
Guide to the Sam Kagel Oral History

Collection number: MS 2465

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San Francisco, California

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Descriptive Summary

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Interviewer

Lucy Kendall

Time of Interview

Approximately one hour

Date of Interview

Wednesday, February 6, 1980

Place of Interview

Offices of Kagel and Kagel, attorneys, San Francisco, California

Conduct of the Interview

The brief interview with Mr. Kagel was held in order to obtain his experiences as counsel for the San Francisco Joint Board of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union; his opinions on negotiations with the employers, conduct of the strikes, reasons for arbitration; his thoughts on strike results, etc.

Editing

Mr. Kagel is an excellent narrator, so the only changes in the transcript made by transcriber were minor technical ones such as deleting of one or two false starts, and leaving out an occasional "that" or "and". Penned changes were made by narrator.

Narrative Account of the Interview

In the process of documenting as completely as possible the 1937, 1941-42 San Francisco hotel strikes, we felt it necessary to record the memories of at least one person involved in every facet of these events- each of these interviews to become an integral part of the whole.

As an employee of the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau Mr. Kagel represented that firm assisting many unions in their disputes with employers. The form this took was, among other matters, researching, preparation of briefs, participating in negotiations, press conferences, etc.

It will be noted, when reading the transcript, that Mr. Kagel's foremost interest seems to have been in his association with the Longshoremen and Warehousemen. This is natural because these unions were, through their organizational activities, strikes, and resultant contracts, the fuse which ignited the "organization of the unorganized" in the San Francisco Bay Area during the post Wagner Act days.

Being a perspicacious man, Mr. Kagel often anticipated questions and answered them before being asked. He played a vital part in pre-strike talks as well as in post strike arbitrations and adjustment board hearings. Although he states emphatically, in the interview, that the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau followed the direction of union officials and did not attempt to determine union policy, interviewer has heard from various sources who knew Kagel during this period that "when Kagel spoke, we listened."

Mr. Kagel is an extremely busy man. As a leading Arbitrator in the United States he travels constantly. Thus his courtesy in allowing time for the interview as well as taking the time to read the strike chronologies and union leaflets in preparation is most appreciated.