

GILES HALL
Interviewed at the Industrial Relations Center
at Cal Tech
by Frances Lomas Feldman
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ABSTRACT

A Los Angeles native, Giles Hall is descended from an early California family. His wife's grandfather was Ozra Childs, who came to Los Angeles in the 1850s, made a fortune in real estate as well as a horticulturist, and was one of the three contributors of the land on which the University of California was established in 1880. Giles Hall was, for many years, the director of Personnel for Electrodynamics Corporation in Pasadena; when it was taken over by another company, he went to the California Institute of Technology to head its industrial Relations Council, where he remained until his death in the early 1990s. He was an active volunteer with a number of Pasadena and California organizations. This interview describes some of his activities. Some documents about his own history, and that of Ozra Childs, were placed by him in the University Archives.

Note: Because the recorder was in voice-activated mode, the beginnings and endings of a number of his statements were lost. Some could be recalled by the interviewer but those that could not be resurrected, were deleted.

FELDMAN: Giles, I think we can just begin with how you entered the field of personnel.

HALL: I entered the personnel field in 1944. It was purely by accident. I was at a function at a little company called Consolidated Engineering Corporation, which was a high-tech company, one of the pioneer high-tech companies in Pasadena. It had its origin in the service function, which is separated from the manufacturing and design function. The manufacturing and design functions then became Consolidated Engineering Corporation. Then World War II came along and changed everything. But going back beyond that point, I was at the Bank of America and had been absorbed a few times by the greatest takeover man in history: that's A.P. Giannini.

FELDMAN: Oh, yes. (Laughter)

HALL: He really was a master of this game. While I started in a small unit bank, eventually, I found myself part of a huge organization in which the atmosphere and

conditions were entirely different from a small neighborhood bank. This was a transition I was not prepared for, because I was a member of a physician's family. Dad didn't know what transpired behind the walls of a business operation. He knew something about a medical operation, because he was a son of a city physician. So I went to work in a branch bank far away from the policy makers and there I was, practically a number along the way. This was not something I enjoyed, but in the meantime, 1929 came along, and I had a job. It was a good job. I stayed with that bank ----

FELDMAN: Was that in Pasadena?

HALL: In Los Angeles. On the border of Los Angeles.

I think I should go back to my training at home. My father was the type of physician who was a generalist, or a general practitioner. He became what I would call a money manager. In those Depression days, he was often paid with ducks or presents which we called GP presents: grateful patient presents. But he was a very humane man, and, industrious, and he worked hard right up through the ranks. That was the way it was, but that's not the way it really is. In a big corporation I think you need an advocate to help you along. In those days of the Depression, it was a very difficult thing to be comfortable in your job. You knew that if you made a mistake, five or ten other people could get your job. That made for some rather hard, harsh relationships between upper management and the employees along the way. You either did the job the way they wanted it done or joined the ranks of the unemployed.

In my era, growing up, everything was sure. There were no uncertainties. You worked hard and you got there. You behaved like Teddy Roosevelt did, then you were sure to get ahead. But anyway, the personnel relations in the bank were not exactly sensitive or humane, but I was fortunate to have a job. I kept it, too, until 1943. Oh, I should go back. The bank was very good to me. I wanted to be an international banker. They put me into the international banking department. It was a marvelous experience.

FELDMAN: That was one of the very first American banks in the international field, wasn't it?

HALL: Yes, Bank of America was second. I think it was the second – Chase Manhattan was first. At any rate, it was a wonderful department with a different kind of manager than I had experienced before in a bank. He was thoughtful and he was patient. But then along came Hitler, and he ruled the international trade, among other things. So I had to go back to operations. Well, I was tired of operations, so at the first opportunity, I left. Not knowing what or not knowing how world bankers would be accepted. For example, the Marine Corps told me they didn't want any bankers. They were a dime a dozen (laughter). The only thing I could find to do in the service - and I had to earn a little money, too. I had a family. They would let me be a Petty Officer in the recruiting service of the Navy. Well, I felt I could do better than that; better for the War effort and better for myself, so I joined Consolidated Electro-Dynamics Corporation. They asked me to take materials priorities division in which I had to verify orders for scarce materials. It was called "controlled materials" (it was called CMP) and I had to make a case each time, whether it was gold, for example, for some of our instruments I had to make. I really had a quite difficult time because the instruments we built were test instruments; they were airborne but nevertheless they were not dropped on the enemy. They were testing high altitude, high speed aircraft. And so if the materials that we needed were airborne and dropped on the enemy they would be easy to get but I had to prove my point. But I had not been in that job very long when the Personnel Director of the company was drafted and had to go to Europe, and they asked me to become the director. "Well, I'm not sure I know all the things to do but I know a lot of things we shouldn't be doing" and so I took the job on and I think that this is where the job became fascinating and different from what personnel jobs had been theretofore. We had all kinds of people in employment, society girls and housewives were doing fine instrument assemblies.....

FELDMAN: This was part of the war effort?

HALL:: Part of the war effort.

FELDMAN: Yes.

HALL : And I had a number of people who were really not oriented to working in a factory or organization situation. Ordinarily, some of them would not have been working.

FELDMAN: It could have been better had all been used to the workplace.

HALL : It could have been better. In college, I had been a rushing chairman for my fraternity...

FELDMAN: This was at Stanford?

HALL: At Stanford. And I learned an awful lot of lessons about judging people and also presenting their credentials to the rushing committee. I learned about empathy, and that there were many people who were not really adjusted to working in an industrial situation. They had major problems. Coincidental with my job, I accepted a number of volunteer jobs. For example, the Family Service of Pasadena, which was a marvelous arm for me when I had difficult problems, people problems really, people among themselves not necessarily with the supervisor, but their own personal problems. So I learned quite soon after beginning to volunteer with the family service that they were very handy; they helped me solve some of the personnel problems that I had. I think that if personnel people had used the resources available to them such as the social agencies, more than they did, they would have an easier time. Pasadena had many different types of social agencies that I could call on for help, and I think that this also meant that I had to take part in the activities of these social agencies. I couldn't just call on them. As a paying customer.....

FELDMAN: Did you pay a fee for services?

HALL: Yes, and I had to cooperate in the work they were doing with our employees.

FELDMAN: What other agencies, Giles, besides family services?

HALL: Elise de la Fontaine (Director of Russian Family Services) was the most incredible person I ever encountered. She would call me in the middle of the night if some person at my company was in trouble. For example, there was one boy who had been in the Burma/China Forces. This employee was threatening to commit suicide and she said, "I'm going to take him to jail or send him to jail." I said, "All right there will be a hearing the next morning. I'll be over at that hearing." I went to the hearing. This employee, by the way, was a pretty good machinist and they were hard to find. The judge sort of hemmed and hawed about what to do with him and finally I said, "I think he should go to the Veterans Administration," which was near Brentwood at that time...

FELDMAN: Oh, yes.

HALL: It was right nearby. And the Court said, "Will you take charge of him?" I said, "Yes, I'll do that." So I took this man to work with me until I could get in touch with the Veterans Administration chief, and when I got in touch with him and went to the VA, his people said, "You can't come here."

FELDMAN: A mere thirty miles away.

HALL : Yes, thirty miles away. And I thought to myself "What do I do now?" I had agreed to take charge of him, so okay. I said, "You sit here right in my office and you can go out to the canteen to get some food and you come right back." And about 4 o'clock I got in my car and drove him back to Brentwood. Is this the kind of thing you are interested in?

FELDMAN: Yes, it is. Let's stop a moment, because I hear a little hoarseness coming on, and I'm going to give you something to take care of that. (Water!)

HALL : Oh, aren't you nice. Yes, thank you. (Cough) So we got to Brentwood and we had to go through door after door and finally we got inside and they accepted him then.

FELDMAN: Was already a monstrosity of a place then?

HALL : It was just a monstrosity of a place. About nine o'clock that night, I called Emily (Mrs. Hall) and I said I'm on my way home. Those things-a lot of them were difficult. And uncomfortable. But news got around through the plant that I had a friend in court and that made our industrial relations job easier, and I'm not trying to put on anything, but it was just natural for me to do those things. Then along came Ed Walsh. His wife had left him. They had two beautiful children, and he was having a terrible time. I got in touch with my friend Elise de la Fontaine and, by the way, I was the only one who could understand her.

FELDMAN: (Laugh) Well, she was a very temperamental woman. I had known her well so I know what you mean.

HALL : Well, she would get going with that fast French accent and people wouldn't understand her, but I managed to understand her, and I really liked her, too, because she was a dedicated employee. And she took all the cases that I have ever asked her to, would work with them, and her work with them turned out to be honestly successful. Those two boys today came out fine, due to her attention then and then, finally she arranged for a girl named Peggy Lake to take over those two boys -- she was a client of Elise's and went to her for lots of help -- those two boys have turned out to be immensely successful, not only financially but wonderful, wonderful children to their parents. I always thought that was a great victory that Elise could chalk up to her credit. Then there was another little plan that I worked out with her. I always thought was very interesting. I soon learned that some of these employees, some of them living in the community, would have legal problems and they would not know where to go to help. Well we had a very fine firm and I went to the directors and they agreed we could work out a program whereby, if we paid for the first visit, then the employee would have to pay the balance. The advantage was that they got to talk with a first rate firm of lawyers. Maybe that first visit was enough, but if it was not enough they would have to pay -- and

they did. They got really first class service from Pasadena Family Service and the lawyers they were referred to.

FELDMAN: And they knew what they were getting for their money.

HALL : They were so grateful and were good employees.

When a new employer took us over, that was the first thing they discontinued.

FELDMAN: Oh, was it?

HALL : Yeah. They were a hard-boiled Chicago organization; they had no concept of the culture of Consolidated Electro Dynamics. We were way ahead of the game in those days. That was just the best place I ever worked. Anyway, something else happened early on in 1950. There was a governor's conference on aging. Do you remember that?

FELDMAN: Yes, I do.

GILES: And the consensus there was that communities should establish centers, senior centers, and establish committees in their communities to get the projects going. Well, they did that in Pasadena. A person, an able and civic-minded man with lots of connections, accepted the chairmanship of this committee called Pasadena/Altadena Committee for Senior Citizens. This community planned a program for a senior center, then looked for the money to build it; they found a spot where we could build or rent a building. We met at least from 1954 until about 1957. The city somehow found some funds that could be used to build a senior center. And we had done a lot of work. We surveyed people and some of us had gone out to see a Little House in Menlo Park; that was just an ideal little senior center and in fact, eventually we patterned plans and on it. We took them to the City Council in Pasadena. They agreed to finance us, to provide operational funds for about five years -- I think that was their limit. They went beyond that, of course. (Laugh) But they supplied the start up funds so we had a senior center, a "prospering" operation with quite a bit of money behind it. You know about that?

FELDMAN: Yes, they get some from the Area Committee on Aging.

GILES: There was a woman, a friend of Mrs. Cronkite, I don't know if you remember her or not, she was very, very generous and contributed IBM stock to the Center. We all looked forward to that. When she died, she left quite a bit of money, and part of it was available to the Center, provided they developed programs and the trustees approved them. Okay, that sort of is the story of my move into the personnel file and my realization that there were lots of community resources available if we were aware of them and knew how to use them. But then I think that is about the time we began talking to you about the Money Management Institutes at U.S.C.

FELDMAN: You remember them?

HALL:: Yes, that's right.

FELDMAN: From 1960 to 1962.

HALL: Pretty seriously, they were good conferences, by our friend Roland Jones.

FELDMAN: He was on the planning committee and very interested in the focus on money problems of employees that led to wage garnishment.

HALL:: I think he just enjoyed your company (laughs long and hard)

FELDMAN: Actually, he worked very hard. He was Industrial Relations Director for Carnation Company and how to help supervisory personnel deal with these employee problems was a problem in his company. They also had a lot of female employees He was very helpful.

HALL: During the war there was the "Rosie the Riveters" in our company. They could sew well and were very valuable to the assemblers of parts and instruments at the time. And they were good employees, too. They had never been in an industrial situation before and that is another reason the company needed a personnel person.

FELDMAN: Were these women with children, Giles? Was there a problem about care of their children?

HALL : There seemed not to be, apparently for the reason everyone during that wartime was involved.

FELDMAN: Wasn't there a shortage of childcare centers?

HALL : I guess we didn't encounter that. Our people seemed to be able to find mothers or mothers-in-law who could do the job for them. And some of them were society girls without children and some of them were young marrieds without children. And everybody was following a common purpose. It was a thrilling time. It's too bad we can't replicate that in a peacetime situation.

FELDMAN: Yes.

HALL : But, it was just a time when everybody was...well, it seems, as time goes on, at least from this observer's viewpoint, that the attention employees received at that time and a little bit later doesn't exist these days. I may be wrong but I feel that the work situation is very different. Maybe I'm getting older.

FELDMAN: I think if you just look at our experience in developing those several annual money management institutes which rule out of concern of management that employees had to be fired because there were so many garnishing

HALL : Oh yes, I remember that.

FELDMAN: And you know, it was a matter of productivity, too, but I think there was concern about the employees in a way that you don't always see now.

HALL : Yes, I think there was. That's why we inaugurated that attorney relationship, because debt was sometimes a problem here, too. Also, that was a period in which I became interested in alcoholism – alcohol and work problems. I came over here to the Industrial Relations Council at Cal Tech every year for a real workshop and lunch meeting. Our purpose about how alcoholism could be managed was something that could be discussed openly in an environment like Cal Tech. I think, anyway, it could be managed or handled with proper understanding of the problems, considering the percent of alcoholism a company has among its employees. Alcoholism alone seems today to be a minor problem compared to drugs and other substance abuse. That brings me down to date. I should say I get a little tired sometimes trying to cure human ills.

FELDMAN: At the same time, don't you see some success? Should I say encouragement?

HALL : I see real success in the alcoholism field.

FELDMAN: Did you work on the Alcoholism Council, too?

HALL : Yes, I was on the Board of the Council on Alcoholism Councils. I always felt quite at home working in these areas because I realized they did a lot of good.

Actually, today I have a more remote association with the Family Service Agency. I am on a foundation, personally, for education. We do make grants to small organizations. I think we're doing good.

We're a foundation with four directors on the board. We don't have a paid director so we do a lot of the investigating ourselves. We'll go out and look at an applicant. It's been very helpful, I think. I always loved to go out there in Temple City, a blue-collar community entirely. We had a child care center there.

FELDMAN: Giles, you're also interested in and have been part of some the historical society activities in California. Why don't you tell us a little about those, too. They may not be directly social welfare but we're interested in California history.

HALL: Well, I was born on Bunker Hill. As a matter of fact, whenever I'm asked, "Where were you born?" I say, "I was born under the Department of Water and Power Building."

FELDMAN: (Laughs)

HALL: Which is actually true because our house was under the northwest corner of 138 No. Flower Street. It was just about right under that northwest corner of the building. One time, I took my mother down when she was in her late eighties, and, if you remember, just before the Department of Water and Power building turned those fountains on, they had the ponds filled with water and little nozzles sat around in a circle. I said, "Mother, look, that is where you gave birth to a son." But actually, I was nearly born in Mexico.

FELDMAN: How'd that happen?

HALL: Well, my father was a surgeon for an international company. He lived with the Company and was stationed at a little town called in the state of Sonora – the sovereign state of Sonora. And he was there for four years, and the last year, my mother came down to surprise him. She couldn't cook. All she could make was mayonnaise dressing. Anyway, she was a brave little woman. I have some pictures of the town and it was a pretty barren, treeless little plateau. But at any rate, that's almost where I was born. One night I attended a party in Beverly Hills and there was a very stunning looking woman who came from Nakasare. I said "Well, I'll let you in on a secret. I was conceived in Nakasare and you were born in Nakasare so we do have something in common." But anyway it was then about the size of Pasadena, 25,000 thousand people. After I was born, we were moved west to another hill called "Crown Hill." You probably read Jack Smith in the Times. Well that's the hill that he lived on. In those days, the oil industry had invaded part of that area because Doheny's discovery well was down below us. And we lived on a little street called Rockwood Street. Now its former name had been Temperance Street, but I know my father would have objected to that (both laugh) name; living on that kind of a street. It was a very interesting situation because right across the street was an oil field and it was an exciting place for boys, anyway, because we could disappear into the oil field and no one would know where we were or what we were doing. And our school was surrounded by oil derricks. The winds would sometimes topple over. A derrick did topple over on this house and the people came running out just like ants in an anthill (laughs). That was the kind of area our little street was on. It was a very respectable street where people were on their way up on the social scale and economic scale and the minute they began to prosper they'd get up and leave for West Adams or Hollywood or someplace. But it was a true neighborhood when we were young and the people right immediately around us had about the same rules for their children.

Now, we never heard of the term “child abuse”. We knew that some boys got spanked more often and harder than the rest of us but we didn’t think that was abuse. We just thought they probably deserved it (laughs). In fact I have to admit that near our house, the Polish boys over on Temple Street could fight better than anybody else. Handsome black boys from down the street were pretty careful. If there were any special duties to perform Ted and I used to get the job. (both laugh). We had to be very careful because those little Polish boys down there could fight better than anybody else around. That’s where we grew up and my closest friend today is a friend of 78 years. We were in the third grade together. But that’s where we grew up, in that kind of an era – it was secure. We didn’t think anything about it, well our mothers and fathers let us ride our bicycles three miles beyond El Monte when we were twelve years old and we would camp on the way because that’s where my cousin’s ranch was. Now today you wouldn’t do that. Valley Boulevard used to have a grove of eucalyptus trees along the edge and we would just stop our bicycles and make a little camp and eat our sandwiches and sleep. I remember one night we got up because we heard the market wagons going by and we thought we’d have move on. We thought it must be morning, because we heard wagons going by, so we got up and broke camp and put our blankets on our bicycles and started off down Valley Boulevard. Finally, I went up to one of these wagons and said, “You guys shot me out of bed.” (Both laugh) We rode on a way and found a place under some mailboxes in front of a house that had a long, long lawn. We just lay down in that grass and slept until morning and then went on in the morning. I only cite that to say what a privileged time we lived in. That’s the kind of childhood we had.

We were very unreligious, the reason being this: When my father was a boy he belonged to a mission church. Well, being a doctor required a lot of activity on Sunday. We just loved that. We’d get up and get in that little 1910 car, and off we’d go and all our little playmates would be off to the Methodist Church or the Catholic Church. But if I

may digress for the moment, my daughter-in-law is a teacher in the San Gabriel System and they have what they call a “read in.” Have you heard of that?

FELDMAN: No.

HALL: That means they bring in an adult and the adult reads to the class out of a book or a passage of the book and then he tells something about his own life. I drew the third grade the first time and the second time, too. Guess what I read? Did you read “Stone Soup?”

FELDMAN: Oh, yes (Both laugh)

HALL: And then afterwards I told them about third grade in my day, how we had to go to church from time to time, how children had scarlet fever and measles and mumps and go to Sunday School in the Catholic Church. And one child raised his hand and asked, “Are you a Christian or a Catholic?” I love to tell that story to my Catholic friends

FELDMAN: You can guess what he is! (both continue laughing).

HALL: Well my answer to that one was “Well, I think I qualify as a Christian.” Well, anyway that was the kind of childhood we had. My dad was a severe taskmaster, but we had a very good family life.

FELDMAN: I imagine that it has a lot to do, along with your experiences in the bank and elsewhere, with the kinds of things you did as a personnel director, and subsequently.

HALL: Yes, I think so. I think all these things....you know how they say “You don’t plan your life” ...

FELDMAN: Well, you do pick up certain things and discard others. And what you select, you keep. That makes a difference.

HALL: I think that in raising children, you tend to raise your children the way you were raised.

FELDMAN: Or to do something different, like your father, not having to sit in the church.

HALL: Yes, probably.

FELDMAN: Now, when you were growing up did you hear anything at all about social agencies?

HALL: Yes, my mother was one of the founders of the Assistance League, for example. I should say she was one of the original signers of the Articles of incorporation.

FELDMAN: You grew up with some orientation to what the social agency was.

HALL: She just couldn't help with all the problems. There was, for example, a rash of cases of tuberculosis and of plague and cholera on the east side.

FELDMAN: I remember that.

HALL: Do you remember that?

FELDMAN: Because we came to California in 1921 and I remember that.

HALL: Well, we were particularly troubled by it. You see, Dad, being a general practitioner had all kinds of patients. The police cordoned off the Mexican quarter and that's where some of his patients came from, so he couldn't get to them.

FELDMAN: It was very much of a public health program at that time.

HALL: Well, it was tough on the cordoned people. But nevertheless, what's more they kept it quiet so that people didn't panic.

FELDMAN: It was a frightening thing, yes. I remember that because one of my brothers was in what was then the beginning City Health Department.

HALL: I'll have to tell you one about the Health Department. Before we went to Europe I had to go get my birth certificate so I walked in proudly to that new building and told them I wanted my birth certificate. I knew there was one because my father was a doctor and I know the attending physician, Dr. Hutchinson was there and my father was meticulous about those things. I thought I'd better go to the Health Department and see if the birth certificate was in that new building. I walked in there and they said, "What year were you born?" And I said, "1903." I was in the record section populated by Indians and winos (both laugh).

FELDMAN: I remember that building; that was before the merger of City and County Health Departments.

HALL: It was in a beaten up old cabinet. They pulled out the file, there it was.

FELDMAN: But you got it fine?

HALL: Yes, there it was, signed by Dad and Dr. Hutchinson. May I tell you a cute story to illustrate that? One day I received a notice from J.W. Robinson, or a letter, asking if I would like to open a credit account. I wrote back and said to them, "I remember when your store was called the Boston Dry Goods Store. What's more, I used to love to go there with my mother because they had great big pillars inside with patent leather seats around them. I would sit on these seats and watch that little brass basket zip up to the hole in the wall and then mysteriously come back with the exact change for my mother in a little station right behind her.

FELDMAN: Did they respond?

HALL: Yes, they sent back a letter, a really cute letter..."Well, we apologize. Of course you have been a long time customer, but we can supply you with merchandise of equal quality for a selective buyer."

FELDMAN: Well, that was certainly a different era.

HALL: That was a different era. Well, I used to go to Jacoby's, too. You remember Jacoby's?

FELDMAN: Jacoby's and the Coulter Dry Goods Store.

HALL: Coulter's and Jacoby's. She went there for her corsets. If we children were good, sometimes she would take us to the Pig 'N' Whistle for an ice cream soda.

FELDMAN: Of course I remember the Pig 'N' Whistle. I grew up on the Pig 'N' Whistle.

HALL: Or if we were extremely good we might walk over to Third Street and take that Angel's Flight up to the top and back.

FELDMAN: Well, someday it may be going up again. Giles, do I remember correctly that your wife's family also was a pioneer family here? Childs Way is on our campus. That family?

HALL: Yes, Child's Way. That's the family. That was her grandfather, Ozra W. Childs. He arrived in Los Angeles in 1850. It was a bilingual community at that time, with probably an overwhelming population of Spanish-speaking people, and very few Chinese. He was a school teacher and also knew how to be a horticulturist (as well as a teacher) which he was when he lived in Vermont in those days. When the call came to come to California, he boarded a boat on the Ohio and changed to a vessel in New Orleans traveling in what they called "bungo" boats. He and his friend crossed lakes and high mountains, and reached a little town called Rialto. Pretty soon, a boat came down from San Francisco headed to San Pedro. It stopped there for some water. He had about a thousand dollars with them when he started. At that time, he had to actually pay the passageway for his friends because nobody else had any money. So he got to San Francisco with about ten dollars in his pocket.

FELDMAN: How long did the trip take?

HALL: They started in March and ended in Los Angeles in November. That much I know. Well, when he got to San Francisco, of course they all took off for the gold mines. He got about as far as Sacramento. He stopped and looked around and bought some miner's pans. He made a little money and he went to San Francisco and pretty soon the San Francisco climate got to him and he said, "I've got to get south from here." So the friends piled their tools and raw materials on the San Francisco boat. When they arrived at San Pedro, the captain said, "Well, if you get off here, I'm not going to make any more stops until I get to Mexico." So they said, "Well, this is it." They got off in San Pedro, and they put their materials and tools in a Mexican cart, probably with wooden wheels, and off they went to Los Angeles.

He had learned the trade of the tin smithy, and had started a hardware business in San Bernardino. His hardware business grew quite fast and his partner cashed out and went back

East, but Childs stayed on in Los Angeles and became a landowner and a horticulturist. In those days they didn't have any trees for lawns or shrubbery around the houses, so he went up to Napa and bought a whole nursery and had it shipped down.

FELDMAN: Was this in the late '50s?

HALL: 1850s. First part of the sixties. 1860. Bear in mind, the Civil War hadn't started yet.

FELDMAN: Oh, it's before the Civil War.

HALL: Before the Civil War, the 1850s. Anyway, he became a horticulturist and won prizes in the State. That's how Ozra Childs and I. W. Helman and Governor Downey happened to own some land together where USC was, and they donated that to USC.

FELDMAN: Do you have any material about this for the USC Archives.

HALL: There are some interviews in the Bancroft Library with Hubert Van Cross and O. W. Childs. It is fascinating. I am sure they would let you have copies.

FELDMAN: It would be wonderful for the University's Archives. The University Archivist has worked with us on our little project (California Social Welfare Archives), and I know the kind of things that he is eager to have. It would be great if it could be available.

HALL: Emily gave a talk to first century families organization, and she spent a lot of time preparing for it. But I think to read the replies of O.W. to Hubert Van Cross's questions are really quite interesting.

FELDMAN: If you could see your way clear....

HALL: I am sure that I can arrange it.

FELDMAN: Why don't you check it out. If you can't get the material, we'll understand, but if you can, I think we'll all be very grateful.

HALL: You should have that, and I have a wonderful picture of O.W. and his wife, which I think you should have.

FELDMAN: Yes, I think that would be great.

HALL: I often wondered what I should do with his ticket to California.

FELDMAN: Would you like me to have the University Archivist get in touch with you?

HALL: Why don't you do that.

FELDMAN: May I take one of these? (a card of Giles Hall) His name is Paul Christopher and it will either be Paul or it may be somebody in the Development Office where they've been collecting things, but I expect it will be Paul Christopher.

HALL: You might do this - some afternoon, drop by and sit in my garden and have a drink.

FELDMAN: All right.

HALL: (Laughs) I have really a beautiful little garden. It's a California garden. It's down at the end of a wash so it really feels like you're out in the country.

FELDMAN: All right. That would be great.

HALL: Yes, you should do that.

FELDMAN: I'll call you as soon as I get back to the country, on the 15th of October and I'll try to reach Paul Christopher before I go this week so he'll be in touch with you.

HALL: You do that. It would be nice if you could come along, too.

FELDMAN: I'd love to. I accept. I'll tell him he can't come without me.

HALL: All right. That's a good thing to do. I thought everyone has a proud moment in their lives and I thought I would show you my awards.

FELDMAN: I'd not only like to see citations but if you had a photograph of Giles Hall that we can put with your interview, and if you have....is that a summary? May I have that? Is this for me, too?

HALL: I'll have to reproduce it, but I can.

FELDMAN: Either that, or I can have it reproduced and send it back whichever you prefer. You still look the same except you had a little more hair here.

HALL: Yes, I had more hair and what's more I think they doctored that up a little bit. But I think that at the time when the function of personnel administration was taken out of the factory office, the employment office and made a part of top management – the primary focus

was employment. But actually in this period, from 1944 on, the office...today it is the management of human resources.

FELDMAN: Yes, yes.

HALL: But it began to be taken out of context of the factory function.

FELDMAN: Do you have any records or letters or papers from those days or your days in connection with social agencies that you would make available to us?

HALL: Gee, I've got a lot of old papers.

FELDMAN: Look around because these old papers are really testimonials to what life was like and the forerunner to some of the things that are happening today, or that we want to have happen that has occurred yet. It would be very interesting to have these.

HALL: Recently I had a telephone call from a young man named Alan Kindrick. I remember him as a young man. He said, "Giles, thirty-five years ago today, you hired me."

FELDMAN: It is wonderful to have someone remember like that.

HALL: He said, "I'm going to retire very shortly." I said "Well, Alan, you better come over here and we'll have a little lunch with a couple of other ex-Con's as we call them."

FELDMAN: Well, I think that's very nice. If you could let me have a copy of the testimonial and anything else you find and if there is a picture, if you have a photo you could spare.

HALL: Yes, I do.

FELDMAN: Is this about the time that the personnel and industrial relations organizations started?

HALL: Yes, it was. They started about 1940.

FELDMAN: I didn't continue but I remember being asked to attend Lyman Cozad, former president of the Industrial Relations and Personnel Council. Did you know him? He retired a few years ago as City Manager of Covina. His field was personnel management, city management. He would be inducted in the Industrial Relations Council at CalTech.

HALL: In 1964 I joined that Cal Tech group. Bob Gray, the director, was one of the pioneers of the “employee attitude survey” or “employee opinion poll”. He always called them opinion polls. And I had some wonderful experiences in that field. Well, I feel that the employee opinion poll was a very valuable tool if used properly. Some companies apparently would merely use the poll to just find out how they were doing, if they were getting by with what we were doing, were they safe? Some would conduct or ask for an opinion poll to if the employees feel that they are doing the things that are satisfactory to them and that would reduce the possibility of union membership. Some of them did that. But some of them would take the results seriously. Obviously, the best way to find out about opinions would be to sit down for a couple of hours and listen to the employee, but you can’t do that. There isn’t time enough. So the next best thing is to construct an opinion poll. Also, you want to know if a new employee has the same opinion as the old employee. Or do the female employees think the same as the male employee. So we divided our questionnaire into three sections. First part was personal information. And we safeguarded the confidentiality, with fewer than 20 employees so you couldn’t identify anyone. That was the first section. The second section was devoted to structured questions. How do you feel about the company, for example. About supervision. At the end, we asked them three questions, for suggestions. That was truly the most valuable part of the piece.

FELDMAN: They did respond?

HALL: They responded primarily to the first and third question. They opened up. We’d get the real story. I remember once asking an employee of Disneyland. “What do you like least about working for Disneyland?” The man said “I drink.” (Both laugh) Sounded like “he couldn’t get a drink early in the morning”.

FELDMAN: You could read a lot into that.

HALL: I read a lot into that one. (Laughs) His only comment. And then...do you remember the little girls who had the Scotch costumes.

FELDMAN: Yes.

HALL: Well, they were the most carefully selected of all. They would fill out the questionnaire. I don't know what they sat on. Of course, we couldn't tell. But their comments were worth their weight in gold. You really got the story. Those were really interesting. Companies could make use of those comments.

FELDMAN: They don't want the details.

HALL: Well, they felt they could go on to other things. They felt "We're doing all right; well, we move on." But many companies would have real progress reports, and would relate the improvements. For one thing, there were other organizations doing opinion polls. Organizations now do it themselves. For example, the Los Angeles Times conducted four opinion polls. This one was our first. One man came upstairs, put his hands in the ballot box, put them in so we couldn't see them. He walked over with his questionnaire and said, "It was the worst company I've ever worked for." Boy, was that something. He'd been thirty-five years. In my mind, he must have started when he was eighteen.

FELDMAN: Well, he never worked for any other company. He could have also said it was the best.

HALL: Well, I said to him, "There's nothing like a satisfied customer, is there?" And he laughed and walked off.

FELDMAN: That's very good. Well, Giles, are there some other things you would like to....?

HALL: I can't think of anything else significant except that I have seen the change from the women's position in business.

FELDMAN: Let me just ask you in that connection, with regard to the seminars the Industrial Center has held; they've been going for how many years?

HALL: For fifty years.

FELDMAN: Do you think there is a noticeable change in the proportion of women who come.

HALL: Oh, immensely so. And this is really quite a rewarding thing. Companies send them from east.

FELDMAN: And international?

HALL:: Yes. Well, for example, we had a one-week conference. Eighty percent of the people came from elsewhere in the country.

FELDMAN: If you would look through your papers sometime and see if there is anything that you think might add a little insight into the way things were, I'd like to have them. I will also remind you about sending a photo to me. And then I will try to reach Paul Christopher. I don't know what his schedule is.

HALL: I think this is terribly important. I think you ought to have something on O. W. Childs.

FELDMAN: Yes, I think so, too.

HALL: You know, he built, I think this is so interesting. Here is this little man of short stature and frail, too, born in Vermont. I've been up there. Just a rural area and no longer populated, just a guard. That south county had cholera and many died; little O.W. wasn't very well himself. But when he got to Los Angeles, he prospered.

FELDMAN: I know Paul Christopher would be very excited about that.

HALL: Well, I have a lot of memorabilia, some of it I don't want to surrender yet because I would have to consult with the family first. But I would like very much....do you know how long you are going to be gone.

FELDMAN: I'll be back on the 15th of October. It's a short time.

HALL: Wait till that time and then come on over.

FELDMAN: All right. I'll give you a call...

HALL: Then we'll sit in the garden and have a drink. And talk about what we've seen.

FELDMAN: And I thank you very much. This is very valuable interview

