HERBERT COGGINS: FROM HORATIO ALGER TO EUGENE DEBS

(deceased Dec., 1974)

An Interview Conducted By
Corinne L. Gilb

Berkeley
1957
HERBERT COGGINS: FROM HORATIO ALGER TO EUGENE DEBS
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INTRODUCTION

Herbert Coggins' biography is of interest to scholars both as a case study of a twentieth century American and as one eye-witness account of life in the San Francisco Bay Region.

About the man himself, interpreters of American thought and folkways might ask what are his salient characteristics, of how large a group are they typical, what in the American environment helped to produce them, is he a vanishing type and if so why?

His roots are in the humanitarian reform movements which absorbed so many illustrious Americans in the pre-Civil War era, movements for temperance, peace, women's rights and abolition of slavery. He has also shown the time-tested traits of Yankee ingenuity and individualism -- when he started to work as a $3-a-week errand boy and subsequently became an editor in the firm which published Horatio Alger's stories; or in middle age when he reorganized an automotive parts business to give the workers both a share in the decision-making and a share in the profits and thus managed to weather the great depression of the 1930's while other businesses failed; or when he began writing for publication when he was past 60 and produced a successful children's
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book about a boy and his pet beaver who went into the woodcutting business together.

By the twentieth century, when one strain of Yankee individualism had evolved into the all-powerful capitalist "System," this humanitarian individualist turned to Socialism and stuck with the Socialist Party right down to the day when very few Americans even knew there was a Socialist candidate for President or who he was (Darlington Hoopes). Herbert Coggins' story ends on a note typical of mid-twentieth century -- the plight of a small businessman in a world of leviathan corporations; the plight of a gentle soul with a Quaker's aversion to violence in a world threatening total war.

In describing his own life he has also outlined some features of life in the San Francisco Bay Region -- the post-fire literary scene, the economic dilemmas of West Coast publishing, Socialism in a university town, and some phases of the automotive parts industry (an appropriate motif in the cultural history of a state where there are more automobiles per capita than anywhere else in the world).

He told his story in a series of three tape-recorded interviews -- on July 12, July 31, and November 14, 1956 -- two in the Berkeley home of the interviewer and one in
the Library of the University of California at Berkeley. His name was called to the interviewer's attention by Dr. Robert E. Burke of the Bancroft Library. This series of interviews is part of a larger series designed to illustrate and document the cultural history of California.

Corinne L. Gilb

Regional Cultural History Project
University of California Library, Berkeley
December 4, 1956
Herbert Coggins, 93, dies

Herbert L. Coggins, 93, author, ornithologist and businessman who once ran for Berkeley City Council as a Socialist, died recently in San Francisco.

Mr. Coggins had been active until a few months ago when he fell and was forced to enter a rest home.

He was president and general manager of Patterson Parts Inc. in San Francisco, a wholesale automotive firm, for many years until his retirement.

HE WROTE many books for children, and his first work was accorded the New York Herald Tribune Honor Book award. At age 22, he was editor of a children's magazine for Curtis Publishing Co. in Philadelphia.

He contributed in his early years to Atlantic Monthly and Collier's magazines. His best-known books were "Busby & Co." and "I Am a Mouse"—both for children.

Mr. Coggins was interested in ornithology, an avocation he pursued in his early teens in Martha's Vineyard, Mass., and Germantown, Pa. He was one of the founders of the Audubon Society, and had taught economic ornithology at UC-Berkeley.

M R. COGGINS resided many years in Berkeley where he was, along with his wife, a contractor and builder. In 1917 he ran for Berkeley City Council as a Socialist— the year Stitt Wilson was elected mayor.

In 1924 Coggins ran for Congress.

For many years he owned and operated a stationery store at 14th and Broadway in Oakland. He was one of the original members of the Athens Club.

SURVIVORS include his sisters, Alice C. Longaker of Carmel, Anna C. Dart of Oakland and Edith I. Coggins of Berkeley. Mr. Coggins' wife, Elsie Shirsper Coggins, died May 2, 1973.

No services are scheduled. Contributions in his name may be made to the Audubon Society, the War Resisters
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Where had your grandfather lived before he came to California?

Philadelphia. When he was a young man there, I think he was connected with Smith, Kline, and French, a company which still exists. They wholesaled chemicals and medical supplies. He came out to California in the Gold Rush.

Do you know how he happened to go to work on the Sacramento Union?

No, I don't. I presume in the early days there were not many trained newspaper people in California at the time and anybody who had an education could fit into the work. And as the newspaper grew, his experience grew and he became, perhaps, a pretty good editor. He was the city editor of the Sacramento Union.

That was the paper that Mark Twain and Henry George worked on.
Coggins: Yes, it was a crusading paper. We have a letter by Mark Twain written to my father many years later recalling the days on the Union and what fine men the proprietors were and how courageous they were in advocating reforms.

Gilb: What sort of reforms? Along the Henry George single-tax line?

Coggins: Probably not. In those days in many people's minds the Southern Pacific was the enemy of the public because it was monopolistic, had things pretty much its own way and ran the politics of the state. At least, that was the feeling of the anti-railroad people. It was that group that elected Newton Booth Governor of California, as an anti-railroad man. He was Booth Tarkington's uncle. Politics then was very much as it is today. Hiram Johnson's father, Grove L. Johnson, was an Assemblyman in that period. Later he was classified as pro-railroad. My grandfather was also in the legislature. It was in the '70's. It's one of the stories in the family--I can't vouch for it--that in a way he was responsible for keeping the capital in Sacramento. There was an attempt to move it to Benicia and of course the Sacramento
received a request to send a report on the current state of the union. The report contains various statistics and projections for the future, which are important for planning and decision-making.

The report also includes a detailed analysis of recent trends and challenges faced by the union. It highlights the need for further investment in infrastructure and education to ensure sustainable growth.

In addition, the report recommends several strategies to improve efficiency and reduce costs. These include the implementation of new technologies and the adoption of alternative energy sources.

Overall, the report provides valuable insights into the current state of the union and outlines a path for future development.
people were against it. When the matter came up in the Assembly for voting, my grandfather was to make the speech favorable to Sacramento. He had taken the precaution to put on a pair of hip boots and wade into some mud nearly up to his waist. When it came time to speak, he got up on the platform. He apologized for his appearance and explained he'd just been down to look over the new proposed site for the capital in Benicia. (laughter) According to some people, that was what kept the capital in Sacramento.

Gilb: Those were the days when the Workingmen's Party was becoming...

Coggins: It was the Union Party—a reform party—or at least the party of protest.

Gilb: Did your grandfather do anything else in politics beside serve in the legislature?

Coggins: No. He ran unsuccessfully for the Senate against Leland Stanford.

Gilb: You mentioned that a great-uncle had been an abolitionist. Was this due to his Quaker connections?

Coggins: Probably. His name was Passmore Williamson. There is a book about him. I forgot the name of it. Oswald Garrison Villard gave me the name of it.
As many persons are aware, it's difficult even though they are aware of the importance of understanding and applying their own beliefs and values in all aspects of life. A good example of this is the role of education in shaping our future. Education is not only about acquiring knowledge but also about developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These skills are essential for making informed decisions in both personal and professional settings. Furthermore, education is a tool for personal growth and development, enabling individuals to reach their full potential. It is important to recognize the value of education and invest in it, both for ourselves and for the future generations.
later and I've tried to get a copy of it.

Gilib: Did you know Mr. Villard?

Coggins: I met him a number of times and had correspondence with him. His grandfather, William Lloyd Garrison, and Passmore Williamson were contemporaries and when my great-uncle went to jail for his underground railroad activities, Garrison and Whittier came to his defense.

Gilib: This must have been in Philadelphia.

Coggins: Yes. As I know the story, Uncle Passmore was Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. It was his duty to go to the boats and trains and meet the colored people, and explain that under Pennsylvania law they were free. If the slaves wanted to escape, they would help them. In the case that made trouble, it happened that the slave and her two children belonged to a Southern Senator. Through his influence Uncle Passmore was arrested and tried under the Federal law and sentenced to nine months in jail.

Gilib: Something to be proud of. Was your great-uncle more active after that?

Coggins: Well, I don't think he had much chance afterwards. But he had helped to organize the first Republican convention, the one that nominated Fremont. The war soon followed.
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CHILDHOOD IN PHILADELPHIA

Gilb: Your father was born, I take it, in California.

Coggins: No, he was born in Philadelphia, but was brought here when he was two years old. Across the Isthmus.

Gilb: Did your father then follow in your grandfather's footsteps in politics and in newspaper work?

Coggins: Well, he went back to Philadelphia to study law at the University of Pennsylvania. Then he came back and was soon elected to one of the smaller judgeships. Then he went back East again, taking the family with him.

Gilb: Do you know why he left? He was a judge.

Coggins: Partly to administer a family estate.

Gilb: So then Philadelphia was the scene of your childhood.

Coggins: That's where I went to school. I left when I was about twenty-seven and came back to California.

Reading—The New England School

Gilb: I'd like to know some more about your father there in Philadelphia, what his interests were. You say he was a lawyer.

Coggins: He was a lawyer. He was interested in writing. As a family, one might say we were readers. But not in the sense people are today; we didn't
devour books. There weren't so many to devour. It was the New England group we looked up to in those days.

Gilb: Who? Henry Wadsworth Longfellow?

Coggins: Whittier and Lowell and Edward Everett Hale, Emerson, Julia Ward Howe, Margaret Deland, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Mary E. Wilkins, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, William Dean Howells, Henry James. As I recall some of the people in their books, their adventures were largely struggles with their consciences.

Gilb: And that's the sort of thing you grew up with?

Coggins: Yes.

Church—Unitarian

Gilb: Did you attend a church when you were a boy?

Coggins: My father's mother's family had been Quakers, but my grandmother went over to the Unitarian Church. We weren't what you would call a very churchy family. Part of our life, I think, was made interesting by the contact with the church. My father was president of the local Unitarian Association, which often had interesting speakers. I still hold the vivid image of Julia Ward Howe
rising to full height and leaning on a cane, reciting the stirring "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Her presence and her deep resonant voice made a lasting impression. She might well have been a character from Hawthorne's *The Grey Champion.* Emerson's brother spoke once. And Booker Washington. I recall one of the stories he told. He and a friend were travelling through the South. One night they came to a little shack where they had to put up for the night. In the morning the colored lady gave them their breakfast and as she poured their coffee she asked the other man if he wanted long sweetening or short sweetening. Puzzled, the other man decided on long sweetening. So she took her finger and dipped it in a little jar of molasses and whirled it around in his cup. When she asked Mr. Washington which he wanted, he decided on short sweetening. She took up a lump of sugar, bit a piece off and dropped it in his coffee.

Gilb: The Unitarian Church seemed to have attracted a wide variety of people.

Coggins: In a way they carried on some of the traditions of the Quakers, of the liberal Quakers. There are two groups of Quakers, the orthodox and the
Hicksite, and the Hicksite's viewpoint was more like the liberal Unitarians. Not rebellious, but people distinctly with an idea of improving things. They tried to make ethics practical.

Gilb: Did you take an interest in politics when you were a little boy?

Coggins: Little boy? No.

Our family used to go to Martha's Vineyard in the summertime and I recall the year 1896 when my brother came down later than the rest of the family. At that age our great interest had been baseball. I went down to the boat to meet him. The first thing he said to me was, "What do you think of Bryan?" And I said, "What team does he play on?" Then I discovered it was William Jennings Bryan who had just delivered his "Cross of Gold" speech and captured the Democratic Party and the Populists. My brother was old enough. From then on I became more aware of political happenings.

Father, A Family Lawyer, Writer

Gilb: You said your father was a lawyer. What type of practice did he have?

Coggins: Oh, just ordinary practice. A family lawyer, like you say a family doctor. Later the lawyers
specialized, but in those days it was still in the stage of the family doctor. If you had to write a will, you wrote a will. If you had to go to court, you went to court.

Gilb: You mentioned that he had been the lawyer for J. B. McMasters.

Coggins: They were both members of the Franklin Inn Club.

Gilb: What kind of club?

Coggins: Franklin Inn was the literary club of Philadelphia. It was started, I think, by S. Weir Mitchell. Owen Wister and Edward Bok, Mr. Curtis of the _Ladies Home Journal_ and some of the book publishers were influential in its founding. It was a lunch club, housed in a little old residence in a back alley. Father was a member and he and Mr. McMasters were apparently congenial. I think they were both rather modest. My father wasn't a good booster for himself. I remember one time, as a lawyer he thought... well, I don't know whether he thought it or somebody urged it... he should join organizations to make friends and get business. He went to a meeting of some group where he had been invited one time and came home reeking of tobacco, which he didn't use himself. He shook out his clothes and never went back.
Coggins: Also that he disapproved of alcohol.

Alcohol was no issue in our family. If he disapproved of it, he never had to show it. We just didn't have it and never missed it. Maybe it was the Quaker background.

Coggins: Also that your father wrote children's books and children's stories.

He wrote two books published by the Penn Publishing Company. And some stories. He wrote for the Atlantic, for New England Magazine, for Harper's, and The Saturday Evening Post.

Coggins: He wrote two books published by the Penn Publishing Company. And some stories. He wrote for the Atlantic, for New England Magazine, for Harper's, and The Saturday Evening Post.

Gilb: What sort of things did he write?

Coggins: For The Saturday Evening Post, humor dealing with business or politics. But for other magazines, mostly the struggles of people within themselves.

Gilb: Oh, he wrote along with the New England School he admired?

Coggins: Yes. Not about people having great territorial adventures, but whose adventures were mostly in their own make-up.

Gilb: What they called the New England conscience.

Coggins: Then he wrote one story for the Atlantic that would be acceptable to the small "free-enterprisers" of today. It was the story of a businessman who refused to join a trust because he wanted his sons
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to have to work rather than "own" for a living. He got a good number of praising letters from businessmen who were feeling the pinch from department stores and organized suppliers.

Gilb: He was an anti-truster?

Coggins: Yes, in those days it was a common attitude. Today most people have recognized that the trust was part of our evolution. It had to come.

Mother--Women's Rights

Gilb: What was your mother like? What were her interests?

Coggins: Well, she had six children.*

Gilb: That ought to have kept her busy. (laughter)

Coggins: She was interested in more life for women.

Gilb: A suffragette, do you think?

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: Did she join any organizations?

Coggins: Yes. At one time she was chairman of a suffrage committee in Philadelphia. I recall that she had correspondence with Anna Shaw, Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, and other campaigners. Alice Blackwell...there was a very militant group in those days.

* Herbert Coggins was born on May 31, 1881
...
Either my mother or grandmother subscribed to the *Woman's Journal*, edited by Alice Stone Blackwell. It was the organ of suffragists.

Gilb: Had your mother also been a Quaker?

Coggins: No. Her people came from Massachusetts, probably Pilgrim stock. But her mother as a girl had come across the plains in a covered wagon.

**School and Ornithology**

Gilb: Did you go to the public school in Philadelphia?

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: How far along did you go?

Coggins: I only went through high school.

Gilb: Since your father had gone to college, what made you decide to quit at that point?

Coggins: I didn't have any incentive to go to college. There wasn't anything I wanted to be. In those days things were different. There were very few boys I knew who wanted to be any special thing. There were a few wanted to be doctors and lawyers and engineers. Most of us, when we got through school, just wanted a job. We wanted to earn money.

Gilb: You told me that as a boy you had become interested in birds and ornithology.
Coggins: Well, I went first to a public school. Then we moved out to Germantown and I went to a private school. In many private schools, I've found, either because they were people of a little more leisure or a little more money, they had time for nature study and cultural things. One day Witmer Stone, Curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science, came to our school and gave a lecture on birds. He had been one of our alumni, by the way. He brought the bird specimens with him and somehow they caught my interest. I had always been interested in animals and I became quite interested in birds.

Like many boys I hunted birds' nests and the birds became characters to me. And I got to know them that way. I joined the Academy of Natural Sciences when I was old enough and was secretary of the Delaware Valley Field Club, which was the ornithological section of the Academy. Later when I came to California I was President of the Cooper Ornithological Club, a large organization founded on the West Coast.

I have been a member of the American Ornithologists Union and the original Pennsylvania
In past Lourdes pilgrimage we reached here I had walked a bit and saw a stone on the ground. I asked if anyone knew what it was. They told me it was a holy relic. I picked it up and felt a sense of peace and connection to the past. I realized how important it is to remember our history and the stories that connect us to our heritage. It made me feel closer to the people who lived here before me and added a new appreciation for the beauty and significance of this place.
Audubon Society since 1897. I've never had a systematic course in ornithology, but I was in the midst of ornithologists and biologists, and I went on expeditions with them. I remember going across New Jersey on a collection trip with Witmer Stone and J. A. G. Rehn, now a well-known entomologist. We took a horse and wagon and tanks for collecting specimens. We slept out in the open in the pine barrens, and even in the populated East, it was so unsettled in the heart of New Jersey that we traveled two days without seeing a person.

In 1900 I went to assist in the course in ornithology at Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Dr. Thomas Montgomery of the University of Pennsylvania had charge of the ornithological work there, and he invited me to assist him, and that was quite an experience. That summer the entire school was under Dr. O. F. Whitman of the University of Chicago. One of the guest lecturers was Dr. E. L. Thorndike, the psychologist. Afterwards, I always boasted that he was in my class, but it was very casual attendance. Dr. Herman Bumpus was one of the important people, and Dr. Walcott. Then there was a man interested in marine life. We called him "King Crab" Patton because he was a specialist in the king crab.
The little town of Woods Hole was made up of rather well-to-do summer residents and the natives. And the natives had the summer people classified: the Big Bugs and the Bug Hunters. We had a boat trip to the island of Penikese, where Louis Agassiz had had his famous class. I remember one of the former pupils telling how he wanted to know what he was to do, and Agassiz handed him a fish bone and said, "Take this and tell me all about it in a couple of weeks." He was somewhat bewildered about where to begin. I guess Agassiz wanted him to go over it with a microscope and study its structure, chemistry and everything else.

I remember later when I was having Dr. David Jordan (President of Stanford University) autograph some of his books, he told me with pride that he had an autographed book of Louis Agassiz. Dr. Jordan seemed such an important person, yet he had an almost boyish pride in his possession of Agassiz's autograph.

Gilb: Of course Louis Agassiz was so great.

Coggins: Yes. He must have been quite a forcible person, I guess, to leave his mark as he did.
I am afraid that work in this field is not
sufficiently advanced for me to venture into
theoretical aspects. My work with this
material, however, has been extended to the
study of...
Gilb: You didn't aspire to be a professional ornithologist though?

Coggins: No, I didn't think of it as a full-time career although there were scholarships there which I could probably have had. All the boys I knew were thinking of going into business. As far as I knew, that was the proper future. I didn't want to be a doctor or a lawyer.
TO WORK FOR THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

Gilb: When you got out of school, how did you set about finding a job? Did you find one right away?

Coggins: I went to one job and they dispensed with me promptly on account of my penmanship.

Gilb: Was this a clerical job of some sort?

Coggins: Yes. I did go to business college there for awhile and I learned...at least, I took bookkeeping. Then, father had known the Penn Publishing Company and they wanted an errand boy.

Gilb: So you went to work as an errand boy? Appropriately in the firm that published Horatio Alger (laughter).

Coggins: In those days boys were very cheap and they weren't very valuable.

Gilb: What were you paid when you first started to work?

Coggins: $3 a week. You could hire a boy for $2.

Gilb: You had to live at home, obviously.

Coggins: Oh yes. Well, I did that anyway. No, I didn't have a family to support on $3. But that was an errand boy's established rate and they could get all the boys they wanted. Jobs were scarce; boys weren't.

Later I got to filling orders, packing and shipping books.
In the meantime, I think it was because I had written a story—in fact, I had written two stories. One of them was in response to a newspaper contest, I think the Baltimore Sun. I didn't win a prize, but they bought my story and published it. The other I sold to Vogue.

Gilb: Vogue, for goodness sake.

Coggins: Vogue was different in its format at that time—a commonplace women's style magazine. But it published a few stories. It didn't have anything like the glamour it has today. Relatively, perhaps it did, because those were not glamorous days.

My writing gave our manager the idea that I might be useful in reading manuscripts. And I read manuscripts.

Gilb: Do you recall now any of the manuscripts you read during that period that later became well known?

Coggins: We had, for instance, some of Horatio Alger's books, but we were going to publish them whether I read them or not. (laughter) Some of them had been run through Golden Days, which was a boys' magazine, and we were glad to get the book rights and publish them under any conditions.
Gilb: What was your function as a reader then?

Coggins: On other manuscripts it was for my opinion, but Alger was accepted already. It was like asking a publisher if he wanted to publish one of the best sellers today. He'd say "Yes" before reading it.

Then we had books by W. Burt Foster. These are names nobody will know today. James Otis was pretty well known; he wrote for St. Nicholas. Then we published this series of books. We got the idea...of course, I was not very much of an influence in the decisions in those days...but we got the idea we'd like to publish an adventure series dealing with West Point and Annapolis. We wrote to West Point and asked them if they could suggest somebody who could write a book and they gave us the name of a young man who had graduated or was graduating at the time. His name was Paul B. Malone and he wrote the series starting with Winning his Way to West Point. The author later became a general and later was in command of the Presidio in San Francisco.

Gilb: Trying to live down the fact he'd written the books, no doubt. (laughter)
Coggins: He was quite an ambitious person, quite up and coming. Then we got a young man who was going to Annapolis to write a series of books. His name was Commander E. L. Beach. While we were publishing that series, we found another Annapolis graduate who we felt was an even better writer; so we had two Annapolis series at the same time.

Also we decided on a series of college stories for girls, so we got a teacher from Smith College. She wrote a series called the Betty Wales books. Betty Wales, Freshman; Betty Wales, Sophomore, etc.

They were very successful. In fact, a garment manufacturer named some of his creations after her.

Gilb: Sounds as if the firm went out and actually sought writers and thought of the ideas for books and got people to write them.

Coggins: I think that's very common.

Gilb: It was common then?

Coggins: Yes. I think, except for books on fiction, many books were planned ahead. In fiction, you couldn't plan very definitely, but you could say, "We'd like a good fiction sea story." The series makes friends for books to follow. People say, "I've been buying books in, say, the Modern Library."
What they publish is usually something I want."

Their mind is open to look at the next book. We found that a series of books sold easier.

Gilb:

However, back in the days when you were a reader of manuscripts, if an unknown writer did submit a manuscript it was read, wasn't it? They weren't ignored?

Coggins:

Oh yes. I can't quite understand why so many people feel that their manuscript doesn't get a trial because, after all, the reader and the publisher would feel pretty sick if a manuscript had gone out of their house unread that became a best seller. Barnaby Conrad was telling not long ago that he offered his book, The Matador, I think it was to Bennett Cerf's office (Random House) and the fellow called in to Cerf and said, "Can we use 80,000 words on bull fighting?" and Cerf said, "Hell no!" And that was The Matador. They must have thought that matterover later many times.

I think when each person picks up a manuscript, he's hoping it will be something that his house wants; but on the other hand, he can tell pretty soon, he doesn't have to read very far, to know whether the author has skill or not.
Gilb: Did you find that different readers had different prejudices, however, in the firm?

Coggins: Oh yes. I remember we had a book offered to us by Edward S. Ellis, who was quite a famous boys' writer in those days, and I was the only one who liked it because it just told about some boys who rehabilitated a brick yard. It had no Indians, no fighting, nothing of that kind. It got published by another firm and later one of the errand boys read the book and said, "Now, I like that kind of book because it's about something that you can do yourself. It isn't so far away. It doesn't make you feel so unsatisfied." I was very glad to repeat that to the other readers.

Gilb: You were saying you were a reader for awhile. And then you moved on to what job after that?

Coggins: When they published a children's magazine they turned it over to me to run.

Gilb: What was that magazine called?

Coggins: Youth. We made serials from the books we were going to publish.

Gilb: How wide a circulation did it have? Did it circulate all over the country?

Coggins: Well, as far as we could make it, but we never got over 10,000 circulation. That was pretty big in
those days. I remember one time after I came to California I was talking to the editors of the *Sunset Magazine* and I said, "10,000 subscribers." Charles Field said, "You didn't really have that many, did you?" So evidently they had had their problem of circulation. Of course, there were no circulations like there are today. When the *Ladies' Home Journal* went over a million it was the top news in publishing.

**Gilb:** Did *Youth* Magazine take advertisements?

**Coggins:** We tried to, but people don't advertise very much in children's magazines. After all, with children there's too big a gap between the desire and the ability to purchase. The Curtis advertising man for the *Saturday Evening Post* told me, "When we published *Jack and Jill* we didn't even try to get advertising; it wasn't worth trying."

**Gilb:** As children's editor, was your function purely to edit the magazine, or did you also select books?

**Coggins:** No, I didn't have much to say about the books as a whole, except to select as serials. Perhaps I was more of a managing editor than an editor because I had to make up the magazine, work with
the printer, and do everything that needed to be done.

Gilb: You told me that you'd discovered L. M. Montgomery.

Coggins: Well, if I didn't discover her at least I published one of her earliest stories, "In Quest of a Story." I remember the manuscript came in from Canada. The whole adventure was about getting to the library to borrow a book in snowbound winter. I forget just what the adventure was but it was enough to make a story.

Gilb: Did the Penn Publishing Company publish Anne of Green Gables?

Coggins: No. There were a lot of stories like that that went through and a lot of the writers never did publish anything else. We didn't think of following all our short story leads. A great many of them had published and some of them we published later.

In 1906 a young man going to college sent in a poem which I accepted. It was called "The Wash Tub Sea." Forty-nine years later I was looking over an old file of Youth and came across this little poem, which I remembered, and I was astonished to see the author's name—Sinclair Lewis.
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Gilb: What sort of things did you try to get at that
time? What did you think would appeal to children?

Coggins: Of course we knew that hunting stories, war stories,
and adventure stories, historical stories, would
appeal to children. In our first issue we started
a story by W. Burt Foster called "With Washington
at Valley Forge," a series which starred a boy
who helps win the Revolutionary War. It was sure
fire. Then we had another little story called
"Little Polly Prentice" which was the story of a
little girl taken out of an orphan's home and finally
adopted by the people. I remember Mary Mapes Dodge,
Editor of St. Nicholas, told me later she would
have liked to have had that story for St. Nicholas.
So there evidently were patterns we all recognized
as acceptable for the children.

Gilb: Do you mean stories the children would like?

Coggins: Yes, and that their elders would approve of. We
had rules then. Nearly everybody who published
children's books had to be very much aware of the
Presbyterian and the Methodist Boards of Publication.
Such words as cigarettes and drink and slang were
not to appear in books that they bought.
Gilb: What would you have thought of Mark Twain, whose books are full of slang?

Coggins: I think *Prince and the Pauper* ran through *St. Nicholas*, but Mark Twain was probably not a favorite of the church publication people.

Gilb: You wouldn't think of him as being for children?

Coggins: For older children, but it wouldn't have passed...

Gilb: It wouldn't have passed your editorial policy?

Coggins: The company policy, anyhow. It wouldn't have passed the group that we were working with and selling to. I'm not familiar enough now with *Tom Sawyer* or *Huckleberry Finn* to know if they were entirely proper. They weren't, were they?

Gilb: No, I wouldn't say so.

Coggins: Well, these had to be proper! I remember, I was talking not very long ago to Oscar Lewis and he used to write for the Presbyterian Board and we were discussing the taboos of that time.

Gilb: And why did they have so much influence over you?

Coggins: Because they were big buyers of books.

Gilb: You were just editor of the magazine, but I guess your policy would be influenced by...

Coggins: By business, by what we could sell later. In other words, between our books and our magazine
we developed a following and after awhile, you know, to keep your following you have to follow your following.

Gilb: Didn't this ever bother you? Didn't you sometimes feel that this was an artistic or esthetic restriction?

Coggins: No, because I was not aware of it. In those days children's books were not so numerous nor so diverse. The values were in black and white. Reading was reading and a children's book was not analysed as they are today. Any of them was better than getting into mischief.

Then, too, the rags-to-riches viewpoint was the national ideal. Tobacco and drinking hadn't been advertised into the general acceptance they have today. It was not until one day I heard Otis Skinner let out a blast against the Alger stories as false, misleading and destructive that I realized there were varying opinions of what was proper for children. Furthermore, rags-to-riches stories did not become the subject of ridicule until the next generation.

I was perfectly aware that certain facts of life did not appear in books. But I thought it
Our policies and the policies of the businesses we work with are based on the principles of
fairness, transparency, and mutual respect. We are committed to protecting your privacy and
honoring your confidentiality. We believe that your personal information is valuable and
should be treated with care. We do not share your information with third parties without
your explicit consent. We use the information we collect to improve our services and
provide you with a better experience. We also use it to comply with legal requirements.

If you have any questions or concerns about our policies or practices, please do not
hesitate to contact us. We value your feedback and strive to continuously improve our
services. For more information, please visit our website or contact us directly.
was because no one wanted to write about them. The first knowledge I had of a general taboo I acquired one evening when I happened to be on a Fall River boat along with Joseph Coates. He was a member of Porter and Coates, an old Philadelphia book publishing firm. He was also the editor of their magazine, the New Era, an intellectual monthly along the lines of the Arena and the North American Review. He told me, "We have a manuscript in the office which I think is a great book by a young man I think is going to be a great writer. But I think it will never be published. It's too frank."

How nearly right he was is evidenced by the fact that, as I am told, Doubleday accepted the manuscript and Mrs. Doubleday prevented its publication. However, after several years and many journeys it was published. It was Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie.

Gilb: And would you say that in a way your standard of what was a good book was what sold well?

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: It didn't bother you?

Coggins: No, I didn't feel it was a cause. Any more than I would have questioned the formula if I had been working for a soap manufacturer.
Gilb: In Philadelphia, did you associate with many of the publishers? Did you know many of the publishers of that time?

Coggins: I met many of them. I was not a very important figure, but I did meet them. I met people like the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies Home Journal*. Edward Bok and George Horace Lorimer. I used to commute with Churchill Williams, an editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*. He had written a couple of novels later and was pretty well known. I remember his review of Frank Norris's *Octopus* in the *Bookman*. He coined the term "red-blood literature."

Then I met these other people, the people at Lippincott's. I knew Mr. Coates pretty well. There weren't very many publishers in those days. I remember when these "upstarts," McClure and Doubleday, came out of Scribner's and went into business and everybody predicted they wouldn't last.

Gilb: It was a very risky business, publishing, wasn't it?

Coggins: Not for them. They lasted a long time. But it was not a big business. I remember, at the time, there was no publishing company that would be
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rated as a million dollars in Dun and Bradstreet, while a lot of other businesses would run into many millions. If they sold $500,000 a year they would be a big publisher. But of course, the profits were bigger in percentage because labor was cheap. As I remember, our juveniles cost around twelve cents to manufacture.

Gilb: That's a regular, heavily bound...

Coggins: That would sell for $1.25 at list. Some of the publishers would send their printing up into Lancaster County, where the Mennonites lived, because they worked very cheap. I think some magazines are still printed there today. I think Country Life was printed up there for a long time.

Gilb: Curtis Publishing?

Coggins: Yes, they gave it up later, or sold it to somebody.

Gilb: May I ask what your salary was as children's editor?

Coggins: Well, not very impressive. When I became Editor it was doubled, but it never got over $60. I was, however, to be better paid when the magazine got on its feet.

Gilb: A month?

Coggins: Yes.
Gilb: Well, that bought a lot more then.

Coggins: Values were very different. A top executive in a department store would get $100 a month. $1,000 a year was pay for a smaller executive. Girls rated office boy pay. Stenographers, $4.00 a week. Recently a well-known businessman told me his father came to New York in 1910 and was glad to work for $3.00 a week.
When you were there in Philadelphia, besides working in this literary field you were developing an interest in politics, were you not?

Well, somewhat. I guess I got it from my brother and partly from the general feeling that politics in Philadelphia were so bad that we all should do something about it. You know, at the time Lincoln Steffens referred to Philadelphia as "corrupt and contented." There had been a great deal of graft there. There had been a succession of gangs for generations. Dave Martin was the boss of one. He was followed by Israel Durham and Jim McNichol. They were obviously grafters of the boldest type. There was an Independent group that repeatedly tried to reform the city, but never very successfully. The Democratic Party was very weak. Pennsylvania was Republican, a tariff state. The social standing at the time of a Democrat was lower than that of a Socialist today. The prevalent idea was that the Democrats only wanted to get a chance to loot the national treasury.
My brother and I got into the Democratic Party. We had a little lunch club, I remember, of which I was the treasurer. It was an odd mixture of Democrats. Some of them were liberals, some of them very conservative. One of the conservatives, one of the old aristocrats, was a Democrat because an uncouth upstart named Lincoln had come into the national picture with the Republican Party and ruined the country.

Gilb: Considering your abolitionist background, it was a little odd that you went into the Democratic Party.

Coggins: I was born a Republican. My father was Republican. It took him quite awhile to get over it because at first it had been a new and improved party. His uncle had been one of its founders.

Gilb: By your time it distinctly was not, however.

Coggins: No. Of course, there were economic issues involved in its birth. The North was not against slavery solely because it was wrong. The controversy has been interpreted as a conflict between the planters and the growing capitalism of the North.

Gilb: How active was this club? Did it just talk?
Coggins: It went into the campaign. In 1905 there came pretty near being a revolution. The city got so corrupt there that the mayor, himself a Republican, turned against the people who had put him in office. On one occasion citizens crowded the Council Chamber and lowered a noose from the balcony as a warning to the Council members. The story appears in Lincoln Steffens's *Shame of the Cities*.

Gilb: Did you know Lincoln Steffens at that time?

Coggins: Not at that time. Mr. McClure introduced me to him in his office a year or two later. Then in California I met him many times.

Gilb: We were talking about the activities of the Democratic Club in 1905.

Coggins: It was interesting. Interesting people would drop in occasionally. Tom Johnson, mayor of Cleveland.

Gilb: He was a Socialist, wasn't he?

Coggins: No, he was a single taxer and a liberal. They really didn't have any economic program except single tax, on land only, and less government. They believed first in democracy...

Gilb: And honesty.

Coggins: Honesty and democracy, free speech and free assembly. Then, when they came into questions of public
ownership, they split. The dyed-in-the-wool single taxers opposed socialism more than any other group— even more than the conservatives. They wanted less government. The Republicans were willing to have more government if they could control and benefit by it.

Gilb: And you more or less subscribed to this train of thought during that time?

Coggins: Well, no. It didn't take long to convince me that the single tax wouldn't fill the bill because it didn't cover enough. In fact, Henry George... a lot of the single-taxers wouldn't admit it, but Henry George himself came out for government ownership of railroads and the obvious monopolies. He had the feeling that was growing among these people, that after all the combinations were not going to disappear. It was a question of who owned them and whom they were to serve.

Gilb: What did your club try to do? Campaign for a reform mayor?

Coggins: It campaigned, it put a ticket in the field, but as we found out afterwards, or at least was pretty sure, that the real bosses of the Democratic Party were Republicans. Donnelly and Ryan, the Democratic
figureheads, were just there to see that it never did real harm to the Republicans. They were much closer to the Republican bosses than they were to us. They looked on us as innocents who had to be tolerated at election times.

Gilb: Sort of as middle-class reformers. Is that how you would describe yourselves?

Coggins: Well, yes. We didn't know the score, from their standpoint.

Gilb: You didn't have a big following, any power. No money.

Coggins: No. Nobody wanted us except ourselves.

Gilb: But you were vocal?

Coggins: Oh yes.

Gilb: Did you publish things?

Coggins: Well, we didn't do very much publishing. We had no organization. This was about the only non-Republican group in Philadelphia at the time that met regularly, in a big county like that of a million or so. Yet it had no power because the money was all on the Republican side and the tariff...you see, Pennsylvania needed the tariff, the businessmen...The repeal of tariff was like cutting the businessmen's throats.
Gilb: And that was one of the big planks of the Democratic Party.

Coggins: Yes, lower tariffs or no tariffs. That was about the only difference at the time. Later when Bryan ran, one segment of the party broke off and went into the Republican camp.
RETURN TO CALIFORNIA

Gilb: You came to California right after the 1906 San Francisco fire, which was a strange time to come. What brought you out here?

Coggins: I had been running the magazine for five or six years and it was obvious that it would never be a big thing. I knew at the time that St. Nicholas wasn't making any money; it was a question of time before they would go out of business.

Gilb: Even in spite of their obvious merit?

Coggins: Yes. It wasn't profitable. They kept it for sentiment for a long time, as long as Mary Mapes Dodge was alive, and I think Mr. Charles F. Clarke, her adopted son, carried it on for a time, but the Century Company finally gave it up. I think St. Nicholas had a remarkable record when you think of the books that went through it. Hans Brinker, Prince and the Pauper, Little Lord Fauntleroy, Juan and Juanita, Toinette's Philip, which I've seen in a movie in the last decade, Donald and Dorothy, Palmer Cox's Brownies, Joel Chandler Harris, Tudor Jenks. I don't know any publisher that introduced so many popular books for children.
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And encouraged so many young writers. I know that as a little girl I used to send poems to St. Nicholas all the time.

Mr. Clarke told me that one time when he was looking through their old numbers in the "Letter Box" department he came across a letter from a little boy from India. His name was Rudyard Kipling.

St. Nicholas was really a very important cultural contribution to the country.

Yes, I'm surprised too, because Mrs. Dodge didn't give one the impression of a literary person at all. She gave the impression of a very healthy, outgoing housewife rather than one living partially in a world of fantasy.

Did you ever have any controversies or problems in editing your magazine? Were there any choices of policy?

Within the limits already referred to I had the final decisions on policy. In fact I was the one who furnished all the taboos when others wanted me to publish something. I insisted on sending back a story by Jack London which I was urged to accept. It was a story of a little Eskimo boy who killed a polar bear by feeding it meat filled
with needles. I didn't think it was suitable. It was published later in another magazine.

Gilb: Jack London was already famous?

Coggins: He was just becoming famous. Critics were calling attention to this new writer.

Once in awhile I dream that I have forgotten to get out the last month's number. That's very real. I must have dreaded deadlines. It's unbelievable because that was fifty years ago.

Gilb: You said that the reason you were willing and ready to leave there was that you could see the handwriting on the wall, but what attracted you back to California?

Coggins: Perhaps the stories I'd heard from my parents about it. I didn't care much for Philadelphia as a city. I don't like hot weather, and the cold weather is useless after you get too old to sled and skate. I don't know whether the earthquake influenced me or not. Perhaps I felt I belonged here more than I did in Philadelphia.

Gilb: Had you had any contact through your editing duties with any California writers before you came out here?
Coggins: We printed a number of stories from California writers, but I couldn't name them now without looking them up.

Gilb: Then when you came out to California you didn't have a definite job in mind. You just had a romantic idea of coming out here.

Coggins: Well, it wasn't romantic. At least I didn't feel so. I just felt there was more room and opportunity out here.
Almost all users perceive a website as
possible if the text is large and positive.

Users tend to avoid sites that are
unfriendly or unhelpful. A site

Should be organized so the user can
read the content easily and

Visually appealing to content

Should also be easy to navigate. While UI

and user experience are important, in

All
And how did you happen to get your job with Whitaker and Ray?

Whitaker and Ray were a large book and school supply house. They had handled our books and also *Youth* magazine. Rather to my surprise, they remembered me. I wrote them from Fresno, where I was staying.

Apparently they must not have been damaged by the fire.

They were. Nearly everybody was damaged pretty badly. They were occupying a little corrugated iron place on Grove Street across from the City Hall in San Francisco. I arrived in town at night and walked around to see the place. Their stationery had always pictured the big Bancroft Building where their store had been before the fire. I saw this little hole in the wall and nearly decided not to go in in the morning.

(I'd like to know about their background. They had bought out...)

Yes, they bought out the old H. H. Bancroft Company, famous for their 47-volume *History of California*.
Whitaker and Ray were people who had a successful country store in Galt and had a lot of surplus money. When the Bancrofts wanted to sell, two of the employees got Whitaker and Ray to buy the business and let them run it. One of them soon got out of it. I worked for the one who remained, Charles M. Wiggin, who finally got the controlling interest in the business.

Gilb: How big a capital did the firm have?

Coggins: I never did know. I presume it was not more than $100,000 or $150,000.

Gilb: Was that the only publisher in the West at that time?

Coggins: No. There were various...lots of people published their own stuff. Paul Elder was doing publishing. Alec Robertson was publishing George Sterling. Both were booksellers. Every once in awhile somebody would publish a book at his own expense. Sometimes they would succeed. George Wharton James either published his own books or sold his own books. He would lecture and sell them at his lectures. He was quite a person at that time, very well known. His book on Lake Tahoe, The Lake and the Sky, has just been re-issued after forty years. There was some relation between him and
the Southern Pacific and the Sunset Magazine. Sunset Magazine was owned by the Southern Pacific and was a high-grade publicity medium. Either in it or in separate books James would write up attractive places where they owned a hotel. The present Tahoe Tavern was one of them. They had another down in San Jose, one near Monterey and one in Coronado. As the transportation was exclusively theirs, they could put a hotel in and get all the business. And apparently James found it was rather profitable to write a book about the section they selected. He wrote about the Indian country and about baskets and pottery. He was a man of a good deal of drive to him and I think a certain writing ability. He wrote easily.

Gilb: Didn't you tell me Joseph Henry Jackson started out as an editor for Sunset?

Coggins: Yes, he worked on Sunset.

Gilb: And that he had some dispute with...

Coggins: Well, it wasn't his type of thing. Jackson was distinctly a literary person and Sunset wanted business people. And he said, if he took a trip to Los Angeles, they expected him to come home with an advertising contract.
Gilb: So there was a considerable amount of small publishing going on all around.

Coggins: Yes, there's certain things that can be published locally. Of course, the Bancroft-Whitney Company, an offshoot of H. H. Bancroft, could publish law books successfully. No New York house could publish California law books! The facilities and the market were here. Publishing can serve in certain specialized functions in any state. But where you're dealing with general publishing for the public as a whole, in New York City you could either make or break a book without going out of town. There would be enough readers; you could sell enough there to insure its success. Here it would take a spread of seven or eight states to do the same thing.

Gilb: Did Whitaker and Ray try to sell to a nationwide market?

Coggins: We published a few books that did sell all over the country. We had one book, The Health Index of Children, by Dr. Ernest Bryant Hoag, who taught at Stanford for awhile and later at the University of California. One of the people who contributed a chapter to it was Dr. Lewis Terman of I. Q. fame.
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The book enabled the teacher to diagnose the troubles of her pupils. If they were not good students, sometimes it was because they had adenoids or lack of nourishment. Some had nothing but coffee for breakfast. The book really pioneered health supervision work in the schools. We received praise—and orders—from universities and from boards of health all over the country.

Then we sold Joaquin Miller's books all over the country. His reputation had been established in the 1870's back in England. He was better known in England than he was here for awhile.

Then Dr. Jordan's books sold pretty well.

Gilb: That was Dr. David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford.

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: They sold all over the country, did they?

Coggins: Yes, not big sellers, but he had a following of graduates and people who had worked with him and admired him.

We published one of Theodore Roosevelt's books. He gave a series of lectures here in the Greek Theatre of the University under the Earle Foundation. I got him to revise the lectures
and let us publish them under the title
Realizable Ideals. I still have the original
manuscript which he gave me.

Then we published some supplementary books,
mostly compilations.

Gilb: What type of compilations?
Coggins: One was Power's Poems for Memorizing, which was
used in schools in San Francisco year after year.
We had a book on basketmaking, design books for
art teachers, a series of aids to literature. For
instance, one of Shakespeare's plays with notes and
questions for the teacher.

Gilb: You were hired right off when you went to apply for
a job there?

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: They hired you in what capacity?

Coggins: To take charge of their publishing department.

Gilb: What other departments did they have?

Coggins: They sold a lot of school furniture, stationery and
supplies; also theatre seats. We had agents covering
the state, selling to the school districts.

Gilb: Selling books along with other wares.

Coggins: Yes, they carried samples of our own publications
with them. A good many of the books were used in
the schools. I would go out to the county meetings
when they would notify me to submit our books. There's quite a lot of local patriotism and if you published in California the superintendents would try to help you.

Gilb: Did you ever try to sell any other way except through salesmen? Did you sell through the mails?

Coggins: Yes. I worked on adoptions in different states through the mail.

Gilb: What do you mean, adoptions?

Coggins: Say Minnesota, for instance, might have a "reading circle" of some kind or a board. We would send our book to different members of the state board, who were often normal school principals and bought books to circulate through the state's schools. The Health Index of Children was adopted by a good many states because it was new and of recognized importance.

Gilb: Did you have any other methods of selling besides mail and salesmen? Did you sell through jobbers?

Coggins: No, you couldn't sell through jobbers. The book jobbing business had practically disappeared by that time. There was a time when Bancroft in the early days was a book wholesaler, but that practically disappeared. In fact, the only place
then that a book jobber could survive was up in Spokane.

Gilb: Why Spokane?

Coggins: Because the jobber there, John W. Graham, had a good start from the first. There were little towns scattered around the territory with little book stores which couldn't afford to buy from the East because of minimum freight costs. Also they were too small for sales calls by the publishers' salesmen. So they bought many of their books from Graham at a shorter discount.

In San Francisco, for instance, you couldn't job books because there were too many sources to buy from. Book sellers picked up from each other. There was one very serious attempt to make a business of jobbing by some young people who had a lot of money but no experience. They tried it and failed. Today many publishers have depositories of their own books out here and have taken over jobbing themselves.

Gilb: You did have a lot of Eastern competitors out here competing with you.

Coggins: We weren't in the class of the big school publishers at all.
Gilb: You just had to fill in where they didn't.

Coggins: Well, something that was too small for them.

If we could publish something for California, they couldn't always afford to do it, but we could.

Gilb: Was there ever any politics involved in trying to get school boards to adopt your books?

Coggins: There was supposed to be a lot of politics as well as graft in the book business.

Gilb: Did you hear stories? I'd like to hear some of the stories, even though they are only hearsay.

Coggins: They're the stories you hear about any selling. People would be bribed one way or another. One publisher told me that when he went to a town he would go and find out who the political boss was who had the influence in the state or city. He said, "I would make him my agent on a commission basis. When the books came up for adoption the word got by which books were to be bought." That goes through all business, that isn't just book selling. Our five-percenters in Washington are not unique.

Gilb: Did you feel that this was practiced by any of the salesmen for your company?
Coggins: Oh, if they were it was so picayunish we didn't know it. I presume they did get a lot of their orders by "cultivation" one way or another. One agent who had worked for a larger house told me that his objection to Boss Ruef was that he didn't stay bought. He paid him one time but another book company got the orders.

Gilb: Of course, Boss Ruef took graft on everything.

Coggins: Probably, but if it hadn't been he it was apt to be somebody else. It seemed to be inherent in competitive business. From management's viewpoint a business must survive. If it can afford to be ethical, it is fortunate.

Gilb: How did you get your authors? You discussed how you sold books, but how did you get them in the first place?

Coggins: Naturally, we didn't get the big authors. We could have published Charles F. Holder, who had written a number of successful books on deep sea fishing. He offered us a manuscript, but it was not in our line. It would have been a disappointment for both of us.

Gilb: So what kind of authors did you look for? Did you look for authors or did you wait for them to come to you? How was this done?
Jewish emigration to the New World and the establishment of Jewish communities in places like the United States and Brazil. This was part of a broader trend of globalization and the spread of Jewish culture and practices around the world. The acceptance of Jewish communities by local communities was often met with resistance, but over time, these communities were able to integrate and contribute positively to their new environments. This period was marked by the growth of Jewish education and the spread of Jewish literature, as well as the establishment of synagogues and Jewish institutions. The story of Jewish emigration to the New World is a testimony to the resilience and adaptability of the Jewish community, as well as to the transformative power of immigration and cultural exchange.
Goggins: Well, once or twice, when we were making these literary aids I'd look for people to write these for us. Usually a teacher of English. A book on California civics was written for us by a school superintendent. In a way, that came nearest to being graft, you might say, to get a man who was in a position to buy his own book. But if he believed in the book, if we believed in it, it seemed to be all right.

Gilb: In other words, a teacher who could influence the choice of a book to be used in his classes would be a good person to approach to write a book.

Goggins: Yes, that was very common. Charles Mills Gayley wrote *Classic Myths* or *Grim Tales Made Gay*. His prestige helped to sell the book.

Gilb: But you didn't handle books usually that were written by university professors?

Goggins: We didn't handle that one. Yes, we had one on geography by Harold Fairbanks, who taught in the Department of Geography at the University of California. And Josiah Keep of Mills College wrote a book of West Coast shells for us which has been a standard book and is still about the only book of its kind.
Gilb: How did you happen to get David Starr Jordan's books? Did he come to you?

Coggins: We'd had one of his books before, the story of a baby seal. It was really a kind of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to save the seals. It was a plaintive little story of an orphan seal left to perish because its mother had been killed for her fur. Then we published his *Care and Culture of Men*.

Gilb: He brought them to you, in other words. He came to you.

Coggins: *Care and Culture of Men* we had already published before I came and it was destroyed in the fire. I just republished it. He was willing.

Gilb: Oh, you went to him?

Coggins: I did, but I didn't have to because it was already in the works when I came here.

Gilb: How did you happen to get Joaquin Miller?

Coggins: Joaquin Miller we had had before, in one volume, but we republished it in six volumes. The old one-volume edition was published way back in the 1880's.

Gilb: And you didn't go after people like Jack London or Gertrude Atherton?

Coggins: No, we couldn't compete.
Gilb: Did you receive many unsolicited manuscripts?
Coggins: Yes, lots of them.
Gilb: And you read those over carefully?
Coggins: Yes. Once in awhile we published one. Just after women got the vote, Bessie Beatty, a feature writer for Fremont Older, brought us a manuscript called A Political Primer (for the new voters). It sold pretty well. And a Congressman, a member of the Congressional committee for the Panama Canal, brought a history of the Canal. We published it. We had a book by Thomas Parker Boyd that sold very well. It was called The How and Why of the Emmanuel Movement.
Gilb: What's...
Coggins: I'm not sure but I think it was a little like Humanism. He sold practically the whole edition himself.
Gilb: Because he had a following somewhere?
Coggins: Yes. He'd go out and lecture, like George Wharton James.

Then we published another book which I didn't understand at all at the time and was totally out of sympathy with, called The Subconscious Mind and Its Illuminating Light. I thought it was kind of
a sentimental thing, but we had already contracted for it and the lady paid for it and sold it too. So you'd be surprised at the kind of books that can be sold.

Gilb: You didn't try to sell much fiction, I take it.

Coggins: No, we weren't equipped for it. Fiction was too much of a gamble.

You know, Kate Douglas Wiggins' *The Birds*! *Christmas Carol* was published here and never got anywhere. Mr. Doxey published it. It wasn't until Houghton-Mifflin finally took it that it paid. One trip around the country and they've got their money back.

Gilb: In other words, even if a book had merit, if it weren't published by someone who knew how to sell it...

Coggins: No, the physical obstructions would stop your success. The shipping back there, the traveling, what it would cost a man to travel with just one or two books of fiction. He couldn't even pay for his meals on the train.

Gilb: You mentioned somebody having paid for a book. Was that a common practice?
and it dawned on me that there were some subtleties in the way the text was written. It seemed to be a mix of formal and informal language, with some terms that were not immediately clear. The overall tone was somewhat ambiguous, which made it difficult to fully grasp the meaning. However, I made an effort to understand the context and tried to make sense of the text as best I could.
Coggins: They had been doing that a lot. I discouraged it and finally got rid of it. "Vanity publishing," where people wanted to be printed. Once in awhile there's a book that's so special that it's justifiable. There was a man many years ago in Philadelphia, an engineer named Trautwein, who published a technical book himself and it became a constant seller to engineers for generations.

Gilb: Why didn't you want to publish books on that kind of arrangement?

Coggins: Well, it's hard enough to sell a book when you believe in it. But if you didn't believe in a book enough! In the second place you have to pay a much bigger royalty, naturally, because they put up the money and you're taking less of a risk and if it is a success you lose out. There was a case of that. As I recall there was a company in Boston that used to do that. I forget their name, but they would encourage people, "Your book is good, it should be published, but unfortunately our budget is low and we can't take it on at present." They would talk them into putting up the money. They would do a printing job and the contract always said that "you have to take the
remaining copies off our hands when the time comes," and so on. Well, a man by the name of Charles Felton Pidgeon sent them a book and they got him hooked on the thing, as they thought. Instead of getting 10% royalty he got a much larger percent. The book started to sell and sell and sell. Here was the author getting something like 40% royalty and the publisher getting poorer and poorer because he had all the expensive end of it for himself. That's the only case I know of where the man bit the dog.

Gilb: In other words, you didn't want to take "vanity" books because you thought it was bad economics, rather than just bad ethics.

Coggins: Perhaps a little of each. Usually when they want to pay for them there isn't much reason to publish. If you got something like Trautwein's book, you might feel you were doing something worth while.

Gilb: And you didn't think publishing poetry was very worth while?

Coggins: I didn't think it would do very much for either us or the author. After all, anybody could publish what he writes, but that wouldn't mean that it was worth while. The fact that we published it wouldn't make it any more worth while.
Gilb: What kind of arrangements did you ordinarily have with people, aside from those who paid for publishing? Did you give them advances? Did you commission them to write books?

Coggins: No, we didn't commission them. They were glad to go ahead anyhow. In fact, most of the manuscripts offered were complete when we got them.

Gilb: And you didn't pay them any advance sums?

Coggins: No, we just paid them royalties as they sold.

Gilb: What was the normal royalty?

Coggins: 10%.

Gilb: A few of them earned quite a bit from that, but not many, I gather.

Coggins: Well, some of them did pretty well. Miss Power did pretty well with her Poems for Memorizing. Dr. Hoag sold very well. I got pretty good royalty out of Theodore Roosevelt's book because I bought the plates for that myself.

Gilb: Did you ever have any trouble or controversies with any of your writers?

Coggins: No, because I guess we didn't have writers who could afford to be controversial. Well, Joaquin was sometimes a little unmanageable. In
the prefaces to one of his volumes he wanted to pay off a lot of grudges to people he didn't like and I talked him out of that. I remember trying the same with Theodore Roosevelt, but it didn't work. He apparently didn't like James Gordon Bennett and he said something about him that I thought it would be better to leave out, but he said it was better, when you believed a thing, to say it.

Gilb: So you let him go ahead?

Coggins: Oh yes. Anyway I think the author should have the final say.

Gilb: Did you do much of an editorial job on these books? That is, revise the contents?

Coggins: No. I wouldn't touch a thing of Joaquin's, for instance, except to read proof.

Gilb: In all of these books, did you do much revision?

Coggins: I did do some in The Health Index of Children, its shaping up. I did make one suggestion which apparently was very helpful. I suggested a diagnostic table in the front to aid teachers in noting symptoms and checking them for later reference. It gave the school nurse something to go on.
Gilb: You told me this company didn't do very well financially. What eventually happened to them?

Coggins: The publishing by itself would probably not have made money, but by using the company's facilities it was profitable. The whole company did pretty well. They did a big business between their furniture and books and school supplies. The company had made money but the manager wanted to retire and later sold the business.

Gilb: How many people did it employ in the publishing end?

Coggins: Just two of us.

Gilb: You and who?

Coggins: My present wife, though we were not married then.

Gilb: She was the secretary?

Coggins: Yes, and also my assistant. It was her first job.

Gilb: That wasn't a very big firm then.

Coggins: No. Of course, we had the use of the rest of the organization, salesmen, shipping and everything else. The books were sold and shipped by the bookstore department. If we'd just been publishing we'd have had to have more people and it wouldn't have been profitable.

Gilb: Why did you leave the job?
Because I realized that I was never going to be able to own it. It wouldn't have been profitable to separate it from the rest of the business. It wouldn't have stood alone. I'd have had to be in another business besides, to carry it.

Did you have a financial interest in it?

A little, not very much.

And because you couldn't own it you didn't want to be in it at all?

No. I knew that Mr. Wiggin would dump the whole company if he got the chance. He was wanting to get out, and that made it very uncertain whether anybody who took it would want the publishing end of it. Finally he did sell it to Harr Wagner after I got out. I had gone into contracting at the time.

When did you leave the firm?

I would think it was about 1912, but I'm not positive. Maybe a little later than that.
as to going there and I was pleased. I remembered the
friendliness and the way we talked at all. I was so glad
I could not help but think of you all. I know you
were all thinking of us, I could tell by the way you
spoke. I was so happy to see you all again. It was
like coming home after a long time. I was so glad
I could be with you all again. It was like being
home.
Gilb: I also wanted to ask about the book selling of that period right after the fire. I understand some booksellers were also publishers.

Coggins: Yes. Paul Elder, when I was in the East, was publishing paperbound books by Gelett Burgess and Will Irwin, and some of that mischievous type of literature that they produced, and his partner, who left the business about the time I came here, Morgan Shepard, had started to publish a series of monthly letters for children called the Bird Alone letters. The child would subscribe and would receive a letter every month simulating a personal letter about things that should interest him.

Gilb: That would appeal to children!

Coggins: Yes, but it didn't last. Very difficult to make a success of publishing out here. One, I'd say there were not enough buyers in the radius of our shipping facilities. Secondly, costs were too high compared to the East. I remember one of our books—we could get the whole book manufactured in St. Louis for what we would have to pay here to have it bound in San Francisco.

Gilb: The labor costs were more, is that it?
EXHIBIT IV (Continued)

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Coggins: Yes. There was no binding machine here on the coast. All of our books were bound by hand. In New York at that time, the machine would cut the boards, paste it, fold it up and be all ready to put on the sheets.

Gilb: The binding must have been a very high percentage of the cost.

Coggins: Yes. The printing and paper weren't so high as the more complicated mechanical process.

Another bookseller-publisher here was Alec Robertson, who was a character; everybody knew him. When he wanted to be, he was hard of hearing. He also had the habit of never answering letters. One time a man came down from somewhere in the mountains. He raged into the store and confronted Robertson with "You're a hell of a businessman; I've written to you three times and I haven't heard from you. Now I've come two hundred miles just to get an answer." He thought Robertson would wilt. Instead, Robertson said, "You know, you've proved something I've contended all my life, that if you leave every letter alone it will answer itself."
Robertson was a person of principle. He published George Sterling's works. He knew that he was losing money on them, but he was willing to do it because he felt that Sterling was a great poet.

Why did these booksellers publish? Did they do it in the hope of making profit?

I don't know. Why do people like to express themselves in different ways? They had been buying books all their life and, after all, there was a little temptation that they might get a best seller. Not having any experience, they didn't know that it might be very difficult. Now Mr. Doxey, who was the predecessor of Paul Elder and Company, published Kate Douglas Wiggin's Birds' Christmas Carol. It didn't sell until later when Houghton Mifflin took it.

There is more to publishing than merely producing a book.

Yes. It's a whole process, and like everything in business, the most difficult part is to make it pay.
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I want to ask you some questions about the general literary scene you found out here in San Francisco right after the fire. What struck you as different out here from what it was like in the East?

Although I didn't work very long in Philadelphia, I doubt if I would remember the names of more than three or four poets who were writing poetry in Philadelphia at the time. When I came to California I found I was right in the midst of poets. There were a few novelists and historians writing in Philadelphia, mostly novelists and short story writers, but we didn't publish any poetry. I don't recall having any book of poetry offered to us. Out here we had people bringing us books of poems all the time, more than any other kind of work.

How do you account for this prevalence of poetry?

In one way, Philadelphia was drab. It was a business city, not particularly colorful. Out here there was more color. I made a little list coming over here of people who were pretty well known at this time in California. Even people who were not readers would know of them. Joaquin Miller, for
instance, was known all over the state. Edwin
Markham was known. Herbert Bashford, who had been
the literary editor for the Bulletin, was known.
Ina Coolbrith was a celebrated person. Clarence Urmy
and Edward Rowland Sill, who wrote that poem,
"God Be Merciful to Me, a Fool." Burgess was no
longer here but his poems, his "Purple Cow" and
"Chewing Gum Man," were known all over. Charles
Keeler was a well-known figure. People would point
him out. David Starr Jordan even wrote poetry.
Mayor Taylor wrote poetry. Palmer Cox, who I
believe came from Vallejo, had written his Brownie
stories in poems. Bret Harte, Charles Stoddard, and
George Sterling were very generally known. Clark
Ashton Smith, a young man in Auburn who had never
seen a trolley car, never used a telephone, and
wrote a striking poem on Nero, a philosophical
analysis of Nero's mind. Will Irwin and Wallace Irwin
wrote verse. Jeffers was not so well known at that
time. Mary Austin was out here in Carmel.
Henry Meade Bland, who was a teacher of literature
in the San Jose school, had whole classes of poets.
He used to publish a little magazine for them.
This was all very different background from Philadelphia or New York.

Gilb: I was going to say that by 1906, the time of the fire, many of the people whom you have mentioned had already gone to New York. People like Ambrose Bierce, Gelett Burgess, Will and Wallace Irwin had left. Was there much literary activity going on?

Coggins: Oh yes. There were many in the California Penwomen's Group and the California Writers' Group. There were lots of people writing poetry. There still are, very much the same type of person. There were a lot of these poets still here. Charles Stoddard, I think, was here when I came. I know he was. Joaquin was here. Ina Coolbrith was here. Most of the list I gave you were here.

Gilb: So it wouldn't be a fair generalization to say there had been a complete exodus.

Coggins: No. George Sterling was here. The best-known poets were still here. Irwin and Burgess were perhaps best known for their other writings.

Gilb: Did your work bring you much into contact with all these people?
Coggins: Indirectly, with many of them. Because of Joaquin Miller. His home on the "Hights" was a shrine for poets. I hadn't known Joaquin Miller well before then because I hadn't had many contacts with poetry.

Gilb: Of all this group you mentioned, who were your close friends? Were any of them in your inner circle of friends?

Coggins: I saw a great deal of Joaquin Miller and was with him a great deal of the time. He would come over and we'd have lunch together. I would go up to his place. Sometimes I'd stay overnight there in his mother's cabin. Through him I would meet other people like George Sterling, who came up there.

Gilb: What kind of a man was Sterling?

Coggins: He was a tragic figure. I wouldn't say he was running away from things, but the life he had to live wasn't the life he'd like. As you know, he finally committed suicide. The story was--I don't know if we should say these things or not. They don't hurt anybody's feelings.

Gilb: No.

Coggins: Well, the story was that somebody had given him a lot of liquor so he could entertain Mencken, who was coming to San Francisco. When Mencken arrived, Sterling had drunk up all the liquor. He was so
Almost all nations have laws that define the "weighing" of a cause on the side of justice. Evidences that a cause is just are weighed against evidences that are not just. In some cases, where there are evidences that a cause is just, such evidences are weighed more heavily than the evidences that are not just. In other cases, where there are evidences that a cause is not just, such evidences are weighed more heavily. However, the balance must be observed to make sure that the weight of the evidences is not manipulated.
humiliated he couldn't face it.

Gilb: Did he commit suicide before or after Mencken arrived?

Coggins: Before he arrived.

Gilb: Oh, what a tragedy!

Coggins: He couldn't entertain him the way Mencken should be entertained.

Gilb: If you knew Sterling fairly well...

Coggins: I didn't know him very well. I don't think many people knew him very well. He was a shy person. The only times I saw him...I first met him with Upton Sinclair when Sinclair came to speak. A number of us had dinner together. He seemed to avoid attention. He rather followed Sinclair.

Gilb: What was Sinclair like?

Coggins: Sinclair was no blushing violet. He didn't try to hide under any bushel. He schemed for publicity, usually for things he believed in. But he didn't play himself down.

Sinclair and Sterling were extremes. The one shrunk from the world, the other challenged it.

One time Sinclair was eating breakfast at the St. Francis and they charged him 25¢ for a shredded wheat biscuit. Protesting the bill, he got headlined and whole columns of newspaper publicity about what
the item actually cost and what he had to pay for it. He liked to do that type of thing. In fact, I think I remember he got his start with a phoney discovery of a manuscript.

Gilb: Well, I got the impression that Joaquin Miller was somewhat of a poseur.

Coggins: Oh yes. But the thing that surprised me about a man like Joaquin Miller is how sensitive he could be about some things and yet do things that attract so much attention.

Gilb: What type of things was he sensitive about?

Coggins: For instance, one time we were going past the Bulletin to lunch just as Fremont Older was getting into his car. I said, "Here's Fremont." He didn't say anything. I thought he didn't hear me. Then he said, "You keep telling me Fremont Older is there. I don't want to see him. He said I was a drunken bum." Well, those things went pretty deep with him.

Gilb: He couldn't take criticism.

Coggins: Well, he wanted to be admirable. It hurt, I guess, because it was true. You can see that a man can be brutal and also sensitive. He can do cruel things or mean things and yet not want them done to him.
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Gilb: Was Joaquin Miller brutal at times?  
Coggins: I don't know that brutal is the word. He wasn't a family man by nature and he didn't treat his family any too well. He practically ran away from his wife. He ran away from his daughter. She had to follow him out here. He had been through one or two affairs that were not very commendable. He was a natural masculine person. This I don't consider a 100% compliment.  

Gilb: And among the other literary people, whom did you know quite well?  
Coggins: We knew Edwin Markham quite well because he stayed with us several times when he was in California, a week or two at a time.  

Gilb: He'd already been made famous?  
Coggins: Oh yes, he was famous. He was in New York but he came out here for the 1915 World's Fair and twice after that.  

Gilb: Could you tell me something about him, what type of man he was?  
Coggins: A happy outgoing person, delighted with his audiences and his fame. Joaquin, on the other hand, was a showoff but not outgoing.
Glib: I understand the difference.
Coggins: But Markham was more natural, very acute in some ways. He was very forgetful. We hunted all over town one time for a pair of trousers that he was wearing and which because of his frock coat we did not see until we all sat down to think over the situation (laughter). He'd stayed downtown at somebody's house after giving a lecture. Then he came to our house and he was to speak somewhere and he wanted to wear those trousers. He'd visited the Bashfords and he just couldn't tell where he'd left them, maybe downtown at Miss Potter's. He went there--no trousers. We went over to the Bashfords' and they weren't there. We came home frustrated and sat down to rest and think over the next move. As he sat on the couch, his coat fell open and here were the trousers he was looking for.

Another time we were eating our supper and the phone rang and I went to answer it. It was Mrs. Rieber, wife of Dean Rieber of the University of California. "The guests are all here and we've been an hour waiting for Mr. Markham," she said. Mr. Markham had just about finished his dinner.
with us. But he sensed something of the call. He said, "You'd better let me talk to her." At the phone he said soothingly, "Mrs. Rieber, I don't want you to think I forgot about your invitation. I told my secretary to remind me and he forgot it."

Well, we hustled him over there in time to save the day, or at least the evening.

He was pretty foxy. A person he didn't recognize at all would come to him and say, "Oh, Mr. Markham, I'm Mrs. So-and-so and I met you at Mrs. Such-and-such's house. I know you don't remember me." Markham would look straight at her as if he hadn't heard. "Wait a minute," he'd say. "I remember now. I met you at Mrs. Such-and-such's house and your name is--let me think--Mrs. So-and-So." And he'd repeat her own words. She'd go away saying, "What a wonderful memory he has!"

This he worked over and over again.

Gilb: Did you know Ina Coolbrith?

Coggins: Just slightly. I knew her only through Joaquin. I didn't see very much of her. I didn't pursue the poets at all. In the first place, she was published already and she didn't have anything to publish. I don't know whether she was friendly
It was all my fault. I should have been more careful and more respectful of your feelings. I regret the trouble I caused you. I hope I can make it up to you somehow. I am truly sorry for my behavior and I promise not to repeat it. Please forgive me.
with our house or not. She never came in to see us, I know that.

Gilb: Did you know Gertrude Atherton?

Coggins: Just met her. I didn't know her at all. The most vivid thing I got off her was something that Joseph Henry Jackson told me. She invited Jackson to dinner on her birthday. It happened that just before dinnertime one of the book salesmen came in with a bottle of wine and hung around and talked and talked and talked. He hadn't been invited. It was long after dinnertime. As a last resort she invited him to dinner. In a good carrying whisper she confided to Jackson, "There wasn't a damn thing else I could do."

Gilb: An outspoken type.

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: You didn't know Jack London.

Coggins: No, I didn't make an effort to meet him. I'm really sorry I didn't, because I could have gone up there with George Wharton James or John Barry; either of them knew him well.

Gilb: What kind of man was Barry?

Coggins: Well, Barry was an institution here. He was a Harvard man, a pupil of William James. He knew so
very many people. At one time he was dramatic editor for Harper's Weekly. Then he came to the Coast and Fremont Older took him up, rather to my surprise because John was more of a literary man than a newsman. He wrote a very thoughtful column and I was surprised that it took so well. He'd pick a small subject and make it into a literary cameo. He was a master of simple expression. I doubt if he ever wrote a sentence that wasn't clear. One time I asked Older, "How did you know that a column like John Barry's would take? I think a lot of editors wouldn't have taken it. They would have thought it was just too high-grade." Older seemed pleased by my question. But he waved off the implied compliment with, "Oh, anybody who keeps writing every day for a length of time will get a following,"

Gilb: What did you think of Fremont Older?
Coggins: I have always felt very grateful to him, although I had no chance to be close to him. He was interesting. He was a go-getter, a fighter. He wouldn't have much patience, for instance, with the Socialist Party or running for office with no hope of being elected. He'd feel that was not
On this point I feel sure I was right.

...
getting anywhere. But during the first World War—my brother was a conscientious objector—Older made it easier for us and all the conscientious objectors. He was sympathetic, which meant a lot. His office was about the only place where we were accepted at the time. I knew him through John Barry and got invited to his birthday parties. Some of them were very interesting. I admired lots of the things he did and his courage.

Gilb: How closely did you know Barry?

Coggins: Well, I used to have lunch with him once a week for years.

Gilb: Just because you were friends?

Coggins: Because we were friends and we were interested and our viewpoint was the same. He believed very much as I did, and we were in sympathy.

Gilb: Socialism, for instance?

Coggins: Yes, although he was never a member of the Party, but he defended its viewpoints rather subtly and very carefully. He was an anti-war man. All the way through the war he was never reconciled to the war. He was anti-capital-punishment; when the law was being considered, he went out and campaigned for it. He was a very civilized person. As I said
before, I think he was a master craftsman. He was not a success as a novelist. Perhaps he lacked imagination. And I don't think he realized it. He made several attempts at writing plays, too. I think as an essayist he was best.

Gilb: What did he look like?

Coggins: You might have taken him for an Englishman. He--do you remember the English actor Aubrey Smith? Well, John looked like a smaller edition of Aubrey Smith.

Gilb: Correct me if I'm wrong. I think of Aubrey Smith as having a handle-bar mustache and a sort of reddish complexion and heavy eyebrows.

Coggins: Yes. John was--Aubrey Smith was sort of an enlarged caricature of John.

Gilb: Well, both of them then must have been a caricature of a certain type of Englishman? The God and Empire type of Englishman?

Coggins: Although John was Irish. Apparently the Barrys originally came from one of the towns across from England--in France. But John's father came from Ireland. John was born a Catholic and grew away from it, although he retained lots of Catholic friends and he used to be invited to the Archbishop's
As I looked out the window, I noticed the sky was filled with a strange, ethereal light. It was as if the world was about to change. I felt a sense of foreboding, a hint of the unknown. I knew I couldn't ignore it anymore. I had to act.

I looked around the room, assessing the situation. The only thing I could do was to prepare. I gathered my things, making sure everything was in order. I knew I had to leave soon, but I didn't know where or how.

I checked the clock, wondering if it was too late. The minutes ticked by, but I didn't feel any rush. I knew I had to act, but I didn't know what to do. I was lost, alone, and confused.

As I stood there, staring out the window, the light continued to shine. It was as if it was guiding me. I knew I had to follow it, no matter where it led. I took a deep breath and stepped forward, ready to face whatever lay ahead.
houze. He told about the Archbishop being very tactful. The other guests would kiss his ring. He didn't embarrass John.

Gilb: Because he was no longer Catholic.

Coggins: Yes, I presume so.

John used to stay at our house—he'd come over sometimes. Once I had a debate with General David Barrows—while he was President of the University of California. The Unitarian Church wanted someone to speak against war. Somebody told them to get me. John came and wrote it up at some length. He made two or three articles out of it. Gave him a chance to get in a lot of his own views on it too. But it didn't stop the war.

Gilb: Were his views shared by Fremont Older?

Coggins: As I said before, I don't think Fremont Older could accept Socialism. He was an individualist of pioneer background. He had to have a lot of freedom for himself. But he recognized the foolishness of war, and he defended the objectors to war and a lot of people who needed defending. He stuck his neck out. Hearst probably kept him because he was profitable. He was successful.
He knew a lot of people he disagreed with, but they respected him. He got advertising.

Gilb: He did not alienate the advertisers?

Coggins: No, apparently not.

Gilb: That's interesting.

Coggins: He was so dynamic and yet kind that he carried people with him. He could get people to help others.

Gilb: I wonder if as an editor he tried to censor the views of people like Barry.

Coggins: No, he didn't. But Hearst would have. Hearst finally forced him to let Barry go.

Gilb: Oh, why was that?

Coggins: Hearst didn't like that kind of stuff.

Gilb: Didn't feel it sold well?

Coggins: Just was hostile to it. In the first place, he was a warrior; he wanted us to conquer the Japanese and the Mexicans, where he had his mining. Probably Fremont kept Barry longer than Hearst wanted him to.

Gilb: You said John Barry was an institution. Does that mean that he had many, many friends?

Coggins: Yes. I saw the letter that Older wrote him when he finally had to let him go. And he didn't know where to go then or where to try. He had an offer from the Oakland Tribune and an offer from the News.
And we talked it over and Joe O'Connor thought he ought to go to the Tribune and I thought he should go to the News.

Gilb: I should think that the News would be more sympathetic.

Coggins: I advised him to go to the News. I felt he wouldn't last very long on the Tribune, not in these days, anyhow. I knew that old man Scripps had been a tremendous liberal force. He wasn't alive at the time, but there was still a hangover from the old attitude.

Gilb: The News has been a strong pro-Labor paper for a long time.

Coggins: Under Howard it became rather conservative. Howard, I believe, wanted to be Ambassador to England. He was fishing for that for quite awhile, but he didn't get it. But they let Barry write anything he wanted for the balance of his life.

Gilb: Did he retain his following in the latter part of his life?

Coggins: The News said that he brought 4,000 new readers over with him when he came. That was very impressive, because a lot of his readers probably were already
taking the News too, and would have come over if they hadn't been reading the News already. We always read the News and the Bulletin at the same time.

Gilb: You said that he had many friends. Was he active in organizations?

Coggins: Not so much in formal organizations, but everybody liked to invite him to their homes. He was interesting, and also his visiting made copy for him. I mean he would pick little, overlooked subjects. I have an article he wrote about my first wife. It's called "Advice is Cheap." She was a house builder. She had started as an art student and took up designing sofa cushions. They sold so well they had to be lithographed, and she rested from that business and built a house and sold it before it was finished. She went on building. She was talking to John one time. He asked her how she accomplished things. She said, "Well, I always went to people who were successful and asked them. I found that instead of feeling competitive, people liked to tell you how they succeeded." She'd go right to another contractor or painter and ask him,
If there were such plans here, you would not publish
them. But, as it stands, there is no need to keep it a
secret.
and he'd be glad to tell her. They enjoyed being a part of her success.

Gilb: Sure. Liked showing off what they knew.

Coggins: Yes. The psychology of a woman making a man think he's smart. But I don't think she thought it out that way.

John made many articles that way. I will always remember one sentence of his: "Sometimes God gives us what we deserve by letting us have what we want."

Gilb: You say he was interesting. Did he lead an active life, aside from being a writer, that made him interesting? or was he just a good raconteur?

Coggins: Well, he was on the Ford Peace Ship, among other things. And of course he had a lot to tell about that. He'd go to Honolulu or someplace. While there he would write a series of articles and also come back with a lot of copy for the future.

Gilb: A lively observer. And interested in everything.

Coggins: No, not in everything. Anything to do with people. He wasn't interested in scenery or nature. You could take him up to Yosemite and he'd continue talking about some actor or writer while we faced
a three-thousand-foot waterfall. It wouldn't even divert him. You could bring him over the top of one of the mountains with a thrilling view and never know that he saw it.

Gilb: Do you think his writing style was influential upon any other writers around here?

Coggins: I'm not sure, because a lot of people didn't appreciate that kind of writing. They said it was colorless. He didn't admit that, but it was always clear. He admired the French writers. Possibly that was one of the things that influenced him.

Gilb: Which ones?

Coggins: I can't think of the ones he used to refer to.

Gilb: Flaubert?

Coggins: Probably. The ones who wrote so simply. I don't know much about the French writers, but I presume they wrote more directly than we did.

Gilb: Did you know Peter Kyne?

Coggins: Yes, I knew Peter Kyne.

Gilb: Tell me something about him.

Coggins: Well, I met him through Mr. Lorimer. Mr. Lorimer used to come to California every year to beat the bush for new writers.
Who was Lorimer?

He was the founder of the *Saturday Evening Post*. He was the editor who built it, made it what it was and is. I had known him slightly in Philadelphia. He invited me over to the St. Francis for cocktails. He introduced me to a new young writer, Peter Kyne, who, he said, was going to be a good writer. That was the first I met him. Peter Kyne lived in Berkeley. I used to meet him on the street and once in awhile we had lunch together. He told me about things he was writing and about people.

But he'd grown up in the country down near Half Moon Bay and wanted to be a writer. He did write and he was very successful. He was one of the big money makers.

He did make a lot of money?

Oh yes.

What sort of things did he write?

Well, sea stories and his Cappy Rick series ran through the *Post*. It was published in book form. Then he wrote the *Valley of the Giants*, which was afterwards a moving picture. Later, I think, he went down to Hollywood and worked for the moving picture companies. After a few years he apparently
had some kind of difference with them, gave it up and came home.

Gilb: Were there any other writers of that period with whom you were especially intimate that we haven't mentioned?

Coggins: There weren't many novelists here in that period. Mostly poets.

Gilb: Did you know Charles Norris?

Coggins: No. Met him, but I didn't know him. They were in New York a great deal, he and Kathleen Norris.

Herman Whittaker I knew pretty well. He wrote The Settler and The Planter, stories of Mexico. He went into Mexico and pioneered the atmosphere and life down there.

Stewart Edward White was here for awhile and lived out on the Peninsula. But offhand, I couldn't make you a list of novelists like I could of poets.

Gilb: You didn't get into the Carmel group at all?

Coggins: No. I don't know who was there at the time, mostly short story people, if they were there. Jimmy Hopper was one. Sinclair lived there for awhile.

Gilb: Wasn't Sinclair Lewis there for awhile?

Coggins: Sinclair Lewis, yes. He was a friend of Upton Sinclair, you know. I don't know if he was kind of a protege or not, but Upton Sinclair organized
Helicon Hall, an organization in the east years before, where radicals lived together. Sinclair Lewis, I think, was the kid in the group.

In Carmel, too, the author of *Ruggles of Red Gap*, Harry Leon Wilson, was living at that time. He was one of our best humorists.

I remember, too, at the time Peter Kyne and Mr. Lorimer were together, Irving Cobb had just begun to become important. Kyne admired his work and he asked about him. "What kind of a looking fellow is Cobb?" Lorimer laughed and said, "He's just a big, fat slob."

Gilb: That's dismissing him rather abruptly.

Who were some of the outstanding literary critics here at that time?

Coggins: Well, the best known book reviewer, if that's what you mean, was George Hammond Fitch of the *Chronicle*. It was pretty well toward the end of his life when I came to California, and he had a reputation up and down the coast, and people would refer to him. Not many years later, Joseph Henry Jackson came out from the East and he worked, I think, first for the *Sunset* magazine and later ably filled Mr. Fitch's
many there are ofもらって so, the realized
problem. Assembled here the parts, model
there is no way to own, is, that is, that
shall be released to another until our
model at this time to fill. It is a


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place on the Chronicle. He carried on the tradition that Mr. Fitch had already established and became even much better known. Of course it was a different age; there was much more communication than in Mr. Fitch's day.

Gilb: Was Fitch a caustic critic?

Coggins: Not that I recall--I didn't know him very well, but he seemed a kindly person. I think people felt that he was honest and serious.

Gilb: Did you make an effort to get the books that you were publishing reviewed by him?

Coggins: You didn't have to make an effort because Californians were rather patriotic. Anything published in California was treated with consideration.

Gilb: I see. And local critics didn't attack your books.

Coggins: No, never did. The only criticism I ever had--one time I wrote a letter to Porter Garnett, one of the literary figures of the Bohemian Club--he was back East at the time. I wanted him to write a book on "California literature." He sort of slapped my wrists. He didn't recognize any such thing as California literature. Literature was universal. He resented this local pride.
SOCIALIST PARTY IN BERKELEY

Socialist City Government

Gilb: It was during this time that you were changing over from being a Democrat to being a Socialist, wasn't it?

Coggins: Yes, when I moved into Berkeley. Berkeley had just had an election and elected a mayor and two councilmen and a school board member who were Socialists.

Gilb: Who was the mayor?

Coggins: Stitt Wilson. It was a far more interesting movement than the other movements. I was rather grateful that I learned as much about economics as I did. I've always thought it has been a good thing for me.

Gilb: What kind of fellow was Stitt Wilson?

Coggins: He would have been a great actor. He had dramatic power. He was the best campaigner for the Party that I ever knew. To win over new converts. In a way he was trained for the work. He was a minister. He could sway people and also raise money from them.

Gilb: Do you think he was a good mayor?

Coggins: Well, as I look back on him now I don't think of him as a good executive. In the first place, that was not really what interested him. He was interested
in speaking and moving people and being before the people. He wasn't interested in the details. He was not very closely related to business and a mayor's job was a business job. His interest was in promoting Socialism.

Gilb: Did you start joining a regular Socialist organization?

Coggins: Yes, my wife and I joined the Socialist Party about 1910.

Gilb: Were there many Socialists in Berkeley at that time? When you went to party meetings were there numbers of people there?

Coggins: I don't remember just what our party registration was, but our vote would have been perhaps one-third of the city's vote.

Gilb: That was large.

Coggins: And then we gained the disgruntled people besides them, enough to carry the city. Twice we did it. They started to recall the Socialists, you know, soon after they were in office and we won the recall.

Gilb: Did you take a very active part in that?

Coggins: I was quite active in that, yes. I did some of the work that perhaps helped us in quite a way.
The excuse for the recall was that the Socialists wanted a new superintendent of schools. But the incumbent didn't want to get out. He was the center of this recall movement. As I remember, I drew up a petition asking him to resign to save the useless expense of an election. We got enough signatures to show him that he was beaten.

Gilb: If the Socialist Party was this strong, did they make any substantial changes in the nature...

Coggins: Well, we were the first people to put in an ambulance. Before that they used to get the grocery wagon to take people to the hospital. It installed a system of signal lights around town so that the chief could signal policemen on their beats. August Vollmer was Chief; he worked out that plan with the administration. And they were economical. Wherever there's been a Socialist administration, it's usually done a good job because it is always on the spot.

For instance, Milwaukee and Bridgeport have had only Socialist mayors for generations. They get in and they have to do a good job. This generally gets recognized.
Gilb: Who were some of the leaders besides Stitt Wilson in the Socialist movement in Berkeley at that time?

Coggins: Herman I. Stern, who was the president of the school board; he was an ex-minister. There were no particularly well-known people. Job Harriman was well-known. He was in Los Angeles. Jack London had run in Oakland the election before and got a pretty large vote. But I don't recall any particularly well-known people in the movement. Really, the striking thing about it was the people who were not well-known.

Gilb: Perhaps I might ask you this question. What kind of people were Socialists? How would you describe them? The leaders among the Socialists, what was their background? Were they wealthy, middle-class, poor?

Coggins: No, they were not wealthy people. Many college people voted Socialist but they didn't make a point of saying so. I know that some of the Women's Civic League voted Socialist. Most people are sensitive about being marked as a Socialist.

Gilb: Well, what type of people were willing to be marked as Socialists?
Coggins: Some were labor people. But most of them were people that the system was rejecting, who knew they were being rejected. Middle class people who were not succeeding in capitalism.

Gilb: Would you count yourself among this number?

Coggins: I was a person who didn't like capitalism. I didn't like the things you had to do in capitalism and business and I didn't like the waste of people and materials. Fruit and vegetables were regularly being dumped in the Bay then to keep the price up. I was not embittered. Life had treated me pretty well, but that alone wasn't enough to justify the capitalist system.

Gilb: Did Debs ever come out here?

Coggins: Oh yes, practically every election. We held meetings for him lots of times. He came if you needed him. I think as a rule, though, that men like Stitt Wilson or Job Harriman don't like to have a bigger man come. That's natural enough. They want to be the lead. Debs would come out, especially on his own campaigns, and then he came out after the war when he got out of Atlanta. We filled the Civic Auditorium at a dollar a head,
took in $10,000 or $11,000 that night. That was his last call out here, the last time I saw him. I told you about my last sight of him as I left his hotel--his head bent down at the top of the door to look out, calling to me, "You're a great soul." As I later learned, it was one of his common stock phrases.

Gilb: I'm afraid he called everyone a "great soul."

Coggins: But his tall figure bending down to look out was something I'll never forget.

Definition of Socialism

Gilb: At the time you joined the Socialist group here, what did you feel Socialism was? How would you define it?

Coggins: Common ownership and operation and democratic management of the things that we all need, and particularly things which serve most of the people.

Gilb: What you mean is that you would have national or state ownership of every industry which produced the essentials for human beings, such as food, clothing, housing, transportation.
new deal criticism about 500,000 or 1,000,000 at least and once I could read my book and then I asked if I was old enough. I wrote that the real problem was how to get out of debt which had—what—by being a "true person, a socialist," or so called, that would content us. In the end of it, I suppose, was the end of it.
Coggins: Yes. Of course, the word "essentials" is not a fixed thing. Things become essential. For a long time everything would have to be pioneered by individuals where it wasn't practical to put them under one roof, and manufacture.

Gilb: And by democratic management, what do you mean?

Coggins: Well, I think democracy is the thing you'll get last of all.

Gilb: Economic democracy?

Coggins: I think we'll get different forms of Socialism. I think it's going to be a little bit like the lady who wanted to get married in the worst way—she finally was! Married in the worst way. (laughter) And I think we'll get our Socialism in the worst way instead of the best way.

I have a friend who wrote a book on Socialism. He dedicated it to John D. Rockefeller and Eugene V. Debs, on the theory that both of them were pushing along the same lines to a certain extent, and that Mr. Rockefeller was demonstrating clearly the economies of the monopoly.

Gilb: This is interesting, because you have been a small businessman in many phases of your life, and yet your Socialist belief was in large organizations.
Coggins: Yes. I think the reason I'm a Socialist is because I dislike waste so much. And also I'm lazy. I think I like to see things done the easiest possible way, and when we see how many people are not only duplicating the same job but are trying to put each other out of business in the process, it's a tremendous waste.

Gilb: You think competition is wasteful?

Coggins: Yes.

Reaction to Johnson Progressives

Gilb: It was about the time that you came, that the Lincoln-Roosevelt League began, which grew into the Hiram Johnson Progressive movement. What was your reaction to that?

Coggins: In a way the Johnson campaign was rather inspiring. It seemed like a real battle. There were big forces clashing, and Hiram Johnson seemed a very heroic little figure. I mean he would campaign until he could hardly stand up. He'd be so angry at different people. They hated him thoroughly, the same thing that one had encountered many times, I think, with Theodore Roosevelt first.
The Socialist movement has always looked larger than it really is. The real Socialist corps is small. Around it are people who are sympathetic and who would be willing to go with it if it succeeded, but who fundamentally were more opportunistic and had to be. You should be economically independent to be a Socialist. One of our problems was labor. We were talking about a millenium and they were talking about better wages today. And there was always a conflict. Only where labor was strong and where we ran a member who was a union member did we get the advantage of labor support.

Now we had a union man running in Oakland, Mr. Booth, who was an old English Labor Party man...

Gilb: The Gompers type?

Coggins: Perhaps. And he scared them to death down there.

Gilb: Because he was more for business unionism than for fundamental changes.

Coggins: He himself was a Socialist. He knew the Socialist picture. But he had his big support because he was a labor man. He'd have gone as far as the local labor wanted and even further if he could.
Gilb: I'd say fundamentally that the old corps of the labor movement was more conservative than the Socialists.

Coggins: I remember when Gompers fought the Old Age Security. He said that was un-American. He was really our opponent. He had been a Socialist. But you know these people. Socialism is slow-moving. You don't have to expect any results in your lifetime, and these people have other things to do. So when someone like Hiram Johnson would be elected with a fairly liberal battlecry, they felt this was a movement. The same with Woodrow Wilson.

Gilb: The Socialists backed both of those men?

Coggins: No. But some Socialists deserted to them.

Gilb: Oh, I see.

Coggins: I remember one of our members went to one of the meetings of Hiram Johnson. He said, "Up there on the platform was most of our party." Sitting on the chairs.

Gilb: That is a little paradoxical, because I feel that Johnson was really quite a conservative in many of his basic ideas.
Coggins: Johnson's strength, I think, came largely from the Catholic labor. I don't think he ever antagonized them willingly. And he was loyal to them and they were loyal to him.

Gilb: Why Catholic?

Coggins: Labor is Catholic in California. The Catholic Church has the working people, and the Catholic Church is backing unionism because it helps the working people. They were the ones that really swung the Johnson campaign success. Some of the higher-ups were hostile to Johnson. The mass groups were for him.

Gilb: Did you find many Catholic Socialists?

Coggins: A few, yes. And of course we used to kind of rib them a little about it and quote the Archbishop—and they'd come back with a pretty good answer, "All higher-ups are conservative."

Gilb: Of course Archbishop Hanna had the reputation of being at least liberal.

Coggins: About like Johnson. I wouldn't be surprised if they were very closely related.

Gilb: How did you yourself feel? You said that many Socialists deserted to Johnson and then to Wilson. Were you enticed?

Coggins: No, I felt that the things they stood for were superficial.
Pacifism

Gilb: Another social issue related to politics at this time was the issue of pacifism, because the question arose whether we should get into World War I. I take it that you were a pacifist. Were other members of the Socialist Party also like-minded?

Coggins: The first World War, the Socialist Party was against the war.

Gilb: How did the people here that you knew in this region--

Coggins: There were a few that would break away, and that's how I happened to run for mayor. Stitt Wilson, who had been our mayor, had Canadian background. It was a strain on these people to see their mother country so involved, and he went over to the war and left the Party. And in order to hold it together, I was nominated. He ran again, but I took enough votes away from him to keep him from being elected.

Gilb: Oh, you ran against him?

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: And the reason is that he had deserted the pacifist principles?
Coggins: Yes. He had been the best peace orator we had.

It was even worse in the Second World War. You see, the backbone of the war resistance in the first war had been the needle trade unions, Milwaukee Labor and people of that kind, who were European and were anti-war. When the second war came along, many of their relatives were being slaughtered, some former pacifists thought we should go over and fight. It was a touchy situation. You couldn't very well explain to a person that it would be better if his relatives were killed, maybe, that it was a question whether the people there get killed or whether our boys get killed. And I don't feel that's a decision that anyone really has the right to make.

Gilb: You mentioned this Jewish matter. Were the Socialists, the pacifists, in Berkeley at that time Jewish?

Coggins: Not so many, no.

Gilb: Mostly Protestant?

Coggins: I would say that if there was any predominant religious group, it was the Methodists. They had always taken, I think, what was an enlightened stand on labor matters. Some of those people had expected to be ministers.
Gilb: So it was a bourgeois, Protestant movement.

Coggins: Largely, yes. The Catholics did not line up in any official way.

Gilb: And not only you were pacifist but large numbers of Socialists were.

Coggins: The movement was pacifist. And the People's Council--I guess you're not familiar with that.

Gilb: No. Would you explain it to me?

Coggins: When the war started, there was a very spontaneous movement starting in New York. Louis Lockner, who afterwards was the foreign correspondent, still is, and a group of people, and all of the California people, were up in arms about this war, and they called a convention in Minneapolis. They had within a very short time nearly two million signatures asking Wilson to keep out of the war. We went there. I was a delegate and went to Minneapolis. The mayor kept us from meeting. Then we went over to Chicago. William Hale Thompson, the mayor there, invited us there. And the Governor, on the other hand, wanted to clear us out and threatened us with the state militia. We held our meetings just the same, though. Lots of people were members. Dr. Jordan was a member. Senator
Works was a member. Leon Magnes, later President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was one of our speakers. Scott Nearing was our Chairman. He was the hero of the time. He had just been put out of the Wharton School of Finance of the University of Pennsylvania because of his views, although the Wharton family retained him. It was their idea of a university, to have a controversy.

The People's Council was where we met most of the I.W.W.'s. They came to this convention. They were against the war, too.

Gilb: How strong did you feel that the pacifist feeling was here in the Bay Region?

Coggins: I think the country wanted to keep out of war, as a whole. But then they begin to use psychological pressure, you know, and if you have enough money you can sell it, just like you could merchandise. Scare people into it. I think it's true of most nations, that people don't want to get into war. Then the power begins to work on them and they do.

Gilb: I know that one of the things that was in the background of the bombing of the Preparedness Day Parade, which led to the celebrated Mooney case, was this anti-war feeling.
Coggins: That was a war demonstration.

Gilb: Against which there had been an anti-war demonstration the day before.

Coggins: I think so. I forget the details, but I know I was rather shocked, watching that parade, just before that explosion, and here one of the men marching in the parade was an officer of one of the peace associations. He was an employee of the organization. You see, those guys are helpless. They are so dependent on capitalism for their jobs. This was a question that he couldn't afford to be unpopular.

Gilb: I think you mentioned that your brother was a conscientious objector. Did you do anything to support the conscientious objectors after we did get into the war?

Coggins: My brother-in-law was also a conscientious objector. We went to prison and visited them all and tried to get them out. I think Wilson's conscience hurt him and he had to take it out on the pacifists. After all, he went in as a peace man, and he was so vindictive to Debs. I have felt so kindly toward Harding. Wilson put Debs in—Harding let
The text in the image appears to be a mix of random characters and incomplete sentences. It is not possible to transcribe a coherent message from this page.
him out without a guard. I think Debs and Harding had one thing in common. They were both kindly men. I guess they smoked together and had a good time. Wilson was sour.

**Gilb:** Did many of the Socialists after we got into the war continue to be against the war to the point where they would support conscientious objectors?

**Coggins:** Well, yes, all the way through, lots of people did. They had their meetings. When you realize how helpless you are, you're not so apt to meet or try anything, because you just see how futile it is. It was a losing battle. It wasn't only that; they didn't know what to do that would be effective. Just merely being against it didn't help much.

**Gilb:** I know conscientious objection is very often equated with Quakerism. And you have a Quaker background. Were you at the time of World War I out here in California a Quaker or connected with Quakers?

**Coggins:** No. I never had any close religious affiliation. When I was young I attended Sunday School because my folks--

**Gilb:** But I mean here in California?

**Coggins:** No.

**Gilb:** So this was just a matter of principle rather than a matter of religion.
I was a drizzly day and the
flowers were wet. I was
sitting in the cafe and had
been a bad one. But the warm
feeling started to ease the
pain and I started to feel
better. The cafe was
quiet and I enjoyed the
atmosphere.

After I finished my meal, I
walked outside to take a
breath of fresh air. The sky
was clear and the sun was
shining. I decided to take a
walk in the park.

As I walked, I noticed a
pair of birds perched on a
tree branch. They seemed to
be singing. I watched them
for a while, and then I
continued on my way.
Coggins: It seems to me to be just common sense. Who believes in killing? If you want to defend war as a theory, you might say that it was an emergency, you don't know what else to do, or you want to preserve your life, but to say that to go out and kill people is principle, it's pretty hard to defend from a theoretical standpoint, as an ethical belief.

Mooney Case

Gilb: Now we touched on the Tom Mooney case, and I gather that you were very sympathetic toward him and probably participated in drives to help him.

Coggins: Oh yes. We had big meetings for him and, as I said, my predecessor in the business I'm in now raised over $100,000 for it.

Gilb: What was his name?

Coggins: W. D. Patterson.

Gilb: He was a Socialist?

Coggins: Yes, he'd been a member of the party.

Gilb: Raised $100,000 personally?

Coggins: He drove an automobile around the country and held meetings. He used to tell—he had an Irish background himself. He said he'd get into Milwaukee or New York
ed. The report indicates that it is to be an 18-month trial. The goal is to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the project. It is expected that the project will be completed by the end of the trial period.

The report also mentions that the project will involve the development of new technologies and the implementation of new procedures. It is believed that these advancements will significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the project.

Despite the challenges, the project team is confident in their ability to successfully complete the project. They are committed to working closely with all stakeholders to ensure the project's success.

In summary, the report provides a comprehensive overview of the project and its objectives. It highlights the potential benefits of the project and the challenges that need to be overcome. Overall, the project team is optimistic about the project's success.
and raffle off a watch. Says if a man wanted to, they'd raffle it again. He said, "Don't talk to me about the kind-hearted Irish!"

Mooney was a very touchy subject for the Irish Catholics here because he was an Irish Catholic. And just like the Jewish people are sensitive to anything that reflects against their group—sort of made trouble for them.

Gilb: What did you do personally about the Mooney case?
Coggins: ...May have taken part in a meeting, given away a few ...

Gilb: Did you sustain your concern for him right on through to the end or did you become disgruntled?
Coggins: I don't ever remember being disgruntled, but when the Communists took over, we were a little more wary of it, because the Communists' idea was they would sacrifice Mooney or anyone else for a good cause. At least we had that feeling; I don't know how true it was. But we never felt that we could be sure of cooperating with them because they believed, in the first place, that our destruction was the most important thing that could happen to us.

Gilb: Destruction of the Socialists?
Coggins: Yes. I mean they felt that we were sort of a bourgeois group that was interfering with evolution, just as we feel about the reforms.

Gilb: And you felt that the Mooney defense was taken over by Communists.

Coggins: Yes, we all felt that pretty soon it was taken over--I forget--there was a girl out here who was supposed to represent it. I think we thought that she was working with the Communists. They'd kind of seize on any sore spot--

Gilb: Did you know Mary Gallagher?

Coggins: That's the one I mean.

Gilb: You thought Mary Gallagher was a Communist sympathizer?

Coggins: Maybe I shouldn't say that, because I don't know and if you link a person up with Communism you might make trouble for them. I don't know.

Gilb: The fact that your group had this feeling is an important fact, whether or not it was true.

Coggins: That is true; they did feel that way.

I.W.W.'s

Gilb: Did you in your Socialist activities encounter leaders of the I.W.W.?
Coggins: I don't know whether they were leaders or not, but the I.W.W.'s felt more at home with us than with any other group. I think that of all the radical groups, the I.W.W. were the most popular. I mean, they really were out on the firing line, and they were kind of heroic. I think we all admired them.

Gilb: Did you give them financial support?

Coggins: Well, they never asked it. As far as I know. They weren't capitalized. They were working people who didn't care much whether they had good jobs or not. They were dedicated. Of course once in a while one of them got in a place where he made money to make change, but mostly they were living on the ragged edge and that was their life.

Gilb: They were adapted to it!

Coggins: They adjusted to it, and I think in a way they might have resented living differently if they had to change their habits.

Gilb: But you did give them moral support.

Coggins: Yes. We did help them on that Wheatland Hop riot. It was a bitter strike up in the hop country near Wheatland, and Austin Lewis, who was a member of the Socialist Party, defended them. I think they looked down on us.
And just to make sure this works, I'll send a test email to your email address and check if it gets through. Just a quick note to say hi and wish you a happy day.

Best regards,

[Signature]
Gilb: Why did they look down on you? Because you were bourgeois?

Coggins: Bourgeois and had an easier life. But they were tolerant of us and friendly. They weren't nearly as hard to deal with as the Communists later.

Communists

Gilb: I'd like to trace the relationship of your group with the Communists. The Communist movement began really with the Russian Revolution. Did your group follow--

Coggins: They split.

Gilb: Did they have a split in your group? As they did nationally?

Coggins: The professional Socialists went to the Communist movement. When I say professional, I don't mean that they were high-paid people, but the official group, the group who were more serious and perhaps giving their life more to it.

Gilb: Because it was showing more tangible results.

Coggins: Not only that, but of course—we were all—they were all disappointed at the breakdown of democratic processes during the war—free speech and all those things were practically blotted out.
Gilb: And yet all this was under Woodrow Wilson, whom Socialists had supported, and so you felt that--

Coggins: Now look, we never supported Wilson. We never did, but the group around us supported him, the people that visited, the people that would come into our meetings and who weren't in it but were in favor of it. They were the ones that— they perhaps hadn't formed their opinions as firmly as we had. They probably hadn't read— were more superficial in their knowledge of Socialism. They felt that this was it, you see. We always had people breaking away from us that way, even some of our old-time members.

Gilb: So you felt that democratic processes had been subverted by the Wilson regime during the war.

Coggins: Yes. In other words the action of the democracy had proved the Communists' contentions to a certain extent, that a democracy as we knew it would not function, that there would have to be violence.

Gilb: Did a very sizable number of local active Socialists become Communists at that time?

Coggins: The active ones did. The older ones were the ones who stayed in the Socialist Party.

Gilb: The older and less active?

Coggins: Yes. They were not ready to entangle with the law.
Gilb: Then that meant that the Communist Party sort of took the guts out of Socialism.

Coggins: I'm not sure. I think the New Deal set the Socialist Party back more than the Communists did.

Gilb: In fact, theoretically, the Socialists were not committed to that form of action, anyway.

Coggins: No. They hadn't been committed to it. I mean, of course--Jack London used to sign himself, "Yours for the Revolution," but he didn't start one. When the time came--

Gilb: Capitalist! (laughter) What was your feeling about Communism at that time? Did you feel any twinge of sympathy toward it?

Coggins: Oh yes, I did. I thought they had a good deal on their side, but I have never been sold on the effectiveness of violence and I have no ambition to be a hero. It was a dilemma. Wartime was not a good time for education; people are too emotional and economic problems are pushed aside. Wages are big.

Gilb: Did you protest actively the Criminal Syndicalism laws?

Coggins: Oh yes. Many conservative and liberal people opposed it vigorously. We used to have meetings in my store to fight it. The Communists were on
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trial in Oakland. Although we were Socialists we still supported them, raised money for them.

Gilb: They didn't like you but you liked them.

Coggins: No. It wasn't a question of liking them. We felt that after all, they were part of us for a long while. We recognized their trial as a common cause. Later they made it harder to like them, I will say that.

Gilb: Yes. But at this time you raised money for them.

Coggins: Yes, we raised money. We held meetings. I remember one man used to come to our meetings all the way from Walnut Grove. He'd leave us at twelve o'clock at night, had to drive four or five hours to get home to his dairy. He had a big dairy up there.

Anita Whitney

Gilb: Did you support Anita Whitney?

Coggins: Yes, we did. She's awfully hard to support, though.

Gilb: Why?

Coggins: She always picked on me. She always tried to put me in a bad spot. I mean, if she had tickets to sell for some cause, she would prefer to embarrass me into buying two tickets instead of having me buy five by my own choice. (laughter) I think she
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and some of the Communists were indignant that they should be persecuted and that some of us shouldn't be. I don't think that many of the young people understood the risk they were taking.

Gilb: John Francis Neylan was her defense attorney, on the appeal. Did you ever have any contact with him in connection with that case?

Coggins: I never did, no. Older was the one who--

Gilb: Persuaded Neylan to take the case.

Coggins: Yes. Neylan felt obligated to him. There was a much better man at the time.

Gilb: Who was that?

Coggins: Tom O'Connor. All of us who attended the trial were in a hostile group and everybody looked at us as if we were crackpots. The minute O'Connor got up to speak, he seemed to reverse the whole conduct of the trial. First he put the judge in a bad spot, and the latter stuttered and he couldn't pronounce his words. The court staff was on the defensive. O'Connor's confidence was contagious, and by the time the court adjourned for the day he had carried the whole audience with him. Then as luck would have it, in the midst of the case he got pneumonia and died. I never saw such a sudden change of
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be among everything and here was another. 1. What has
mass feeling. Made me think of a play that Otis Skinner made a dramatic entrance in, "The Honor of the Family." An adventuress had taken hold of a young man and his mother to the point that neither of them had a will of his own and did everything she suggested. She had gotten all their money away from them.

The brother, a man of the world, was coming home from the war. As he merely walked by the window on his path to the door, the audience burst into applause. A reviewer said, "Otis Skinner walked by the window and the house came to life." From then on he outwitted the adventuress in every way. Putting it mildly, he gave her a bad time.

Gilb: This is the man like O'Connor?

Coggins: That guy did the same thing. In the courtroom was a bunch of cowed people. Like the martyred Christians. (laughter) Tom O'Connor walked in and the change was electric. He had no reverence for the judge. He knew him too well. The judge had been--

Gilb: What judge was that? I've forgotten now.

Coggins: Then I won't tell you all about it. Quinn. He may be still alive.
Gilb: Judge Quinn? Yes.

Coggins: Is he an old man? He would be by now. The names repeat over here in Alameda County. I think he's the one.

Gilb: And he knew O'Connor.

Coggins: Everybody knew O'Connor. He was a fighting Irishman. Quinn had met his own kind, and they're much more aggressive.

Gilb: Neylan was an aggressive man. How did your group feel about him? The handling of the Anita Whitney case. Were you satisfied with him?

Coggins: We didn't--it wasn't our case, you know.

Gilb: You were sympathizers.

Coggins: We knew nothing of the internal workings. We don't know whether he was paid or anything about that. We didn't try to get too close to the thing because we might be used in some way.

Gilb: Jail?

Coggins: No, but we might be called as witnesses.

Gilb: You didn't want to go to jail unless it would do some good.

Coggins: Only when a crowd was watching. (laughter) Not to be sneaked off in the dark and never heard of again.
Another social movement at that time was the movement for women's suffrage. About the time you came to San Francisco, did your fellow Socialists take strong interest in the suffrage movement?

I think that came off just about the time I joined the Party. I was very active in the Socialist Party. The movement cut across all the parties. Hiram Johnson was not very warm about it.

Lukewarm. In fact, I think he would just as soon they didn't vote.

I have noticed that many men who have led unhappy lives don't think much of women's intelligence.

But you thought the Socialists were by and large sincerely for it.

Oh yes. It was in our platform right from the start. Debs was running.

And who were some of the other people working for women's rights here locally?

John Barry and Bessie Beatty, both on Older's staff, went out and campaigned for it. Also Dr. Aked, the former Rockefeller minister, Anita Whitney, and Gail Laughlin.
Gilb: Do you remember Sara Bard Field?

Coggins: Oh, very well, yes. She campaigned, and her sister, Mary Field. One of the most interesting campaigners was Gail Laughlin, a lawyer, who came from Colorado to help out. She had the habit of holding a finger up before her face and rising up and down on her toes like a sandpiper. She wasn't very large and I guess she wanted to be sure that people paid attention.

Gilb: What type of woman do you feel, from your personal acquaintance around here, was most active for women's rights?

Coggins: Oh, I think college women, more than the working women. After all, they had some economic power, you see, and they resented this. I remember Mrs. Hume, Sam Hume's mother and the widow of Jim Hume, the Wells Fargo agent who captured Black Bart. She was a very good speaker, and she went to campaign up in the mining towns. Also in Eureka, a town that had been so hostile to the Chinese that they ran them out of town. Up there she emphasized that the Chinaman could vote "but your wife can't."
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Orientals

Gilb: Speaking of Chinese, organized labor at that time was anti-Oriental.

Coggins: Of course not as much as in Dennis Kearney's day.

Gilb: Did the Socialist group to which you belonged share that feeling?

Coggins: Oh no. The Socialist group was international. They couldn't have any other position. This was the type of thing that separated us from labor. We were middle-class people, in favor of Chinese having jobs. But their competition for jobs was with labor.

Gilb: When it came to the Alien Land Law, which was passed under Johnson's administration, did the Socialists oppose that law strongly?

Coggins: I don't recall any great campaign for it; I don't remember that they hedged on it. We didn't take a position sometimes; we were timid about certain things which we believed in and which labor didn't. We were trying to get the labor support; it was a pretty difficult thing to do and explain our differences with them. Many of the Socialists were for prohibition, including the Socialist mayor,
null data on which taxonomic assignment is attempted.

The known species of this group are described in the text, with special emphasis on their differences and similarities. This comparison is facilitated by the use of a taxonomic key, which is also included.

References are given for further study and for the verification of the above discussion.
Stitt Wilson. This was not the way to win over the Brewery Workers Union.

**Prohibition**

Gilb: Yes, I wanted to ask you about Prohibition.

Coggins: Wilson was a very successful Prohibition orator. And that was one of the things that labor was hostile to, of course. But we had big votes just the same.

Gilb: And Socialists were by and large drys, weren't they?

Coggins: I wouldn't say by and large, no. The Methodist groups were largely dry. I mean the churches. People came in as a moral issue. The labor elements were not dry.

Gilb: But you felt the core of the Socialist Party was this Methodist group. Locally, did you or your closest Socialist friends take any active part in the Prohibition?

Coggins: No. You see, we were in a dry city to start with.

Gilb: In Berkeley.

Coggins: Yes. And it didn't come up. I think most of us would have voted for local option.

Gilb: Local option was an issue at this time.

Coggins: I think we were for local option.
Gilb: And when it came to National Prohibition, you were for that too.

Coggins: Wilson was for that too.

Gilb: I mean when it came to supporting it.

Coggins: It didn't need any support. It just forced through. I don't recall any--it was just a lot of--the middle-class people were resentful of it.

Gilb: Because it was dictatorial?

Coggins: Woodrow Wilson put it over. I don't know just what was the force that let him do it.

Gilb: Were you in favor of it? Aside from how it was put over?

Coggins: Well, I'm not sure. It doesn't mean very much to me, so it isn't fair for me to say that people shouldn't have it. But I would be willing to dispense with it entirely. On account of the waste and damage it does. Unless it would be better controlled than it is at present.

**Candidate for Office**

Gilb: You mentioned a while back that you were a candidate for mayor one time against Stitt Wilson and that you almost unseated him, almost got more votes. Didn't you say that?
Coggins: No. He left the Party on the war issue and I ran hoping to hold the Party together. I merely won enough votes from him so that the other man won.

Gilb: That's a little different. How many votes did you get?

Coggins: Between four and five hundred.

Gilb: Oh! Would that be considered a big vote among Socialists?

Coggins: No. Berkeley was smaller then, but it took about three thousand votes to win.

Gilb: Oh. So you took away a slight margin to make the difference.

Coggins: Yes. The entire vote in those days was only about six thousand, counting the whole town.

Gilb: Did you ever run again?

Coggins: Yes. Next election.

Gilb: Ran against Wilson?

Coggins: No. He didn't come in again.

Gilb: Who was your opponent?

Coggins: The other one was Frank Stringham. It wasn't a very bitter campaign.

Gilb: How did you do in the next election?

Coggins: I had more votes than I did before. I don't remember what it was.
Gilb: You said it was not a bitter campaign.

Coggins: No, no. First place, there wasn't very much hope in the Socialist Party at that time. They were just wondering what they'd do next. Their real purpose was just to stick together. I rather enjoyed the campaign. I didn't have any hostility in it. I wrote an article about it for the Survey, about some of the ridiculous things that elected people. The other two major candidates were struggling, and I could ridicule both sides. I got applause from both from each time in turn. It really was an amusing situation.

Gilb: I think Norman Thomas has played that role for years. Gadfly to the two traditional parties.

Coggins: Yes, he doesn't approve of either major party. And he gets cheers from both sides.

Gilb: Did you ever run again?

Coggins: I ran for Congress in the LaFollette campaign.

Gilb: Oh! Socialists supported LaFollette, did they?

Coggins: Yes, he was on our ballot. It was the only way he could run in California. He got nearly 500,000 votes.

Gilb: About 1924, was it?

Coggins: Yes.
Gilb: And you ran for Congress at that time. How did you do then?

Coggins: Well, I did much better, of course, but I had a whole big territory. That was the first time Earl Warren ran for District Attorney. The Democrats supported us. Bryan came to California and spoke for LaFollette. The Republicans were really afraid LaFollette would carry California.

Gilb: Now I remember that LaFollette was also backed by Rudolph Spreckels and financed.

Coggins: Yes. But not very heavily, I guess. He helped us some financially but I don't think he had much money in those days. But anyway he took a stand. Also Frank Henery, the prosecutor of Abe Ruef. Neither of these men was afraid of people. Conservatives considered Spreckels a traitor.

Gilb: Well now, Spreckels had at one time been affiliated with the Johnson movement, and by this time Johnson was a Senator and had become identified with isolationism. What was your feeling about Johnson by this time?

Coggins: I admired Johnson sometimes. I'd like to have kept out of war. But I would have voted to help the Europeans in any way except by killing them.
Oh. So that you wouldn't describe yourself as an isolationist.

No. If I did anything, I'd rather give them the money the war cost. A nationally intelligent group could have avoided the war if we'd been willing to make the sacrifice instead of dumping it onto our soldiers. I believe a socialized world could have made jobs for the underprivileged people instead of war.

So you weren't a natural supporter of the Republican isolationist sentiment.

I'd prefer to see our money spent anywhere in the world that needed it than used for war.

Socialism since 1930

Well now, you ran for Congress; you had already run for mayor of Berkeley. And you supported LaFollette. In the twenties. What did you do next in the Socialist group?

Well, I don't recall too much. The Party sort of died out. We tried to keep meetings going. Then when this war came, we had no power.

The Second World War.

Because of the strong Jewish war sentiment in the Party. Of course, their people were being killed.
You felt by this time, the 1930's, the Socialist Party was getting quite a sizable Jewish element.

It was the backbone long before that. In 1910 East Side New York and Milwaukee were the Socialist strongholds.

Did you continue here in the Bay Region your affiliation with the Socialists throughout the 1930's and the 1940's?

I'm still a member. There's no other party where I belong. What weakened us, really, was our endorsement of LaFollette. And the passing of Debs.

You didn't feel that Norman Thomas was as potent a leader.

No, he was more of an individual than people like Victor Berger, or even Hillquit. He was a good debater. A little like Stitt Wilson, too. But he could not close a sale like Stitt Wilson could. He was a kind of actor, and a figure of importance. I remember when Maynard Kregar ran for President. Someone said, "Kregar is just about the same cut under Thomas as Thomas was under Debs." Thomas was courageous; if he believes a thing, he will stick it out. But he changed positions oftener than the rest of us.
And the loss of Debs, you feel, badly hurt the morale of the Party here.

Yes. It was sort of timely, as if it was the notice of the end of the Party.

But did you continue to be, vote Socialist?

Yes. Whenever there was a candidate.

There was a strong Socialist movement, or in a way Socialist movement, the EPIC movement, in California, in the 1930's. Now how do you feel about that?

That was another thing that weakened the Party, because the EPIC movement was such a well planned thing. A lot of unemployed people, unemployed brains, seemed to come in that movement, and with the money they had -- you see EPIC advertisements up in the mountains. They did a wonderful campaign job.

Where did they get the money?

They used services. They would donate this and that. There would always be painters that would paint their signs for them.

You mean they had intangible wealth.
Coggins: Yes. They had resources, would cooperate. I think they had the old age people among them, who were a definite, stable group. I think it was really too bad the Socialist Party hadn't learned something from that, and had some of that spirit. The country people were all for it. These farm wives would be out working.

Gilb: How about the Socialists? How did they feel? Your group?

Coggins: Upton Sinclair left the Party and started the movement with his pamphlet, "I, Governor of California." Thomas was quite put out about it. He was out here at the time. Sinclair's son stayed with the Socialist Party. Told his father he should read his own books. (laughter)

Gilb: Did you feel that you wanted to back Sinclair?

Coggins: No, but I envied them their movement. I thought, you see--I don't know what to say in explanation of it. After all, the Socialist Party was made up of a lot of people who did not do well under capitalism. They were not skilled people. They had not been effective in making a living, and they hadn't developed any great skill of any kind. They were just protesters and they would talk.
They were very vocal. But the Depression brought a lot of skilled people down the breadline, so that here they had a group of people who were already to go to town and could do things.

Gilb: Unfortunately, Upton Sinclair took these people on, not the Socialist Party.

Coggins: Yes. And that always seems to be true. Seems to be that things happen to a certain point and then a new bud comes out. And it looks like a new start. Some people always feel it has a better chance than the old stem.

Gilb: What did you dislike about the EPIC movement?

Coggins: Well, I think that I felt that it was transient like the progressive movements. It would vanish in even a phony prosperity. It did call for production for use. But in some respects it was a little vague.

Gilb: Socialists accused Sinclair of being vague? I think that's one of the accusations against Socialism, isn't it?

Coggins: Well, no, we say take the utilities over and run them. I think EPIC sort of soft-pedalled their Socialism. It was made up for mixed and different groups, as I remember it. It was sort of a mixture of, maybe, the Populists and the Socialists and
pensioners. Marx was not mentioned. But that I didn't feel was important. They had a lot of farmers who couldn't sell their stuff, who would not be interested in unemployed machinists. It was a mixed organization. It was suddenly gathered together, in one campaign. A lot of them, of course, were not Socialists, and I felt if it won a campaign, it would break. The Prohibitionist Party was represented in it too. It was made up of segments rather than a unified group. At this time they had a common motive, but they wouldn't stay together.

Gilb: Of course, that's a description of any political party in the United States. Our parties are coalitions rather than single-principle parties generally.

Coggins: Yes, it is. Our national issues are not very clear. It's largely who gets the jobs, although there is a good deal of largess to be fought over and apportioned within these limitations. No matter who gets the Democratic nomination, the bulk of the party members who opposed him as unfit for the nomination will support him for the office with enthusiasm.
Gilb: Speaking of Democrats, it wasn't too long after Sinclair's campaign that Olson--

Coggins: He inherited the mantle plus certain southern interests that financed him. He had been Sinclair's manager.

Gilb: And he became then the Governor. How did the Socialists with whom you associated react to Olson's campaign?

Coggins: Well, we didn't think any more of him than we did of Sinclair.

Gilb: Perhaps less.

Coggins: Well, I don't think we believed so much in his courage as Dr. Burke suggests in his book (Olson's New Deal for California). We do know it took great prodding to get him to pardon Mooney. He's a real estate man and probably got their support, also, and I guess the moving picture people supported him. Standard Oil was said to have divided their contribution between both candidates.

Gilb: What do you do now about your Socialist views? Do you still consider yourself a Socialist?

Coggins: Yes. I don't see any reason for changing.

Gilb: Now when it comes to voting, you no longer have much of an opportunity.
Coggins: I just feel that as far as I'm concerned it's a period in which there isn't much you can do, you have to wait for evolution and the period of deflation.

Gilb: At one time way back, the Communist splinter group of the Socialist Party was not looked at with complete disfavor. How in these later years have you felt about Communism? Have you developed an antagonism?

Coggins: They've been in an awkward position. Their attitude is like a religion. They had accepted the thing and they had to stand by it. They were aware of the absurdity of some of the party line switches. They tried to take out some of their discomfort on the Socialists. I'm sure that people like Earl Browder knew how absurd their positions were at times.

Anna Louise Strong recently had a good article on Russia and the new attitude there, in the Modern Monthly. She tells about the people who realized all that was going on, but they knew there must be a lot of brutality in a revolution. They knew that their country was threatened by outside nations, and that Stalin was the lesser of two evils. One good thing, he did force a tremendous amount of development, which I didn't know about. She tells
about it. For a victim of Stalin, she gave him real credit.

Gilb: Well now, since you can't vote Socialist today, do you vote at all?

Coggins: Oh yes. I'll probably write in Darlington Hoopes.

Gilb: Oh, you'll write in a Socialist.

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: You don't ever go over to the Democratic Party.

Coggins: I stopped voting the Democratic ticket 40 years ago because its chief beneficiaries seemed then as now to be the reactionary south.

Gilb: Not even during the New Deal.

Coggins: Well, the New Deal was like the rest of these movements, I thought.

We had a campaign at the time. I think as far as I'm concerned, my job is just to express myself; if there are not many other people like me, I can't help it. I'd feel a lot better to know I hadn't been a sucker.

Gilb: Well, I think we've not covered the Socialist picture, but at least outlined it.
AVOCATIONS: ORNITHOLOGY AND WRITING

Gilb: Did you keep up your interest in ornithology after you came to California?

Coggins: Yes. One of the first things I did when I was out here was to go to teachers' institutes and talk on birds. I guess it helped a little in the publishing, too, because I met teachers who were prospective buyers. The company didn't object to my doing it on their time. Besides, I was paid well for it.

Gilb: Did you attempt to publish any books on ornithology?

Coggins: We wanted to republish one that had been destroyed by the fire and earthquake, but the lady never finished it. She was Joe Grinnell's mother.

Gilb: Have you ever been tempted to write technical books on ornithology?

Coggins: No, there's so many people who like to do that kind of writing. I never had any ambition for it—it looks like too much work.

Gilb: You began giving talks on birds in Philadelphia?

Coggins: Yes, I spoke to some of the Friends schools and to recreation centers. Soon after I came to California I gave a sort of introductory lecture, in California Hall at the University of California, which was
pretty well received.

Not very long after, I was talking to Dr. Jordan, who was a backsliding ornithologist who had gone over to the fishes. I told him I was thinking of giving a series of bird talks and calling it Economic Ornithology, emphasizing the economic value of bird life.

He said, "I think it would be a good thing. I don't think people know what insects would do to us if there were no birds. They would multiply so that they would overwhelm us."

I gave a series of four lectures at the University of California summer school. Later when my children's book, Busby & Company, was brought out, the publishers thought lecturing to libraries would be a good way to promote the book.

So for the last three or four years I've been talking to libraries in San Francisco. I bring specimens with me to the library and they invite maybe three or four classes from the neighboring schools to come in. I have been invited to lecture in the San Francisco libraries for Children's Book Week this month. Children show a great deal of interest, particularly in things like
protective coloration and the ingenuity of birds in their nest building.

Gilb: This in a way leads directly into your recent writing activities. After having been an editor for several years, I know you left the publishing world. Did you try writing during that time?

Coggins: No, I didn't try to write until rather a few years ago.

Gilb: What made you decide to try to be a writer?

Coggins: I don't know, except that I was always interested in writing and after a while I had the time to do it.

One time I was invited to speak at a dinner meeting given by the readers of the Nation. It was long before I was married to my present wife who had always urged me to speak and write. She had been on the dinner committee and I suspect had persuaded them to invite me.

My subject was "Eating for Causes." It was a satirical little account of the many causes I had bolstered up by eating for them: the starving Armenians, the famished Irish, the destitute Chinese, oppressed labor, and so on. Many people
remembered it, and long afterwards Gus Vollmer said, "You should just dictate that talk and publish it as you gave it." Later I did. I sent it to the Atlantic Monthly and they published it and asked me for other articles.

Gilb: Did you know the editor or did you just send it to him?

Coggins: No, I just sent it in. At first I got it and a note back, "It was an atrocious coincidence," the editor wrote, "but your piece arrived just as we decided to discontinue our humor department. We are sorry, but if we open it again please let us have it..." I saved it for them and soon they did reopen the department, and they published it. After that I wrote a series of satires for them. One of them, "The Burglar Trap," attracted quite a little attention, and I got a letter from Tom Beck, Chairman of the Board of the Crowell Collier Company, who had seen it. He wanted to know if I was the Herbert Coggins he had known as a boy on Martha's Vineyard and who had taught him how to make bird skins.

I wrote that I was and he wrote back, "Well, if you are going to try to write, why don't you send your stuff to us?"
I said, "But, my dear, you must know this."

"And if it does I shall."

"Then I shall take it all back."

"Then you must be crossed."

"Crossed, my dear, crossed."

"But, my dear, you must know this."
I had a little piece I had just finished and intended for the Atlantic. I sent it to him with a note saying that I was submitting it to show that I didn't belong in large circulation magazines.

I promptly got back a letter from Summer Blossom, editor of the American Magazine, explaining that Mr. Beck was in South America. Would I accept two hundred dollars for "My Rainbow Bees"? They published it with colored illustrations. Later I sold them a similar piece, and the next year when I went east to address the National Standard Parts Association, Tom Beck invited me to his house. One day at lunch he and one of the editors said, "We want you to write some animal stories for us. We don't know anyone who could write them as well as you could."

I wrote one. I never was quite sure that I could write that kind of thing for Collier's because my stuff is not very dramatic. Not much punch to it. I wrote about a bear who worked his way up from a garbageman to assistant postmaster and accidentally became well-to-do through a radio program. I got quite a lot of response to that.
Gilbs: Was this intended as a satire?

Coggins: It was intended as a satire.

Gilbs: If they like your book, it is a series that is one, then they want to go back and read the other, people read with other books. You mean followed up.

Coggins: It would have sold much better if I had Pretty well, yes. It was the Herald Tribune Honor.

Gilbs: Has that sold well?

Coggins: 1950 or 1951, I'm not sure and that came out when Busy and Company.

Gilbs: When you called what I did.

Coggins: And asked me to make it into a children's book. Press people saw the original story in Collier's two others, one about a beaver and the Whittlesey.

Gilbs: A lot of letters from that. Then I wrote one of "Black Bear", who was not spoiled by money. I got it. A reeds-to-riches story of a poor but honest.

Coggins: It was intended as a satire. Yes. They labeled was this intended as a satire?
There is no behavior about me!

Please, may I be decent? I do not need to provide information. I am here to help you with any questions you have. I am here to help you.
Gilb: What percentage?

Coggins: Ten percent.

Gilb: In the academic profession, receiving royalties is a rare thing. (laughter)

Coggins: They really just publish things to express themselves and also to advance themselves, largely?

Gilb: That's right.

Coggins: I know Vollmer was rather surprised that I get paid--he thought you only got separate copies. (laughter)

Gilb: You mentioned Gus Vollmer a couple of times. How did you know him--through Socialist activities?

Coggins: No, my family knew him. He grew up here. Nearly everybody knew him. And one time John Barry brought him to the house. I mean we'd known him to speak to before but he had never been to our house. We had him quite often after that. We were very congenial. When he went to the University of Chicago to teach, I stayed with them when I was East. I would go to the conventions and I would stay with Vollmer and his wife. In Berkeley we used to take trips together.

Mrs. Vollmer was not an outgoing person and was rather limited in the number of people she liked to be with. She felt at home with my first wife.
MARRIAGE

Gilb: When were you first married?

Coggins: About 1910. My wife was a house builder. She built a great many houses in Berkeley. Also she was a painter. She enjoyed landscapes but she also painted portraits. Her portraits of David Starr Jordan, Edwin Markham, Joaquin Miller, George Wharton James, Herbert Bashford and August Vollmer are now in the Bancroft Library. Her portrait of Edward Hyatt, the former State Superintendent of Schools, was in the state building in Sacramento. She passed away in 1930.

Gilb: And did you get married again right away?

Coggins: No, I was married quite a few years later. My second wife was a friend of ours who had worked with me in the Whitaker and Ray Company. I always explain that I really worked for her but she denies it.

Gilb: What was her maiden name?

Coggins: Elsie Shirpser. She was a social worker for over twenty-five years for the Jewish Committee for Personal Service. This social agency was statewide and had as its objective the rehabilitation of the
I'm not sure what you're asking for.
mentally ill in the state hospitals and the adult offenders in jails and prisons. It is a program for the rehabilitation on the outside of the institution by first contacting the client while still within the institution. For the last twelve years before her retirement she was the executive director of that agency and initiated new programs for the rehabilitation of psychotics and offenders, and the education of the community to accept them upon their release. She was one of the organizers of the now extensive Mental Hygiene Society of Northern California.

Gilb: Was your first wife a Socialist? Did she share your beliefs?

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: Does the present Mrs. Coggins also share your political views?

Coggins: Yes. I think she does, although her background is a little different from mine. She has a little more tendency to join the majority; I can see it tugging at her all the time. Often when she resists it, I think she does it more for my sake than from her own inclination. But she has been a member of the
Socialist Party for over twenty years and just before the First World War lost her job for not marching in the Preparedness Day Parade, the parade that made Mooney a world figure.

It was more difficult to be a pacifist during the Second World War. Many of the former pacifists were too close to the persecuted people.

Gilb: Has her being Jewish brought you into close contact with the Jewish community in San Francisco?

Coggins: I have a lot of friends among them. But they are through her, largely. I don't make very many friends on my own.
A WORKER-RUN AUTOMOBILE PARTS BUSINESS

Gilb: After you left Whitaker and Ray, what did you do to make a living?

Coggins: I was in the cement contracting business.

Gilb: And why did you go from being a publisher to being a contractor? That was a big jump.

Coggins: My father-in-law had the business and he couldn't go on with it, and it enabled me to live in Berkeley. I knew that the man who owned most of Whitaker and Ray wanted to unload the whole company. He wanted to go into the real estate business because there was more money in it. The book and school supply business was competitive and getting tougher all the time. The publishing department could not have existed by itself.

Gilb: And your father-in-law gave you a job in his business?

Coggins: Oh no, he left the business. He couldn't make it go. It had had a pretty good start...certain amount of independence.

Gilb: Weren't you being a little courageous or audacious to take up cement contracting when all your life you had been in the editing field?
SMALL SCALE NEUTRALITY POLICIES

of any kind after that one establishes a neutral position and

realistic a plan

sufficient advantage to ensure one's own lack of

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advantage of one's potential and had a future control of

voluntarily at all? If so tendencies at 1941 or 1951 or by

how valuable is there anyone now who will want I

do control or. Some dealing of nations and the world economic situation which can find an

advantages in order one third of all the power now

He's started getting the evolutions and statements

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to enter into this. It will have to the 1951 or 1951 or

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with the terms of agreement at all a profit very d'office

with the most valuable decisions are kind of

these particular one of now and any
Coggins: Well, if you're not very skillful in anything, you're not so much afraid of the next thing. (laughter)

Gilb: I see. And did you make a go of this?

Coggins: Yes. I held onto it for several years. At first it seemed to me easy money. I had had a very competitive start—$3 a week—and California was easygoing compared to an eastern city. But toward the end there was a building depression here. You see, the earthquake had made a building boom, which tapered off finally around 1914. Then I bought a stationery and engraving store in Oakland, and then I went to the publishing of Christmas cards, and also the publishing firms of W. A. Wilde and Company, and Laird and Lee, on the Pacific Coast.

Gilb: What happened to the cement contracting business? You let it go, finally?

Coggins: I let it go, yes.

Gilb: Then came along a time when you invested in this business which was started by your Socialist friend, Mr. Patterson. Could you tell me something about him, what he was like and how he got started?

Coggins: He was young, very aggressive, energetic, and he was an ardent Socialist at the time. He had been a carpenter, strong union man, and became one of
the strong forces in the Mooney defense. He went around the country in an automobile and raised money for the defense.

Gilb: How did he happen to start this--

Coggins: Well, after the Mooney case was settled temporarily, he came home, had no job. There was not much building at the time, and he had a brother-in-law who had a small machine shop which was pretty busy making parts for automobiles. The automobile manufacturers themselves were so busy making cars that they didn't bother about supplying the broken parts. There was too small a market for them. That was a wide-open field, because the axles and springs were breaking; the roads were bad in those days, and there was a big market. Some of these shops were big enough to make the things that were needed.

Gilb: On custom order?

Coggins: Oh yes, originally, and then they got the idea that when they were making one axle, make two, make three, and bring the cost down.

Gilb: The parts were interchangeable, were they, on the automobiles? Were they standardized enough?

Coggins: No, they weren't standardized. That's what made the market. There would be a use for a hundred Ford axles, but as far as that axle being any use in a Studebaker or Chevrolet, that was out.
Gilb: That's still the case, isn't it?

Coggins: Yes, more and more. That's the waste of the whole business. Patterson finally decided to go out and sell these parts, and it soon developed into a business. In two or three years he had stores in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Fresno.

Gilb: Now wasn't it a little strange for a professed Socialist to go in the business and furthermore to go into it successfully? Did you think that was a paradox?

Coggins: Well, if a Socialist went into business, I would not blame him for trying to be successful. What else would you have Socialists do?

Gilb: I'm assuming that Socialists are against the competition of many small businesses, so that there is a contradiction when a Socialist becomes a small businessman.

Coggins: Would you choose unemployment?

Gilb: No. I think...

Coggins: He knows the system; that might give him more incentive to establish himself as securely as possible. He can have his beliefs with him if he
For those who have little or no
knowledge about the subject at
hand and are unable to
understand a full explanation
were told that they would be
provided with a comprehensive
outline. The outline was
distributed to all attendees and
was designed to give them a
broader understanding of the
topic. Comments after each
session were collected and
analyzed to gauge the
understanding of the attendees.

For those in attendance, the
comprehensive outline was
distributed and explained by
the organizers. The comments
from the attendees were
analyzed to understand their
feedback and improve future
sessions.
wants to. If he can make money, he can donate it to his beliefs.

Gilb: But in continuing to profess Socialism he was in a way, after he became a successful small businessman, professing his own doom.

Coggins: Well, yes, in a way. I met Patterson on the street one time and he seemed to be put out. Somewhere along the line of his market there had been a strike. "In other words," he said, "they're doing what you and I spent the best years of our lives telling them to do." (laughter)

Gilb: How would a Socialist employer react to a strike?

Coggins: It depends on the Socialist and his make-up. Some of them change psychologically. Today, however, few small employers allow a strike. Employers are following a lot of labor demands.

Gilb: Following?

Coggins: I mean we're insuring our people in new ways today. There's a lot of things that employers do now along the lines of labor welfare.

Gilb: To go back to the development of Patterson Parts, Inc. You became a stockholder at one time.

Coggins: Yes. And also director.

Gilb: How many stockholders were there?
Coggins: I don't know. Must have been eighty or ninety.

Gilb: And mostly drawn from this region, weren't they?

Coggins: Mostly drawn from the town of Pinole, the Hercules Power Plant, where Patterson had grown up.

Gilb: Were many of these stockholders Socialists?

Coggins: Not so many. A few. Most of them were people who had some savings.

Gilb: How big a stockholder were you?

Coggins: I only had ten shares, but my wife had twenty.

Gilb: How did you happen to be director, then?

Coggins: Well, because in the whole group there was hardly anyone with a business experience. Patterson himself had been a carpenter, never been in business, and I don't recall any of them that even had a small business like I had.

Gilb: And this business grew, and of course there was a great boom in the automobile industry in the twenties, so there was a big market, and then eventually it ran into trouble, didn't you say?

Coggins: Yes, it overexpanded. They spent too much and owed too much. It was obvious that they had to have some kind of showdown. Pressure from the bank forced a meeting.

Gilb: Was this after the twenty-nine crash or before?

Coggins: Oh, before.
Gilb: Would it have been in the depression of 'twenty-one?

Coggins: Yes. At that time I was still in the stationery business too, and I noticed the stationery was hit by the depression, but it didn't have any effect on auto parts.

Gilb: So the stockholders were forced to meet. And what happened at that meeting?

Coggins: Patterson resigned. He was ready to resign. And a lot of the people in it resigned at the time; some of them sold their stock. Those that were left wanted to save what they could out of the business, and they asked me to take it over and either liquidate it, or if I thought I could, go ahead and run it as economically as possible.

When I saw the volume they had, I was greatly impressed, because I had never known any business that built up to five, six, seven hundred thousand dollars volume in such a short time.

Gilb: This sum refers to what, their gross income?

Coggins: Volume of sales. And in most businesses that is the problem. In this one, the problem was keeping costs down.

Gilb: So what did you decide to do?
Coggins: Well, knowing myself and knowing that I was not an executive, I decided to get the employees to carry the load. And I got figures together about our volume, the cost of doing business, and so on, and figured what our gross profit was. Then we figured what our expenses would be and, including a little margin for the corporation security, the amount that was left we decided was what could be paid in wages and salaries. And we took a census of our employees and divided up on the basis of their present salaries, figured each one's percentage of the total wage and salary allotment.

Gilb: In other words, the workers were to have a profit-sharing interest in the business.

Coggins: They would have an allowance based on their share of the intake.

Gilb: Was this to be a percentage over and above a fixed salary?

Coggins: Each one had a drawing account. At the end of the month a balance was to be paid in a bonus.

Gilb: And what if there were losses rather than gains? What would happen to their salaries?

Coggins: I think they would probably have to make a readjustment after it went down, but it didn't happen, because we were not overstaffed.
Gilb: I see. Well now, what provision did you make for dividends to the stockholders?

Coggins: Well, that didn't come for a long time afterwards.

Gilb: You didn't assume that there would be dividends afterwards.

Coggins: No. We didn't aspire to dividends for some time. Our first job was to continue in business.

Gilb: So that at least their stock would be worth something.

Coggins: Some people were so anxious to get out that $100 shares went for $20. Some of them as low as $10. People were ready to get out.

Gilb: Was this a rather unique arrangement, this profit-sharing?

Coggins: I don't recall any set-up just like it. But profit-sharing is not uncommon. Come to think of it, a very natural thing. It's a sort of partnership.

Gilb: What was your motivation in doing this? To keep the employees there?

Coggins: I knew nothing about the business. I thought they were the only people who could run it.

Gilb: This would give them incentive, is that it?

Coggins: Yes. In other words, I wanted to put them in as nearly as possible the position of owners. So that they would have all of the hopes and responsibilities of owners.
we made use of this method essentially. Our logic: since 3.1

makes the system more compact and reliable, it is

considered in conclusion to use this technique and

subsequently, being that there are only two main tasks at the 3.15

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the fact that at present, we are considering a new

Threats

Although we had to deal with some difficulties in the

and it wouldn't be very convenient for our

problems. We have done a lot. And because our

scores or yields which all could result may have been

reported everywhere all over the world. We

reported a lot of valuable results and were

also tested and confirmed many times. We are

in the work of determining the properties of the

This is an attempt to summarize our "difficulties as pleasant

the literature have proved and to the need of further

Amanda to
Gilb: This was sort of largess on your part. How did they react?

Coggins: Well, they all stayed with us. But I didn't feel there was any generosity involved in the matter. It was merely an effort to compensate accurately and fairly for the desired end. Moreover it was not my property. For a long while people used to think we were going out of business. And when I heard the door open, I expected it was the sheriff (laughter).

Gilb: But you did last.

Coggins: And we went through the Depression that way without discharging anybody.

Gilb: And you kept your employees loyal.

Coggins: Well, we kept our employees anyway. Once an applicant for a job said, "I hear you never fire anybody." It wasn't quite true. We fired very few.

Gilb: And you had very few quit.

Coggins: Yes. Very few. Most of them have been with us nearly all their working lives.

Gilb: Did they render efficient service?

Coggins: Yes. They really did. A manufacturer one time told me, "I really think your company gets more work out of your people than anyone else." He felt he was praising me.
Gilb: And you attribute this to this profit-sharing arrangement.

Coggins: Yes. To a certain extent I think our boys feel they are working for themselves. More than in some companies, anyway.

Gilb: Didn't you tell me that you have a little trouble now even getting people to come to work for you?

Coggins: Well, everybody has trouble now, but not in times past. Today nearly everybody who is proficient and a good workman is employed. One of the reasons that we haven't been able to expand is because we can't get the type of people that could expand.

Gilb: You don't find this profit-sharing arrangement is an inducement.

Coggins: If you open a new store, the profits wouldn't be large enough to attract an outside go-getter. He could do better right away in a big company. The other type of employee would not want the strain of management. One boy told me, "I am not going to try to get rich. All I want is to be secure."

This was before the period of full employment. And that's why he was interested in us at the time. We offered security, you see. He knew that we'd kept...
all our people when other people unhesitatingly let them off to curtail expenses.

But today the big companies can offer a good salary right from the start and apparently security too. I think that Standard Oil has a standing order in at Stanford for five hundred engineers. And all big companies are that way. Our jobs at first were pretty closely related in a way to manual work. But the sons of our employees are taking college courses. They don't want this skill that you get only from experience.

Gilb: What is the average background of the people who have been with you a long time? They are not college-trained, I take it.

Coggins: No. None of them were. We had no college-trained people in the group. They were mechanics and boys who went out for jobs. Some of them became salesmen. Some of their parents had worked with their hands, and the boys were captivated by the automobile. They unconsciously trained themselves, as a plaything first, then as a business.

Gilb: Now what is your function? What is your title?

Coggins: President.
You're president and general manager. And you exercise this function largely by delegating work to the employees.

Yes. In other words, I think the only thing I've done for the company is I've left the employees free to work.

How many employees do you have?

About thirty-five.

Do they get together in meetings to make policy decisions?

Yes. When the manager thinks it necessary.

How many stores are there now?

Three now.

Where?

San Jose, San Francisco, and Oakland.

And each store works out its own policy?

Yes, But there are some decisions that they don't want to make.

What decisions do you reserve for yourself?

No particular ones. But if they want to move their store, they would come to me.

Have you ever had to change any decision they made?

Well, San Francisco boys were very anxious to move about a year ago. And I felt it was a pretty bad
time to move, and not a good location. While I didn't forbid it, they knew I didn't think it was a good move, and they didn't do it. There are not many major decisions. After all, there is a routine to a store. There are lots of small decisions. If you make a mistake, you try to find out what to do as quickly as you can to correct it. I mean, you rent a store and you stay there, and routine sort of takes over in a way. Salesmen go out on their territories and look for new accounts. Your countermen satisfy the ones that come in. It's sort of institutionalized. Circumstances make many decisions for you.

Gilb: Do you find some men more willing than others to take a lead in making decisions?

Coggins: Yes, but very few. Most of them want to follow.

Gilb: Can you describe some of the typical people who become leaders in this store?

Coggins: Well, we have one boy whose father was a soldier in the German army. His father was I think rather severe with him and almost regimented him—I won't go into details. His life was a serious life right from the start. His first job was in a store selling vegetables, and he was just miserable.
He spent all his lunch hours trying to find another job. He was finally offered a job in an automobile parts store, and when we opened a store near him, he applied for a job there. That was back about 1923 or 1924. And he is now our best manager. A very systematic person. He gets up at six o'clock in the morning if necessary, gets down to the store early. He puts his whole life into it. But it takes a lot out of him. I don't wonder that the other boys don't want to do that.

On the other hand, we have a boy whose biggest interest is umpiring basketball games at night.

Gilb: You have three stores. Do you go around from one to the other?

Coggins: Well, not as much as I used to and not as much as I ought to.

Gilb: How do you spend your time, on the average?

Coggins: Everybody asks me that. (laughter) I read the mail, watch the invoices as they come in. I tabulate costs and expenses to check on our profits or losses. I do a little writing.

Gilb: At the store?

Coggins: Yes, sometimes. I do compile figures. I compare costs for last year to this year. We use those as warnings if they are going up. We do find that our margin of profit is getting less all the time.
Gilb: How do you account for that?

Coggins: The pressure of increased wages, increased expenses from the manufacturer, all the way down the line. Everything is costing more. This causes a conflict. Buyers don't want to pay for increased costs. And as long as there's competition, you can't just dictate prices to a customer. He begins to look around and see whether prices are the same all over.

Gilb: And you feel that your worst competition is the very big firms that have you at a disadvantage.

Coggins: I don't know that they have such a great advantage. I think they're up against the same thing too. They have tremendous costs too. I think in one way we have an advantage on them--our costs go down automatically if our volume goes down. They have fixed overhead.

Gilb: What was the original capitalization of your company?

Coggins: Its authorized capital was $250,000. They sold almost $170,000 worth of stock.

Gilb: What would you say the capitalization has grown to today?

Coggins: Very little more. I think our surpluses amount to $50,000 or $60,000.

Gilb: The stockholders are by and large the original stockholders?
Coggins: They have largely been replaced; the boys have been buying the stock ever since.

Gilb: The employees.

Coggins: Yes.

Gilb: And you're a large stockholder yourself?

Coggins: I'm the largest single stockholder.

Gilb: I see. And what's happened to Mr. Patterson?

Coggins: He's in business for himself.

Gilb: Has your firm been able to pay sizable dividends?

Coggins: Well, for us that bought the stock cheap, it's paying big dividends. But on the original capitalization, it's only paying about two or three percent.

Gilb: You bought it at a time when other people wanted to sacrifice?

Coggins: They wanted to get out. They thought they would lose all their investment.

Gilb: You feel by and large that it was a successful company?

Coggins: That depends on the viewpoint. I think we offer a job security that few other companies have. I think we could all weather a depression together.

Gilb: The company would keep the workers around even if there wasn't enough work for all?
...
Coggins: Even in a depression it isn't always the work that's scarce. It's the profits that are lacking. This in a way creates extra work. Effort to get more sales. And when it's slow, it's slow for everybody. There's no one particularly you could point to and say he's the one not needed.

Gilb: There wouldn't be any attempt to reorganize the company so you could fire people and therefore save money so the others would have more profit?

Coggins: People might get in there that would want to do that, but it wouldn't have to be.

Gilb: And the general attitude during the last big depression was not to do that.

Coggins: We didn't do that. We didn't let go anybody on account of the depression.

**National Standard Parts Association**

Gilb: Do you belong to a trade organization?

Coggins: Patterson Parts was one of the founders of the national organization.

Gilb: Oh, when was this?


Gilb: And who belongs to this association?
Coggins: I guess about five or six hundred jobbers in the country belong to it. And manufacturers. More manufacturers.

Gilb: What's the function of it?

Coggins: Well, we have our conventions, we have our shows, where manufacturers show their lines. Lately it's been in the Furniture Mart in Chicago. And we go there to complain (laughter) to the manufacturer, and he's there to explain why he's right and we're not. They expect a lot of that. They expect us to come back and bring our grievances. Then we pass resolutions and they pass resolutions. It's a dual organization. The manufacturers meet all together and the jobbers have their own meetings. And then we'll have a common meeting. Sometimes the flies.

Gilb: Over what sorts of things is there trouble?

Coggins: Prices, discounts, policies, partly as to whom they sell to. For instance, if the company sells to Montgomery Ward or a chain organization, it used to be a subject for combat.

Gilb: Why should they fight over that?

Coggins: We'll just say that chain stores have a tremendous buying power. And they tempt these people with big
orders at low prices which will take care of their factory costs for maybe a year. Buying at a lower price, they can undersell us.

Gilb: So part of this association's function is to keep prices up.

Coggins: Yes, to preserve our profit! That is the purpose of it entirely.

Gilb: And do you actually get together and fix prices?

Coggins: No, you're not allowed to do that, I think. The manufacturer sends us a list and that's our price. But a chain store can catalog a better price than we can offer.

Gilb: How do you stop them if you don't like it?

Coggins: We can't stop them, but if a certain manufacturer gets known for that, jobbers are apt to lay off his line.

Gilb: In other words, you have a sort of jobbers' boycott.

Coggins: Well, no more than the housewife who patronizes the man who serves her best. We try to buy lines with stabilized selling prices.

Gilb: Have you been a leader in this trade association?

Coggins: No. I don't lead anything if I can help it.

Gilb: I saw somewhere a description of you as the Will Rogers of the automotive parts industry. You must make speeches.
Let us assume that we are faced with a complex problem and need to analyze it systematically. The first step is to define the problem clearly. What is the main issue? What are the objectives? What are the constraints?

Once the problem is well-defined, we can proceed to collect relevant data. This may involve gathering information from various sources, conducting surveys, or performing experiments. It is important to ensure that the data collected is accurate and relevant to the problem.

After collecting the data, the next step is to analyze it. This involves identifying patterns, trends, and relationships within the data. Statistical methods and data mining techniques can be used to extract meaningful insights from the data.

Once the analysis is complete, we can then develop solutions. This may involve brainstorming, using existing solutions, or developing new ones. It is important to consider the feasibility and scalability of the solutions.

Finally, the solutions need to be implemented and evaluated. Feedback from stakeholders can be used to refine the solutions and ensure they meet the objectives.

In summary, solving complex problems requires a systematic approach. By defining the problem, collecting and analyzing data, developing solutions, and evaluating their effectiveness, we can increase the likelihood of success.
Coggins: I did. I spoke about six or seven years in succession, until I got tired of my own voice, and then on the organization's twenty-fifth anniversary I spoke again. I promised sometime again to give the talk that I gave in 1931, which I had heard about a great deal. I poke fun at the business as much as possible.

Gilb: Do you ever talk Socialism among the other jobbers?

Coggins: Not openly. I've never been asked to. (laughter)

Gilb: How do their politics usually run?

Coggins: They're conservatives. They're not all people of great cultural background. They're people who worked their way up. Some of them are mechanics. They've got to the stage where they feel that what they've earned belongs to them and the thought of the government taking away doesn't seem fair to them. I have ridiculed a good many of our practices. That was one of the things that was brought against me, that I was a Socialist.

Gilb: Brought against you by whom?

Coggins: Patterson.

Gilb: Oh. I thought he was a Socialist also.

Coggins: He was. But he became resentful after he saw that the business was continuing to run.
Gilb: Your company is sort of Socialism in action, isn't it?

Coggins: It's not comprehensive enough to be Socialism. But it's cooperation. We try to use cooperation to the limit.

Gilb: And it's worked.

Coggins: Yes, it's worked in this way, that we've been content. Some months I make less money than a store manager or a salesman. And I am perfectly willing, because they're building up something that's partly mine. And I'm not taking the punishment they do. I don't feel my job is worth as much as theirs. It's my fault that my job isn't a bigger paid job. But I don't want to pay the price in struggle.

Gilb: Well, perhaps you deserve this for having had this wonderful executive idea of--

Coggins: All I claim for the plan is that it has made jobs for all of us for thirty years. The employees know that. Some of them also know that they could have gone out at any time in the last ten years and made more money than with us. But they didn't want to do it.

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Dear Mr. Coggin,

I have just finished reading your book, I am a mouse. And my father read it, and loved it. We discuss Mouse and his cheese holders. We think it's the best book ever written.

Do you think you could write another story about animals like -

chickens, skunks, and eaters, dogs, rattle snakes, chip monks.

Hoping you will reply.

I remain respectfully yours,

Libby J. Mantel.
Mr. Herbert Coggins,
Box 1566
Whiteside Press,
San Francisco, California.

Dear Herbert:

I certainly like that pamphlet choosing a reason for war, and hope it will have a mighty big sale.

More power to you!

As ever yours,

Norman Thomas
April 29, 1941

Dear Herbert:

Many thanks for the copy of "Choosing a reason for war." I hope almost made a pacifist out of a conservative.

With personal greetings from Bob and

Yours sincerely,

August Vollmer
Mr. Herbert Coggin,
Right Side Press,
218 W. 15th St.,
San Francisco, California.

My dear Sir:

Your "Choosing a Reason for War" hit the bull's eye. It's the happiest best thing I've ever done. I am very glad to see you go on giving me insight into the situation. I am just thankful to see that these works of satire is still kept bright by men like you. Voltaire may rest in peace.

Yours truly,
Hugh Robert Orr