HULET HORNBECK

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

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EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT Oakland, California

Hulet Hornbeck

PARK DISTRICT ACQUISITIONS: 1965-1981

An Interview Conducted by
Carole Hicke
1981

PREFACE

The idea for an oral history of the East Bay Regional Park District was born at the District's 45th Birthday Party in the summer of 1979. Several of the guests, Park founders and longtime Park supporters, recalled events leading up to the formation of the District, and it was decided that it was important to capture the variety and richness of their recollections. Shortly thereafter the District's Board of Directors authorized an oral history project, and in early 1980 a program was launched to interview Park District founders, supporters, employees, and directors. The program was continued with more interviews in following years to bring the history of the Park District up to the present.

Hulet Hornbeck has led the Park District's Acquisition Department during a period of immense growth. His unflagging devotion to the interests of the District has produced results that help make the Park District unique in its contribution to the public. His recollections chronicle some of the ways this growth took place.

Mr. Hornbeck was interviewed on September 29 and October 15, 1981 in his office at District headquarters in Oakland. He carefully reviewed and corrected the transcript of the tape-recorded interviews.

The oral history project was conducted by Mimi Stein, President of Oral History Associates, a firm specializing in oral and written histories.

[Date of interview: September 29, 1981]

Begin Tape 1, Side A

Hicke: Perhaps we could just start with when and where you were born?

Hornbeck: I was born at Passaic, New Jersey, on October 14, 1919.

Hicke: And you went to school there and grew up there?

Hornbeck: No. I grew up in Detroit, Michigan and then my parents split up and I was back in Newark, New Jersey. I went to school in Newark and Bloomfield, New Jersey, which is the northern part of the state where it's pretty heavily urbanized.

We were very poor and the family was split up; my sister boarded at one house and I boarded in another and my mother in another and we would eat some of our meals in a fourth place. That was the era before there were welfare benefits, and we just made our way through it.

I had a bit of college at the University of Maine for two years, and one summer studying forestry. Then I went into the air force and was commissioned in the Fiji Islands. I was an aerial navigator in the first Flying Fortresses in the South Pacific. Then I was stationed in Boise, Idaho, where I met my wife-to-be. I was also stationed in other places in the West like Salt Lake City and the state of Washington.

I went back to New Jersey following the war and got a juris doctor in law and was admitted to practice in New Jersey. I worked for a bonding company and was transferred to San Francisco in 1957.

Hornbeck: In my young life, one of the things that helped hold the family together was weekend family outings. We had an aunt who was a member of the hiking club in Interstate Park. That was a mix between New York and New Jersey of lands that had been in the Harriman Estate, which was a massive land holding of several hundred thousand acres. We would go there on Sundays or weekends and swim and hike. That was a significant factor in my life. When I came back from the service I saw very substantial areas that we had played in as youngsters that were totally gone. I was very involved in trying to get educated and keep the family together and then get employment.

When I came to California in '57, the very first thing I did was join the Sierra Club. One of the seniors at the company I was with had me every night at the Olympic Club where we exercised, and there was a man there who was a member of the Sierra Club. So the first formalized thing I did was join the Sierra Club when I came to California.

I was living in Contra Costa County. I thought this place would make a good park system. I had my youngster and there were various areas we could climb and go in the county, and they were totally open. The topography was very interesting. So I got going locally with a group that had formed called the Contra Costa Council. We were pushing the county to do something about park land in Contra Costa County. The person who had founded that was Al Burton. He was a chemical engineer who liked the idea of parks or land publically owned that could have public use.

But we were really unsuccessful with the county. The county had a group called the County Park and Recreation Commission, an appointed commission. We would go to those commission meetings once a month.

I centralized the location of the monthly meeting of the Park Council in the Co-op Building because they had a very nice meeting room. Everybody would know where it was and they knew what

Hornbeck: night of the month it was, and that seemed to be a factor that helped encourage people to come. We would end up with a good group. They were very aggressive and pushed the county. They even tried a bond issue around '62 but that failed: they couldn't get the two-thirds vote.

They tried a pay-as-you-go-plan which would be to put up some money for land every year in the budget. The first year nothing got put up other than a small sum that they had under a contract with EBMUD for the beginning of Briones Park. The county had no park land except a little park with picnic tables in it in the poor town of Pacheco. They gave that piece of land up as part of the Walnut Creek Flood Control Project without even any effort to get a substitution.

We would try to get the board of supervisors members at the Park Council meetings and finally we got three, then finally we had all five. We had an annual dinner and we had all five there, and some county thought leaders as well, so that was really making progress. That was in '62, '63, and '64. The Park Council was making progress, but it was not producing anything: no land, zero.

Bill Mott had gone to a Park Council meeting. At that time I was the President of the Park Council, and we met and Bill Mott made a pitch. He had just come to the Regional Park District from the city of Oakland and that was about the second time I ever met him. I guess we were each sizing the other up and it looked like it could work.

So then we had the vote and we had a minority vote. There was a big turnout at the meeting. People came from eastern and western Contra Costa County; a whole contingency came from the Richmond area. They all drove over to the Co-op that night. After that majority vote for the annexation, we got some letters of dissatisfaction and one resignation. It was a heavy, involved, emotional matter. I don't believe the board of supervisors supported the annexation, but the vote was there and it happened.

Hicke: I believe the Kahn Foundation was involved in this. I think Robert Kahn opposed the 1962 bond issue. Do you recall that?

Hornbeck: Yes. there were a number of people who opposed the bond issue. I saw Kahn awhile ago and he said, "I never knew, Hulet, that we'd ever really get along and be friends because of the opposition that we had at one time," and I hadn't even remembered that. So apparently we had had opposition then.

Hicke: It was more on his side than on yours probably.

Hornbeck: Yes.

Hicke: What do you think overcame the opposition to annexing Contra Costa County to the East Bay Regional Park District?

Hornbeck: I think that there had been a series of failures and there had been no concerted, organized effort on annexation to the East Bay Regional Park District. And probably there was more structuring of public education and involvement, and it was done by Trudeau. There was no question that it was Trudeau.

I remember we were having a meeting on a Saturday morning. It was in Pleasant Hill, because I had headed up the central county on this annexation. During the meeting, Trudeau called to say that we could not put out anything or use any of the literature that we had ready to be passed out that carried Pt. Pinole on it. I said, "Fine." Everybody had a packet to go out, but we pulled all those back. So I said, "Fine," and I thought, as I do on most things, that there's a larger goal and you try to always bear in mind the larger goal.

Pt. Pinole could not be included because the edict had been laid down to Trudeau and Mott by the city of Richmond forces that they would come out actively against the annexation unless Pt. Pinole as a park was removed from consideration. So that was done.

Hicke: Do you know why?

Hornbeck: Yes. It had to do with the use of the land for an integrated steel mill by Bethlehem Steel. When we got to negotiating with Bethlehem many years later, Bethlehem explained that they had been gathering parcels of land together at Pt. Pinole since the late '50s for the purpose of building the steel mill, and they still had that in mind at the time of the annexation. I guess when Bethlehem Steel realized what things were possibly going to occur, they went to west county leaders. Then this pressure came in and the items were removed from the literature.

Hicke: Were there any problems after annexation in transferring assets of Contra Costa County, the land that they did have and so forth, to the Park District?

Hornbeck: No. Surprisingly enough, there weren't. There was a good rapport. Kennedy Grove was deeded over along with Briones Regional Park. Around 1,000 acres were under contract between the Utility District and the county; it was in parcels and it was to come in over a period of years. The county had filed for some matching funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development on one of the parcels, and they transferred that grant contract on that parcel over to the District. On the other parcels making up the 1,000 acres, we filed for a grant from HUD also, and those grants were consummated.

There was good cooperation, and that's exemplified by when the 1964 Bond Act was passed -- the statewide Bond Act, which really was not effective until 1965 and '66 -- they voted unanimously to transfer those monies to the East Bay Regional Park District. Because the Bond Act provided that county governments make the determination, they determined that $250,000 of that money would go to eastern Contra Costa County, $404,500 would go to central Contra Costa County, and $450,000 would go to western Contra Costa County for land acquisition exclusively.

Now within those confines they had general designations: John Marsh Home (later changed to the coal mines area), Las Trampas, and Brooks Island. The District made the acquisitions and took title

Hornbeck: to the property, and we were reimbursed on those sums of money by the state, so there was good cooperation. It's a good question, but there was good cooperation.

There was a little gesture made by Contra Costa County at the time of the State Bond Act. One of the supervisors made a suggestion that because these monies were really county monies (although the District was going to manage the lands and would acquire them), the title ought to belong to the county. It's preferable not to split ownership and management. That creates the potential of political involvements of unknown nature in the future. So the District said, "No, it would seem that we should have title to the property as an element of really effective management and operation." That took care of that. It was a little trial balloon and yet had immense implications.

Another one was that for central Contra Costa County, there was a certain effort made to see that the money would go for land acquisition in an undeveloped area north of Pleasant Hill and south of Martinez, smaller in size but closer in to potential development. The second choice was the Las Trampas area. Mott and I went out and walked all over the area -- it was called Las Juntas -- and then I made an evaluation of the land values and what the time elements would be for development over there.

At the same time a chap down in Danville by the name of Manfred Lindner, who works at the Rad Labs at Livermore -- really an esoteric guy -- wanted me to see something. He had gotten Bill Mott up there previously and he wanted me to see Las Trampas, so we walked out there one weekend and walked up into it. He had such difficulty in getting people out there to talk about things and to do them. He was quite emotional about the fact that he'd gotten somebody from the District, had gotten me out there.

In any event, we advised the board of supervisors that everybody was four years too late in attempting to build a park at Las Juntas. This was just after the annexation. They had wanted a park there about four years prior to that time. I used

Hornbeck: the term, "The bulldozers are literally looking over the hills," and everybody understood. So the effort was shifted then to Las Trampas as a geographical site. Now you would never know that there even could have possibly been a park there at Las Juntas.

There was a drainage area with a series of year-round ponds. The idea was to pump the water from the lower pond back up to the top pond and the water would drain back down making a continuity of the water stream. The topography was such that you could have had a park that would have been something like Golden Gate Park on a little smaller scale. But now you would never know that even the possibility had been there; it's just totally built up with townhouses and condominiums. Las Trampas is going ahead as a dandy park.

Hicke: It makes you appreciate the Park District's foresight.

Hornbeck: Yes. I'll tell you this; I was thinking about this while I was driving in to work. I've already said that there is no other urban area in the United States that's similarly involved in urban trails connecting county park lands or regional park lands or other park lands by off-road trails, that we are leading the country there and therefore the world.

I also believe that the last 15 years or so of this District's land program has not been duplicated anywhere else in the United States in an urban area during any time of the history of this country. I don't believe it's been duplicated in Chicago, Miami, Newark, or New York on a per capita basis. It might have come close under Robert Moses in New York. He had a parkway system going and he figured the way to get people to use the parkway was to have parks out at the end of them, so I'll make that one exception -- that would have been during the Depression -- but other than that, nothing can approach our District.

Hicke: What combination of factors do you think is responsible?

Hornbeck: I suppose that when the populations were increasing in the Eastern cities -- Chicago, Philadelphia,

Hornbeck: Baltimore and places like that -- there was no environmental movement 100 or 150 years ago. In the West, this mushrooming of population kind of coincided with the idea of environmental protection.

Also the city people were moving out in the farmlands. The farmers say, "Don't bug us. Leave us alone. We don't want parks or open space; we've got it all. Why do we want a park?" When the commuter moves out there, it's a different approach. The commuter says, "We want some parkland; we want a place for our kids to go," and the rest of it. So the mushrooming population and the environmental movement made a double whammy in effect.

Also the topography is unique: the way the ridges are, for instance. They held back development until the tunnel went through the mountain, until BART came along. Also it takes longer to build from the flatland up to the ridges because it costs more; therefore you fill up the valleys first. That was a factor. Then there was a certain segment of society which otherwise didn't pay any attention. All of a sudden they saw these beautiful hills, and they said, "Let's keep them."

End Tape 1, Side A

Begin Tape 1, Side B

Hornbeck: Then we had a series of bond acts -- it's very unique for a state to have a bond act -- in '64, in '74, in '76, in 1980. That's a significant impact. The bond acts provide much of the money which goes for acquisitions.

In addition to that, under the Johnson administration some very significant federal legislation came along: the Land and Water Conservation Fund provided money, not just for federal but for state and local parkland acquisitions as well as developments. The Land and Water Conservation Fund was a new source of money. Also, for a number of years the Department of Housing and Urban Development had a matching grant program known as Title VII, which helped this District. Every one of our acquisitions

Hornbeck: from '65 through '71 was made with funds matched either by a federal or a state grant, from either Land and Water or HUD or the state. For a number of those land acquisitions, the state money was matched by a federal grant and the cost to this District was nominal.

And that has left out the human element: you had Bill Mott coming here as the General Manager and then you had Trudeau as General Manager. Dick has been a staunch supporter of the acquisition program, and I'm certain that my attitudes as well are reflected in this product in an equally significant way.

So I guess there have to be these fortuitous elements in life that they gather together in one situation. For example, Dick realized you can't work forever on a grant program, -- the HUD grants and the Land and Water grants -- nor can you maintain what you have, and so he produced state legislation for us for this tremendous sum of money for land acquisition and capital development over a period of 10 years. It was a unique bit of legislation: it was precedent-making for that kind of money to go to a local agency.

The main advocates of this program have been as follows: the citizens, who have been there all the way through and pushing; the two general managers I mentioned; the Board of Directors, which has consistently voted -- and it's unanimous in almost every case -- on the specific land programs as we brought them to the Board for approval. There have been people of very unusual persuasion in places of authority at a given time and a given place.

Hicke: Can you give us some specific examples?

Hornbeck: The negatives are that the department heads are not interested in what we're doing, except for people of unusual persuasion. Josh Barkin would be an example of an employee of this District who would pick up the telephone and call me after a particular acquisition and say, "It's the greatest thing going and thanks a lot," but he's the only one who ever did. We have land acquisition items for the Board of Directors literally every two weeks. When you ask

Hornbeck: for a specific example, I can answer that the Board is just absolutely dedicated to getting these programs going.

The only interruption that we had was following Proposition 13 in June of 1978. The world literally fell apart, and the reactions were very human and they were very devastating. It took about two years, until 1980, to get the thing back on course. Again I want to emphasize this massive effort on Trudeau's part of orchestrating funding, which was done certainly in the public interest.

Hicke: Did Mr. Trudeau and other people from the Park District go to the state legislature?

Hornbeck: Dick is the one who went up there with regularity. He used me quite frequently in persuading Senator John Nejedly because we have been friends for much of our adult lives. We had a certain piece of legislation that came through Nejedly where this District got more money pro rata than any other given agency in this state. That was Senate Bill 31. The Board would send representatives up there to be on hand to testify at certain committee hearings as these bills would be going through the line. The leadership came from Trudeau and the Board.

Hicke: Perhaps we could back up here just a bit to 1965 when you were appointed Chief of Land and Water Acquisition. This job was created at that time. Am I correct?

Hornbeck: Yes. I had had a cancer operation because I had had a melanoma and I was in the hospital, Alta Bates, lying on my stomach thinking. The operation was performed by Dr. Gordon Holmes, who lives in Lafayette. He was on the City Council of Lafayette and practices in Berkeley, and he figured I had about five years. A melanoma is the most virulent of cancers. It's like wildfire, supposedly. He took a good-sized chunk out of me. The cancer was small in terms of the chunk, but it was a good-size chunk of my body. So then I thought, "What do I really want?"

Hornbeck: I think I was hardly out of my bathrobe and I may still have been in my bathrobe when I went over to Bill Mott's house. I had never thought of working for the Park District even once before. Not even once. All the things I'd been doing seemed to be just fine; they were fulfilling me in terms of public pressure and public organization and all the rest of it. But then in the hospital I thought, "Well,I had better do it fulltime if it is what I seem to like and I have only a limited number of years."

I went over to Bill's house and I told him, "Listen, I'm going to make a shift here," He said, "There are three openings coming up in the District; submit an application." I didn't even ask him what they were. I submitted it.

He said, "You ought to apply to the Land Acquisitions Department." There were 50 applicants, so when it finally whittled down to just a couple, the controller called me and said, "When can you come to work?" So there you are. That's how that was.

The doctor's expectation never happened to me. I'm still going back every couple of years to the doctor. That's what's called a remission.

Hicke: What a wonderful story.

Hornbeck: Yes.

Hicke: When you came to work here, what were your responsibilities?

Hornbeck: I started right off with the grant programs, and the first acquisitions were the Las Trampas area and Brooks Island. Coyote Hills Park came along pretty soon, and that was a good one. This District has always been in competition of sorts with the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District. Maybe competition is the wrong word, but at least there's been an edge there someplace. The State Department of Parks and Recreation holds hearings on the state park programs and since Alameda County had designated a good portion of their grant money, the '64 Bond Act money, for Coyote Hills Park, the state had to hold a hearing on that. The hearing was being held in

Hornbeck: Palo Alto and it involved $816,000 to be allocated to the East Bay Regional Park District for Coyote Hills. I went to the hearing, and while I was sitting there, this fellow got up to speak. I didn't know who he was, but he actually was the General Manager of the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District. He's still there. He got up and said, "I don't recommend that you award these monies to the East Bay Regional Park District. They can't acquire that amount of land," or something like that. He had some arguments, anyway.

There was a representative there from Leslie Salt and the large Patterson interests, and he spoke against the park, saying there should be some controls on it. I guess then the Hayward Area Recreation man stood up and said, "Yes, it's a good idea."

Neither one of them knew me because I was brand new with the District, so when the people from the State Department of Parks and Recreation asked if there was anybody there from the East Bay Regional Park District, the fellow from Hayward -- I think it was he -- said, "No, there isn't." I got up and said, "I'm from the East Bay Regional Park District." They said, "Well, would you please come here?"

I went up to the front of the room and they said, "What do you think about what you've heard? I said, "We've looked at the area and we have some idea of its value, and if Bill Mott says he can build a park down there for these kinds of monies, the East Bay Regional Park District can do it." That was just about the way I got out from under. I wasn't making any claims for myself that I could be questioned on, because I wasn't really prepared.

Well, they voted for it then, of course, and we get along just fine with Bud Critzer. It's always been an item to laugh at. There was a new face on the scene.

The Coyote Hills is a great park. We ended up having to file a condemnation on the land, and we

Hornbeck: tried to explain it to the property owner. It was a large family with 17 members in it, three or so generations, and they had one spokesman, Nat Patterson. After it was all over and the settlements were in and the lands were acquired, the District staff people were good friends with the Patterson family because we had made an effort to explain it to them. We still deal with the Patterson family on a good basis.

We try to do this on all of our acquisitions and all of what we condemn. After it's all over, everybody goes back to an accord. I never consider any acquisition as an adversary relationship with any property owner. I think what we're doing is right and it's a matter of communicating that to the landowner or the citizen group or the taxpayer association, as the case may be, who don't always agree with what we're doing. I never feel that it's an adversary relationship.

Hicke: You must have been very successful. I read something that Mr. Trudeau wrote, I think it was in 1974, where he praised you very highly for work in condemnation proceedings, which I think would be very difficult. Can you explain why the Park District has to do that?

Hornbeck: Sure. If there is a parcel of land that is essential for the park or for rounding out the park acreage or for making the park usable, and if you cannot acquire it at fair market value by negotiation, you then have to condemn the property. This is a very unique power in the law: the power is called eminent domain. It came from the English common law, and it was the power of the king, the first of domain, to take the land for the purposes of the king. It's in our law for the purposes of government.

The eminent domain of this District is the acquisition of land for park, recreation, open space, ecology areas, and trails, and it is given to the District by the state of California legislature.

Hicke: Do you listen to the citizens' input when you're making a decision like this?

Hornbeck: Yes. The citizens have been involved when the Master Plan was prepared. The citizens visited all the park sites proposed -- over 40 of them -- and then the citizens are involved as you build a park, acquiring land after land, so there's all that opportunity.

Then on a specific parcel where you have to have condemnation, there's another opportunity, because you must hold a public hearing and you must notify the property owner that you're going to hold this public hearing and that the purpose of the public hearing is the condemning of the person's property or the corporation's property. Then you hold the public hearing and the decision is made. Even after the decision is made, you still keep on talking to the property owner, only this time you're able to say, "Not only is the staff of the Regional Park District recommending this acquisition, but the Board of Directors has specifically directed the acquisition, and all the judgments are that it is essential for the long-term future and betterment of this area that this piece go for a park or a trail, as the case may be."

Hicke: That brings me to another question: how is the site selection made?

Hornbeck: The Master Plan that was done in 1973 was amended in 1980. That amendment came as a product of almost two years of public involvement by the Park Advisory Committee. They made more field trips and had nighttime discussions; it's a very enthusiastic group, and they meet till 11:00 at night half the time, on the first Monday of each month. So the Master Plan is extremely current.

The interesting thing about that Master Plan is that it didn't require that many changes from 1973 and that it works. Many Master Plans or general plans are simply documents on a shelf, just nice exercises. That's all they are and that's maybe all they were intended to be, but this is one of implementation. In another four or five years we'll have another nice exercise. But this is one of implementation and it's not on the shelf and it works. It just works beautifully.

Hornbeck: It has designated these sites -- and they're circles on that map -- as the location of future parks or shorelines, and then there is a breakdown of it in what is termed "balanced parkland." So in the different sections of our District we get a mixture of recreation areas and wilderness areas, parkland, preserves, trails, and shoreline. Those are the categories.

I have tried through the years to have some balls going on all of these items at any given time, so that the acquisitions were coming in in southern Alameda County, central Contra Costa, western, and so forth. I tried to keep them all going so that no given geographical area got too far ahead of the others.

Now beyond those points and within the framework of the Master Plan and keeping the balance going, I tried to make the acquisitions where it was most comfortable for the property owner.

That meant that if we found a unit of land that fit these other categories and also fit the Master Plan criteria -- a viable land unit, rational boundaries, convenience, ease of acquisition -- and where there were circumstances that would encourage that sale, such as a death in the family, a divorce, a change of intention on the part of the landowner as to what he was intending to do with the land, like a rancher getting ready to retire, a bankruptcy, then we would make the acquisition.

A great majority of our acquisitions, though they were pragmatic in the sense of time, were not pragmatic in the sense of location. The location was selected on the basis of merit, and the time was chosen at the best interest of the property owner. One of the things that this did is it helped to have this District not be viewed as an ogre, which could have happened in the kind of land program we've undertaken. The District could have been seen as a devil, a demon.

Hicke: That helps to keep the people supporting you.

Hornbeck: It keeps the support coming from the public, and it keeps the legislators' support because they're not getting inflammatory letters.

Hicke: Back in the '60s, before there was a Master Plan, how did you make site selections?

Hornbeck: Certain site selections were made by the county governments. They were made by the Contra Costa County supervisors and by the Alameda County supervisors. As I've just described, the Board of Supervisors had made a decision in the county that there would be a Briones Regional Park. They only talked about 1,000 acres at that time. Now it's 5,000. The other sites I described came through the Bond Act in Contra Costa and Alameda. The main one that came from the 1964 Bond Act was Coyote Hills.

Another site that had been selected was what is now the Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline. That site was selected by the Park District Board of Directors and top management, primarily through encouragement from organized citizens saying, "This is an appropriate place for a park."

The extension of Tilden Park northward into Wildcat Canyon also came at that time and that was again an expression of citizen involvement, citizens' field trips, and the decision of the Board of Directors and the assistance of the federal government. Without the assistance of the federal government, certain of these acquisitions would not have occurred. You could say that the federal government's matching program was material, because we needed to select sites that they would approve, and those were sites near urban areas and fitting various requirements.

End Tape 1, Side B

Begin Tape 2, Side A

Hornbeck: They assisted 50 percent in land acquisition on every acquisition almost without exception through the '60s and into the early '70s.

Hicke: You've covered quite a few of the financial aspects: the bonds and the federal government assistance. Can you tell us about the increased tax rates?

Hornbeck: I talked about it without using the word increased tax rate when I talked about the Assembly Bill 925. That was promulgated by Trudeau and John Knox. It was to run for a 10-year period for land acquisition and capital development. That is the tax increase that you're referring to. There had been earlier tax increases of a nickel, but this one was an additional 10 cents.

Hicke: The state also approved borrowing against future tax funds in the '60s. Was that crucial?

Hornbeck: No. We borrowed a million bucks on Wildcat Canyon, but that was a small percentage of what this District had a capability of borrowing.

Hicke: Are there any general recollections of Bill Mott that you can talk about?

Hornbeck: I know you're intrigued by him and that's appropriate. We had a field trip one day at what is now Contra Loma, and John DeVito, the Contra Costa Water District General Manager, was out there. We walked down a hill to where this reservoir was going to be built and a lake made. DeVito always remembers that Mott was running down this hill waving his hands like a bird saying, "This is going to be the greatest park going." The feature of enthusiasm, of course, is a very key element to Mott, well-demonstrated by his running down a hill screaming, "This will be a great park."

Hicke: After him Irwin Luckman was General Manager.

Hornbeck: Yes, for about a year or so. Irwin had ulcers and he left.

Hicke: When Mr. Trudeau came,did he make any particular changes in direction?

Hornbeck: Dick gave a great deal more emphasis to the organization. Dick involves the department heads in decision making and he involves department heads in the ongoing program of the District more than

Hornbeck: Mott did. Dick has a greater rapport with the public than Mott on a day-to-day basis and he's more attuned to the press. It isn't so much that he reacts to the press as that he seems to communicate to the press.

We established a legislative person in Sacramento and then we established one in Washington. These were not easy things to do. It took quite a while to get the Board to understand that it would be helpful for us to have somebody in Sacramento, and it was doubly hard to get it for Washington. Washington is somewhere off in another world on the East Coast, and Californians don't need those people. So that was a real accomplishment.

And then, by God, he was out trying to get the other large park agencies around the country to use Washington and have somebody as a lobbyist back there on the basis that if it's good for us it's going to be good for them, and if it's good for them and us, it's going to have a stronger impact.

Every year we have more bills in Sacramento than we had the preceding year. We have a million and a half dollars going into land at Del Valle. It's going to enhance and improve that park; it will complete the integrity of that park. We had $2 million at George Miller. These were state bills that were passed, and you build to that level over a period of time.

For some purposes, Dick will send Ralph Meilandt to Sacramento. Ralph talks to people that know about controlling and finance. Or I'll go up to Sacramento and I'll be talking to people that I can talk to. The product is that after awhile this District has an image in Sacramento or Washington far beyond what you'd expect it to have. Those are some of the things that Dick has done for this District.

Hicke: Over the years can you recall any particular instances of negotiating with EBMUD?

Hornbeck: Yes. At the staff level we've always had, as far as I know, an excellent relationship between the

Hornbeck: two districts. We lease all kinds of their land for trail purposes. The key lands of the Lafayette/Moraga trail are EBMUD's, along with the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District areas and the Pacific Gas and Electric alignments. The key ones belong to the Utility District. We also have dealt with the Contra Costa Water District.

We followed EBMUD on their ranching program. When I first came with the District, this District didn't lease its lands for grazing purposes. I thought that should be done, so we did it in Briones right off the bat, and we followed EBMUD. We used their method of determining the number of cattle to put on land: rather than doing it just on an acreage basis, we do it on what is called an animal unit month. This means the number of cattle put in is determined by the amount of rainfall and grass. If it doesn't rain and there isn't very much grass, you don't have very many cattle. If there is a lot of rain, a lot of grass, a lot of sunshine, and a lot of warm weather, you can then have more cattle. The rancher only has to remit to the District based upon a number of cattle.

EBMUD was the only one doing it that way, and then we started it, and then the federal government started to do it 10 years later.

However, there had been a general manager at EBMUD who didn't get along with Bill Mott. His name was McFarland. They had a secretary called John Plumb. He's no longer there. I remember the morning when the Utility District made its definitive move. There had been conversations between Bill Mott and the board of directors of the Utility District concerning Lafayette Reservoir, for one, and the management of it for park purposes, which had not taken place. Their move was made on a Tuesday morning before the board of supervisors. Two members of their five-person board went over with John Plumb to the board of supervisors on the basis they had an announcement to make. So I thought I'd go over and hear it too, because you don't have board members of the EBMUD going out on something like that unless it's very unusual.

Hornbeck: I went over, and John Plumb went up before the board and made the announcement that two things had happened: 1. They had hired Doc Mattison, who had been the park director of Contra Costa County, and he was leaving the county. 2. They were going into the recreation business, and he would run the recreation program. That was quite an event.

Following Doc Mattison's leaving Contra Costa County, of course, the county was out of the park business. They had never really been in it, but then they were out of it. EBMUD was in the park business. Doc Mattison is now the park director in San Mateo County. I don't think he was with the Utility District for more than a year and a half following that event. The next time I heard of him, he was up at Pardee and Camanche working for a concessionaire of EBMUD. A concessionaire had the recreation facilities at those two reservoirs in the foothills. He was working for them, but he didn't work for them for too long and then I don't know where he was. Then he was over in San Mateo as the park director. That's my recollection of EBMUD going into the park business.

Hicke: To go back to land acquisitions for a minute, I ran across an article that talked about the "unilateral operation" plan which you and Jack Rogers carried out for the District.

Hornbeck: Yes. That happened when we were going to have to go into condemnation at Coyote Hills. We had previously and we were even then using the county counsel, but we figured that this was a pretty big undertaking and we should have our own condemnation attorney. After looking around awhile, we found that Jack Rogers was definitely the person to hire. So we had hired him.

After our tax increase, we set up a program of options. That was done because we had all these potential park sites and though some stood out more than others, we couldn't go after all of them at one time. We worked out a process whereby we could contact property owners and see whether they were interested in disposing of their property to a

Hornbeck: ready market. The ready market was the East Bay Regional Park District. We asked that they offer us an option for a given period of time, and paid $100 for it to make it binding. Binding it means that it's a contract, a unilateral contract. It's a contract coming from one side to the other, from the District to the owner.

Then if I could gather together a number of properties in a given area with these options, I could go to the Board of Directors for authority to act under the options and buy the property. The value there is that it was a binding contract: therefore, the property owner knew that he couldn't play a game and after we'd gone to the Board of Directors, say "Well, I've changed my mind. I guess I don't want to sell after all." It needed some careful thought on the property owner's part.

They also had to determine that we were the best market at a given time for that relatively short period. We had various flexibilities under the option of leasing it back to them for ranching purposes or life estate for part of the property if somebody wanted to live on it for awhile.

Then we brought in a number of negotiators. Some were volunteers who, for one reason or another, wanted to help the District. A lot of people really like this District. One chap that comes to mind is Heath Angelo, who was a very responsible citizen through the years and vice president of one of the larger realtor companies, Coldwell Banker. We had these people go out and talk to some of the property owners or go to a property owner through a third party friend or relative. It was pretty low-keyed. We had some outside negotiator whom we had hired to do this.

That process went on for a couple of years. It was immensely successful and produced lands negotiated for in a friendly way at values which, though they were fair market values, will never be repeated. Never.

Hicke: Do you recall what specific properties were acquired?

Hornbeck: Yes. We had a hodgepodge in Wildcat Canyon. It was checker-boarded. There were at least nine other ownerships up there. We brought all nine ownerships into the District through this plan. We have a park entity of marvelous parameters now at that location.

At Las Trampas Park, we used Maynard Munger, who was a well-recognized realtor and a past member of the board of directors of the Sierra Club. So he had both of those kinds of experiences: conservation and real estate. He and I worked together on a thousand acres at Las Trampas.

A portion of the lands at one time had been owned by Eugene O'Neill, the playwright. We had a very heavy involvement there, because the owners of the land wished to sell, but it was intended that the home, which was Eugene O'Neill's home, be preserved. It was where he wrote "Mourning Becomes Electra" and "Long Day's Journey Into Night," his most famous play, and three or four others. Yet this District does not want to be in the antique home business. So the dilemma was that we wanted the land but not the home.

Some of the citizens didn't care about the land but wanted the home, and the property owner didn't want to sell just one but not the other because it was a unit. If they had sold the home, they would have had difficulty marketing the land, and if they sold the land, they would have had a greater difficulty marketing the home. It was an old home of the late '30s, built in 1937, a big home, and it would take a lot of money for rehabilitation, though it was livable even then.

I said, "I can't buy the home, and I refuse to buy the land unless we have the home under control." I had one option for the land, which had a very short fuse on it: I had to do it immediately. On the home, I wanted an option for five years; I didn't know what I was going to do with it, but I wanted it for five years. They gave it to us for a

Hornbeck: year and a half. We bought the land and we had this option for the home.

A citizens group formed and they went the political route and got the state in. Then we assigned the option to the citizens group. The citizens group assigned it to the state, and the state bought it. Then the federal government came along and said, "We'll make a national historic site out of the place," and that's what's going on now. It's going to be owned and managed by the federal government. That's an example of the option process working.

We actually used it at Morgan Territory. We used it at Martinez Shoreline. There were four separate private ownerships on the Martinez Shoreline. We used it at Miller/Knox, Wildcat Canyon, and at the Ohlone Wilderness. Those are the main ones.

Hicke: I believe that you are the architect of the trails system. Can you tell me that story?

Hornbeck: Yes. That's kind of a fun story. That goes back to when I came with the District. In the Park Council there had never been any talk about trails. It was hard enough to get some parkland. But when the parkland started to come, the trail people started to come along and say, "Now we want some trails." So that was one of the first things that we did, and it may have been a "first" in the state.

I realized that the hikers and the equestrians were constantly fighting each other. The hikers would say, "We don't want these equestrians around because they crap on the trail or they cause erosion. These horse people are pretty stuffy, and they are all wealthy, and they just come down the trail and we have to step aside." The bicyclists were doing their thing.

We got together with George Cardinet of Contra Costa County and we said, "We'll set up a meeting and put them all in the same room together." We set up the East Bay Trail Council and said,

Hornbeck: "You guys fight your own battles inside this room. When you go outside to a city council meeting, you had better talk the same language, because otherwise you are all divided and you don't stand a chance. You haven't made out so far. "The evidence they had was that the state had tried a trail system following World War II. In the late '40s and '50s, the state was out trying to acquire land and build trails. It's been a total failure. The state of California was a total failure. There isn't any state trail system.

We set up the East Bay Trail Council to be like the Park Council. It met every month. Whenever it looked like interest was starting to slacken, I'd say, "We'll have a picnic. We'll have a field trip. The military used to call it a beer bust, and that's what we'll do." So it was a good organization and it works and it still meets every month.

Then in June of 1971 the federal government held the first National Symposium on Trails. This was following the Johnson Administration's federal legislation in 1967 or 1968 for the first time giving credence to trails. So there was a symposium in '71 on that subject of trails. We had a number of people go back East for it. It was held in Washington. It was a very successful symposium. There were about 400 people there. They realized for the first time that there was a high degree of public interest in trails.

Following that we held a meeting in Chicago, Illinois, to set up the National Trails Council. That was set up in '72 for the purpose of pushing state and federal governments on trails and helping to get them going. I've been a member of that board of directors and I am currently a member of that board of directors.

This District moved on trails along with its parkland and is at a point now where there is no question that it is leading the United States on trails. I'm not talking about trails inside parks now; these are trails that connect park to park, park to shoreline.

Hornbeck: At this National Trails Council, it was determined that there would be a symposium every two years, and the first symposium on the West Coast was held at the end of June of this year in Davis. The reason it was held at Davis is that Davis is the leading city for bikeways in the United States. The scheme of living involves bikes in the city of Davis. It's an integral part of their culture. That's why it was held there. Also the University of California at Davis has very good facilities.

End Tape 2, Side A

Begin Tape 2, Side B

Hornbeck: We had 35 states represented, plus Canada and Australia, and it was considered the most successful of the trail symposiums to date. There hadn't been that many since 1971, but they had been held every two years with regularity. We went on rafts on the American River, so that's a form of a trail, and we looked at the American River Trail Parkway.

We had four buses, and as part of the program, we brought the participants down to the East Bay to look at the East Bay area trail system. This was not entirely for the purpose of looking at the system but for the purpose of making 15 stops at points where there had been problems and either successful or unsuccessful resolutions of those problems. It was a learning process consuming one entire day at these 15 or so sites. As a result of that bus trip, the judgment was that there was nothing like our trail system going on in the United States.

And the trails are used. As the months go by, the Lafayette/Moraga trail gets more and more use, and they tell me that measuring the use of the Lafayette/Moraga Trail on some kind of a basis indicates that it's the most intensively used of all our parkland in the District here. We've run a survey two years out of this office

Hornbeck: to get the viewpoint of 500 owners of property adjacent to the trail and 500 trail users. It was a whole series of questions. The survey was conducted by university people, not by park people but by apparently disinterested people. It was computerized at Davis for the results of the questions and the responses. The results were very, very pleasing but they were quite surprising in that the adjacent property owners were very satisfied with the trail and they liked it. They hadn't thought they were going to like it beforehand, but they do now. The trail users didn't have any criticisms. They said they would go back again, and they told why they had gone there.

I feel that all of the effort for the trail system is not only justified for today but it would be especially justified for tomorrow. We're going to have people and families who will not go to the Sierra but will leave their homes on Saturday and go by trail to Mt. Diablo or to Briones Park or Las Trampas; they will camp overnight and return on Sunday. Others will go and have another member of the family pick them up at the destination. And that will substitute for Sierra trips.

Hicke: How did you go about designing and acquiring the land for this system?

Hornbeck: Again, you have your public hearings and you try to get your grants. You have to be a bit pragmatic on the trails. I'll give some examples which are verbal and you don't need a map to look at.

If a trail is going to go from Briones Park to Mt. Diablo, it's got to get past U.S. Highway 680. It has to get by BART. So right there you say, "Where can we get by 680 and BART?" When you find the place you can do that, then you're going to have to steer your trail on both sides to that location where you get by on a corridor. We devise the corridor where you get by. In this case, it's under BART and under 680, where the Contra Costa Canal goes.

Hornbeck: One of our big problems was that the citizens who were opposing the trail use points of weakness. The trail previously was going to cross North Main Street in Walnut Creek. That's a very heavily traveled artery, and it was a valid concern. They went ahead to widen North Main Street, and the city of Walnut Creek got money to build an underpass for the trail. It got money out of transportation funds, because it's an element of transportation safety, and the tunnel is there now. So we would go under not only BART and 680 but also under North Main Street on that route, and it's a delight. It's just marvelous.

We found ourselves dealing with local government: the city of Walnut Creek, the city of Pleasant Hill, and the city of Concord, three local governments, on that trail. Here and there it passed through unincorporated areas, so then that required dealing with the county. There has to be this high degree of coordination on trails because they pass through local government territory.

This phone call I just received from Dick Trudeau was about a trail: the extension of the Lafayette/Moraga Trail to Redwood Regional Park. This goes from Moraga to Redwood Regional Park, east and west. It's been before our Board, and that trail corridor has been approved by the Board of Directors. After lots of hearings on the Master Plan of the town of Moraga, it's on the general plan of the town of Moraga. So there's coordination between the Regional Park District and the town about where it passes.

The trail has to go along the back yards of three private property owners. One of them we have by dedication. The property owner wanted to subdivide. So the city said, "If you subdivide, you've got to give an easement for a trail." That's one. We negotiated for the second and we bought it about two weeks ago. The third one we haven't bought yet. We're probably going to have to condemn that third piece, and that's what Dick was calling me about.

Hornbeck: On the second one, which we are in the process of buying, I have to write a letter to the town of Moraga, to their planning commission, asking them to say that the use of the land for a trail is compatible with their general plan. It's a procedural thing at this point, but it still has to be done. That hearing was last night, and they had this on the agenda for 11:30 P.M. I generally go to all those hearings, but I talked it over with the chairman of the planning commission and the planning director and they said, "You shouldn't really wait here until 11:30 because it's going to go through." So I didn't wait.

First you have these very schematic maps, which just show a bunch of fingers. Then you go from that to a study where everybody from Crutcher's department and this department goes out and looks at possible alignments. Once in a while we get some Public Safety Officer to go along for political purposes to prove that we can provide public safety. We try to not bisect property but to run the trail along the edge of the property. We try to use public lands where possible, like land belonging to PG&E and the Utility District and the water company. We use the land along sewer lines, the land above the sewer line, the corridor underneath a power line. Sometimes it has to be on private property, and then where necessary we have to condemn. So far there aren't any regrets on the part of the property owner of the District. These processes are working.

Hicke: I've read a little about the Huckleberry Trail controversy.

Hornbeck: Yes. The Huckleberry Trail is a great story because the area is marvelous botanically. In fact, it is more marvelous than the District realized at the time. It has certain rare plants there. One of them, called leatherwood, occurs almost no place else. It is indeed a delightful slope, and it has huckleberries there too, believe it or not. In any event, we were going to just build a trail and we were going to have a little bit of surrounding

Hornbeck: woods to protect it, but this was before the tax increase came along.

Then, by God, after a three-day Washington's birthday weekend, I came in on Tuesday morning and learned that one of the property owners had gone in on the weekend with a bulldozer and he had cut two big corridors and flattened out two knolls. That was a power play.

The citizens then said the jig was up. We had a large citizen movement to force the District to buy more land than just enough for a trail. Well, even under those circumstances we'd buy nodes and nodes and we still weren't buying a full park.

Stein: There was a phrase that you used that I read in an article; nodes and nodules.

Hornbeck: Yes. But buying nodes and nodules was not adequate, so Dick said, "Set a citizens committee up," and we did. It was a large one, and we brought in Professor Mason from Cal, who was a botanist. We ended up with a park rather than a trail: Huckleberry Botanic Preserve. We have made eight or nine acquisitions up there altogether, and we have a number yet to go. It's very difficult, very difficult, because the owners know that sooner or later they'll be able to develop their property, and these lots have that amount of value otherwise.

The land is split between Contra Costa and Alameda counties, which means there are some political considerations. It has some technical defects, which someday will be corrected so they can build. The technical defect is that if you're going to hook onto the city of Oakland's sewer system, you've got to be inside the city of Oakland. Normally you could say, "I'm annexed to the city of Oakland and I can hook onto their sewer system." You can't say that up there, because the backyards of the lots are in Contra Costa County. You can't be in Contra Costa County and then be annexed to Oakland and hook onto their sewer system.

Hornbeck: Sooner or later they're going to have to adjust that county boundary. Somebody will come along with sufficient political punch to adjust the county boundary. Then the lots will be in Alameda County. Then they can be sewered. Then they can be built upon. These people know that.

It's a dandy park. What happens is that we have something called the East Bay Skyline National Recreation Trail. This Skyline National Trail was another outcome of the Johnson legislation on trails. One of the items said that local government can make a determination of trail areas, with the involvement of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which was later called the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Services and then incorporated into the National Park Service. It has now been done away with, but at that time it was there. That agency could evaluate a corridor of land for a national recreation trail near an urban area; it had to fulfill a number of criteria.

When I read that law, I got my paperwork back to Washington and this became the first nonfederal United States National Recreation Trail. It goes all through Chabot Park, Redwood Regional Park; it now goes through Huckleberry, Sibley, and then it continues on to Tilden and then over to Wildcat. So it's already about 30 miles long.

Now, in the area where it went through Huckleberry, the botanic people said, "We don't want horses around. We don't want them around for a number of reasons, one of which is we don't want anything cut." On a horse trail, if you've got a limb and the horse can't go under it, you'd cut the limb. So they wanted the horses to go someplace else. We routed the horses down the hill and the people walk along the top. Everybody's happy. Have you ever been out there?

Hicke: Yes. I was out there a couple of weeks ago.

Hornbeck: Isn't it pretty?

Hicke: It's lovely. The huckleberries are delicious.

Hornbeck: All these things take all kinds of effort. They take meetings and concern. We had to file condemnation proceedings against Mr. and Mrs. Avelino, who live down that hill there, to make a viable unit of land for Huckleberry Preserve, because they own 14 acres of that slope. It was down by a creek and they really couldn't do much with it other than live there. We did that and it has worked out; they've been relocated. Everybody's happy. But it's very difficult.

End Tape 2, Side B

[Interview continued on October 15, 1982]

Begin Tape 1, Side A

Hicke: Last time we talked about some of the acquisitions, but I was wondering if today we could go through a list of some of the specific parks and perhaps you could tell us a little bit about how they were acquired. We could start in the '60s with Lake Chabot.

Hornbeck: Lake Chabot: that was the first real change when the water surface of one of EBMUD's lakes went into public use. We had the Chabot Marina. All the land was placed under lease to the District, as distinguished from sale. The opening up of those waters only came about because of state legislation directing the Utility District to conduct studies of its water surfaces if they needed to justify why they would not be opened up to public use. Then through the years, the Regional Park District had an ongoing program of capital development at the Marina, so that today it's one of the very important water areas of our District.

We also made some purchases down there in the late '60s from the Utility District on lands which, though part of the watershed of Lake Chabot, still were beyond the line where the Utility District felt it could justifiably maintain land as absolutely necessary for water quality. So we did make those purchases, and we were assisted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in that. Other than the matter of the golf course,

Hornbeck: which Dick Trudeau or Jerry Kent will talk to you about, it's certainly been an excellent relationship between the two agencies.

One of the problems is that an area of some 40 or 60 acres all through the years has been used by the motorcyclists and off-road vehicles. It's a small area, and, particularly in the past, it has been heavily used by the vehicles. It is really the only vehicle-use-land around in the immediate area that is public land. The erosion arising from such concentrated use has been extremely difficult for the District: we also get erosion on the down slopes and increasingly hazardous erosion from the ravines that is generated when the rains come in the fall and winter.

Hicke: How did you resolve those problems?

Hornbeck: The staff of the District felt a proper resolution would have been the acquisition and development of a large parkland that was intended to be used by off-road vehicles. The staff had never felt that it could get a good, strong, consistent Board position on the matter, and a divided Board on such a subject would be extremely awkward and probably unsatisfactory in the long run.

The anomaly here is that when you don't have public lands for this purpose you are in effect compelling the use of private property. That is because it is a state policy and a federal policy that these vehicles are going to be used, and that policy is set by the encouraged importation of the vehicles from Japan. The state and federal governments have encouraged sale of the vehicles for the revenue that is derived from the sales and the revenue that is derived from the sale of gasoline, and state and federal legislation supports off-road vehicles and their development and use.

So here they are in our area, running all over the private property on Sunday mornings with ensuing phone calls to elected officials. It's a harassment to the public. Because they are uncontrolled and the lands are not managed, you have fire problems, you then have uncontrolled erosion problems, and you have noise as well as the trespassing. It's all

Hornbeck: generated by the failure, in my judgment, of the public to meet the issue. It was helped a little bit by the state acquiring a place called Carnegie, but the off-road vehicle people recognize that it's expensive to travel there. It's about 50 miles away. You have to drive a long winding road to get there, but it is a location. That's where we are: we have no site, we have no plans for a site, and we continue to have a small part of Chabot misused.

I want to say one more thing about off-road vehicles, because here a 2,000-acre area couldn't be set aside for off-road vehicles, and yet we have a federal policy to set hundreds of thousands of acres aside far in the hinterland -- where the off-road vehicles and the snowmobiles go, because it's high country and they can just travel anywhere -- so we have a number of different standards. We have a local standard. We can't have 2,000 acres and the public doesn't want us to have 2,000 acres. We have federal standards that say you can have hundreds of thousands of acres, and Washington controls are so remote that nobody is doing anything about it, and those lands are being declared open.

Hicke: What about Camp Ohlone?

Hornbeck: Camp Ohlone used to be called the Erickson property; it came along in the middle '60s. It was seven miles down a dirt road, but it's on a stream and part of the watershed of Alameda Creek. It was an acquisition of opportunity by Bill Mott when the party who had owned the property passed away and had willed it or in some way devised it to Mr. Erickson, who didn't wish to continue to live at the site and sold it to the District. It was an excellent acquisition as it is good, flat, usable land for group camping. People can camp there for a week or so. There is nice, clean water for swimming, and it is sufficiently remote so that you have a real sense that you're in the wilderness.

Hicke: Las Trampas?

Hornbeck: Las Trampas, as I mentioned last time, came along as a result of a citizen effort and the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, then supported by the District and the Bond Act of 1964, with assistance from federal grants. The first acquisition was from two brother doctors -- Dr. Nordstrom was one. The two practicing medical physicians probably bought it at some time prior to that time for development purposes or otherwise, and money was tight in the middle '60s for a period, and a very pleasant transaction was negotiated to help get that park started. That acquisition was in a key location.

The second acquisition was from a chap by the name of Al Kaplan, a realtor of the area, and it was called Starview Ranch. He had purchased the property from a chap in Nevada. Kaplan had not held the land too long, but again, the values were hill and ridgeland values that were in the vicinity of $400 an acre; so it was some of the last lands being acquired at that price. That acquisition gave us access from the east side of the Las Trampas Ridge: Las Posquitas Sierras. An old map called it the Little Sierra.

The next acquisition was the Mueller property. The Muellers were five brothers. Their father at a certain point had partitioned the holdings equally among them. They were the lands between Las Trampas and Rocky Ridge. Both sloped down to Bolinger Canyon Road. The first acquisition from Mueller was maybe 600 or so acres. He lived out there and was reasonably elderly and wanted to keep living at the site and feeling comfortable that it was still his land, yet he wanted to sell, so we gave him a life estate on 30 acres. We cut that 30 acres. It worked out extremely satisfactorily and we had a good relationship with him.

As he got older his grandson, Ron Mueller, moved on in a trailer. He lived nearby with his wife and cared for the grandfather -- the grandmother was deceased. On a certain day he passed away and we processed those papers and the life estate was

Hornbeck: dissolved and then the fee was cleared up. Ron Mueller, the grandson whom I mentioned, now works as an employee of East Bay Regional Park District. He's an enthusiastic supporter of the District and very knowledgeable of its lands and sympathetic to lands, partly at least because of his childhood and early experiences.

Hicke: That's a nice, happy ending.

Hornbeck: Yes. We had another acquisition there: the Little Hills Ranch. We were now coming down the road and the park was being built and there was an area where, high up on the slope, five springs brought waters down to a swimming pool. Other members of the Mueller family for 30 years ran a recreation by-reservation-only picnic area. They had public agencies and corporations coming there for their annual picnics and it was nothing to see 400 or 500 people there on picnics. They had a play field and swimming, a barbecue, and a concession stand, and then they built an equestrian center, so they had a lot of things there.

Then they got tired and said, "We've had enough." We'd had conversations with them for a number of years, and then one day they said, "We're ready to sell." We had set a value that we'd indicated to them earlier, and they had wished to sell for more, but when the time came that they wanted to sell, the figure we had offered was satisfactory to them, and the sale was made.

We have a concession operation in there, and, again, it's by reservation. You have large groups coming in and in the summer playing ball and swimming in the cold, clear water that comes out of springs on the property. Others can wander into the hills and climb the ridge; that's what the adventurous ones do, and then they can tell their stories about their adventure when they get back.

Hicke: Perhaps we're not going to have time to go through all the acquisitions. Are there some that stand out in your mind that are particularly interesting?

Hornbeck: We'll let Dick tell you the story of Pt. Pinole. Probably the Black Diamond area, because of all that is going on out there, should wait for another day, as far as I'm concerned. Let's wait on Black Diamond for a while, but that should be a part of it.

Hicke: How about the Tilden merry-go-round?

Hornbeck: That ought to be told by Jerry Kent. I'll give you a couple of hints so you can know what to ask questions about if you'd like that. The planners didn't like the little pond up there in Tilden for flycasting, because they said that didn't belong in a regional park and they made the grade and got rid of it. Then there was a tennis court up there, and they tried to get rid of it as not being appropriate in a regional park, but they didn't make it on that one; the citizens stopped them.

There's a question as to what the District's real intentions were regarding the merry-go-round. In any event, the citizens all banded together on it. Mr. Perry, who was the owner-operator of the merry-go-round, had been coming to our Board meetings for about a year.* If you ask him, he'll tell you why he came every time for about a year. If you want to learn something about the merry-go-round, that's what you would do. All his life he has run a merry-go-round. He runs a hell of a good merry-go-round, and he's got as much enthusiasm today as he had the first time I ever went up there and rode on his merry-go-round.

I like the merry-go-round. I like the time when we had all of the people come from Tanzania and there was a Saturday picnic scheduled there. All of the Tanzanian leadership, including the person who was later their Prime Minister, with their white robes and dark faces, all got on the merry-go-round. I like the merry-go-round so much that I bought a merry-go-round horse and I have it at home. I didn't buy one of those, but I bought my own merry-go-round

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*Note: EBRPD owns it now and Mr. Perry operates it under a concession agreement. - Ed.

Hornbeck: horse, an authentic Mueller horse, a hand-carved, wooden horse, from 1960, and I have it at home.

I think that our culture is such that our people are being entertained too much. I believe that you can go to a park like Tilden and experience values which you'll never get at Disneyland or these Marine Worlds. At Tilden you can ride a merry-go-round or a little train and that's plenty satisfactory to a child. That along with the other events is plenty satisfactory, and they don't have to be so super saturated that when they're finished, like at other places, they don't know what they've done. When they finish riding that merry-go-round with the music going, they know they were on a merry-go-round with the music going, and I think that's great. I'm all for that merry-go-round in that park. I think it's great.

I told you when we had our National Trails Council, we brought the people from 35 states down from Davis to look at the trail problems: failures and successes at the sites. When I thought, "What are we going to do to cap this with a climax?" So we went to Tilden Park for a barbecue and to cap that, Mr. Perry kept his merry-go-round open after hours and everybody went up from the place at the Brazil Room and rode the merry-go-round. These people had never heard of anything like this before, so the impact was overwhelming.

You can do your own digging to get differences of viewpoints, which are important, and it's also important how things turn out, because they don't always turn out right. But I think this turned out right.

Hicke: Speaking of the national trails, when I was talking to Dr. Seaborg about the trail system, he said that he had a dream of a trail that would completely surround the Bay, would go all the way through Marin County and down the Peninsula. Can you envision such a possibility?

Hornbeck: Yes. In the early '50s or the late '40s, they talked about a trail going all around the state. That was not realistic and it also wasn't practical, but a trail going around the Bay is probably practical and it is a potentiality.

Hornbeck: For example, we're seeking, as I told you, to go south all the way down through our regional parks, down past Mission Peak Regional Park and southwards. We've encouraged the Midpeninsula Open Space District citizens to set up a trail advisory group, like we have a trail advisory group of citizens here, and they have set one up. They set it up following our Davis Trail Symposium. They got charged up, which is the purpose of the symposium.

The Midpeninsula Regional Parks staff did not want a citizens group set up. They said, "They'd get in our way; we don't have to be told what to do." So we sent Bob Doyle down to their Board meeting two months ago. He appeared at their Board meeting with a written document that I had prepared which told of the values of citizen participation on trails. The Board overruled its staff, and now they have a citizens committee on trails.

I'm saying that because we're meeting with them on Saturday of next week to have a hike and a picnic, halfway between the East Bay Regional Park area and the Midpeninsula area, which is just up the slopes in the southern part of Mission Peaks Regional Park. We're going to have a hike and a picnic with that group, and we're going to talk about our common interests. It's being held down there because it's halfway between the two, and then you can swing around the bottom of the Bay and you come up on the other side of that ridge. You first have to have the idea; that has to come first. Seaborg is an inventor and a scientific leader, and I'm sure that he's right, because the idea has to come first.

Hicke: I know in the very early days of the Park District there was some talk about a park region that would surround the Bay.

Hornbeck: Yes. Politically, that's too frightening for county government; that's what I think.

Hicke: Perhaps I could ask just one last question. What do you think have been your major contributions to the East Bay District?

Hornbeck: I think it's been a capacity to maintain a goal that is not a self goal but is an objective goal, and having sufficient flexibility, both in terms of sequence of time and horizontally, a shifting with the forces, be they economic, political, social, to be able to arrive at the goal comfortably. I think it's important to have your objective different than just the promotion of yourself; that is the way I'm structured. Whatever benefits are going to come to you will be there because you are accomplishing a goal that seems to be in the public interest.

End Tape 1, Side A

Begin Tape 1, Side B

Hornbeck: I'll give you an example. We have resisted for a number of years the building of a small airport near Pt. Pinole, on adjacent private property, on the basis that it would be too heavy a burden on the park. The park has some long-term values that would surpass a small, probably not-completely-satisfactory airport, or even just a runway. We had to appeal a Planning Commission decision supporting that airport to the City Council of Richmond a number of times. We were successful in that use of the adjacent property didn't occur. We wouldn't have resisted other types of uses, such as industrial.

But the point here is that we met with that property owner yesterday at his request, and he is now proposing other uses and also talking about giving the property along the shoreline to the District. His last comments to me as I left were, "You know, you guys are doing a great job," and then he started asking me about some of our trails and said how far more satisfactory the parks were today than when he was a child. He said, "I remember Tilden Park when I was a kid and there's no comparison, in terms of more people using the parks." Here we had a person whom we had opposed, yet he had remained friendly. Consistently, those whom we have had to oppose, even condemning their property, have afterwards still had a good rapport and good relationship with us, and the individuals have respected both the District and staff as individuals. I think that's probably been part of my success.

Hicke: I read an article that said you were awarded the John Muir Award in 1980 because the Park District had doubled its lands, so apparently your contribution is very much appreciated.

Hornbeck: Yes, the District probably will surpass any urban area in the United States for parkland in the next couple of years, even in the face of the more limited resources that are occurring. This has all happened in the last 15 years, and if it was going to happen at all, this was the time it had to happen.

Hicke: You played a very crucial role.

Hornbeck: It's actually teamwork. We wouldn't have gotten anywhere, as I said, without a general manager who was geared as Dick is and a Board that was not only sympathetic to land acquisition but pushing on it, and an area where the citizens are very environmentally supportive.

Hicke: Thank you very much for all you've told us.

Hornbeck: There will be more.

End of Interview

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