the Oakland mud flats?

Nathan: Many years of the "Stinking East Bay." I remember it perfectly.

Zellerbach: You remember it, do you?

Nathan: Yes, I certainly do! [Laughing] I don't miss it a bit.

Zellerbach: That was going on for years.

Business Support for the Arts

- Nathan: Yes. Thinking some more about building public interest and concern about various issues, like support for the arts, I noticed that some businesses have begun to finance particular productions.
- Zellerbach: We're trying to have the business community take their share, which they haven't done. If you look at the statistics, you'll find business has been a minor contributor. I think about one percent of the total amount that's spent on arts comes from business, which is nothing. Of course you'll find a great many of the men in the top places in these big corporations have no feeling for the arts. They think it's a waste of corporate money. They're not sympatico. I think these times are going to change. You can see it going on now, with these different companies supporting the arts much more than they have in the past.
- Nathan: How do you answer this contention that it isn't necessary for business to support the arts?
- Zellerbach: You find a lot of the stockholders will complain that they have no right giving their money away. Instead of giving money to the arts, and to the city, and UBAC, they say, "You're giving the stockholders' money away! Instead of that, you should increase our dividends and let us give it away."
- Nathan: How do you answer that?
- Zellerbach: Today, business is a member of the community, just like a person. In fact, businesses have a responsibility, and more so all the time. We have many people working for the company; all they do is public relations, showing that we're trying to be good citizens. That's the answer.
- Nathan: Yes. I also had a note about the San Francisco Opera Guild. How effective do you think it is?
- Zellerbach: The San Francisco Opera Guild I think is very effective. They're the women's arm of the opera. They're the ones that put on the Folderol and the Opera Ball--raising money. From whatever money they raise, they usually make a grant to the

Zellerbach: Opera for some new production or something of that kind. Also it's a question of getting people interested in going to the Opera. That's of great assistance.

Nathan: Right. I had a note that they raised about one percent of the necessary income. There was another promotional kind of thing that businesses do, apparently. They can buy blocks of tickets at a special price.

The Repertoire

Zellerbach: There is some promotion of that kind, but that takes a lot of work. Of course, everybody wants to go to the good operas. When it comes to putting on Lulu--I think you'll find that you can buy all the tickets you want to Lulu.

Nathan: This brings up the repertoire. What do you think the repertoire ought to be during the year?

Zellerbach: When you're in show business, one basic principle is, you give the public what they want, and they'll buy it. You don't put on opera to please the critics. You don't play an orchestra to please the critics. They're always crying that you don't give anybody an opportunity. Well, we'll give them an opportunity, if somebody wants to underwrite it, we'll perform it. If they put on Carmina Burana, and Lulu, and a few modern operas, they could shoot a cannon through the aisles and hit nobody. You put on Madame Butterfly, and Trovatore and all the popular, well-known operas, it's different. That's what the people want. When they mount an opera, I would say it probably costs them between \$40 and \$50 thousand. So you can't monkey around.

You can lose on the 50 percent order. If it costs you 50, and you get 25 out of it, you don't make anything. That runs into money fast. You schedule six repeats, you can't stop it. You must go through with it. So the answer is, give maybe one modern opera, and for the rest you give those that the people want, and will come in here and pay for.

I told you that about the Pops Concerts. The same thing with the Orchestra. Of course, with the Orchestra, you can always work in one or two moderns, providing you give a good old

Zellerbach: Tchaikovsky symphony or a Chopin, or some of the old-timers-- Brahms--that people like. If the new stuff doesn't take up too much time, so they don't leave, it's okay. Yet, it does give them a taste of modern music. But to put a whole program of modern music--that is the big fight over in Oakland.

Nathan: Oh, with Gerhardt Samuel? Is that so?

Zellerbach: Yes, sure. Samuel's becoming too modern. They were losing so much money they couldn't afford him. That's the answer.

Nathan: It makes the choice of program very crucial.

Zellerbach: Yes. It's all crucial. It's whether you live or die.

Nathan: I take it that you do not think much of the argument that the public taste needs to be developed.

Zellerbach: Any change is going to take generations. All right, you have jazz. Now, jazz is out. Now it's rock. So we don't know what it's going to be next. It will be something else. But what schoolchildren are learning now, what they're doing in the schools, with the Opera and the Symphony, they're learning about the old masters. They come out with a better appreciation of what over the centuries has been called good music. Now, as for modern opera, you know--why, even Bartok is a little modern. And then there's Alban Berg and this English composer, Benjamin Britten. When they have Britten, I stay home. It doesn't do anything for me. I like a little melody. So do most people. Why does everybody love Il Trovatore? and Butterfly? and La Bohème? and Johann Strauss? Even Der Rosenkavalier. That's fairly modern, but at least he has the waltz in there.

Nathan: That's right. It is melodic.

Zellerbach: He has a lot of modern in too--you know, good heavy German stuff in it. There you are.

Nathan: I wondered whether you were acquainted with Merola?

Zellerbach: I knew Merola but not very well, because I had no business with him.

Nathan: Are you getting acquainted with Kurt Adler?

- Zellerbach: Oh, Kurt Adler, I've known right along. We've done a lot of business between the Ballet and Adler. We've had many a scrap with Adler about his use of the Ballet.
- Nathan: The use of the ballet in opera productions?
- Zellerbach: Yes. The San Francisco Ballet. Not the use of ballet, but the use of the San Francisco Ballet. I did so much screaming that we finally got it through his head that the San Francisco Ballet should have the work. They have the dancers, there's no reason why the Opera shouldn't give them the work.
- Nathan: If he didn't use the San Francisco Ballet, what other group would he have?
- Zellerbach: Well, he used to hire a ballet-master, and collect, you know--
- Nathan: Oh, I see. He did it himself!
- Zellerbach: Yes. On his own, you know. Sometimes he had ballets in there that really smelled to high heaven.
- Nathan: [Laughing] That's what I was just thinking! They were terrible!
- Zellerbach: Sure, those things have happened.
- Nathan: I wanted to ask you one more thing about financing the Opera. I see that the San Francisco hotel tax provides eight percent of the arts budget, or did last year. Do you have to fight that out every year, or is that fairly automatic?
- Zellerbach: You have to scrap for the amount.
- Nathan: I see. Have you been involved in the Opera broadcasts?
- Zellerbach: No.
- Nathan: Any other thoughts about the Opera that you would like to tell me about?
- Zellerbach: I think you have most of my ideas. Fairly basic.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION

Nathan: Shall we move on to the San Francisco Symphony Association?

Zellerbach: Well, yes. We've got to move on to some things, here, or it'll be next Christmas!

Nathan: Right! Have you had a longer association with the Symphony?

Zellerbach: I've been a little bit more intimately involved with the Symphony than I have with the Opera, although I was never on their board until my brother passed away. They asked me to take his place. That's when Phil Boone took over the presidency of the Symphony. He's done a terrific job, really, a marvelous job. I've had a closer association with the Symphony, by far, than with the Opera. It's only in recent years that I've done anything as far as the Opera is concerned. I haven't done much.

Nathan: There is a natural link, I suppose.

Zellerbach: First you get on one, then another. As president of the Art Commission, it's always good for me to keep my fingers in all these artistic pies, so as to see what we can do: more coordination of what we're doing, and what things are needed.

Nathan: When the San Francisco Ballet performs, do they use musicians from the San Francisco Symphony?

Zellerbach: No. They mostly use the Oakland Symphony musicians, because when they want to use the San Francisco Symphony, they're always busy with their own season.

Nathan: Oh, I see. Yes, the season becomes a problem, doesn't it?

Zellerbach: Well, sure.

Nathan: I wonder which conductors you may have known. Did you know Pierre Monteux?

Zellerbach: I knew Pierre Monteux. Of course there was also Alfred Herz.

Nathan: Did you know him at all?

Zellerbach: Well, I'd met him, but I was pretty young then. I was more active in business than I was in the arts. My brother had always been very active in the Symphony, for years, and he occupied that field; there was enough for me to do in others. The same thing at the Mount Zion Hospital. He and my sister were always on the board out there, so my associations out there have not been as close.

Nathan: I see. I assume that you probably knew Josef Krips.

Zellerbach: Oh yes. I knew Krips fairly well, the same as I knew Pierre. You know, we didn't entertain each other.

YOUNG ARTISTS

Zellerbach: Monteux was the one that recommended Lenore Joffe, my first protegé. I told you about Lenore.

Nathan: I don't know about your protegé.

Zellerbach: Oh you don't? That was my first real contact with Pierre.

A Violinist

Zellerbach: She was taking from David Hauser, who used to be the first violinist. The Jewish Community Center was helping her. Eva Soline Goldman was at the Center there. I knew the Soline girls from when we were children. She brought Lenore home one evening to perform for us. She was a little tike. I don't think she was over six or seven years old. A child prodigy. Pierre was very much interested in her, and thought she would go very far. I said if that's the case, I'd see what I could do to help her, which I did for quite a few years. Lenore had a family. Her mother and her father and a sister and a brother. The father needed work. It was one of those situations. I put the father to work down at the Zellerbach Paper Company. I paid for her lessons with Hauser. Then Pierre had her perform with the Symphony. She did very well. People were sympathetic to a child prodigy. As she grew older, the first thing I had to do was get her a better violin. She was playing a little violin, and she needed a bigger one. I think that cost me a couple of thousand dollars.

Then I had her play with the Pops Concerts, and she played at different places. In the meantime, she concentrated on her violin. She had private lessons, school lessons. So she had to have clothes, and everything that went with it.

Zellerbach: She finished high school and wanted to go to Mills College, in their music department. So I sent her to Mills College. In the meantime, her violin was not good enough, so I bought a Guarnerius. You've heard of Guarnerius?

Nathan: Yes, I have.

Zellerbach: But this time, I didn't give it to her. I kept the ownership, and loaned it to her. I didn't know then how smart I was. The conductor of the Kansas City Symphony used to spend his summers here, and worked with some of the colleges. He was very good. He was very much taken with her work.

After she entered college, she had to have an automobile to get around, so of course she asked me for an automobile. I said, "Uh-uh. I'm not giving you an automobile. You're over there to study. You're not over there to run around in an automobile." Then she got into that stage that young people do, where they don't know what they want. She didn't want to have any more to do with her family. She didn't want to have any more to do with me. She wanted to live her own life. She was living with two other women students. I think she finally graduated, but she dropped her violin and didn't pay any more attention to it for the last couple of years she was there. She took up physical education.

I kept in touch with her. She said she was going to teach physical education at some private school. I said, "That's fine. I'd like to come over and see you some time." She'd love to see me. So Mrs. Zellerbach and I went over. She was living over in Hayward, or San Leandro, somewhere in there. We went over there one Sunday. She was there and she had a piano. I saw my Guarnerius violin, lying under the piano. I said, "Is that the Guarnerius violin?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Inasmuch as you don't use it any more, I think I'll take it back." She said, "That's fine. You go ahead." So I took it back, and eventually I gave it to the Jewish Community Center as a gift. I think they eventually sold it. All I got was the tax deduction.

Every once in a while she'd call up, or write me a letter, say what she was doing. She kept in touch with me. Then finally, she wanted to know if I would take her back; she had made a big mistake. I said, "I'm sorry, but you had your opportunity. You didn't use it properly. As far as I'm concerned, you know how to play the violin, so get your job as a musician."

Zellerbach: She did get a job in the Kansas City Orchestra in the string section. What she's doing now I wouldn't know. Her father passed away. I think her mother passed away. Her mother used to write me letters about how sorry they were. That was my first protegé.

A Soprano

Nathan: Did you have another one?

Zellerbach: I had another one. Yes. One year we were in Europe in May, I think. We came back on the Andrea Doria, one of her first trips. There was a man on board who was a very famous purse-maker from New York. He heard I was on board. He knew about my connection with the Art Commission, and music, in San Francisco. So he got acquainted with me, and said, "I'd like to introduce you to a young soprano on the boat. She's just coming back from La Scala, to go home to visit her parents."

So I said, "Sure, I'd love to meet her, and talk to her." We arranged to meet and went over what she was doing. At that time I think she was eighteen or nineteen years old.

Nathan: Do you remember her name?

Zellerbach: Yes. Franca Duval.

Nathan: I know that name.

Zellerbach: You should. It cost me a lot of money to publicize that name! [Laughter] She showed me all her pictures, and the opera she sang in. She was going to sing in the ship's concert for the sailor's fund. I thought she had a very lovely voice. I said to her, "We have the Pop Concerts coming on in San Francisco. They open in July. I don't know if we have somebody to open it. If our executive secretary, Mr. Dyer, hasn't done anything about it, I'll see what we can do to put you on."

I got home and talked to Joe Dyer, and he said, "No, we haven't anybody." I said, "We can open with a beautiful young soprano and get a lot of good publicity on her first appearance with an American orchestra." Joe said, "I'll arrange to have her meet Fiedler, and if she's okay we'll put her on."

Zellerbach: We had her on. She came out, and I gave a big cocktail party for her and Fiedler and introduced her. She was a very beautiful young thing. I think I have her pictures around somewhere. Anyway, she gave a very nice concert, and she had good notices. Then went back to New York and settled. I paid for her lessons, and I had to buy her clothes. In the meantime, we had a contract. In other words, for anything that she made over \$10,000, I would get twenty-five percent. This was a business deal.

Nathan: I see. Is that a usual arrangement?

Zellerbach: If I wanted to get a tax deduction, I have to treat it like a business. In the horse race business, you're allowed to deduct depreciation. The sponsors are in it for business. So I was in this for business, to promote her, see what I could do with her.

I had her introduced, auditioned at the Metropolitan. I placed her with one of the biggest and best agencies. We knew them very well, because we had dealings with them out at Winterland, the Ice Follies. The Music Corporation.

They heard her and said they'd be very glad to do what they could. I got her a year's contract with them. They didn't do much, so I said, "Well, forget it." Then I found another, Lester Schurr, to try to promote her.

In the meantime Kurt Adler auditioned her. I always used to get the same answer back. "She has a very lovely voice, but it's not true."

Nathan: A bad ear, maybe?

Zellerbach: I don't know. I'm not that critical. It's not a true voice. She doesn't get something right. The recommendation was always that she belongs in musical comedy or light opera. So I told her that. I said, "We have to put you in light opera and make some money."

"Oh, no." She was better than Tebaldi, and better than Callas. They're a lot of bums. She's the best in the business. She went back to Italy, but she could never get into the big time. I knew Ghiringhelli at La Scala. He still runs it. I became very good friends with him. He gave me the excuse, "Well, she's an American, and they like to use

Zellerbach: Italians." Then I found there was a lot of underground work between Ghiringhelli and the agent, little commissions pass the ball. So I found a guy and was about ready to make a contract with him to represent her and get her in La Scala, the Opera House. Just about when he was ready to sign the contract, the guy dies.

So then she went into a traveling group, one of these Italian operas. Went to Bordeaux and went to little towns, like Cannes, all over France and Belgium. She was going to sing in Bordeaux--not Bohème, but-- What's the opera with the old count, you know? A nobleman. Scarpio, what's--?

Nathan: Tosca.

Zellerbach: She had the lead in Tosca. So Joe Dyer and my wife and myself made plans to go over and hear her in Bordeaux. We had tickets, we had everything ready to go. Two days before we go, we get a cable from her. She's got the flu, and she won't be able to sing. So we went over, but we didn't hear her.

Finally, I did get her into La Bohème in the San Francisco Opera. She played--not Mimi. What's the other one?

Nathan: Oh, the girl, the flirtatious one. The one who has the special role in the cafe. I'll think of her name. Musetta.

Zellerbach: Yes, Musetta. She was on a Saturday matinee, and she had excellent notices. She did a hell of a job of acting, but I couldn't get Adler to give her a lead.

Anyway, they had this opera, it was before the Spring Opera. McEnerney supported it, I think. They wanted to give Franca a job, to sing in one of the operas. But that wasn't good enough for her. That's second rate. If she took that job, she would lose other jobs, because it would detract from her singing. So she didn't take it.

That was a big mistake. She should have taken it, but she was "too good," you know. She always had such a high reputation of herself. I was getting no place fast. I had her eight years or so. I said, "Well, Franca, I think I've had it." "What are you going to do? What am I going to do?" I said, "I've spent all the money on you that I'm going to spend. I'll give you a year to find yourself, but after the year's up, then you're on your own." Which I did. I was just throwing money down a rat hole.

Zellerbach: But in the meantime, I had my income tax examined. I don't know if you know Lou Aaron? He's my CPA. The young tax examiner came down here and looked over my relationship with Miss Duval. He asked me if I had any personal relationship with her. I said, "No." "Is she a relation of yours?" "No." "Is there a family relation of yours?" "No relationship at all." "Well, she says here she has--" It wasn't a maid, it was some term for a maid.

Nathan: A companion?

Zellerbach: No, no. It's a woman that does housekeeping for her, took care of her. I supported that too. He wanted to know who she was. Wanted to know the history of her, and so forth. In the meantime, I was pretty well documented. I had all the clippings, all the reviews, everything. I had a stack that high. I said, "Here it is." I said, "I promoted her. She's highly recommended, but she just got so far, and evidently she couldn't go any further. There isn't enough work around. So I've done my duty, and I'm fading out of the picture."

He said, "Well, are you sure this isn't a personal matter?" I said, "No, strictly business. You've seen the contract I've had with her. You've seen the books." I kept books on her, with all her expenditures. I had a summary of her expenses and what she took in, what she laid on, and what for. I said, "After all, she could have been a bonanza. She could have made me a millionaire." I said, "She's no different than Frankie Sinatra. I'd love to have had Frankie Sinatra when he first started--had an interest in him. That goes with Bing Crosby. That goes with any of them. After all, she's no different. If you can have a horse, and the horse is deductible, I see no reason why she's not deductible. She's in the same category." So after he was with me for about half an hour or so, he says, "Yes, I guess you're right."

The result was that this protégé of mine lived in Paris, and finally got herself a job as a prima donna in the Folies Bergère. She sang seven nights a week and two matinees. She worked two solid years. In the meantime she married a fellow by the name of Carlo Nel. He's a very nice young fellow. He was the coming--what's his name, with the straw hat? French?

Nathan: Oh, the coming Chevalier?

Zellerbach: Yes. He was the coming Chevalier. He imitated Chevalier. He was Chevalier's protégé, except Chevalier didn't do anything for him. He used to sing on television, in night clubs. After the two years, they decided to come back here and see if he could find a job here. They lived back here for six months. He was no Chevalier, and they weren't looking for him. So they moved back.

I still correspond with her, and see her. We're very friendly and all. So anyway, we went one night to hear her in the Folies Bergère.

Nathan: How was she?

Zellerbach: Of course we were right up front, to see all the Folies girls all made up, and the costumes were filthy dirty, oh and the paint odor that came off the faces, and everything else. You could just smell it all. She came out and she sang Tosca.

When we heard her screeching, I had to take my handkerchief out almost and weep. Her voice was completely gone. Just forcing herself. That was the end. That was the last time I heard her. In the meantime, last year I think, or the year before, she went into a French musical comedy and spent I think a year in that. I don't know what she's doing now. So that was my last protégé.

Nathan: That's quite a story. It's quite a gamble for them, and for you.

Zellerbach: These are things you learn. I thought she was a great prima donna, I could travel around Europe with her, my wife and myself, and meet all the princesses and princes and everybody else fawning over her. But that was the end. She's the last protégé.

Nathan: That's a fascinating story.

A Pianist at the Conservatory

Zellerbach: Those were the only two, and I've never taken another one. I'm now interested in little Karen Hutchinson, the Black pianist.

Nathan: How old is she now?

Zellerbach: She's now eighteen. We met her when she was about fourteen years old. I first got acquainted with her when Fiedler found her and had her on one of our Pop Concerts. She had rave notices. She's little kid, five feet tall. Her hand just reaches one octave, that's all. She works to widen her hands all the time, to reach the octave. But boy, is she intense. Can she play.

Her father's a doctor down in San Mateo. Dr. Hutchinson. A very nice gentleman. Her mother's a charming woman. They're all musical. There's a brother that's musical too. She went over to a teacher here who thought she should go to the Paris Conservatory. That's where she is now. This is her second--third year, I think. She's been winning all the prizes. This year we had her back, and she played Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. She got a terrific ovation. So anyway, she's back for another year.

Nathan: She is not a protégé.

Zellerbach: No. Oh no. I just helped a little. She's out at the San Francisco Conservatory. They sponsor her. So I send them a donation to use for whoever they want. It's not specific. I give it to them, and it's up to them. If he doesn't want to give it to her, that's his business. You used to be able to do it directly, you see. Under the new law you can't. He's delighted, because it gives the Conservatory a better reputation.

Nathan: Sure. And you have a certain verification that this person is talented too.

Zellerbach: Oh yes. No question about it. She has good talent. There'll be a big difference in the next five years. But I'm not doing what I did before. Her father and mother support her. What is given goes for her lessons over there, to help her father and mother out.

Nathan: Right, and the family really is still in charge.

Zellerbach: Yes. I'm just a friend.

Nathan: You manage to find some very interesting things to do.

Zellerbach: That's the history of my protegés.

Nathan: A very good story.

Zellerbach: I've been offered many more, but I've turned them down.

Nathan: It certainly must have added interest to your life, even when it went wrong.

Zellerbach: It did. It's lots of fun, you know. It gives you something to try, to help somebody. If they succeed, or if they don't succeed--well.

I just came out of helping a good friend of mine get his son into U.C. at Santa Cruz. He couldn't wait to get in, you know. The youngster comes from Cleveland, and he couldn't get in on his own. I knew his father and mother very well. I didn't know the boy very much at all. "Oh, he's a good boy, a good student. Everything is fine. His heart will be broken if he doesn't get in. He's so anxious." But to make a long story short, I got him in.

He was there less than a month. I had a letter from him. He's decided he's going to leave, because he wants some time to think over what he wants to do.

Nathan: [Laughter] Oh.

Zellerbach: When I read that letter, I was fit to be tied.

ZELLERBACH PAPER COMPANY: DEVELOPMENT OVER THE YEARS
(Interview VIII, November 19, 1971)

Nathan: There is another part of your life that we could talk about, the paper industry itself. We really haven't gotten into the Zellerbach Paper Company or the Crown Zellerbach operation. Maybe you would like to develop the business part of your story that we barely touched on in the beginning. Is it correct that you began to be affiliated with the Zellerbach Paper Company in 1917?

Zellerbach: That's right. November, 1917.

Nathan: And you began as personnel manager?

The Export Department

Zellerbach: No, I didn't begin as personnel manager. As I said earlier, I took charge of the export department. It was during the war. We had had no export department. But then during the war, we had all kinds of business from the Orient: Japan and Indochina, and Australia. Coming out of the Wharton School, I knew something about a bill of lading and a few other things, so I built up a very large business during the war. Of course as soon as the war was over, the gravy train quit, but during that period, we made a lot of money out of our export business.

We were shipping newsprint to China. You know, they had a standard size of lightweight newsprint that they used in China. It was 31 inches by 43 inches, and 27 pounds to 500 sheets. That's lightweight.

- Nathan: Is that how big a newspaper page is opened out?
- Zellerbach: A page opened out, is probably about somewhat the size of our own. The Chinese papers were only four pages, they just fold them up. We shipped them out in bales. That was the size that was normal for Oriental newsprint, and we shipped a lot of pulp paper out there, to Japan. Cardboards, everything I could lay my hands on.
- Nathan: How did it happen then that you could get this business? Because European suppliers were no longer furnishing it?
- Zellerbach: Yes. The Orient had no other sources of supply. Europe was shut down, so the only place they could get it from was here. We did a big business. I made some pretty good connections, and I bought all they would give me, and I sold all I could get.
- Nathan: When you say pretty good connections, do you mean suppliers?
- Zellerbach: Suppliers. So that's how I started.
- Nathan: You started with a big success! That's wonderful.
- Zellerbach: In fact we started a branch down in Batavia, that's now Jakarta. We ran into trouble down there, when we shipped a lot of coated book paper. Not having much knowledge of storage in the tropics, [laughter] we found it stuck together, because of the humidity. It wasn't packed right. So we took a little loss down there. We closed the branch and said, "The hell with the thing. We'll just ship paper and let somebody else store it." But anyway, that didn't amount to an awful lot.
- Nathan: At that time, I suppose, the American producers were not competitive with the Europeans?
- Zellerbach: Oh we weren't competitive with anybody. You could name any price you wanted. In fact we were just finishing our newsmill up at Port Angeles, our first newsmill. I had just finished college, married, and just moved back out here.

Boxes, Paper Bags and Paper Towels

Zellerbach: Have I told you the story of the National Paper Products Company?

Nathan: No, tell me about it. That was National Paper Products?

Zellerbach: Yes. They built that board mill at Stockton. It's still there. It's part of Fibreboard now.

Nathan: You called it a board mill?

Zellerbach: A board mill. Fibreboard. They made boxes. Cannery boxes, cannery cases. That was the time, I think I told you, when my father got the contract from the California Packing Corporation.

Nathan: No, I haven't heard this.

Zellerbach: That's how we built that mill.

Nathan: With a contract from California Packing?

Zellerbach: Yes. He was the one that arranged it. A paraffin company. We were the only manufacturers of cannery cases on the coast, and we used to do a little jobbing. We used to do a large business with them. They did the same with us that Crown did when we built the Port Angeles Mill. They said they were going to take everything direct. So my father fixed them up by getting the Cal Pak contract, which is the largest one, and we built the mill with it. That was our second. Then I think our third was Port Townsend. That's the old Zellerbach Corporation.

Nathan: You didn't need a contract? You had financing, then?

Zellerbach: Yes. That mill also made board to start with, and then they also put in a kraft machine. Those two machines are still running.

Nathan: Is kraft what the big paper bags are made out of?

Zellerbach: Yes. That's when, in 1925, we consolidated with Crown-Willamette. If you want it, I'll get you the history.

Nathan: I'll be glad to have it. I have parts of it, but I don't think I have all of it.

Zellerbach: We were in the mill business before that, in 1917. That was at the beginning of the war, when we had a connection with the Carthage Paper Mills, and they supplied us with paper toweling. We converted it into the paper towel. We had a patent on the interfolded towel, so we had a converting plant here in San Francisco. The paper towel started right here. Then we opened up back East, and we had this connection to supply us the raw materials. When the war broke out, they didn't want to supply us any more, because they could earn more money by doing other things. That put us in the position of having to buy them out.

I was just married and I was living in Cleveland temporarily, working for the Joseph & Feiss Company, the clothiers. I think I talked to you about that.

We had a little Overland automobile, you know, a little four-cylinder Overland. There were two seats in the front, and you got in the back, a convertible. So my wife and I hit the highway, and we drove from Cleveland to Carthage, New York. That's where we had our first contact with a paper mill. I had nothing to do with any of the negotiations. I just went there to visit it, and see what it was.

Nathan: And eventually then, it was bought out?

Zellerbach: Yes. We bought them out.

A Book Paper Machine in Port Angeles

Zellerbach: One incident was with the Whelan Brothers. They had several pulp mills all along the British Columbia coast, with timber attached to them. They were trying to sell these pulp mills, because they were in financial difficulty. They came out, and I interviewed them as the export manager. I turned them over to my father, and he found out that they had a brand new paper machine, a book paper machine, in storage over at Port Angeles. They were going to ship pulp over to Port Angeles and make it into book paper. That way, they would avoid the duty.

Nathan: Oh. There was a duty on paper but not on pulp?

Zellerbach: That's right. Wood pulp and newsprint always come in free, but paper, coated book paper, has a substantial duty on it. So they shipped the pulp in and they would make the book paper, and they'd do pretty well. This was a brand new machine, that had never been run. It had been sitting there for years. We found that out, so my father thought it was quite an opportunity. I was sent up to look over the pulp mills, but I didn't know anything about it. This mill was an independent company in which the Zellerbachs have a majority interest. It was publicly financed.

Nathan: Now, when you say publicly financed, was that when Dean Witter and Company began to handle your stock?

Zellerbach: No, it was Blyth-Witter, at that time. Then they split up, and it became Blyth and Company. Blyth handled most of our underwriting until this last underwriting. They've been our financiers for years. We got the mill built.

Now on the trip up the West Coast to look at the Whelan pulp mills, the only transportation was by boat. A mill right near Vancouver was called Mill Creek. I went to see that, and I took the steamer up to Swanson's Bay on the coast near Prince Rupert, B.C., and stayed there and looked at that operation. Then they had another mill on Vancouver Island, on the west coast, at Port Alice. We were dropped in the dead of night in the fog at Port Hardy. We had to cross an isthmus, and then take a boat on the lake to get to Port Alice.

We debarked from the steamer around six or seven in the evening. The steamer waited out in the stream. I don't know how they knew where they were. They were waiting for the Indians to come out and pick me up.

Nathan: The Indians?

Zellerbach: Yes. A couple of Indians came out. They brought a boat. Bravely, I got in it. I didn't know where the hell we were going. So we started off, and all we could hear were the foghorns, but the Indians knew where they were going, and eventually we arrived at Port Hardy. There was a bar with a few rooms above it, musty and cold. I went to bed, but I didn't take my clothes off. I put heavy blankets on me, so heavy they were like lumps of lead. But it was so damned cold, I couldn't do much sleeping. It was almost daybreak, so we got up.

Nathan: How big a group were you then?

Zellerbach: There were only two of us traveling. There were other people there. Then we had some of our own people come over from Port Alice to get us. We had to tramp over an isthmus, to get to the boat, and the boat took us up to Port Alice, which was a very interesting, quite a good operation. It was their best.

Nathan: Was that a saw mill?

Zellerbach: Oh no. These were all pulp mills. So then we went over to Port Angeles, and they showed me this paper machine. When I went back to report to my father, I said, "I don't know much about the pulp mills they've got, but I think the most interesting thing is this brand new paper machine in storage. You could get that running in a hurry, and I think you could make a lot of money."

We negotiated, and they brought the paper machine in. Instead of buying the pulp mills, we bought pulp from them, and we made newsprint on the paper machine. I still was in the export department, and a general manager of the Melbourne Age came up. That was a newspaper in Melbourne, Australia. They couldn't get newsprint, so they wanted a contract with us. We finally made a contract for 500 tons a month for five years. I think I charged them--I don't know--I think it was eight cents a pound. Before the war, newsprint was selling at around, I'd say, three or four cents. We got eight cents a pound, at the mill. That was \$160 a ton.

Nathan: Did they have to pay for transportation?

Zellerbach: They had to pay for the transportation, and they had to post an irrevocable letter of credit for the whole amount. In an irrevocable letter of credit, the bank guarantees the payments. We started to ship against it before the war was over, and as soon as the war was over, the guy came running back and wanted to cancel the contract. We said to him, "No, nothing doing. We'll adjust the price, but you have to extend the contract, so we'll get the full tonnage." He said he'd have to go back and consult. So we said, "Go ahead. In the meantime, we're still shipping." He finally came back and said, "No," they wouldn't extend the contract. We said, "That's all right. We'll fulfill the contract."

Zellerbach: Well, couldn't we do something? They said, "We're going broke paying this bill." We said, "We're sorry. We'll go broke if we don't collect, because that's how we built the mill, on the basis of this contract." In other words, five years, at \$160 a ton, that's what? 30,000 tons of paper. I think we must have made about, oh, say at \$160 a ton--I think we made over \$100 a ton on it. We made \$600,000 to \$700,000 a year. In those days it cost about a million and a half dollars to build a mill, including the paper machine. So this contract practically paid for the mill.

Nathan: How did you finally resolve it? Did you just keep shipping?

Zellerbach: Certainly. We had the letter of credit. There was nothing they could do. They couldn't sue us. I even had the Consul General of Great Britain certify the contract.

Nathan: Did you foresee that this might happen?

Zellerbach: We were taking no chances. We never did any business with him. So why should we take a chance? We could have sold the paper to others, at the time. That practically ended my export career. When the war was over, I got out of the export business.

Then I organized the first personnel department the Zellerbach Paper Company ever had. I brought new ideas from the Wharton School.

Nathan: What were some of your new ideas?

Zellerbach: We used to have the superintendent hiring and firing the warehousemen, and each department head hiring and firing all their own personnel. But I centralized the whole thing, as I mentioned earlier. We started to set standards, and begin a little sense of order. If anybody wanted to hire any help, they had to come through the personnel department; then we set up applications and histories and background. Before that, the only thing the superintendent asked a warehouseman was, "Where did you work last?" He had no record of where he worked, whether he was a thief, or who he was. When I came out of the Wharton School, this business of centralizing industrial relations and personnel work was just getting underway.

Managing the San Francisco Division

Zellerbach: Then, the next step, I was made the manager of the San Francisco division of the Zellerbach Paper Company. Then I hired a young man who had been in the same class with me, a Californian. He came in as the operating manager.

Nathan: Do you remember his name?

Zellerbach: Yes. Gene Breyman, E.A. Breyman. Then the superintendent had to work under him, you see. That caused a lot of commotion, because the superintendent was an old-timer. My father said I was wrecking the business already.

Nathan: The change must have come hard.

Zellerbach: Oh sure. A lot of the changes came hard. Then I brought a young fellow out with me from Pennsylvania, Dave Morris. I put him in the export department after I got out. He worked with us for, oh, I guess five or six years. Then he went into the paper business himself, as a competitor.

Nathan: [Laughing] I see! That always feels good.

Zellerbach: That taught me a very good lesson too.

Nathan: What lesson was that?

Zellerbach: You want to be sure when you give a friend a job, he doesn't double-cross you and go to work for himself. If you put him in selling, he'll take his accounts with him.

Nathan: But how can you protect yourself?

Zellerbach: Well, I can protect myself from my own friends. I can't protect myself from people we hire off the street, except knowing that the basic Jewish trait is that they usually can't work in a big corporation.

Nathan: Is that so?

Zellerbach: That was my experience.

Nathan: They're too individualistic?

Zellerbach: That's right. They've got to work for themselves. They've got to be their own bosses. My younger son is an example. He worked in the Zellerbach Paper Company for quite a few years, did a good job selling, but it was too confining. He criticized everybody, nobody was doing anything right. He's a good salesman, brought in a lot of business. Then he got married, and I used to go out and see him when his son Gary was a baby. I used to drop by there around 5:15 p.m., and my son had already been home. He got off work at 4:00 p.m., to get his siesta. [Laughing]

Nathan: That's not your style.

Zellerbach: No. No. That was not my style! My wife would holler because I never would get home. So finally Steve made up his mind he just couldn't work for us. It took him a long time to get up the nerve to tell me he was going to quit. I said, "Really? If you want to quit, you don't feel right, then do it. But you have a great opportunity here." Well, he didn't think he had. I said, "Then, Steve, if you want to go on your own, go ahead. I'm not going to stop you."

So he quit. He's been a wheeler and dealer ever since, in one business after another. He's smart. But he has to be his own boss.

His brother is just the opposite. Bill works well with people. He works well in an organization. There are no two alike. Bill is the only Zellerbach left in the corporation. He might occupy a very important position there. He's the senior vice president of the corporation, and he's president of the Zellerbach Paper Company. He's a member of the board of directors. He's a member of the executive committee. He's right in the top management group, which is where he should be.

Nathan: What is the relationship now between the corporation and Zellerbach Paper Company?

Zellerbach: The corporation owns the Zellerbach Paper Company.

Nathan: But the company is a separate operation?

Zellerbach: Well, it was, but they have been consolidated. The company is still run as a separate operation. We still have the directors meetings, and the Crown-Zellerbach executives come

Zellerbach: to the directors meetings. But they don't touch it. It's an entirely different business, the same as when I ran it. But we are wholly owned by the corporation.

I ran the business, and they kept their nose out of it. When they wanted to get their nose in, I said, "Either I run it, or you run it, because you don't know a damned thing about merchandising. It's like a manufacturing man trying to run a department store. They don't mix. It's an entirely different mentality; the jobbing business, and wholesaling is service."

Nathan: The Zellerbach Paper Company does jobbing and wholesaling?

Zellerbach: That's what they are, wholesalers. They don't manufacture anything. Anyway, getting back to the early days, I was the manager of the Zellerbach Paper Company I think until '29. In '29 I was thirty-six years old.

President of Zellerbach Paper Company

Zellerbach: I was pretty young when I became President and took charge of the Zellerbach Paper Company from my father. Of course, during my regime I made a lot of changes.

Nathan: What kinds of changes?

Zellerbach: I made a lot of changes in the policy of running the company. We put younger people in charge, and we rebuilt our sales organization. We put in inventory controls. My father was always a person who said he could never lose a salesman. He was always afraid the man was going to take business away from the company.

Nathan: So he wouldn't fire him?

Zellerbach: No. He just couldn't lose a salesman. It was a fetish. Drunks or no drunks! [Laughter] When a salesman came in and said, "Mr. Zellerbach, I haven't had a raise. I want a raise!" My father would say, "Don't worry, I'll take care of it." Then he'd walk out, thinking he was going to get a raise, and he never got one.

Nathan: Did your father do this on purpose?

Zellerbach: No, he would just make the man feel happy. Then when he started to holler again, oh, he forgot to do it, you know. But I had to change all that. If a person came in and wanted a raise--especially when I was running the San Francisco division and I didn't think he deserved it, I told him why. I said, "You're not earning enough to justify a raise."

Reorganizing the Systems

Nathan: Talking about your interest in Zellerbach Paper Company, and about reorganizing the sales system, I did want to ask you a little more about that. Did you assign people to a certain territory?

Zellerbach: Sure. You know, in the first place, we tried different areas of selling. You divide the city. During my father's time, a salesman would go all over town. He didn't have any territory. He just had accounts. They assigned accounts to different men. He'd go maybe down here for one, and way out here for another. We finally reorganized it all into areas. Then we kept the salesmen in the area.

That took a little doing, to get them to give up some of their old accounts. But you increased efficiency.

Nathan: Were they paid a salary or commission?

Zellerbach: They were paid a salary; then we finally put in both the salary and bonus. My father always fixed wages by guess and by God, you know. He'd chisel around with the boys. The more they hollered, the more money they got.

So we got going, and related the compensation to their gross profit. What were they making on the sales? It wasn't dollars, because they'd go out and sell all kinds of merchandise, and if we can't make a trading margin on it, what good is the business? Then we put in perpetual inventory.

In the old days with my father, he never had any inventory controls. The only time they knew they couldn't fill an order was when they were out of it. They had no records, so they never knew whether they sold a ton a month, or ten tons a month,

Zellerbach: or if they sold a ream a month. As a consequence, we had all kinds of colors of bond papers. Some colors never sell. We reduced the numbers of stock and reduced our inventory, and put in all these different kinds of controls.

So many of the things that I started we still use. Now we've even modernized that. The same thing in credit control. The salesman never handled credit. We finally put in the rule that the salesman had to collect his accounts, and if he didn't collect them, he couldn't sell them. Small competitors used to cut prices and then give credit. That isn't what we did.

We did that same thing with printers, you know. We said, "We want you to make money on our merchandise, and if you can't make money on it, then you tell me, and maybe we can help you. But as long as you're making money, we expect to make money. So we don't expect to haggle with you on the price."

Nathan: So you sold to printers? You mean you sold to newspapers?

Zellerbach: Printing papers, yes. We had a business that was divided into printing papers, wrapping papers (now it's not the wrapping paper division, it's the industrial paper division) and then we had stationery and notions. But now we are out of the notions. That we found was too expensive when we started putting in controls.

We used to sell Listerine, and they used to fix the price. I think we made a gross margin of ten percent. We had to break cases. If a druggist or somebody wanted three bottles, we would give them three bottles, and by the time you did all the work, you couldn't make any money. The same thing with razor blades. You couldn't make any money on razor blades, Devote your time to something you can make money on. Get new items, and things of that kind.

It's the same thing, I remember in Los Angeles. We had a big stationery business; sold playing cards. We were one of the U.S. Playing Cards' largest customers. It was computed on how many playing cards they sold. But they were a short margin area. They turn over fast, they're expensive. Finally we put a check. We weren't selling them. Our warehouseman was selling them! [Laughter] We were losing all kinds of money on them. So we threw those out. The only way we'd sell playing

Zellerbach: cards was in bulk. We wouldn't break a case, and they were all under lock and key. The same thing goes with watches and things of that kind. We have merchandise control. We have some pilferage; you can't avoid it. But it's pretty difficult. Unless they're a couple of people in cahoots, they can't carry out cases of toilet paper, and cases of towels and cases of printing paper, unless somebody's going to pack them out and put them on a truck.

We've already found that, where we had collusion between a teamster and a warehouseman. Then we used to put detectives on their trail. One time we found a whole garage filled with paper.

Nathan: [Laughter] That was all your paper?

Zellerbach: Sure. A couple of our personnel were just taking it and re-selling it to small grocery stores, at a lower price than they could buy it anyplace else, naturally. Those are things you learn as you grow older in business. New controls come in. So when we put in perpetual inventory, we knew how much of an item we were selling, and how fast it sold. Normally, unless it turned over within sixty days, we discontinued it.

Nathan: When you found an item that didn't sell well, and you would discontinue it, then did you have the alternative of finding a new item?

Zellerbach: We were always picking up new items. That's for sure. If you're selling one year, you may not the next year, because uses go off. For example, when they had the Crocodiles we used to sell a lot of small-sized bags. We don't sell any small-sized bags any more. If we do, it's very rare. If we sell a quarter-pound bag, that probably goes to a drugstore, or a candy store. If you sell to a grocery store today, you sell these big bags for packaging. And you sell the smaller ones, but you don't get much below an 8-pound bag.

Nathan: Do you have any plastic bags?

Zellerbach: Oh sure. We handle them and make them. We do a big business in plastics now. We also have some exclusive lines which are very good. We sell cellophane in rolls for conversion purposes. We converted ourselves for grocers and people who want different size sheets, small sheets for wrapping meats, and different things. We carry a list of 20 or 30,000 items.

Profit Centers

Nathan: Do you sell things that might be competitive with paper, like aluminum foil?

Zellerbach: Yes, sure. We have aluminum foil, but the corporation doesn't make aluminum foil. We have wax rolls and things of that kind. For example we used to sell corporation brands of toilet paper, Zee and Chiffon. Only in certain of our divisions now do we sell them. We couldn't make any money on them. Unless the corporation wanted the business and were willing to pay the Zellerbach Paper Company for doing it, we said, "We're not going to lose money. The corporation will make it, and we'll lose it. That's not what you call profit centers."

Nathan: Profit centers?

Zellerbach: In a large corporation, you have profit centers. The Zellerbach Paper Company is a profit center. Our principle packaging division is a profit center. Our corrugated division is a profit center. Our timber operation is a profit center.

Transportation and Modern Merchandising

Zellerbach: We have our own truck lines, private. We don't haul for anyone else but ourselves, so we don't get mixed up with the ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission].

Nathan: When you say "we" does that mean the corporation?

Zellerbach: The corporation. The Zellerbach Paper Company started the truck line. In fact, the Zellerbach Paper Company runs it for them.

Nathan: When you were organizing the salesmen for Zellerbach Paper, did your territory include just San Francisco?

Zellerbach: You mean when I was the manager of the Zellerbach Paper Company in San Francisco? We had a branch in Oakland, we had a branch in Sacramento. Our territory included more than San Francisco.

Zellerbach: We went up the north coast as far as Eureka and Crescent City, right up to the state line. And then we went down as far as, I think, Paso Robles. The merchandising is entirely different now.

Nathan: How do they do it now?

Zellerbach: Now you have freeways, and fast motor transportation. When I was in business, we had horse-drawn vehicles. Later on, we had motor vehicles. When I first started we had big two-horse drays. That's why we had that warehouse right in the middle of town, because you had to be near your printers, you had to be near your customers. Now it doesn't make any difference where they are.

This is my son Bill's operation. He's the one that developed this. The San Francisco region today runs all of Northern California; we don't have a separate manager any more in Sacramento or Stockton, or Oakland. In fact we have no warehouse in Oakland. We used to have a big warehouse there. There used to be a big warehouse in San Jose.

Nathan: Where is the warehousing done now?

Zellerbach: South San Francisco. Today they load the trucks at night, and they go out the first thing in the morning. They run these big vans down to San Jose, all the way. The San Jose orders come up to the San Francisco division, and if it's there by 4:00 p.m., it's delivered the next day.

A printer used to call up; he had to have it in an hour, so we'd send it out. Now he gets it in the regular delivery. If he wants it faster, he has to come and get it. There are a lot of things we don't do that we used to do, because we were small and needed all the business--we still need all the business we can get, but we don't do certain things any more.

Nathan: I take it that the freeways have been very important in your delivery system.

Zellerbach: Well, sure. All of our operations are right near freeways. For example in south city, all the trucks coming to San Francisco deliver every day, and they go to Oakland every day. We have a distributing point down in San Jose, where a big van will go down, and then they'll transfer a lot of their merchandise to a smaller truck. The truck will operate out of there.

- Nathan: Could any of this be done by train, if you wanted to?
- Zellerbach: No, you can't operate that distribution by train. You can't afford to handle it.
- Nathan: Would containerization work?
- Zellerbach: Of course we do deliver a lot of merchandise by railway, in carloads. Yes, we sell carloads of paper, like newsprint. There's also a lot of newsprint that's not shipped in carloads, and it comes down in these great big over-the-road trailers. They can handle around forty tons, sometimes by a truck and a trailer. You see them on the highways.
- Nathan: Yes. How would I recognize one of your trucks?
- Zellerbach: It's either Crown Zellerbach, or Zellerbach Paper Company.
- Nathan: Yes, I've seen them.
- Zellerbach: Sure. There's a paper company, up in Everett, Washington. We buy the paper, and they give us a freight allowance, so we can go up there and pick up the paper that we own. It's not theirs. It belongs to us. Now, if it didn't belong to us, we couldn't pick it up. We couldn't haul for them, but if they give us a freight allowance, that's another thing. They can't pay us freight. If they pay the freight, then we'd be a common carrier. You can't afford to be a common carrier, because after all, the rates are set. You don't have to own a truck line of your own to be a common carrier. You can get any common carrier to do it for you.
- Nathan: And you found that it is more efficient to have your own truck line.
- Zellerbach: Yes, it's not only more efficient, but we make a lot of money doing it. We save a lot of money. It runs into many thousands of dollars; that's pure profit.

Some Corporation Customers

- Nathan: Yes. You were saying that in the earlier days, your father had connections in Sacramento, and so he had the state's paper business. Are you still involved with it?
- Zellerbach: It was bid business in my father's time, but they didn't have so much business to give out. Of course my father was in, so they used to fix the specifications a little bit, to make sure he got the business.
- Nathan: Do you also bid for other public agencies? Say for the city of San Francisco?
- Zellerbach: Oh we supply many public agencies (the corporation, not Zellerbach Paper Company). The corporation supplies Sunset Magazine. Time-Life and Crown Zellerbach have a joint operation at St. Francisville, making book paper for Time-Life. We don't make all their paper, but they have to take half the capacity. If they can't take it, it's too bad, but they have to pay the machine down-time for it. In other words, if we can sell it, they'd be very happy. It costs them less to pay for the down-time than it does to sell it, because they don't make anything off it. We ship their paper for their magazines that are printed out here, you see. Time and Life are printed in Los Angeles.
- Nathan: Does book paper have some rag content?
- Zellerbach: Some very high-grade book papers, special papers, but not the ordinary book papers. For ordinary book paper, some is coated, and some is uncoated. If you pick up a novel, it is an uncoated book; and then you pick up some of these Sunset colorful things, that's a coated book. Life is on coated book paper. Time is on coated book. There are different kinds of paper.

Recycling

- Nathan: Later I want to ask about how you recycle the paper. Are you involved in any of that?
- Zellerbach: Yes. Sure. You want to know about recycling? Just sit here and I'll get you the whole story, and you can read it.
- Nathan: [Laughing] I want you to tell me! But I'll read it anyway.
- Zellerbach: When people think they're going to be able to get a hundred percent recycled paper, there's going to be nothing but recycled paper, that's a lot of bull.
- Nathan: Oh, you can't go just on recycled paper?
- Zellerbach: No. Just forget that, because there isn't that much around. Recycled paper is picked up by the scavengers, or these waste paper people. Then it's got to be sorted by hand. It becomes so expensive vis-à-vis making it out of new pulp, new materials, that you can't afford to use it.
- Nathan: If volunteers who believe in this were to do the sorting for you, would that make it possible?
- Zellerbach: How are you going to depend on volunteers to keep chewing gum and cellophane and all this stuff out? You can't recycle that. If it gets in with paper, you wreck the machines. This recycling business is like this law that Muskie's passing: by 1985 you have to prove that the water you're putting into the stream or the lake is of a quality that you can swim in, and you can drink it--it has to be pure. Well, that's the millenium. Even now, you don't drink pure water, unless it's distilled. If you drink distilled water, you'll have goiter.
- People don't use their common sense. You can make paper out of wool. If you have a wool dress, that can be recycled and bleached and made into paper, because it has a fiber. But if you have some of these man-made substances, you can't do it, because there's no fiber to them.
- Nathan: Right. You were saying that you have been engaged in recycling in the industry?

Zellerbach: Oh, for years. Yes. We've recycled newsprint. We recycle paper right in our own mills. When we get the book paper, and we put it into sheets, we have a side edge. Or even in making rolls, you may have a side edge. That all goes back in the beaters, and is recycled, and we use it again. That goes for corrugated cases. There's a big collection of corrugated cases, and they're all recycled. Go up to Stockton Mills. You'll see a big recycling operation up there. It's been in there for years. People think this is something new. They pass laws about recycling. They have to define, "What is a recycle?" When Congress says, "Everything's got to be 100 percent recycled," then newspapers would have to go out of business. You can't make a sheet of paper that's 100 percent recycled, because there's no strength to it. You've got to put fiber in. Even this has got fiber in it. A lot of this yellow note-pad could be recycled, I mean the filler. This kind of paper has got filler in it.

Maybe this is sulfite bond. Let's see what it is (tearing a piece). There. You see, this has no recycled material in it. See the fibers? All right?

Nathan: Yes. Is this sulfite?

Zellerbach: It might not be sulfite. It could be sulfate. See? This is short-grain, you see. Cross-grain is tougher than with the grain. (Demonstrating) This way it tears easily. This way it doesn't. So therefore, when you put it in rolls, you put the grain the long way. You can't make the grain the short way, because the paper can jump the paper machine, with the grain running in this direction. So it's got to be run that way. You don't make paper cross-grained. There's a certain amount of cross-grain in it, to give it some strength, but it's not the same strength.

Same thing with the newsprint. Newsprint is about 75 percent ground wood, which has no fiber at all. It's a mush. You've got 25 percent sulfate pulp in it, so it'll stick together. Otherwise, it would never get through a press. So when they say it's got to be 100 percent recycled, that's a lot of bushwa!

DEVELOPMENTS RE: THE CITY'S INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
(Interview IV, December 17, 1971)

- Nathan: Do you think the ordinance plan we spoke of earlier will be brought up again?
- Zellerbach: No, we decided not to bring the ordinance up. I talked to the mayor last Monday. We're going to have a luncheon the first part of January, at which he will be the host, or the chairman. Then he will announce to the group what we propose to do, and it'll be organized on an informal basis.
- Nathan: Is this regional, or primarily for the city?
- Zellerbach: This is the City's Inter-Agency Council on the Arts. It's the one with the heads of all the city agencies that spend money on the arts, plus the three museums. The museums are in on it anyway, and the Opera, and the Symphony.
- Nathan: That's great, isn't it? Knowing the way you work, I presume you have already talked to some of these people.
- Zellerbach: Yes, it's all been done. Everybody's agreed to it, and we were supposed to put the ordinance in, and then the mayor stopped us. He didn't think it was proper timing. He felt that we'd get a lot of groups coming in, thinking we should expand it and everybody being in on the act. Well, of course that isn't the purpose of it.
- Nathan: What is the purpose?
- Zellerbach: As we said before, the purpose is to coordinate the city agencies that are spending city money in any areas of the arts. They're spending a total of probably a million and a half or more to support the two big museums, and the San Francisco Art Museum gets their rent free. And of course what the CAO grants

Zellerbach: to them from the hotel tax fund. On the other hand, the Symphony and the Opera are not city agencies, but they're so dependent on the city, they felt that they should be in on the act, so we got them in. This way we hope to be able to coordinate this much better.

The Park and Recreation Commission has a lot of money to spend on recreation and the arts. A lot of those things that we're doing in the Neighborhood Arts Program should be done by the Park and Rec. They have more facilities, and they have more money. They're not dependent on foundations. We're starting in already with the Art Commission and the Park and Rec to see if they can't work out a joint effort. Eventually, if the Park and Rec get the proper help, and they have the facilities and somebody to take a real interest in it who's qualified, I think that instead of the Art Commission running neighborhood arts, it could be the Park and Rec.

Nathan: Now, if Park and Rec carried some of these activities, what would be the main focus of the Art Commission?

Zellerbach: We have plenty of work to do now. This was just a plus, in trying to get this going. You read the Arts Resources Report. You read the recommendation, which was to take the arts to the neighborhoods. Now, they have mini-parks and public squares and the other facilities that the Park Commission is in charge of--after all, they're in charge of the Palace of Fine Arts, that has a thousand-seat theater. We have to get on our knees, and try to see if we can use it. The same thing with the Nourse Auditorium. We've been trying to use that. We can get it from the school department, and they'll give say, the San Francisco Ballet Association, a lease back, for twenty or twenty-five years. But then the Ballet will have to put up about \$500,000 or \$600,000 to put the auditorium in shape. If the Park and Rec were in it, then this comes between two public agencies. So then it would be up to them to dig up the half a million dollars out of the board of supervisors, and also the school department, that's holding a few bucks too.

Coordination and Administration

Nathan: Would you think that there might have to be another person to coordinate the various agencies for art activity?

Zellerbach: If we have this Inter-Agency, the Inter-Agency then should be the controlling factor.

Nathan: But you'd have to staff that?

Zellerbach: Well sure. The way we have it set up, the Art Commission would be the Secretariat. The president of the Art Commission would be the chairman. It might happen to be me at the present time. I'm not going to hang onto the Art Commission forever. I'm trying to find a successor, but I haven't been able to yet. I have to have an opening for him, too. I had a very able young fellow who has been on the commission. I was going to train him, and all of a sudden his business moved to New York, and he went to New York. So that was the end of it. Since then, I'm sorry to say that I don't see anyone on the commission that I feel would be qualified to do the work that I've been doing. I think he has to be a citizen that people respect, and has access to the funds, and knows where to get them. Of course that takes a period of time, and you have to have a proper reputation. Take a person like Bill Roth, for example. If Bill would take over, this would be fine. He has the know-how, he has the backing, he has funds to put up himself, in case of need, the same as I've been doing over the years.

This Neighborhood Arts Program would never have gotten off the floor, if it was left to the city. We'd never be receiving money from them, unless somebody--being a little facetious--like myself, was pushing the supervisors and the mayor, putting the heat on them. If they could avoid putting up the money for arts, they would give it to somebody else. That's one of the problems.

Also, the president of the commission has to be the policy-maker, and watch that the boys follow the policy. Sometimes that's difficult. For example, now, in practically all situations, Snipper is an excellent man. He's an artist in his own right, with lots of imagination, but as an administrator, he just doesn't understand. You need to put somebody alongside him. That's a little difficult, because we only have two

Zellerbach: positions. We've never had more than two employees on the Art Commission, since it was founded. We have the executive secretary, and a stenographer. We've been trying for a third person for years. I think we have a half a person now. Maybe this year we may push it through to get an assistant to Snipper. It's a question of handling money and seeing that things are done. Martin is being underpaid now.

Nathan: Is he on civil service?

Zellerbach: Yes, civil service. We've been trying to classify him in a higher rate range. So we did get him classified, and then the civil service boys out there pulled a couple of fast ones, and he didn't make it. I was out there with him, and we all agreed, and the civil service administrators all agreed to do it. And I said to Martin, "Now, go ahead." So then when he finds the thing is slipping, he should have come to me because I could have said, "Here, you guys pulled a fast one. Now go correct it," before it was too late. It went before the board of supervisors, and was passed, and it was too late.

So I have it fixed up in this last conference with the mayor. The mayor agreed a hundred percent that he's underpaid and he should be paid more. I think he's drawing \$13,000 a year. Comparable people, or un-comparable people, are drawing a lot more from the city than he is. You find similar jobs are getting all the way from \$18,000 to \$25,000.

Consolidation: De Young Museum and the Legion of Honor

Zellerbach: You try to find the head of an art museum, and see what you're paying today. You don't get them for chicken-feed any more, because there aren't that many qualified around.

That's one of the things that helped the consolidation of the De Young and the Legion of Honor. The De Young fired their director, and so they suggested that we share our director, Ian White, who's a very able young fellow. We insisted that we get together on who was going to be his boss. If we were paying him, and he was running two museums, who was going to tell him where he was going to be and what he was going to do? In order to have one master, they consolidated the boards now,

- Zellerbach: as one organization. So in that way, he was able to get a substantial increase in his compensation, which he deserves. These are things you have to do, when you're playing around with civil service and government. It's a mystic maze.
- Nathan: Yes. I missed the date of that luncheon when the mayor will call the people together. Is that going to be in January?
- Zellerbach: Yes. The date is fixed already, and we're getting prepared. We have the luncheon room. So now Joe Paul [Ed. note, 1976. Joe Paul is deceased.] is getting everything on hand.
- Nathan: Are you going to call in the press at this point?
- Zellerbach: No, we don't let the press come in and sit and listen. It's informal, so it doesn't come under the Brown Act. If it came under the Brown Act, if it was formal, then it would have to be open. This has nothing to do with the Brown Act. So we can meet and talk all we want without worrying. The only way you can have a private meeting today, you know, under the Brown Act, is if you're talking compensation. Otherwise it must be open to the public.
- Nathan: How do you feel about this?
- Zellerbach: At the Art Commission, there's nothing secret there. I think six is a quorum. Three is not a quorum. So three of us can meet without any problem. The minute you have four, then you have a meeting and it's open to the public.
- Nathan: I see. Thinking again about this inter-group organization, about how long do you estimate it would take to be set up?
- Zellerbach: Well, we have it all set up now. The only thing is, we have to start meeting, and organize our programs and what we want to do. You need to get the ideas to the other fellows, and they have to sift them down, and see how they're going to operate. Probably, like all these things, they operate with different committees, different areas. You'll have a committee on the Neighborhood Arts; you may have a committee on music; you may have a committee on painting, or you may have a committee on any area. Then they report to the whole group. Then there is the question of how often you have to meet, and matching up budgets. Which agency is going to apply for the money, in order to do the work?

Nathan: And you think that the facilities will get better use this way?

Zellerbach: If they don't, then we have a lot of bums working for the city. I don't think we have. It's a very good team. I think it should work out, because it's to the best interests of all concerned. After all, the city is spending almost \$11 million on the arts now, the arts and related things. The museums are costing them \$18 million, and then the Chief Administrative Officer is spending now I guess over \$1 million hotel tax on the arts, or things relating to it. Then, they have the schools, the libraries. Joe Paul figured it for me. Even the supervisors didn't realize how much the city was spending on the arts.

They maintain the Opera House, and they get \$450 a performance of the Symphony and the Opera.

Nathan: Is that all?

Zellerbach: That's all. The Symphony has a lien on everything in the Opera House, so they go in there for three nights. They can put something else in, but they can't put it in if the Symphony wants the time. If they bring in a big company like the Bolshoi, you can't keep them there for four days waiting to get back into the Opera House for three. So, today, now with the Symphony, the new contract, they're putting up the length of the orchestra service to forty-nine weeks. It's only a matter of time before it'll be fifty-two. Of course part of that is taken by the Opera. The Opera wants more time too. They'd like a longer season. You'll notice that when the Opera closed one week, they closed on a Saturday night, or a Sunday night, and the Symphony opened the following Wednesday. Then the Symphony closes in June; the regular season closes in May, probably they'll extend it. Then the Opera already would like to start rehearsals, in June or July. Anyway, we need new halls so that the Opera can rehearse someplace else. They don't know where. And if they do, it costs them money, and they don't have the money, and they'll go broke, and it's the old story. There's always the little internecine fighting going on.

Nathan: Right. Well, maybe this cooperative group can help a little.

Zellerbach: There's no question about it. It's going to be a great help. It can really be revolutionary, in the handling of, not only the arts and related activities, but also any exhibition of any kind, any entertainment of any kind, not only in art. After all, look at the money the public's put up for Candlestick Park. Now they're going to build a new Sports Arena.

Nathan: Oh really? I missed that.

Zellerbach: Down on Yerba Buena. Candlestick Park, when the football team doesn't practice there, they use it once a week, not every week. They have nine home games. The baseball season runs from April till October, but 50 percent of the time they're not there. They're on the road.

Nathan: Too bad the Opera can't rehearse at Candlestick! [Laughter]

Zellerbach: There you are. You've got a \$25 million facility out there that has practically no other uses.

Nathan: Now, do you foresee that this inter-agency group would set priorities for development of new facilities?

Zellerbach: Well, they would certainly discuss them; they couldn't rule. Every agency is still independent, because everybody guards spending of his own money. As far as saying whether they can build or not, that's not our business. You can't tell the Redevelopment Agency what they're going to build. They have the money and they're the ones that have to make the decision. In the meantime, after it's built, then sometimes the city has to take over and manage it, run it. Like the War Memorial Board runs the old Opera House, and the War Memorial. Any time they build a park, all these mini-parks have to be taken care of by the Park and Rec. When they build a Plaza down here, and if it has any greens in it, or flowers, they have to take care of that. That's a big operation.

We've worked with the school department, who is very happy to let us use their auditoriums at the various schools, when the schools are not in session. The schools aren't in session on the weekends, and they aren't running at night. They have vacations. There are quite a few of the schools that have very good facilities, especially some of the newer ones.

Zellerbach: Mission High has a very good auditorium. I haven't seen the new Lowell auditorium, but I assume that must be pretty good.

Nathan: Has Neighborhood Arts gone to those auditoriums yet, or are you just considering it?

Zellerbach: No, we haven't gone into them, because that's up to those that are doing it, if they want to go in. For example, the San Francisco Ballet was put on last spring season out at the college. They have a wonderful facility out there, you see. Here you have this Palace of Fine Arts theater, with a thousand seats, sitting there idle. One of their troubles is the stage isn't big enough for ballet. It's a question of the hangings. It was built for motion pictures. They did use that for the picture festival. Since then, no one's used it. The Ballet has used it a few times, but it wasn't too successful, because they can't put the whole Ballet on the stage. The Ballet now is in the Opera House, and they're doing very well.

To have a building approved, they have to go through the Planning Commission, the Art Commission, and for example they have to go through Public Works and they have to go through the electrical department. If you build a private building you don't have to do that. All you do is have it approved by the Planning Commission. When you build a public building, you have something else again.

Nathan: It's sort of sad that all these groups are underfinanced.

Zellerbach: Of course, everybody's underfinanced. It's chronic.

Nathan: I'm interested also in what you said earlier about the inter-agency group in the city. They have been dealing with this question of the center?

Zellerbach: We're just getting that started. That's the second thing that's coming from the original study. In the original study you'll find that they wanted this inter-agency group. But the trouble is when you make this official, you're dealing with too many city agencies.

For example, there's the city level and the state level and then you'd be dealing with the school districts and by the time you try to change the law, you may as well forget it.

Zellerbach: Because people hate to give up what they have. So, the answer is cooperation. Now, if this was to be a governmental function, you couldn't have a group like the Symphony because it's private.

Nathan: Right. So, it's both governmental and private.

Zellerbach: Yes. So, the only way we could do it was to make it voluntary. The mayor is the head of it and this is the official policy of the city. So, when he says they all come to a meeting, they all come. As long as we have the mayor and he's all for it, that gives it status. Then, after it gets organized and going I don't care who the mayor is, it's beyond him to do anything except to help it because if he doesn't then he starts to get himself into trouble politically.

Committee on Activities Sponsors a Festival

Zellerbach: We've had two meetings now, the whole group, and we're going to have another one probably in March. We have three committees. One is facilities, one is finance, and the other activities. The first thing is, they're going to put on a big show out at the Civic Center with young people's schools, and children from four to eight or ten, with primarily the work that Ruth Asawa has been doing, plus what the Neighborhood Arts have been doing.

It's going to be a festival, with all the facets: paintings, sculpture, everything that the kids have been doing. This is being organized by one of the committees, the committee on activities, which is headed by Mr. Bill Roth.

And the facilities committee, we had a meeting with them just a week ago talking about this whole [Performing Arts] complex and as well as the Neighborhood Arts and what they can do. Therefore, we involve all of them and they say that they're all for it or all against it. If we get Allan Jacobs coming out and saying, "Well, this is a lot of hogwash, you don't need this. This is in the wrong place. The planning commission doesn't want to approve it," then you're in trouble. So, the answer is you put them on your team right away.

Ruth Asawa and School Board Policy

Zellerbach: And you have Ruth Asawa, who got into the schools. She did it herself. She had quite an article in the San Francisco magazine, The Chamber, the Chamber of Commerce magazine last month. She's done enough there, and that's the first money and first recognition she's had from the school board (for \$35 thousand) for school projects.

That means now that this is the school board's policy. So, instead of fighting to get in they acknowledged that she's done the work. See that? (A wall plaque of Ruth Asawa's "dough" work.)

Nathan: Oh yes. 55. Is that for your wedding anniversary?

Zellerbach: Yes. That's Ruth Asawa's gift to my wife and me.

Nathan: It's really delightful.

DEVELOPMENTS RE: ART COMMISSION, THE SENIOR CITIZENS'
CENTER, AND OTHER QUESTIONS
(Interview X, January 28, 1972)

Zellerbach: Yesterday I was on the phone for over an hour and a half to different people.

Nathan: What were you trying to accomplish?

Zellerbach: This was all on the Senior Citizens' building. The Leroy Vane bequest. The question of location. There's a hassle going on between the elderly people and Park and Rec. We have letters every day again now, that they don't want the Senior Center located at Sixth Avenue. And the Park Commission says they have a lot of people who say they want it there, which is par for the course. It's usually fifty-fifty, you see. The Civic Design Committee of the commission are not unanimously against it, but the majority are against the location.

Nathan: In the park?

Zellerbach: Yes. Of course there's a question under the charter as to whether the Art Commission has the authority to say where the location is. Our power is that we have jurisdiction over the design of the buildings, and the landscaping and the plotting of the building. But whether or not we can dictate the location, that's another story. The Art Commission can hold the thing up, not by saying they don't like the location, but under our rules, any designs for public buildings are to be submitted in three stages. The first stage is the preliminary drawings, and plot plans, so that they don't get into a lot of expense in making definitive drawings and then have them thrown out.

Zellerbach: Then if the Civic Design Committee approves, they go to the second phase. The second phase usually is partial working drawings, so that they can still make changes if necessary, but the plotting, placing of the building, is usually fixed. When the second phase comes, they may have some changes in entrances or things of that kind, you know; circulation and traffic and parking come up, when you're designing a public building.

Back to Phase One

Nathan: Have you had phase two?

Zellerbach: Oh no. This is phase one. Phase one was up once before and we disapproved it. Now they're bringing phase one back again, and I don't think there've been any changes. They haven't done anything as far as following suggestions of the Civic Design Committee. There's a big discussion, and no unanimity of opinion. For example, they're putting this building up, and they only have ten parking spaces. The senior citizens think they should have more parking spaces.

When they started to take soil tests, they found there was a very large water main that runs right under the building site. Which would mean that they're going to have to spend a lot of money to protect the water main, and to make it available, in case anything happens to it. So that's another thing that they're all disturbed about. That'll raise the cost of the building substantially, just getting the protection of that water main. Or they'd have to move the water main.

At 36th Avenue there's the old police academy that's now being used for senior citizens. There's a lot of parking and a big area there. It's quite popular. A great many of the senior citizens would like to see them rehabilitate this and enlarge it, you see. They can put in 10,000 more square feet and make it a real center for them, with parking and everything else.

Then you have a group that thinks it ought to be in the downtown area someplace.

Nathan: By the terms of the Vane bequest, could you take that money and rehabilitate the other building?

Zellerbach: Some say we can't and some say we can. They can call the whole complex by this man's name. There was a question that the grant stated that he would prefer it in the park, but it wasn't fixed that it had to go in the park. The Park Commission is resting on that, that because he wanted it in the park, it should be in the park.

The public's raising hell if we take anything away from the park grounds, for buildings, because after all, it doesn't cost anything. The land is there, so a lot of people in the government say, "Well, let's put it in the park." They're not putting any more monuments in the park. They haven't in some years now. Of course that can change with a new Park Commission. There's nothing against it by law.

This is going to be the hassle on Monday. I've advised the president of the Park and Rec that I wouldn't have it come up on Monday, because, I say, "You're going to have it come up on Monday, you'll have nothing but a hell of a fight, and you're going to be licked." He says, "Well, we know we might be, but we've all decided, 'Let's find out one way or another.'" I said, "You've already found out. All you're doing is coming back for more."

Nathan: Is this Di Grazia?

Zellerbach: Yes. He's a nice guy. I'm trying to coach him a little bit. Knowing the attitudes there, for me to go out there and try to jam this thing through, I can't put myself in that position. I have at times jammed things through, but not of such consequence as this. The only time I pushed something through was against Mr. Taliaferro.

Nathan: Oh, really?

Zellerbach: Well, I haven't seen you since Taliaferro. This was before Christmas. His first meeting. He was put on the board as a music member.

Nathan: A member of the Art Commission?

Artists Selling in the Streets

Zellerbach: Yes. So I said, "What did he ever play?" to the mayor. He's a young Black. He likes to talk. I think he has a program on NBC on Sunday. It follows some--what is it? The "discussion of the week" or one of those national programs. And of course at his first meeting, he started to say that we should pass a resolution endorsing the right of the artist to sell in the streets.

That was the first day I met him. After he got through talking, I said, "Well, we're in no position to take any action today. This is in the hands of the police department. The law is against it. We're not here taking sides unless we know more about it." So I said to him, "If you want to, you go ahead. Go to the police department, go to the Downtown Association, and get the facts of the matter. And at the next meeting you can come in and make a report."

The next meeting, he comes in with a long "whereas," you know, a resolution. "Whereas. . .whereas. . ." All about the poor artists. And we should go on record urging the supervisors and the mayor to let the artists sell on the streets. So he said the mayor has already come out and said they could. Temporarily, you remember, right before Christmas, he let them stay in certain spots, and they were testing in court, too. Of course the police won the case. It's a police right that they had to get a permit before they could sell. Then they threatened to arrest them all. You read it in the paper, I'm sure, so I'm not going to repeat that.

I guess it was at the January meeting, right after the holidays, he brought this resolution in, saying what the mayor had said. He had a young lawyer there too. I advised the commission that we shouldn't take a position. We were a public body, and we were all working under the mayor, we were all his appointees, and we had no right to take a position that would embarrass the mayor. And I wanted to know what his position was, whether he favored it, or didn't favor it.

So I got a big argument, and the attorney said, "I had a long conversation with the mayor. I can tell you, the mayor approves this. This is what the mayor wants. We don't have to wait." And he started to make a speech. So I let him go

Zellerbach: for a few minutes, and I said, "Now, wait a minute. The mayor told you. That's fine. He didn't tell me. Till he tells me, I'm still going to recommend that we lay this on the table until I see the mayor and come back with his official policy. I will report what his official policy is at the next meeting."

The commission followed my advice on a move to lay it on the table for the next meeting, when I would bring in a report. Of course Taliaferro voted no. My good friend, Ruthie Asawa, she voted no! [Laughing] Which is really understandable, with Ruthie, if you know her.

Nathan: No, I don't, yet.

Zellerbach: Ruthie's an artist. She did this sculpture right up here.

Nathan: Oh, this lovely tied-wire on the wall?

Zellerbach: Yes, that's one of hers.

Nathan: That is beautiful.

Zellerbach: Yes. I think it's very lovely. She even made a six-pointed star for me.

Nathan: Right! A sunburst with a six-pointed star. That's lovely.

Zellerbach: She is a complete artist herself. She's married to an architect and has children. She's a little thing. She's sweet, and she's naive. After the meeting was over, she came and she says, "I guess you're mad at me, because I voted against you." I said, "No, I'm not mad at you, Ruthie. You vote the way you want. The only thing is that you don't use your brains. You're too emotional. Once in a while you should stop and think, and reason." She says, "Well, you know me." I said, "Yes, I know you. If I didn't know you, I wouldn't love you."

Commission Stands on City Problems

Nathan: Now, is it your view that a commission should not take a position until you know what the mayor's view is?

Zellerbach: On a city problem of that kind. We take stands on a great many things that have nothing to do with the mayor. We're taking positions all the time on buildings and landscaping. But when it comes to a policy, a thing of this kind, which is against the law, I say we have no business taking a stand until we know what the policy of the city is.

Nathan: So you felt that it was not primarily a question of art, or the Art Commission, but it was in another area?

Zellerbach: It was in another area. I agree that artists should have a place to display their wares, but it should be in conformity with the law. We did have a place for them. We had a place down on one of the piers, called the Silver Market. It was going along quite successfully. The artists ran it themselves. Neighborhood Arts helped them get it started. Then after a few months, I think they were either going to tear the pier down, or they wanted the space there for the Harbor Commission, so they had to get out. Then they found another area. It was in one of the redevelopment areas, and they were in that for a while, until it came time to tear the building down. So then they were out of that, and they had no place to go.

We could take a stand that we agree, the artist should have a place to display. But not against the law.

Nathan: Is it your thought that the Art Commission will probably help them find a more permanent place?

Zellerbach: Well, they are. The mayor has already designated certain streets for them. You see, the mayor is making this decision on the fact that he thinks it lends more charm to the city and intrigues a lot of the visitors, like the cable cars and those musicians that were playing.

In the number of years that I've been in politics, one of the things that I feel is, if I'm working for the mayor, he's my boss, and my job is to protect him as much as I can. Now, if he makes a lot of damnfool decisions, that's not my business. It's his. I can holler at him after he's done it.

CONTINUING DEVELOPMENTS RE: INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL

Nathan: I wanted to remember to ask you about this inter-agency meeting. How did that go?

Zellerbach: It went very well. Everybody approved it and we're going right ahead with it now. We had a very good lunch. We had everybody there except one.

Nathan: That's amazing.

Zellerbach: I thought it was excellent, because the meeting was called with only a week's notice. Showed the interest in it.

Nathan: How many people were there?

Zellerbach: I think there were around twenty-one or twenty-two.

Official Policy and a Voluntary Organization

Zellerbach: The mayor called the meeting, and he's the one that chaired the meeting. I didn't chair it. We paid for it.

Nathan: You mean the Zellerbach Family Fund paid for it?

Zellerbach: Sure. But through the city, you see. We make the contribution to the city. So we have all the city agencies that deal with spending money on any area in the arts.

Nathan: What is happening now?

Zellerbach: Well, now everybody's agreed that we should go ahead on a voluntary basis, on an informal basis. We're following the ordinance, what the ordinance proposed. It said the president of the Art Commission is the chairman of the Inter-Agency. The secretary of the Art Commission is the secretary of the Inter-Agency. The first thing, we've asked everybody to send in the budgets of what they spend on the arts. That goes for performing, and also for painting and dance and sculpture, or anything pertaining to the arts. Literature, or poetry.

We're now working on that, and as soon as we get that compiled, find out just what everybody is spending and just what areas they're interested in, either the mayor will call another meeting or I'll call it, and then present the composite. At that time, we'll start to implement it by probably appointing committees of interest. In that way we can start to coordinate.

The Art Commission and the Park and Rec have already had one meeting. We developed a point that they have a great many facilities, but they have no money to make use of them. They have a director for each facility, but he has no money to spend on doing anything.

Neighborhood Arts and Park and Rec

Zellerbach: The first reaction from the head of the Park Department was, "We've got all these. We can cooperate. We'll supply the facilities, and you supply the activity."

Nathan: That makes sense. Now would something like Neighborhood Arts be able to use their facilities?

Zellerbach: Yes. Neighborhood Arts are to supply the activity.

Nathan: Wonderful!

Zellerbach: Which is wonderful for us, see, because now we can cooperate with them and they'll give us places to perform, and areas in the parks and mini-parks. They can take the credit, and we'll put on the performances. Because they have the money to spend and it's recreation, basically. The Neighborhood Arts Program



Zellerbach: belongs in the Park and Rec. Eventually if we can get this thing developed far enough, I would recommend that it go to the Park and Rec, if they can properly organize. Everyone in Park and Rec practically is in civil service. You can't run a neighborhood arts program with civil servants.

Need for Independent Contractors

Zellerbach: The civil service, under the civil service laws, is organized so that it just won't work. They have to do just the way we've done, to make independent contractors out of them. You see, today the Art Commission contracts with every member of the staff. The workers said, "Well, we have no social security, we have no health and welfare." I said, "There's no reason at all why we can't work something out." Which we did.

We worked out social welfare benefits. I know we worked out the health coverage with one of these--I think Blue Cross or one of these agencies. The way we worked it, was that whatever it cost, we would increase their pay by that amount. They would have to pay it directly, themselves. We couldn't pay it. The same thing with social security. So in that way, we made them all happy.

You know, the kind of employees we have: they're so heterogeneous a group. You're liable to find anything, you know. You were at the meeting. You met Eric. Now, Eric was dressed very well.

Nathan: I thought the presentations were just excellent. You're speaking of Eric Reuther?

Zellerbach: Yes. Eric Reuther. He had his little pigtail, but I thought he looked very presentable.

Nathan: Oh, absolutely.

Zellerbach: He's a very fine young fellow. After all, that's the way he likes to dress. You know that when he's coming up to a meeting like that, that he would put on the best he had. I looked at his shoes. His shoes were practically new. He had a nice pair of pants on. His vest was nice and clean. The only thing, he didn't have a tie on.

Nathan: No, but he had a rather nice ornament, and that's the style now.

Zellerbach: Yes, he had all the decorations. It looked like he had--the thing in the center looked like it was the Ten Commandments. I don't know whether you noticed it or not.

Nathan: [Laughter] Yes, I did, but I thought it looked like an Oriental charm of some sort, in a metal holder.

Zellerbach: It was metal.

Nathan: Buddhist, maybe?

Zellerbach: I don't know what it was. It looked to me like it was the Ten Commandments, because it had two tops, and then it had writing up and down. I didn't get close enough to see if it was Hebrew or not. But anyway, he makes a very good impression, and you can't deny it.

We've been working on this Inter-Agency plan now for four years. It has taken time. The Arts Resources Study was made in 1966. You have a copy and you've read it. Now, almost everything that's being done has come out of that report.

Nathan: Yes, that was really a fine job.

Zellerbach: Sure. This has all been done under that general study. Thinking of what has happened here in this city as a result of this, and the leadership that the Zellerbach Family Fund has taken in this area, personally I feel very pleased.

Nathan: You have managed to get things moving, and that's very exciting.

Zellerbach: When we start to get a little competition, in the Neighborhood Arts, you see, the boys started to holler, "We've got a lot of competition. Everybody's doing the same thing." So I said to them, "What's the difference? The more the merrier. Get them all in. Makes it much easier on the whole to get money." Because you can't get a politician to do anything unless he knows the public wants it. That's the first thing you have to know in politics: votes. If something you're doing will get a guy votes, he's for it. In three or four years the whole country will be arts conscious, and you'll be getting much more support from all public agencies.

Zellerbach: You really can't kick at San Francisco, because I think they've supported the arts right along, in more ways than one, ways that don't show. As I said before, the Opera and the Symphony get the use of the Opera House at \$400 a performance. Well, that doesn't even clean it up any more, pay for maintenance, you see. If anyone else comes in, they have to pay anywhere from \$1000 to \$2000 a performance, plus five or ten percent on the gross over a certain amount. Sometimes, they get a run, for example on the Russian ballet, they could get a run of around \$3 or \$4 or \$5000 a night.

Now, they're each getting \$200,000 a year out of the hotel tax. And then you have the two museums, which are costing the city almost \$1,800,000 to maintain. That's not chickenfeed. You have the library. The school department spends well over \$1 million on their arts program. We counted up, and it was over \$10 million that they've all been putting out. The Art Commission--we were the beggars. We've always been the beggars. We've been the tail of the dog. But I think we're getting in a position, we're not tailing so much any more.

I think the Art Commission has some standing in the community. Everybody respects it, I hope. That's what I've tried to do. Any of the mayors I've been under, I've tried to advise them on their appointments, to keep these political hacks off.

A LUNCH MEETING ON GROUP THERAPY

Zellerbach: This phone call had to do with affairs of the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Dripps, he's one of the outstanding anesthesiologists in the country. He's out here on a year's sabbatical, working at the University of California hospital on research. I'm getting together a lunch party. He's going to be there and so is Mike Friedman, and I hope Joe Sloss, the president of Mount Zion, and the new superintendent out there will meet him first, because it's a courtesy, and the second reason is, the University is doing things at the hospital with a lot of doctors in on the same case. That way they're getting the patients in and out of the hospital a lot faster, and they're saving the University a lot of money.

Nathan: At UC?

Zellerbach: No, Pennsylvania. I asked Dripps if he'd talk to them [at Mt. Zion Hospital]. He said, yes, he'd be happy to.

I said, "I think you'd better take advantage of him while this man is out here. You can learn something, and you may save yourself some money. Whether you do it or not is your business. I think it's for your own benefit." So I finally got them together. They're all coming up to the table, and then they'll adjourn and they'll meet and talk, whatever they want. I want to get them acquainted and let them arrange for a further meeting. So I invited a lot of others, you know, some of the boys at the table. Call them up and get them up there, so it's kind of a mixed group, you know. Talk about everything--politics, women, baseball, football, anything.

Nathan: That's a very fine idea.

NEWHOUSE FOUNDATION

Nathan: A little earlier this morning we were saying something about the Newhouse Foundation. Is this one of your interests?

Zellerbach: Yes. The Newhouse Foundation, you know, is a charitable foundation.

Nathan: Is it a private foundation?

Zellerbach: Yes, it's a private foundation, started by Arthur Newhouse, one of the Newhouse brothers. I think it's been in being now probably--oh, I'd estimate maybe fifteen years. Colonel Tyler, who is a lawyer for the Newhouse brothers, was the one who organized this. The will made the grant.

Nathan: Were the Newhouse brothers businessmen?

Zellerbach: Will was a lawyer, and Arthur--he was the baby--he just lived on income. He used to work for my uncle, Julius Gabel, who was a salesman in the printing business. I remember when he worked for him. There was another brother. I don't think any of them married, so they had no heirs.

Arthur, the young one, was the last of them. When he died, he left the whole estate to the Newhouse Foundation, to do certain things. Colonel Tyler was the lawyer, so he incorporated, and the will stipulated that there were three areas of interest. A third of the income was to go for scholarships to the University of California and Stanford each, on a fifty-fifty basis. And a third of the income was to go preferably to people who were temporarily embarrassed for money, particularly the white collar, if they didn't want to go to public charities. In this area he felt they could do quite a good job. Well, we couldn't find too many of the white collar people. We got a few. We

Zellerbach: spent quite a bit of money on operations, and things of that kind, which they couldn't afford. But they didn't want to go on a charitable basis. We used to get them through the Family Service Agency. They used to recommend individuals, so they used to make the grants to the individuals. Then under the new law, the '69 Revenue Act, private foundations cannot make grants to individuals.

The third area is incorporated charitable institutions that are Jewish. And all the individual contributions have to be Jewish. They can't make grants beyond the fifty-mile zone of San Francisco.

Representation on the Board

Zellerbach: We started out with about \$1,100,000, and the fund is valued now at around \$5 million from appreciation of securities and properties that they had in it. When Tyler died, I became the president. I've been the president ever since. Can't get anybody else to take it, so I get re-elected every year by acclamation. I always say, "Doesn't somebody else want this job? I've had it long enough."

Nathan: How many are on the board?

Zellerbach: The will provides that the University of California has a representative, the Stanford University has a representative, there are two representatives from Temple Emanu-El, two representatives from Sherith Israel, and then they have community members of no particular affiliation. Let's see. There's one, two, three, four. There are four community members. I'm one of them. I was from Emanu-El, and then when Tyler died, they put me in Tyler's place as a public member, and Louis Heilbron succeeded me as a member from the Temple.

I have four committees. One for the universities, one for the individuals, one for the organizations, and then a finance committee. We meet probably three or four times a year at the call of the chair. We have regular meeting days, but there's not enough business to get them all to come in, so usually there are two or three meetings. One is usually late in November or early December, in order to make the final grants

Zellerbach: so that we spend all the income. And then we usually have a meeting in January to elect the new officers and make preliminary grants for the year, so that the committees have money to spend. Then we don't have a meeting until we have some business to attend to. I usually call a meeting around May, before summer starts. Then I probably won't call another meeting until maybe October, or maybe not 'til November.

Regulations on Foundation Grants

Nathan: Do you find the requirements rather limiting? That is, the way the fund is administered?

Zellerbach: Well, yes. There's a limit of \$5000 but we had a court ruling that we could spend 15 percent of the corpus and all the income. When he made his will, he figured that there would be about \$75,000 of income on a million dollars. Which is pretty good return on a million. Each committee was allotted \$25,000. Today our income's around \$250,000 or \$260,000. So we couldn't be limited. Especially under today's law, you have to get rid of it all.

Nathan: All the income has to be spent?

Zellerbach: Even before, you had to get rid of all the income. So then we had to go to court to get the court to give us the power to spend the money. We've done quite a bit of good work, especially with the universities, and also with the organizations. They're usually the same.

Foundation Policy

Zellerbach: We hired Sanford Treguboff last year as a consultant, so that Treguboff would review what we're giving the organizations, having known all of them. At the end of the year, we had to give it away so anybody who was around got money. Treg has straightened all that out for us, so we're in much better shape.

Zellerbach: All the directors are getting a little old. One of them you heard me talking about was Dan Koshland. Dan sent in his resignation because he thinks that younger people should be on the board. Get away and let the young ones get in. Well, the young ones--that means in their fifties.

Nathan: [Laughing] Of course!

Zellerbach: I don't disagree with him a hundred percent. Although your husband disagrees with him.

Nathan: He does?

Zellerbach: Yes. Of course in business, it's different, but in this area he feels that they get some of their best men when they retire at sixty-five. They're still very active and very mentally alert, and they shouldn't retire just because they're sixty-five or seventy-two. It's a question of mental agility and physical ability.

I can see Dan's point. I think if you're on too many of these things you ought to get off. I've been trying to get off of quite a few.

I'm on the Laguna Honda Board, but I attend very few meetings. We got it organized and started and financed. I've been on too long. Every time it comes up I say, "Please leave me off," but I can't stay off because of Jerry Simon, who's the originator and the founder of it. As long as he's alive, we have to stay on for his sake. That's one.

And the Ballet Guild. I've been trying to get off of that. I think I'm on the way to getting off it, because now Stephen is the president. He said, "Now, you've got to stay and help me." I said, "Oh, I'll stay for a year, Steve, and then after that I'm getting off. You don't need two Zellerbachs on the Ballet board. You're running it." It's time he takes over to do these things.

Then when they get this consolidation of the two museums, I'll probably get off of that too. I'll hold a few things, like the Zellerbach Family Fund, and I may still stick on the Art Commission for a while yet. Just enough to keep me out of trouble.

TEMPLE EMANU-EL
(Interview XI, November 17, 1972)

Zellerbach: Temple Emanu-El, haven't we talked about that before?

Nathan: No, we haven't. Just one allusion to it, but no story about the Temple Emanu-El part of your life.

Rabbi Reichert

Nathan: You had mentioned that you came on the board of directors of the temple when Newman was rabbi, and when Irving Reichert succeeded him. Then after being off the board for seven or eight years, you came back as president of the congregation. After Reichert became Rabbi Emeritus, didn't you have something to do with finding Alvin Fine?

Rabbi Fine

Zellerbach: Yes, we went out looking for a new rabbi. I had scoured around getting names of all the other rabbis that I'd met during the first couple of years I was in office. I went to several cities to hear different rabbis.

Bob Koshland was a captain in the Army out in the Burma-China area. I was sitting talking to Dan in his office and Bob was in there and he was listening to the conversation when we were going over rabbis. He said, "I have a rabbi for you. If you can get him you're getting the best in the business."

Zellerbach: He told us the story of his acquaintance with Alvin Fine. Alvin was the chaplain of the regiments out there when Bob Koshland was there. We found that Alvin was the executive secretary of Nelson Glueck, who was the president of the Hebrew Union College. I went back and met Alvin and Nelson and all the rest of them. He, Alvin, came out to talk to the committee and meet the people. You know his voice and the way he preaches.

I had a hell of a time getting him because of a lot of other congregations competing for him, Chicago congregations and several others. Alvin was born in Portland and liked the Pacific Coast. Nelson Glueck was the man who had to consent to release him, so I got pretty well acquainted with Nelson. I blame the Hebrew Union College for taking boys in to make rabbis out of them without those psychological tests to see whether they want it as a job or as a profession or a calling. There are a lot of them, as you know, rabbis that are professionals. They get the job and it pays and once you get in there you're pretty secure.

We finally got the terms, and they consented to let Alvin come out to San Francisco. He went to work and he was there seventeen years. I was the president the first five years of his tour of duty. I was with him his first few years, trying to guide him, and of course he won everybody right away. Our membership commenced to build up and eventually, after I left, over a period of time we then peaked out at around, I think, 1200 children in the Sunday school, and we had around 1200 or 1300 members. We had big confirmation classes. Instead of a confirmation class of four and five we had confirmation classes of over 100 to 125. And in Sunday school we went up to over 1000.

We raised a lot of money because the temple had gone into a little disrepair. We needed money to fix the acoustics, which you know were very bad. Now we've had them fixed. I was in there for all of that.

My successor was Morty Fleishhacker, Jr. When Morty took the office, I bowed out. My record still stands and I'm still respected out there and my opinion is still respected. I'm still one of the board members. I haven't paid any attention to the temple except when I see something I don't like, then I'll tell the president how I feel.

Cantor Rinder

Nathan: Did you ever have very much to do with Cantor Rinder? Reuben Rinder?

Zellerbach: Oh yes. Oh sure. Robby was a great guy. He kept our temple together through all the rabbis. Robby was a typical artist. Music, of course, was his life. When I got in there one of the problems was that Alvin felt that Reuben was doing too much of the rabbi's work. He was doing a lot of the Bar Mitzvah-ing and he was reading the last prayer before you start the end of the service. The rabbi should be doing that. But he had been reading it for years. It had five stanzas and he had to sing them all, and if it had ten stanzas he had to sing them all. He had a lot of singing all the time.

So, of course, I was in between him and Alvin, and Alvin was so nice he couldn't tell him what to do. It was my department. I had to make him stop reading the prayer, I said, "That's the rabbi's prayer and you've got to stop singing so much..." And when I took the prayer away from him I thought he was going to go into a collapse. How could I do it? I said, "I'm sorry. It's the rabbi's prayer and you know it. The rabbi wants to do it. So, you're not going to do it. Don't argue with me anymore." And, of course, I got the kickbacks. How could I treat him so?

When I was the president they all knew who was the boss. Rinder had no voice at that time, but he'd sing anyway. If there was a funeral, he would do it, because eventually he took the perquisites and put them into a charity fund. But we accepted Mr. Rinder because he had been doing it for so long that he couldn't give it up. We had to ask him not to do funerals and weddings, except with the consent of the rabbi. It was never anything too serious. But in the last analysis, I wouldn't get soft and say this was all right, because after all I was too much interested developing Alvin.

And Alvin with his reputation, I guess today it is sad that he left the rabbinate, because today he would be the top rabbi in the United States. That's my opinion; the top or one of them. He was before he resigned. He had that heart attack and you know the story. I was past my regime, so that's not a part of my life.

Nathan: During the time that you were president were there a number of musical events in the temple? I remember hearing some very good organists, one from Saint Sulpice in Paris.

Zellerbach: Well, that's right. We did all kinds of things there. We tried to build up the attendance. We put on candlelight services and always had the children involved with the parents, and we did all kinds of things to get an audience.

Of course, when Reichert left we were getting 100 and 125 people on a Saturday morning.

Nathan: Would you go and count the house?

Zellerbach: Well, sure. That's one thing I did. I was there every Friday night, every Saturday morning. I attended all the meetings, even the auxiliaries; not all of them but most of them. I did a lot of pastoral work. I spent a lot of time, and I got the result. So, I feel that if I didn't do anything else I brought the temple back to its eminence. So, that's my history in Temple Emanu-El.

I still am interested. They want to appoint me on a committee. I was just out to a committee meeting, a ritual committee, because I wanted to register a complaint.

Nathan: Oh did you? What was it?

Zellerbach: These two rabbis were there and they wanted to review the Holy Day services and what they felt about it. I was on hand and I said, "Well, I'd like to talk on that subject when it's my turn." Mrs. Rogers who is the chairman said, "Well, go ahead and talk." I said, "The first thing I think is we've got too much singing in that place now. I think we're back to Cantor Rinder's time. The cantor has taken over and he's singing away all the time. He's got a good voice but I think we need something else. I think the rabbi should do more of the reading. It's not up to the cantor to read, it's up to him to sing." I was just expounding when the cantor walked in. And, of course, the rabbi got red in the face.

You know me. I said, "What I said to you I'll say right now to Portnoy and I have no feeling about it." So, I repeated it. And then they were telling me--"You may have a different audience today and maybe they demand these things." I don't

Zellerbach: know. There's a lot of Hebrew and I don't understand Hebrew and I doubt if very many people do. There are a bunch of services full of Hebrew and with all the singing in Hebrew and I can't sing in Hebrew. Sometimes when you sing the hymns are too damned long. Anyway, I had a good time. I said, "I'm just telling you how I feel and I've heard around a lot of people have complained for the same thing. You fellas know what's going on so you'd better do it." The rabbi came to the rescue.

Nathan: How about the use of assistant rabbis? Did that start during your term? Or have there always been assistants to the rabbis?

Successive Rabbis

Zellerbach: I did serve on the selection committee for Alvin's successor. And we had a hell of a time finding one. And finally we got hold of Hausman. I've known Hausman for seventeen years in Sacramento.

And he had a voice too, a trained voice, you know, and was a very nice fella. But he never made another Alvin. He had a voice that wasn't quite comparable but it was good and his sermons were good. He worked very hard. He was always available and I have no complaint about him. So, unfortunately, after his second year he took sick right after the Holy Days as you know. He got this virus or something spinal, and he was out for a year. After he came back he couldn't stand up. If he stood up he was on crutches. He couldn't do anything.

Nathan: That was sad.

Zellerbach: That was sad so, of course, it was only a question of time that they'd have to make a change, which they did. And then they got Ascher. I had nothing to do with Ascher. I was on the committee but I didn't do much. After all they were running the temple. I'd done my duty.

Building Membership

Zellerbach: Now, I've given you the important points; the rest of it is all just running the place with a lot of little incidents that happened. For example, we were out soliciting members, getting members; you know the old German group were very Reform. We were getting some people from the Conservative groups. In fact, Sherith Israel had the big membership at the time that I took office. They had mostly the Emanuel-El members over there. So, when I took office, they all started to come back.

Nathan: Was that Sol White's congregation?

Zellerbach: No, no. Goldstein's. Temple Sherith Israel. Their membership started to go down and ours started to go up. Especially when we got Alvin, then we moved up in a hurry.

I said to get members, get members. Some of them came and a lot of the older people when they come for the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, were Orthodox and they came in their yarmulkas and their hats on and prayer shawls and they'd get up in the pulpit. In deference to his grandparents the boy would have a prayer shawl on and a yarmulka and all the old Germans would say, "What! Are we going back to Orthodoxy?" I had to answer that.

I said, "Listen. This is a temple. It's open to anybody. If he's a good Jew and pays his dues, if he wants to wear his hat or take it off or wear a yarmulka or anything else I don't care. With all the German Jews, their children are marrying Gentiles and we're losing them all the time because they don't want to be Jews. As far as I'm concerned if this temple was to be viable you must have members. And as long as they're good citizens and good Jews we'll take them." That ended that. I used to get that kind of stuff all the time, and complaints. My answer was always the same. I said, "Well, how often do you come to temple? Twice a year? Once maybe you come and you see your kids getting Bar Mitzvah or you come by on Holy Days and you see these people wearing their yarmulkas. Supposing they wear a yarmulka? Is it going to upset you? It is? Well, I'm sorry."

But that all passed. That was the kind of thing we got into.

Nathan: This big change came after World War II?

Open Seating

Zellerbach: Oh yes. One thing we did which I think was very significant, had to do with the seats. When we build a temple we sell seats. A lot of the oldtimers passed away and left their seats to the temple. The children weren't picking them up.

As a consequence we studied the whole situation. We talked about the fact that there were no more seats to be sold. The temple would own all the seats. The present owners would die off and nobody would pick up their seats and we would take them. Now, if their children want to buy their seats or take them over then you can't do anything about it because they own them. So, as a consequence we cut out selling seats. And right now I asked to get a check to see how many seats are owned and there were very few left. They were talking about open seating. First come, first served, as they do in churches. Well, I think the judgment right at the moment, at the meeting I went to, was that that's a little too soon yet. What I suggested was, why don't you run this like a theater? If they want seats down in front, charge them more than the ones in the back. Anyway, I didn't press that one. I was just giving them a suggestion on how to get more money.

But anyway, eventually the temple should have open seating. It takes time but we'll get there. That was one of the reforms that we put in. I think that's about enough on that subject, unless you have any questions.

The Rabbi's Job

Nathan: One that may or may not interest you. Do you feel that the rabbi as the rabbi of Temple Emanu-El should be a prominent person in the community and should participate in civic events? How do you feel about the job of the rabbi?

Zellerbach: Well, the job of the rabbi is to represent the Jewish people. It's his congregation. But inasmuch as Emanu-El is a top congregation, we want our rabbi to be at all the public events. And he's the one to do the invocations. Fortunately, being president of the Art Commission, as soon as I got Alvin, he was settled and was getting the reputation. I went around to

Zellerbach: the mayor's office when the mayor had an event where they wanted a rabbi. I said, "You call up Alvin Fine first." So, that's what they did. When Alvin went to these things, he really charmed them all every time he spoke or gave an invocation or prayer. The Gentiles all around him all said that this was the greatest person here. Well, he still has that reputation. He's invited all over.

Nathan: In a way it's a big demand for a rabbi to be the "shepherd of the flock" and still do all this public act.

Zellerbach: Well, that's right. You see, one of your troubles is to get the rabbi to do pastoral work because it's a seven day job, twenty-four hours a day. That was one of the things that Alvin wouldn't do. Rinder used to do all that. When they got the assistant rabbi it was up to him to do all that. But now they have a permanent rabbi at Mount Zion.

Nathan: That does make a difference, doesn't it?

Zellerbach: Yes. But the rabbis do come around. When people are there they usually show up. When I was there they all came. I had them from every temple.

Nathan: Is that right? That ought to make you feel very secure.

Zellerbach: As soon as they found I was in there, I got them all. Those I couldn't see left their calling card; I felt very pleased.

Nathan: You were saying earlier that because of his liberal views some people were criticizing Alvin?

Zellerbach: When Alvin Fine was the rabbi there during the early stages of his rabbinate he was pretty liberal, and I had some complaints from some of his members that they thought he was almost a commie. So, one day I took Alvin to lunch and talked to him because I had heard him before preach about how religion and communism do not go together. So, under the circumstances I knew he couldn't be a communist. Nobody that believes in God can be a communist. I suggested that he give a sermon on it. He advertised it, and we had practically a full house. After he preached that sermon that laid the ghost and there was no talk about him being a commie after that.

DEVELOPMENT RE: PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
(Interview XII, December 8, 1972)

Nathan: Shall we talk about new developments in the Center for the Performing Arts?

Zellerbach: Do you know how far we'd gotten the last time?

Nathan: There was some discussion of possibilities and an attempt to figure out how much in public funds and how much in private funds were needed.

Zellerbach: All right, we're getting very warm. The latest development is that the first thing we're going to do is to build a garage, a parking lot. And that'll be, we estimate, for 1400 cars. There's one impediment in the way of going ahead, in fact, two. The first is money. That will always be the prime impediment. And the second is that there's an old apartment house on the area we have to use for the parking lot. It's not fully occupied. We now have an option. We haven't put up the money to hold the option but there's an old gentleman that owns it. He recently had a heart attack, but he'd agreed on a price, so as soon as we can raise the money, we can buy the property.

The urgency is that the faster we get it the better, because we don't want to take chances of this fellow having a fatal heart attack. If he does, this whole thing may be hung up for a year or two while the estate goes through probate.

Nonprofit Corporation to Build a Garage

Nathan: How do you propose to raise the money to buy the property?

Zellerbach: We're organizing a nonprofit corporation that will buy the property and build a garage, and we have to have the lease from the City of San Francisco. The board of supervisors has to approve a lease either for twenty-five or thirty years. That guarantees the payments on the interest and principal of the bond issue. But first we have to raise about \$430 or \$440,000 to buy this building. We put it up to the mayor to find the money because at the beginning it won't be city property, it will belong to the nonprofit corporation. After the bonds are paid off it belongs to the city.

In fact, this whole thing will belong to the city when it's paid off, both the Performing Arts Theater and the whole complex. You know when dealing with the city government or any government, time with them doesn't mean much. The mayor is all over Hell's half acre, he's here today and gone tomorrow, unless he takes the time to really do it. We're pushing him to beat the band.

I'm leaving on January 4th and will be back around February 26th, so these fellows will have to do their own pushing. I'm moving it as fast as I can while I'm here, with the mayor. We've had a meeting with him and he's all for it. The feasibility on the garage is satisfactory. In fact, we ought to have rentals sufficient for the funding of the bonds and about a third over for profit which we will use for continuing work on the Performing Arts Center. We need to have the preparations done and the plans, because when we once start on the Performing Arts Center the plans will probably take eight months to do. So, we have to figure timing.

If we can get this garage started, then we're going to start getting the finances for the whole deal. That's not going to be as easy as the garage because the garage is feasible whether we build the theater or not. The last conversation I had with the mayor was one night at the Opera when we came down and had refreshments together. That day he had suggested to the board of supervisors that they use this money that they're getting from Washington, this extra money--

Revenue-Sharing Funds and Public Subscription

Nathan: The revenue-sharing money?

Zellerbach: Yes, the revenue sharing. He's going to put away \$1 million a year for the escrow providing that we get matching funds for it.

Nathan: Subscribed by the public?

Zellerbach: Yes. So, that was the first act. After the second act, when he came down, I had some second thoughts. I said to him, "Mr. Mayor, \$5 million is not going to be enough from the city. You're going to have to double your sights because if you only put up \$5 million you'll never get \$12 million out of the public. So, you're going to have to get another \$5 million." He says, "Next year I'll put in the other million so we'll get \$2 million a year over each five year period." If they do that, then we go out on the drive, and the city is going to have to guarantee completion because any public funds that we get will be escrowed too. It won't work unless we get this commitment from the city on the Performing Arts Center, that they will complete it. The present estimates are around I would imagine--\$18 million. But, of course, with everything escalating by the time we get out bids it may be, could be as high as \$20 or \$21 million for what we could buy today for \$18 million.

So, if the city will sub ten I think we can raise \$7 or \$8 million from private sources. And that's it. The rest has to come from the city. The public awareness is such today that I don't think we'll have any difficulty. That gets back again to the debacle of the \$39 million bond issue that they put up I think it was about 1965. And when it was beaten, it was beaten unmercifully. Now a long time has passed. In the meantime as you know we started the Neighborhood Arts Program. And that was the result, of course, of the McFadyen-Knowles report that we take the arts to the neighborhoods, as I mentioned earlier.

So, the beginning was that the Zellerbach Family Fund financed the start of it and continued to help finance it through the years. We did this, of course, primarily to get the arts to the public, to make them aware that there is something more in life than just food and clothing and shelter,

Zellerbach: that they had to have something for the mind. When we got it started, naturally we made several errors in what was needed. When we started we thought we'd have to build some structures in the neighborhoods for their own use.

Local Facilities and Expanding Activities

Zellerbach: When we originally talked about a bond issue we were putting an item in it for building facilities in the neighborhoods. But through further examination and further experience we found that that was unnecessary, that facilities of that type would not do the work that was to be done. We've since found out that a firehouse or an old theater or a school auditorium, smaller and more facilities are needed. Even going into a vacant store--that's proving itself out now.

We obtained the old theater down on 3rd Street. And we also now have the University of California facilities with the old teachers' school. We have an auditorium and a big gymnasium there and they wanted somebody to use it, but they didn't have the money or the people that could do it so they turned it over to us.

Nathan: Where is that?

Zellerbach: It's at Haight and Laguna. It's being used by all kinds of groups, theatrical, music, dance, everything. Every minute is taken. Then, we have some other facilities out in the redevelopment area. I think it's out further on Grove.

And then we have different facilities that we use for the smaller classes. We get into the YMCA's and churches. We're pretty well spread out now, and we expect to go further. We have this Inter-Agency thing now moving and the Committee on Facilities is very aware now that we must provide facilities for the Neighborhood Arts. They can be of great help because they're all civil servants, most of them. So, we believe they can be very helpful in convincing the school department to let us use the auditoriums in these schools. If we can do that we're in clover because there are so many of them sitting idle after three o'clock. This would do the work.

Zellerbach: In the meantime we've encouraged anybody that's art minded or has any facilities or is doing anything in the arts to get into the act. The more the merrier. It's snowballing now to the point that again we have to go out and raise more and more money because the demands on us are so great that we just can't handle them.

Now they are bringing up the quality of the work. This is like a school, you know. Like the universities, they only take the top twelve-and-a-half percent. Well, we're trying to make it a little more competitive from the point of view that we want the better people that know how to work. We don't disregard the others, but this is what we're working towards because in that way we get better results.

And then you have the Symphony you see, because in the schools during the summer vacation they have seminars for teaching. They're doing a good job. And then you have the Western Opera Theater that has performances for the schools. Then all of the museums have their classes and they're bringing children to the museums and they're sending works of art to the schools with the people from the museums to explain to the children what each picture is.

There's a lot more going on than I can tell you. It's come a long way. We feel that the reaction of the people as we get further into this is that we'll have a more favorable image from the general public than we did when we had the last bond issue. They are now part of it. If we can do this by a nonprofit corporation it will be a lot simpler. But, I'm just saying that if we have to go to a public bond issue it'll be the same amount that we go for with a nonprofit corporation. If we get \$10 million out of the city we have to go for about \$8 million from the public, at present figures. That's the situation now with the Performing Arts. It's on the move.

On the very day that you see the announcement in the press that the nonprofit corporation is formed for the building of the garage and we have a lease from the city, we're on the way. Because the minute that's announced, this then stimulates a push to get this Performing Arts Theater going. And there's a lot of nervousness around that since Lurie has passed away maybe the real estate on the Curran and Geary theaters is going to be so valuable that they can't afford to hold them. If they let them go, you won't have any theaters in San Francisco.

Zellerbach: In fact, there are practically none available here now because even the Lurie theaters are used practically continually, the Geary by ACT and the other by the Civic Light Opera. You'll notice there are very few outside attractions coming into the town.

And you know what's going on with the Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley. They're showing all the dance troupes, they're getting everything else because they can't come in here. Performers would probably go over there, or even if they did come in here they'd probably go there and perform too. Instead of just a few performances they'd probably be in here for a week or two. There's no place for them to go. There's no question of the urgency of a theater.

Nathan: When you speak about a theater for the Performing Arts, would there be one theater, or more than one?

Musical Acoustics

Zellerbach: There's to be one theater and it would primarily be for the Symphony. The acoustics will be musical acoustics. I say that advisedly. I haven't the last word, but I think that's what it will be because based on the studies of the outside attractions that we're using, most are light operas or ballets or outside orchestras or singers, and if they go in there with a play or two, the acoustics will have to do. If they're ballets, they have music, and if they have singers it's music, and so I think that this is the answer. I never knew that you had to have two kinds of acoustics, one for speaking and one for music. When they built Zellerbach Hall [on the Berkeley campus] it was 60-40, as I understand. And the acoustics weren't so good for music, they were better for speaking. So, we had to go in and spend another \$75 thousand to cure it and turn it into music acoustics.

The same situation holds I guess, in Philadelphia. We just had a meeting with the director of the Zellerbach Theater in Philadelphia at the university there and they've made the same mistake. They have 60 percent for speaking and 40 percent for music and it should have been reversed. In fact, it should have been for music and the speaking should have been second because with all your loudspeakers and electronic devices you can get the voice over easier than you can a hundred musicians.

Zellerbach: So, these are some of the problems that the Performing Arts Center faces.

And then comes the question: If this thing does come through, I'm sure you'll find the Opera wanting to expand its season and sooner or later somebody will build another theater here. We're expecting one to go into Yerba Buena and one is supposed to go down here in the Embarcadero Center. But it won't be built specially for live performance, it will be built more for movies. So, you might find some developer that will come along like they were doing in New York and put up a big building like this and put a theater in it. But these are thing I'm not going to worry about now. We have this one to worry about. If I ever get this completed before anything happens to me this will be my last big push.

Nathan: Then you'll have to stick around and enjoy it once it's been built.

Zellerbach: I'd like to be able to see it finished and people start going to enjoy it. I've been working on this since 1966 when the last bond issue was over. But I have a lot of assistants doing most of the work. They still look to me as the key.

Nathan: It takes leadership to get something like this going.

Zellerbach: When anything goes wrong, then I get the phone calls. And then we have meetings and we have to make decisions and I help them make the decisions. In fact, we had a meeting about what we should do about the garage. We came to the conclusion that as long as the garage was feasible we'd do that and then we'd scale down the price of the building. Instead of putting all of the facilities in at the beginning, we'd put in shells.

If they want a rehearsal hall to seat four hundred people we'd put in the shell but we won't finish it. If they want practice rooms, a certain number may be in and just enough to suit the Symphony and any outside productions, but not enough to do all the things they really wanted to do. The Opera wanted a storage place so they didn't have to move this stuff, and they wanted rehearsal halls so they could have the rehearsals going on without taking the stage of the opera house. Well, that's fine. But then we get into a building that gets up to around \$25 million, and I said, "Nothing doing." That can come later.

Zellerbach: The main object now is to put up a theater that would serve as a concert hall and have all the facilities for that and have the facilities for outside attractions without any of the furbelows and things that are needed (I don't say they are not needed, it would be very nice to do the whole thing). We just can't take the same risks that we did the last time and go out for a bond issue of \$15 million or \$20 million and have the thing kicked and defeated.

Nathan: It's exciting to see the way it's developing.

Zellerbach: You're telling me it is. I feel very good about it. At least I can put that down as an accomplishment.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
San Francisco

GEORGE R. MOSCONE

PROCLAMATION

Whereas, Harold Zellerbach, recently-appointed President Emeritus of the San Francisco Art Commission, has served the people of the City and County of San Francisco for many years, in a variety of exemplary, creative capacities, and

Whereas, these generous donations of time and energies have included 28 productive years as President of the San Francisco Art Commission, work with the National Endowment for the Arts for the benefit of San Francisco, contributions of almost \$500,000 to the San Francisco Neighborhood Arts Program through the Zellerbach Family Fund, initiation of the Family and Child Crisis Project for the Westside Community Mental Health Center, and many other worthy endeavors, and

Whereas, Harold Zellerbach has also contributed greatly to the national appreciation of the arts, through his participation in the Rockefeller Panel on the Performing Arts, and through his promotion of the concept of the Inter-Agency Council on the Arts, and

Whereas, Harold Zellerbach has, through his many achievements, notably enriched the quality of life in our City for all San Franciscans,

Now Therefore, I, George R. Moscone, do hereby proclaim Sunday, September 12, 1976, as Harold Zellerbach Day in San Francisco, and urge all San Franciscans to join with me in honoring this fine citizen.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed this twelfth day of September, nineteen hundred and seventy-six.

George R. Moscone
Mayor

LAGUNA HONDA VOLUNTEERS

Nathan: Now we'd better give you a chance to talk about the Laguna Honda Volunteers.

Zellerbach: Jerry Simon retired from the millinery business. I don't know how he got himself involved in the Laguna Honda Home for the Aged, the City Home, but he did. Everytime we were at the [lunch] table [at Trader Vic's] he was always talking about the Laguna Honda Home. He used to come and tell me his woes, that he couldn't get this and he couldn't get that for the poor people out there. They were putting on a Christmas show for them. We used to get all the acts to perform there.

He was talking to me and I said, "Well, Jerry, let's start an auxiliary, and if we get an auxiliary started they can furnish the things the city won't furnish." All the city would furnish was their home, a few terrible clothes, and care and food, and that's all. No amusements, no nothing. Just the bare essentials of life.

One day we had Harry Ross, who was the Comptroller, and he knew about it and he was interested, and we got Phil Ehrlich [Sr.] and I forget who else. We had a couple of others, and we all went out there for lunch one day to see it. I don't know if you've ever been in the place. It's much better now, but we went in there and here are all these old people sitting on benches or sitting on chairs, just sitting, waiting, waiting for death. We went into the wards and they were lying there, nothing to do, no amusements, nothing.

So, poor Phil Ehrlich seeing it, got so upset he couldn't eat. It affects you. It can't help but affect you. That was the beginning. We started to get some women interested and

Zellerbach: Jerry used to take them out and show them the place. We organized a nonprofit Laguna Honda Home Auxiliary, and then we went out and raised money, and the women appointed committees. Jerry did a great deal of the work. He'd go out and find women that were formerly hairdressers and ask them to volunteer to come in so many times a week and fix the old people's hair, wash their hair and make them feel good.

Then we started to get decent clothes for them. We provided television sets and they organized sewing bees and carpentry and painting--anything to keep them amused, and keep them with the will to live, something to live for.

They used to have solariums and there was no furniture in them, nothing. We had some of the interior decorators volunteer; one took one solarium and then furnished it so that the old people could go out there and they were in a nice room. We used some of these areas to put up the shampoo stuff, and the sewing room. And we used to give them ice cream, which they never got before, and magazines; we gathered all kinds of magazines and books. We did what the city wouldn't do.

Nathan: About when did this all start?

Zellerbach: Oh, you always give me those tough questions. It was in 1957. I've been a director since it started but I don't go to the meetings any more because I've been on long enough and I stay on because Jerry wants me to stay on. Otherwise I would have been off.

Nathan: It's a going concern?

Zellerbach: Oh yes. They have meetings--I don't know whether it's once a month or every other month--at Trader Vic's. I haven't been to a meeting in a couple of years. Well, I wouldn't say that. I went when Jerry got into a jam with some of the women so Ehrlich and I and some of his friends went up to the meeting to get the thing cooled off. The work that I did was completed. It's up to the women. Jerry calls me up once in a while when he needs a little money on the side. He's afraid to ask them because they won't give it to him, so he calls me and I put up my share and I call Phil Ehrlich and I tell him to get the money up to keep Jerry happy.

Nathan: It's very worthwhile.

TRUSTEE, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Zellerbach: You've got Laguna Honda, now what else do you want?

Nathan: Would you like to talk a little about the University of Pennsylvania? Does it have financing problems?

Zellerbach: The University of Pennsylvania is having that problem. All these private universities are in that position. They have some public support from their research departments. Some states do help them by giving substantial numbers of scholarships. Or they may have an organization for financing buildings at low cost. But when it comes to giving them money, some may be given, but it's a drop in the bucket. Pennsylvania I think gets \$12 million from the State of Pennsylvania. They were almost going to lose that, because one of the legislators back there said that that's not their business to help finance private institutions, even though the university is open to everybody. It's not sectarian. But they take the attitude that it's private and they have no control over it. Anyway, they still get that funding, but the university's total budget I think is now, oh, about \$180 or \$190 million a year.

Learning to Specialize

Zellerbach: I think the private universities are really going to have to shrink their enrollments or they'll have to get rid of some of their different colleges, the different courses, at which they're not top flight. One of the problems with the universities is that they have to have every science, and every history

Zellerbach: department, and every language department. Some of them are pretty bad. All the universities have some great departments. Top. And a lot of them are not good. There's a movement on foot I know among some of the Eastern colleges; their presidents are now commencing to talk of working it out so that each college will have so many departments at which they're tops.

Nathan: Oh, specialize, then.

Zellerbach: Specialize. And then to exchange students, to let the students go to the different colleges and they would get credit, on some financial basis, I guess, for so much a course. In that way, you see, they could substantially reduce their costs of operation.

Nathan: It might be a little like the Claremont Colleges.

Zellerbach: That's what they're doing down at UC Santa Cruz, you know, experimenting with different colleges, like the English methods. So this, I think, is going to become a trend here, unless they can get a lot of money. A number of these private schools have gone public, you know. The University of Pittsburgh became a state college. They went busted, so they became a state college.

Nathan: I see. Now can we talk about the dedication of the arts center and the "Voyager" statue?

Zellerbach: My activities as trustee, didn't we talk about that?

Nathan: We talked more about your going to the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton School. But not so much later about your work as a trustee.

Zellerbach: Did I tell you how I first got on there?

Nathan: No.

Alumni Society in the West

Zellerbach: I graduated in the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1917. In those days it was the only undergraduate business school in the United States. There was the Harvard Graduate School, and the graduate school at Dartmouth.

When I was at the University of California at Berkeley for my first two years of college they had nothing pertaining to business except economics. So, I went east.

After I graduated I came back here and then went to see whether there was an alumni group there. There was a small alumni group, but the members were mostly graduate students of Pennsylvania, primarily from the medical school or from law or one of the other professions. At the time there was myself and Brunn Livingston, who was in my class. He and I and a couple of others were asked to get the alumni society moving out here.

I found out who was president and encouraged him to have a meeting. As a consequence I became secretary of the alumni society and eventually I was the president. I did all the work and got everything organized and had meetings. We tried to get students to go back there, doing the usual thing, but it was very slow work because at that time if you went to Pennsylvania from out here that was a five day trip on the train and when you got there you stayed there. You couldn't fly home for Thanksgiving or fly home for Christmas. We took the railway, and in those days there were no air-conditioned cars.

Being active in the alumni got me acquainted with some people back at the university. And then finally I got out of it. Then they started at the university to have trustees from the different areas. In the Pacific Coast area, they had an elderly man, I think he was an ex-professor, but he didn't do anything. Eventually, there was an election and his term was over. I knew the boys down in Los Angeles. Rex Hyman was the secretary and a good friend, and I knew some of them from up in the northwest. I kept moving around. So, they nominated me for trustee.

Nathan: Who names the trustees?

Zellerbach: The west coast alumni, the specific group.

Trustee from the West Coast

Nathan: Oh, each area recommends a trustee.

Zellerbach: Yes, they each recommend their own. And then, if your investigation passes muster, you get elected. In those days your term of office was ten years. So, when I was elected it was for ten years.

I was a very steady trustee. I showed up for practically every meeting.

Nathan: Did you go to Pennsylvania? The meetings were there?

Zellerbach: Yes. In Philadelphia. Three times a year. In the beginning I was taking trains, and to come all the way on a train just for a meeting, they couldn't understand it. I took part in the different activities there from the point of view of what I was interested in: curriculum and athletics.

You always had to report on what you were doing in your own district. Therefore, when I went back to my district I always sent out a letter of what went on at the trustees' meeting to all the alumni on the Pacific Coast, so as to keep them informed. I always asked if there was anything I could do back there that they wanted, and I did it. I think I was the only alumni trustee that ever did that, keep their own people informed. I suggested that to the secretary of the alumni society back there but he wasn't a very workable person. He thought it was great and he did it once or twice and then he quit.

I became very well acquainted with everybody there and I still am. I think my term of office ran out about four or five years ago. Then Walter O'Malley succeeded me.

Nathan: Should I know who Walter O'Malley is?

Zellerbach: You know who Walter O'Malley is; he's owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers. He only served for about three years and they made him a term trustee. And then Billy [Zellerbach] was elected. He's on his first year. Now the alumni trustees' term is only five years, so they think they can be re-elected.

A Building Fund and a Contribution for a Theater

Zellerbach: When I was a trustee they started a \$70 million fund for buildings. The trustees had to be the bellwethers. For my first contribution, I think I contributed \$60 thousand. I thought at that time that was pretty good for me. In the meantime, my wife and I had been building a fund--she was in it, but I put all the money in it. [Laughs] Of course, under the Community Property Act it ought to be half hers, but practically all my securities went in there. So, we built the Harold and Doris Zellerbach Fund.

They knew I was interested in the arts because I had been president of the Art Commission out here for years. The business of this theater came up. So, Sweeton and the trustees started to work on me for half a million dollars, and "...it would be very nice to have the theater named after you..." At that time Billy was a graduate and my grandson Johnny, I think, was a student. So, that was three generations of Zellerbachs. Then I got to thinking that the fund was worth \$6 or \$7 hundred thousand. And all I was doing was spending the income. I wasn't giving away any of the principal. This was the Harold and Doris Zellerbach Fund.

So, I said to my wife one night, "Why don't we do something while we're alive? (The Zellerbach Family Fund had already started Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley.) And we can see the result of it instead of leaving this money here for the kids to give away. We can give it away ourselves. That's what it's for." So, she and my children all thought it was a wonderful idea. Then I said that we'd go ahead and make the grant. We could pay it over a term of years.

Before I finally said yes I had talked with Walter Annenberg who had put up most of the money for the Annenberg Center. The \$500 thousand didn't build the theater, but it helped a great deal. I talked to him one day at one of the trustees' meetings and I said, "Walter, they've asked me to make this grant, and I've considered it favorably but I'm not going to make it unless it's satisfactory to you. Another theater would be named after the Zellerbach family and if you want to keep this to yourself, it's fine. I won't do anything unless it's 100 percent compatible with you and your family." So, he said, "Harold, I'd just love to have you do it. It's perfect. It's wonderful. It couldn't be better. I'm delighted. Go ahead and do it."

Zellerbach: I made the contribution and I paid off \$200 thousand and in January will give them another fifty, so I'll be down to \$250 thousand. I could always liquidate enough to pay them off overnight if I wanted to, but as long as I don't have to I'll just let it work along and pay them off so much a year. If anything happens to me it's a commitment of the funds so they have to pay it anyway.

That's how I got into the theater and I've been interested ever since.

The Problem of Athletics

Zellerbach: I used to needle the hell out of the athletic trustees. I'd been watching the athletic department. Our athletic department was a blank, practically. When I went there we used to get to the Penn-Cornell games like the Cal-Stanford game. Every Thanksgiving they used to fill the stadium. They'd get seventy or eighty thousand people, or whatever the stadium held. This was the biggest thing of the year.

And then they had a little trouble, long after I was there. I didn't pay much attention after I left. Their athletics went downhill like most of the Ivy League colleges because the presidents were more interested in the intellectual side of the college than they were in the athletics. They didn't care whether they had any athletics or not. There was a time that Chicago quit all athletics.

So the Penn football team played, but they used to get maybe three thousand, four thousand, maybe ten thousand at a Penn-Cornell game. I used to get to see the statistics and when I went back there I would needle these guys. I said, "This is a disgrace. A university of this size and with its reputation to sit by here and see this place go to wrack and ruin without any kind of a drive to get your athletics someplace where they're competitive. This university gets a lot of publicity from athletics and it gives you a reputation. It's the one thing that keeps the alumni together, especially the football team." I used to bombard them with the Buck-of-the-Month Club literature. You know about that, don't you?

Nathan: No, I don't.

Zellerbach: Don't you know about the Buck-of-the-Month Club?

Nathan: No. Tell me about it.

Zellerbach: That's Stanford; they collect from the alumni for athletic scholarships. This started some time ago, I don't know how long ago. I just got this report (showing it).

Nathan: I see. This is a directory of those that have given. (Reading)
Stanford Buck Club Directory.

Zellerbach: Yes. Now a letter accompanied that last year. In '71-'72, they raised \$460 thousand and there were 4500 names in here.

Nathan: Fantastic.

Zellerbach: Now, you know why they went to the Rose Bowl. [Laughter]

Nathan: Yes. That is clever.

The "Voyager" and a Dedication

Nathan: I see in this picture that your university has a magnificent sculpture.

This is the "Voyager" statue by Seymour Lipton? This was in honor of your birthday in 1971 and was presented by your family, wasn't it?

Zellerbach: '71. It's not what I'd call a big birthday, but we had all the kids up to celebrate my birthday and they presented me with their picture and the Voyager.

Nathan: They gave you the picture before you ever saw the statue?

Zellerbach: Yes, I didn't know anything about the statue then. It was a well kept secret.

Nathan: And the statue is at the University of Pennsylvania?

Zellerbach: Yes, it's in the foyer of the Zellerbach Theater. All my children and grandchildren gave it to me, which I thought was quite wonderful and was a beautiful thing.

Nathan: It certainly is. About how tall is it? The pedestal itself looks tall.

Zellerbach: Well, they say they can't reach the top. They did that on purpose because they didn't want kids climbing around it. I think it's probably around ten or twelve feet.

Nathan: And is that cast bronze?

Zellerbach: I guess it is, yes.

Nathan: It's really a marvelous work.

Zellerbach: Oh yes. That's a real work of art. It's beautiful. It makes the theater. It's a real work of art.

Nathan: It must give a good focal point for that whole entrance.

Zellerbach: Oh yes, sure.

Nathan: So, you saw it when the theater was dedicated to you?

Zellerbach: Yes, when it was dedicated. I went back there and it was the first time I saw it. They had all my friends come in from all over and it was quite a do. It was very wonderful. They came from Detroit, Chicago, Boston, Washington, Cleveland, and the family were there and it was very, very nice.

Nathan: That must have been a very sentimental occasion.

Zellerbach: Well it was. It was very nice and it was well done and we all were very pleased.

Annenberg Center and the Zellerbach Theater

Zellerbach: Since the theater has been open I've been trying to find out how much use they've been making of it. They put out their bulletin of events, I always look it over to see what's going on. I can never find the Zellerbach Theater mentioned. So, when I was back there I told them, "What is this? A monument? I thought this was for use like the Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley? I see programs all the time and I never have any comment on what you're doing."

Harold Prince put on a couple of big shows there just a few months ago. I guess it was in October. It was too bad I couldn't stay for them, but they occurred a week or so after I was there. That was the only thing I've heard that they've done. Everything was at the Annenberg Center. Well, that's true. The complex is in the Annenberg Center. So, I said, "Does anybody know there's a Zellerbach Theater there?" "Oh yes." "Well," I said, "I don't see it. All it says is the Annenberg Center. Well, now if this is Annenberg's then that's fine. Give me my money back. If it's the Zellerbach Theater then I think it's only proper that when you make announcements, you should say that it's the Zellerbach Theater in the Annenberg Center." So, that's what they're doing now.

Yesterday the head man was out here. That professor, I've got his name here, George Girvner.

Nathan: He says that they're showing that they're doing more than they had done before in the Zellerbach Theater in the Annenberg Center.

Zellerbach: This is the first program that I've ever seen come out.

Nathan: It says, "Zellerbach Theater."

Zellerbach: Certainly. That's after the hollering.

Nathan: It looks very nice.

Zellerbach: Of course their problem is money. When I liquidated the Harold L. Zellerbach Art Foundation there remained about \$50 thousand in it, and so I sent it back to them. I told them that they could spend the income plus ten percent of the corpus per year, you know, for doing something.

Zellerbach: I asked the professor what he was doing with it and he said he only could get two or three thousand dollars a year out of it and he said that it wasn't enough to do very much. I said that it was at least something. And then the Zellerbach Family Fund is putting in some more money for the events for keeping the thing moving, because the university has to put up the money to maintain it. I think the Annenbergs are giving \$100 thousand a year for the maintenance. I don't know.

Anyway, they're not going the way Berkeley is going. But at least we know now it's being used, and that's the main thing I was interested in. I want to know how many students are coming and what's the reaction? Is it doing the thing that it was built to do? Keeping the kids on the campus?

THE SAN FRANCISCO BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU
(Interview XIII, March 30, 1973)

Nathan: There's also the question of your other community interests, if any of these are something you would like to talk about? The Better Business Bureau?

Zellerbach: Well, there's the San Francisco Better Business Bureau. I was a member of that, on the Board of Directors. I don't know how many years I spent on it, not too many. That was when I was very active in my own business. They do a very good job, and like a lot of other things the more money they have the better job they do.

Nathan: Who supports the Better Business Bureau?

Zellerbach: The business community supports it. I imagine they still do, but I don't know whether they have any outside money. They take all these complaints over the telephone, and I suppose they investigate them all. They have so many complaints that we had a staff at that time that would select the important ones and do away with the rest that we didn't have time to do.

THE SAN FRANCISCO COMMERCIAL CLUB

Zellerbach: I was on the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Commercial Club for two terms. I think I helped them by the advice I gave them. When I went on the board they had their depreciation money, you know, for rehabilitation; they depreciated their furniture and fixtures because they were in a leased place and all their money was in fixed-income securities and in industrial bonds.

That was just at the beginning of this inflation. So, I prevailed upon them to hold the amount in the common stocks in order to protect themselves, which they did. And when they were ready to do the rehabilitation their portfolio had doubled in value. If I hadn't done that they wouldn't have been able to do the job. I think that was my main contribution.

Nathan: Tell me just a word about the Commercial Club, is it a social club for business people?

Zellerbach: Yes, it's a lunch club. It's been in existence for years, as long as I can remember, probably sixty years. I think it formed right after the earthquake and fire. I remember their first place was at a loft here on Sansome Street. That was before I was in business, but my father used to take us over there for lunch. All the paper men ate at the same table. I think they still do.

THE SAINTS AND SINNERS MILK FUND

Zellerbach: The Saints and Sinners Milk Fund was Jake Ehrlich's pet charity, supplying milk to the school children who couldn't afford it. Each year they had a drive, and they had weekly lunches at which Jake was always the toastmaster, and Tommy Harris was the foil and the comedian.

Nathan: Did Tommy Harris have an eating place?

Zellerbach: Yes. That's the same one. He was in show business. A long time ago he had this eating place [Tommy's Joynt]. After he got out of show business he went into the eating place. He used to have a night club on Sutter Street. All the places around town, I used to go to them all the time. He was very good entertainment. He always needed all the members there, especially about their private lives.

I suppose you needed a strong skin when they were making fun of you. I always came in for quite a bit. I would always laugh. Nothing bothered me. He always wondered what I did with all my money and all that stuff.

But anyway, we raised well over a half million dollars. Then, we used the income and some of the principal for supplying the milk.

Nathan: That was for San Francisco schools?

Zellerbach: San Francisco schools, and also the parochial schools. I was the chairman of the Board of Trustees in the Milk Fund. The Milk Fund was a charitable corporation. The Saints and Sinners was just a voluntary thing, no tax deduction attached to that. That paid for your lunch and whatever else they needed to carry on.

Zellerbach: Once a year they had a big drive for the Saints and Sinners Milk Fund.

Nathan: Is that still going on?

Zellerbach: No.

Nathan: There are other lunch programs?

Zellerbach: No. The Saints and Sinners died when Jake Ehrlich lost interest in it. He got too busy. There is still money left in the Saints and Sinners fund. But it was turned over to the Security Pacific National Bank to administer. They're still doing it, I presume.

Before Jake died I used to try to get him to liquidate to get us all out of this. He always promised to have another meeting, but he never did it. You know, you get to the point where if he didn't do it, he didn't do it. I wasn't going to get sick over it. I've got other things to do.

Nathan: Just one more question about the Saints and Sinners. Were these mostly San Francisco businessmen?

Zellerbach: They were businessmen, bartenders, policemen, firemen, everybody was in it.

Nathan: They took the name literally?

Zellerbach: Yes. We had quite a cross-section of the male people in the community, entertainers, everything. There were businessmen there, too, people active in business. It was a group that you don't find very often, a wide cross-section. It worked. I enjoyed it. We had a lot of fun at the meetings that put me in touch with all the gang that knew the seamy side of the city. After being there I was always kind of protected.

There was no one who wasn't a good friend of theirs, so I was never bothered by anybody.

Nathan: You never had your hubcaps stolen or anything like that?

Zellerbach: No. It was good for that. There were some damned nice guys. After all, you can't run everybody's life. We aren't out of the same mold and the same pattern. I met some that were

Zellerbach: pawnbrokers, boy, I met everything. At the top there were people that would have big luncheons, and there would be an attendance of a hundred or more. Sure.

Nathan: How did people join? Could any man who wanted to, join?

Zellerbach: He got proposed by a member, and that's how you would know who was who--and you paid for your lunch. That was that.

Where do you want to go now?

FIBREBOARD

Nathan: Would you like to say anything about your interests in Joseph Magnin?

Zellerbach: I've got to skip back a little further. Joe Magnin came later than the others there. Fibreboard, I was on that board. That was a joint venture between Crown Zellerbach and the Paraffin companies. We merged our Fibreboard interests, our plants for theirs. So, I was one of the members of the Crown group representing the Crown Zellerbach Corporation and went for it.

I was on the board until we sold our interests to the Paraffin Company at the time that we purchased the Gaylord Container Company, which was in the same line of business. In order for us to acquire the Gaylord Company we had to dispose of our interests in the Fibreboard under a ruling by the Justice Department. So, we sold ours back to the Paraffin Company and we got out. That was that.

Nathan: Was Fibreboard in the prefab business?

Zellerbach: They used to make wallboard and paints. They're still in existence. Their stock is listed. Paraffin went out of business. They sold their paint company. All the rest was in Fibreboard, and they took over what was left; primarily Fibreboard was consolidated into Paraffin, and then they changed the Paraffin name to Fibreboard.

Nathan: And Fibreboard is still, then, associated with lumber?

Zellerbach: They have very little to do with lumber. They have mostly waste paper mills. They have one pulp mill up at Antioch. In all the rest they make cartons and corrugated boxes. I haven't been too intimately acquainted with what they have been doing in the last years, but I imagine they still do the same thing.

RAYONIER

Nathan: There is one other that I don't have on your list, Rayonier?
[Rayonier, Inc.]

Zellerbach: Oh, Rayonier, yes.

Nathan: You were a director of Rayonier?

Zellerbach: And how I was a director!

Nathan: Tell me how you were a director.

Zellerbach: Rayonier is an independent company, which was founded by E.M. Mills, who was the Executive Vice-President of Crown Zellerbach. He's somewhat of a promoter in his own right.

The start of it was when Mr. Mills made a deal with the Simpson Logging Company up at Shelton, a small town right outside of Olympia, Washington, a new type of operation. Rayonier built the pulp mill jointly with Simpson. Simpson had a saw mill, right there. We put the mill up along side of it. We had the advantage of using their power plant for our power, and then we used their slabs, and we made chips out of the wood that they couldn't use. They supplied us with the logs and we got outside logs. We prepared the logs for making pulp, and we made sulfite pulp up there to begin with. We did pretty well there.

Then we went up to Hoquiam where Mr. Mills made the same kind of a deal with the other lumber mills up in that area. At that time they had big burners that burned up the slabs. It was his idea to use what they were burning and make pulp out of it, which we did.

Zellerbach: At Hoquiam we made a deal. I was instrumental in taking the Hammermill Paper Company in to put in a paper machine. Then, also, they could ship some of the surplus pulp back to their own plant, which they could use. They came in as one of our partners in that role, and that made it feasible.

In our group, as we took our share and later on financed our bonds, the convertible preferred stock and the common was a bonus. The common was just a sheet of paper when you got it. The idea was to build the value of the common stock up by earnings. Much later it became very valuable.

From Wood Pulp to Synthetic Fibers

Zellerbach: Then, next we put another mill at Port Angeles. On that we made a deal with the S.T. Warren Company. They took our pulp. We didn't put the paper machine in there; down at Hoquiam they had the machine running. So, we had a deal with them, and they gave us a contract for forty or fifty thousand tons of pulp a year. That, also, was the key to the feasibility. Then, the surplus pulp we sold on the market. All these three mills were sulfite mills.

After that the next mill we built was down at Fernandina, and that was also a sulfite mill. The last mill we built was in Georgia; that was a kraft mill. Then, we got the idea, Mills did, that instead of making pulp for paper we converted all these plants into dissolving pulp for the manufacture of rayon and synthetic fibers.

In fact, all the lumber plants today are making nothing but synthetic fibers. I was on the board, and we had some very interesting experiences on that one.

One was when Mr. Mills passed away and we had to get somebody to run the operation. We got a man by the name of Bartch. My brother was running it with one hand and Crown with the other one. What was always in the back of my head was that someday we could consolidate the two companies. But, we waited too long and the anti-trust bill came along, so we couldn't do it.

Zellerbach: Bartch came in as president. He was a banker. He came out of some big bank in New York. He was vice-president in charge of the West Coast business. My brother got real well acquainted with him. My brother always loved bankers.

Nathan: This is J.D. Zellerbach?

Zellerbach: J.D., yes. In fact, he looked like a banker all the time.

Nathan: [Laughs] I'll have to take a look at those pictures.

Shifts on the Board

Zellerbach: Charlie Blyth was interested, too. Blyth did all the financing of the bonds. Charlie Blyth was on the board originally, and my brother, and my father. I didn't go on the board until my father passed away in 1945. Then they put me on in his place.

In the meantime, Bill Reed took over the Simpson Timber Company for his father. His father passed away and he was the sole heir, so he bought a substantial interest in Rayonier, a very large interest with the idea that eventually he would get the majority and take it over.

We found he was no good, and we had to get rid of him. That was quite a task. I was right in the middle of that fight. And we finally got rid of him. We bought him out. Then, of course, we arranged to give him a pension for a certain number of years.

Then, we had Goddseman, who had a brokerage company selling pulp. He also had an investment company, and he was pretty smart. He put a lot of money in these paper companies whose stocks were low, and he thought he could make some money. He always had enough stock, so he had representation on the board. We were always tangling with the Hammermill interests because they were on the board, too.

One day we woke up, and Hammermill had made a deal with Goddseman to sell a substantial part of their interests. He had a very large holding in Hammermill. He was working on trying to eventually put the two companies together, because Hammermill didn't want any part of this kind of business. So, they sold him enough of their stock.

Nathan: That's enough of the Rayonier stock?

Zellerbach: Yes. Hammermill had two seats on the board. Part of the deal was to give up their two seats to Mr. Goddseman.

Nathan: How many seats were there on the board, altogether?

Zellerbach: Twelve, or so. I don't know. That was a big shift. Then, he put in his own man, Clyde Morgan, who was the secretary-treasurer of the S.T. Warren Company, who I knew very well. And he took charge.

Bill Reed, at that time, was chairman of the board. He was about ready to run the company. After that meeting, instead of his running the company, this gang had the majority and so he was kicked out of office [laughs] and had quite a shake-up.

Nathan: The primary antagonists, then, were Goddseman and the Zellerbach interests?

Zellerbach: No, no. There was no one who was antagonistic, but we thought that we were double-crossed by Hammermill. Because here Hammermill had a very large trust in the paper company. We were very close to them. I had put them in Rayonier in the first place. I sold them the deal. I thought we were double-crossed, and we were. I let them know, too.

After that we were friends, but I wouldn't trust them. And they knew it. So, anyway, we got along. Bill Reed got piqued and quit and sold out. I was on the board for quite a few years after until I had to get off the board. The Federal Trade Commission went after me.

Nathan: Why did the Federal Trade Commission do that?

Zellerbach: They went after me because under the law you can't have interlocking directorates of two companies producing the same line of merchandise. After fighting around with them for a couple of years my attorney decided that there was no way I could stay on, so I might as well resign and get off, which I did. We kept our representation by putting Stanley Dollar, Jr. in to represent our interest.

Zellerbach: I used to go back there and have lunch with them after the meetings, and I was still very close to it, even though I wasn't on the board.

Nathan: Was Stanley Dollar affiliated with the Zellerbach interest, or just a friend?

Consolidation and Cooperation

Zellerbach: Just a friend. He was an outstanding young man, he still is. In fact, he's a member of the Zellerbach Family Fund board, and a very close friend of mine. [Mr. Dollar died in 1975.]

Then subsequently Rayonier consolidated with International Tel. and Tel.

Nathan: So, it's part of ITT now?

Zellerbach: That was a good deal. We got all our money out of it in preferred stock, plus the fact that our common stock was worth a lot of money. But we had a substantial interest and I got a pretty good chunk of ITT.

Nathan: Very interesting. You were talking earlier about bringing different companies together so that one could use what the other one didn't use and share in the power produced and the division of the pulp. Was this process something that you were interested in?

Zellerbach: That was in the original mill, up at Shelton. We had no partners except for Reed. Reed, at that time, had an interest. As I say, they were supplying the power, they sold us the site next to them, and that made the thing viable.

Nathan: How do two companies find each other in a way that is acceptable to both of them? Are you scouting around all the time for opportunities? How do you get together with them?

Zellerbach: In this instance Hammermill needed a mill that could make bond paper, sulfite bond, and make it good and cheap. They had a high cost mill in the area.

Nathan: But how did you know that?

Zellerbach: Because I was running the Zellerbach Paper Company and trying to sell millions of dollars worth of paper from the area. I knew what their problem was. They were non-competitive in the lower grades of sulfite bond. They had to make themselves competitive.

Nathan: Did you approach them?

Zellerbach: Yes, sure. And the same thing with S.T. Warren. In the matter of running the Zellerbach Paper Company, they were importing and buying a lot of pulp. They didn't have any steady resource. Of course, they had some bad experiences after the war in getting pulp, and this became a permanent supply.

Nathan: You try to know what the problems are of other companies?

Zellerbach: Well, when you're around them almost twenty hours a day, day after day you begin to know what your problem is going to be. If you don't you must be pretty stupid.

Nathan: That's very interesting. You know what people need and how to put them together. Is that it?

Zellerbach: Well, sure, as long as the government doesn't interfere. So, that was the end of my end.

NIANTIC

Nathan: Did we get to Niantic yet?

Zellerbach: No. The Niantic was a real estate company, family-owned 50 percent by the Levy family. Niantic started way back with my father and Alex Levison. The company used to be the Zellerbach-Levison Company. They were partners in real estate. Alex Levison had a printing company, and he did the buying and ran the thing. He bought cheap properties and he ran them cheaply. It didn't do my father too much good.

My father left his interests to my mother, so she was the half owner. (The Levison family was subsequently Levy.) My brother said that I had better take over. By that time Levy was running the Levison half. So, I took over my mother's interest to run that.

Levy did all the buying and he used to buy securities. He pursued the same tactics as his father-in-law. He wouldn't hire lawyers, and he wouldn't have the title changed because he didn't want to spend the money. But, anyway, Louis, that's his name. Louis Levy.

He has one son, Donald Levy. The first thing we did was to make them change the name. We changed it to Niantic because we owned the Niantic Building over there on Sampson Street.

Zellerbach: Then my mother passed away. She left half of her estate to the Zellerbach Family Fund. In my father's will he said that his Niantic interests had to be disposed of, but he wanted it sold as a unit, sold in the whole interest, not split up.

Nathan: Why was this?

Zellerbach: Because he was smart enough. He was a fifty-fifty partner. If your estate starts to be sold off, selling 5 percent to this guy and 10 percent to the other guy, it would be a double-cross on your partner.

In order to avoid that we decided that we were going to sell the estate's interest in Niantic to the Zellerbach Family Fund, so that it would be kept in a unit and wouldn't be divided amongst the heirs and my mother. She divided the rest of her estate to her three children. That would have made it just as bad. We decided, or I decided as an executive, that we sell it to the Family Fund, which we did.

In the meantime my mother's estate was still under appraisal. We had to have all the real estate appraised before we could settle it, or finish it up. We didn't do anything about it; we just kept our interests. Then, after the estate was settled and we paid our taxes and we could liquidate it, we decided that we wanted to sell our interest or divide it. They take half and we take half; we go down the middle.

After months of negotiations we finally reached an agreement where Niantic bought the Zellerbach Family Fund interest. In payment they gave us certain pieces of property, well over a million dollars worth of securities in there, so we had all of that, and everything that was liquid we took.

They wanted to stay in the real estate business, so we got a few pieces of real estate to make up the difference of the selling price. We're still partners on the BART Building, down on Mission. We're trying to settle that one.

We thought we had it leased again, then we had three partners. We had Levy, the Fund, and the Hertzka-Knowles. Then the deal fell through. The thing has been standing empty now for almost a year. After six months negotiating with the school board, then the school board decided that they would build their own building, so the deal was off. There we were,

Zellerbach: and we were putting up most of the money and Levy wouldn't put up anything. He was not interested. He wanted to sell, but he wouldn't do anything to promote the thing. So, we were stuck for most of the expense.

After this was over I called our counselor and real estate advisor and said, "Now you fellas are all through spending any money unless our partners come in equally. We're paying them monthly stipends to manage the building, to look after it. Let them see what they can do."

They've been trying to lease it. Hertzka-Knowles has been doing most of the negotiating and otherwise, I think, if they don't get it pretty soon they're going to sell the property and divide it. That's what I'm urging, so that we can be rid of the problems and rid of the lease. That would be the end of that.

JOSEPH MAGNIN

Zellerbach: I have one left and that's Joe Magnin, Joseph Magnin. I've been retired, although somewhat active around here, and I've always been good friends with Cyril. And as for Joe Magnin, it's a family affair. They own the whole business.

Depreciation and Financing Expansion

Zellerbach: They started to expand, but they didn't have enough money. They couldn't create capital fast enough in that kind of a business to open new branches.

Every time they opened a new branch it was a million or two or three million dollars of their stocks and their book accounts, payrolls. It was almost the size of the store. In a business of that kind it's all liquid. You can mark down your dresses and things, but that's taking an actual loss because you paid for them. Your book accounts are either good or you write some of them off. But they have very few depreciable assets. As a consequence they can't generate cash by depreciation, such as our company can.

For example, the amount of cash we generated this past year, 1972, we generated from depreciation and other ways of generating cash, like capital gains and timber and things of that kind. We generated \$100 million.

Nathan: When you speak of depreciation, this would be on buildings and machinery?

Zellerbach: We already spent the money. So, we depreciate the buildings. You can write off so much a year on your buildings. Well, that comes back to you in cash.

Nathan: But a retail store can't do that?

Zellerbach: A retail store, what can they depreciate? They can hang a dress up and keep it ten years and depreciate it, but what do you do in the meantime? We put in a paper machine and the paper machine is making money. If you have a dress and you try to depreciate that and it stands there, you don't make any money on it. You have to sell it. But, you see, the paper machines and the timberlands and all that, that's investment like in real estate or anything else which you can depreciate.

Yes, if they owned their own real estate they would have some depreciation, but it wouldn't be enough to finance an expansion. So, that decided them to go public. One of the things that their underwriter insisted is that they have two outside directors. The board of directors at that time was nothing but family.

One of the underwriters' partners was one of the outside directors, and Cyril asked me if I would go on the board, as a favor to him. At that time I was getting off of things. I was getting along, anyway. Ehrlich didn't want me to do it.

Nathan: This is Phil Ehrlich, Sr.?

Going Public

Zellerbach: Yes. He said, "Do you want to take that responsibility?" I said, "Well, he's a close friend of mine and he asked me to do it as a favor to him and his family. I just can't refuse." So, I went on the board.

Having been in a family business when I first started and then went public, I knew a few of the ins and outs of running a public institution. They still had five members and the two outside, that was seven.

Nathan: When a family-owned business goes public, do you always have to have outside people coming onto the board?

Zellerbach: Well, you don't always have to have outside people. But it makes sense because, after all, the public needs representation. In a family-owned company, the family will still control the company.

Nathan: When they go public, can the family still keep 51 percent of the shares?

Setting Meeting Days

Zellerbach: They kept more than that. They wound up with 68 percent of the common stock. So, they controlled the business because as long as you have over 66 2/3 percent, you control. It substantially was a family-owned business when they first got together and when they went on the board they were still running it like they always did.

They called directors' meetings at any hour. They would call you up and say, "We're having a meeting." Of course, I got pretty annoyed at that. I was a trustee and a stockholder, and severely objected. I said, "If I'm going to be on this board, I want to attend the meetings and I want to know what you're doing, and I want sufficient notice so that I can be there. I don't want any of these secret directors' meetings where you fellas decide something on a policy matter, or a large expenditure that's not on the ordinary course of your business." Now, in running the business, that was their job.

I had to teach them a few things. One was to set meeting days: the first Monday, or the second Tuesday, or whatever it is, and then stick to it. That's fine. They did it. Then, Cyril would go out of town and they would postpone the meeting, see?

Nathan: [Laughs] I see.

Zellerbach: Of course, that left me high and dry because I set aside the time and I managed to be home so I could go to the meeting. I had to cure that. I said, "This company is not dependent on

Zellerbach: one director. If any one of you directors go out of town, that's too bad. If it's a meeting day, we have the meeting, and that's it. Let's not fool about it."

It was these little things that I had to do to make them feel that they were living in a fishbowl. This wasn't a family-owned company any more. It was public, even though they had the majority of the stock, and they could do anything they wanted. But they have to publish a statement now, formally. They thought they were a family-owned company and they didn't have to publish anything. They did what they pleased. They took out whatever money they wanted, and that was their business.

But when they went public, then we saw what they were doing. It's all right to sell dresses at cost, but nobody should put their hand in the till.

Over a period of time, I was kind of the schoolmaster, you know. Luckily, it was very good. They did a good job and they expanded. After the first financing, they financed again to get more money to open more stores, and they made lots of money and they were doing very well.

After they expanded the conglomerates (you know, that was the days of the conglomerates) were making offers for them to sell out. Every time they got an offer I explained to the young ones, the children, that when you once sell out, even though you hold 25 percent of the stock or anything less than 51 percent, you don't own the company, and "I want you to know that."

"In the meantime, if your new owners want to throw you out they can throw you out tomorrow. If you want to maintain your position, my advice to you is to think twice before you come to this decision." Well, they had another situation there. When the father died and left his stock, he also said that if they sold they all had to sell together.

Nathan: That was Cyril Magnin's father?

The Amfac Offer

Zellerbach: Yes. Old Joe Magnin. Because he wanted them to continue to hold control. If they sold control they would all have to sell out, and it's all in a trust. So, having three children, they were afraid that if anything happened to their father, then if they get into an argument with someone--I think one of them wanted to liquidate the trust, and everybody take his own stock. The only way they could do it was to sell out.

Finally, they got an offer from Amfac. They received \$50 a share for stock that was worth about \$25, with 70 percent of it in cash, and it was liquid in convertible debentures. That was a hell of a price. They figured they couldn't afford not to sell. Two of them were a little unsure--didn't know, and their father convinced them to grab the dough while the going was good. It would make them all independently wealthy and secure, and they could invest the money where they wanted to.

They went ahead with the consolidation. I had several thousand shares of stocks. I had no complaints. I doubled my money in about six or seven years. All I did was lose a job at being a director, which was all right.

When the deal was made, they gave the kids, all the officers of the Magnin group, each an employment contract.

Nathan: An employment contract?

Zellerbach: Yes, sure. They were to be left in control of the management of the business. Six months later they threw out three of them. The only one they kept was Ellen. She was a stylist and she was very clever [Ellen Newman] And Cyril. Cyril was a director of Amfac. Cyril was the chairman of the board of Magnin, and just within the last six months they made Ellen a director of Amfac. Ellen's husband works for I. Magnin. The other son went into the business of souvenirs they sell in stores. He has a couple of floors up in our building on Sutter Street.

Jerry went into the restaurant business, he's the baby. The Station down here, that's one of them. He has a couple of them down in Los Angeles.

Zellerbach: But Amfac had to dump them after six months. I saw them and I said, "Well, boys, I told you what could happen to you, and it did." Of course, they had a good settlement. That was the end of my regime in Magnins.

Nathan: That was a very good story. I'm glad we got to that. In fact, all your stories are really fascinating. Thank you.

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