

MARJORIE MONTELIUS  
Interviewed by John Milner  
At Montelius's Home in Carmel, California  
January 11, 1991

#### ABSTRACT

Marjorie Montelius, a graduate of the USC School of Social Work, with some post-Master's study at the University of Chicago, was a noted group worker and agency administrator. In this interview, she traces her entrance into the field of social work, the circumstances under which she became director of Rosemary Cottage in Pasadena, California, her move to the International Institute in San Francisco, her study of institutions for adolescents under a Fulbright grant in England, her work in Washington, D.C. with groups during the War on Poverty era, her return to the San Francisco International Institute to work with world-wide war refugees and other immigrants, her work in Hong Kong centered on adoption of Chinese children, and her thirteen years as director of Travelers Aid society in San Francisco. She also taught group work at the University of California, Berkeley. Following her retirement from Travelers Aid Society, she became an active volunteer in Carmel, serving on several commissions and with groups to bring services to needy people in that region. She died in 1996.

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MILNER: Marjorie, will you tell me how you happened to become a social worker.

MONTELIUS: Well, I think it was by chance because I surely hadn't known any social workers. I'd read a book, though, by Sinclair Lewis, Anne Vickers, and that was the first time I'd heard about this career of working with different people, so that was sort of in the back of my mind. I was also working my way through USC on an undergraduate NYA grant. I had worked in the Sociology Department and then for some reason, was transferred to the new School of Social Work which was just about to open. At the beginning it was under the Department of Sociology. Arlien Johnson was coming in as the new dean. As I stayed there and learned about social work, I just sort of drifted into it.

MILNER: Yes, and that was about what year; do you remember?

MONTELIUS: That must have been around 1939 or 1940. Do you remember when Arlien Johnson went there?

MILNER: It was in 1939. You mentioned the NYA grant. Those are initials which I am sure today's public would not understand.

MONTELIUS: National Youth Administration.

MILNER: Which was one of the Roosevelt grants. I well remember.

MONTELIUS: It helped a lot of people to go through college. I remember a little later on in my career when I was telling someone that I had gone through school on the NYA grant, they told me I shouldn't mention that. That it implied that you had been a poor family.

MILNER: We were poor people in those days, no matter who you were.

MONTELIUS: I know I just felt lucky that I had it.

MILNER: They were very important; I used to certify people for them. Then you were in the School of Social Work at USC where Arlien Johnson was dean.

MONTELIUS: Yes. Well, she was dean even before I got into the school. I was, it seems to me, her only secretary. She had terribly high expectations of me. Somehow we managed to work through until she did get her own secretary and then I was sort of more in a helping mode.

MILNER: So that was part of your NYA assignment, to be the secretary of the dean of social work. Very interesting. Did you finish one year or two years at the School?

MONTELIUS: I finished all the work for my master's degree, I think, in a year and a half. It was what they called an accelerated program because it was during the height of the War. I had all my field work completed and my class work in August of '43 when I finished and was ready for my Master's, except I hadn't written my thesis. I had done all the research for it. It was about refugee children and other children who were sent from other countries to the United States during the War time.

MILNER: This was really in preparation for a job you were going to do later.

MONTELIUS: Well, without my knowing it, anyway.

MILNER: Where was your field work at that time?

MONTELIUS: That was a time when the schools required that you know something about casework, group work, and community organization--which I've never regretted. I think that was a wonderful way to begin your career. My first placement was with the International Institute in group work. There I had a group of young teenage girls of all different nationalities. I liked that group so well that I kept the group all through the time I remained in Los Angeles. My first semester in the casework placement was with the welfare department, which was a real learning experience. One of the things I remember there is that for Christmas, I'd gotten a briefcase which

I was very proud of. I'd gone off to visit this black family. I was sitting there with all my papers and forms and a little boy about four years old said, "I know what you got for Christmas." He was pointing to my briefcase. It really upset me that it was so obvious to the child. That was in the days in welfare when, before you could release a check, the client had to raise their hand and take an oath that you, the worker, gave to them, that all that they said was true in regard to their circumstances. This was a very difficult thing for me to have to do. Then my next placement, which was part of this accelerated program, was with the Family Services Child Welfare Bureau in Los Angeles--which I liked. I had a very nice field work supervisor with a foreign accent, Dorothy Kagan, I think was her name; a very attractive woman.

MILNER: Yes, I remember her.

MONTELIUS: Then I was even offered a job there when I graduated, but by that time, Arlien Johnson had sort of influenced me to take a job away from Los Angeles and away from my family, which I had agreed to. It was with a lot of ambivalence that I kept with that job up in Vancouver. I'm glad I did, though.

MILNER: This is a policy Arlien Johnson had that you must get away and have different experiences and then come back.

MONTELIUS: I thought I was the only one that she wanted to tear from its roots.

MILNER: No, she got me to go to New York.

MONTELIUS: Well, it was a good thing. It was a real hard thing to break all of your ties. It never really became easy, but it did make me realize that there were other lives to be lived away from the lives that you had been leading.

MILNER: It broadens your whole perspective, I think. That's great. So then you went from school where?

MONTELIUS: Up to Vancouver, Washington, which is right across the Columbia River from Portland. It was the time of the War, and I remember two friends drove up with me in my little Model-T Ford. We had to drive about thirty-five miles an hour, which was the limit then, and we were on gas rationing. Through Arlien, I had located a room in a home in Vancouver with the sister of the woman who was the director of the welfare department. For about a year--housing was so difficult in those days-- I lived in this little room in Vancouver.

MILNER: That was quite common for the social workers to live in a private home in a room. I did it. I know many social workers who did.

MONTELIUS: But as soon as I was there, I started looking for an apartment, and I remember reading letters that I'd written home. I would buy very fancy foods with my stamps and then hide the food, waiting for the time that I'd move to my apartment to eat them. In this room I had to eat all of my meals out, so I didn't have a chance to do any cooking.

MILNER: Your job up there was with child welfare?

MONTELIUS: Yes, it was a very interesting job. It was a child welfare worker job, and Vancouver was proud of all these people who had swarmed in from all over the country to get jobs at the Kaiser Steel Shipyards. It was a tremendous employment opportunity. I think it was about the first time that Vancouver had had black people. The housing was at a premium, and child care was absolutely not available. There were many, many problems brought to this child welfare department--all the ones that we know of: abandonment and neglect and abuse and adoptions--all of them, and in just tremendous quantities.

MILNER: This is really the early part of World War II.

MONTELIUS: Yes, 1943.

MILNER: Serious problems were developing.

MONTELIUS: A lot of racial problems, too. Interracial.

MILNER: A whole new experience of Mexican populations. You stayed there how long?

MONTELIUS: I was there through December, 1945. I went there with a very strict agenda. I was going to work two years in this public agency, two years in a private agency, and one year in an institution. Then my plan was to go to Washington, D.C., and then become chief of the Children's Bureau. I didn't waiver from this plan for quite a while. I was quite a cross for the rest of the staff to bear. It is surprising that some of my dearest friends are still friends I made from that particular job.

MILNER: That is very interesting.

MONTELIUS: One of the things I remember was about being introduced to this job. All of the child welfare workers and the clinical welfare workers were in this great huge room, mostly divided into clusters of four desks. I was given the choice to sit in one of these clusters or to have a desk that was sort of off by itself, facing the wall. I chose the one facing the wall because another one of my goals was to read an article each day from the Social Work Yearbook. I think I probably got as far as C before all my plans were gone, and I got into a cluster.

MILNER: Those were crowded little offices in those days. That's very interesting.

MONTELIUS: Then you became aware right off the bat of the differences between the public welfare worker who determined eligibility and financial affairs and the child welfare workers who were supposed to solve problems and develop support systems--the so-called elite of the social workers.

MILNER: Did you make home visits?

MONTELIUS: Yes, the only other trained social workers in the this child welfare department were already the supervisors and one was the community organizer. So all of the difficult cases

were assigned to me as one of these graduates from USC. So I had very varied and really a very difficult case load and a very heavy case load. One of the things I remember is that I became the specialist for unmarried mothers. I had such a large load of unmarried mothers that the telephone company allowed me to have a telephone because so many times I was called in the middle of the night to go with the young woman or girl for her confinement. I had such a large case load, I remember; my friends still tease me. They knew I really shouldn't take on another case, but they would say, "Well, why don't you just go into the waiting room and look at her?" So I'd walk real fast to the waiting room, and I'd see the poor thing, and I knew that if I didn't take her, you just didn't know what would happen.

MILNER: She wouldn't get any help.

MONTELIUS: So she would be added to my list.

MILNER: Was the agency responsible for a lot of the unmarried mothers?

MONTELIUS: Yes. Vancouver had a big barracks and many soldiers from different parts of the country were transferred there to wait for transportation out to their assignment. So a number of the local girls and new arrivals became pregnant by some of these fellows. But also, a lot of families from different parts of the country came with their pregnant person. They thought they'd have anonymity and privacy and that the child would be born and then they could leave and go back home. In those days, illegitimate pregnancy was not nearly as accepted as it is now. It was quite a disgrace.

MILNER: Can you remember how much you were paid?

MONTELIUS: Yes, I do. I received one hundred and sixty dollars a month minus twenty percent for tax. We were paid twice a month, so I think it was seventy dollars every two weeks. I lived from pay day to pay day. I was supposed to be, you know, this well-paid professional

person able to send money back home, but usually it was my asking for money to be sent to me. It really wasn't easy to live on that amount when you had to eat all of your meals out. You were responsible for your car's upkeep and the gas. I think we got some reimbursement, but it wasn't enough to really pay for the cost of driving. I drove a lot because we had large numbers of children in foster care. A usual in the metropolitan district, many of the foster homes are way out in the country, and I remember one month I drove about eight hundred miles just back and forth on home visits. Part of that was nice, because in those days Vancouver was in a beautiful rural setting with a number of small communities where it was as though no one had ever lived; beautiful flowers and trees.

MILNER: Marvelous country.

MONTELIUS: It was a great experience from that standpoint. Washington was beautiful.

MILNER: Oh, yes. How did you happen to leave there?

MONTELIUS: Well, I think part of it was still this plan I had that I was going to stay just a little at a time. I already went six months past my limit. The main reason, I think, is that I had a letter from Los Angeles recruiting me to be in charge of a home for adolescent girls in Pasadena. I thought I'd kill two birds with one stone and get both the institution and the private experience in one fell swoop. So I accepted that job sight unseen. I didn't even know what was involved. If I had known, maybe I wouldn't have taken it. By the time I had moved myself down to Los Angeles and been introduced to the place, I was there. The previous director left almost immediately as I stepped foot over the threshold. So I didn't really have much choice.

MILNER: That was Rosemary Cottage in Pasadena. How was that sponsored or financed?

MONTELIUS: Most of it was basically supported by the United Way of Pasadena. Then each girl who came was supposed to pay part of the cost of care, either from her family or from the



agency that referred her. This became a real serious issue, as time went by, because it happened that most of the girls were referred from outside of Pasadena. So the United Way of Pasadena wasn't too interested in underwriting the Cottage. All of these things, at that point, were a little bit over my head. I remember many discussions we had as to why other United Ways, like Los Angeles or other areas that the girls came from, didn't do more of this basic support. At that time I wasn't really too aware of how you did budgeting or kept an agency afloat financially. I guess it's a miracle that we survived.

MILNER: How many staff members did you have at that time?

MONTELIUS: We didn't have very many. I was a director, and I was the only professional. We had one home mother, and we had a cook. When I first came there, none of those positions were filled. Those beginning few weeks were really terrible weeks because the place was pretty full of girls. They were almost running the place.

MILNER: About how many girls?

MONTELIUS: I think the capacity was twenty, and I think there must have been about fourteen or fifteen girls there when I arrived. So in addition to having to kind of get on top of the girl situation, I had to begin to recruit staff and develop procedures. I lived at the Cottage for the first two or three months because there wasn't anyone else living there, so I was doing the house mothering as well as some of the other jobs. It was really a difficult job. I know I didn't even get out of the place until about three weeks after I was there. On my birthday, I finally made my way to a public telephone to call and complain about what I had gotten myself into. There were some really difficult girls there. Two of them were part of a group called the Triplets; the third was a boy who, thank goodness, wasn't at Rosemary Cottage. But those two girls really had complete control of the institution, and they'd had this control even under the previous director. They were

very, very strong-minded. I remember that it finally came to a point where I lost my temper so completely that I can remember just shaking as I confronted one of these girls to battle it out. Either she was going to run the place or I was. I won, and from that day on it was under my control. My mother had always worried about my temper. I thought looking back, in some cases you really need one and that was the day that I did. I will never forget that. Their names were Dolores and Darlene.

MILNER: Unforgettable names.

MONTELIUS: Many of the girls were really wonderful girls. Many of them were going through the normal adolescent acting out or withdrawal or whatever. They didn't fit into any foster homes. Many of them had been through a series of foster homes and never felt really accepted. I developed then the philosophy that many adolescents really do work out better in a group home when they get the support of other girls if there is a supportive environment. I think it turned out, it was a constructive place for most of them.

MILNER: Excellent. Can you remember the names of the board members who were particularly helpful to you?

MONTELIUS: I remember the board president that was there most of the time was a woman I really admired, and I learned a lot from her. Her name was Mrs. Reynolds. She was a real warm, outgoing, friendly person. She had been an actress, so she had a different approach to life and to this kind of an institution. Some of the women who were on the board, many of them were elderly women. It was an all-woman board for one thing. Many of them were very controlling, and they had their own ideas about how girls should be raised. They weren't too comfortable with self government and girls making decisions on their own and older girls being allowed to date: sort of going through the same experiences that girls in their own homes had, and which I felt they should

be having. With the help of Mrs. Reynolds and Mrs. Regans and several other people, the board membership gradually changed, and they became much more supportive. I remember when I first went there, there was an empty lot next to Rosemary Cottage. It was filled with trees; apple trees, peach trees, and cherry trees. I remember that some of those women thought that I should be able to take care of those trees and to bring in the fruit. That was another time when I really was able to say that I was not employed to be the orchardologist and that there was no way that I could take on the responsibility of those trees. I think eventually that land was either sold or it just didn't belong to the Cottage. That was such an unreasonable expectation. It was a time I learned in that job that as executive versus a social worker, you had to put your foot down with some of these lay people who run boards. I think it stood me a good stead as I went through the years and through a number of other boards; there is a role for both. It isn't a superior or inferior role; it is an equal role. As you let the board take control, you are really out of luck. So I don't think I ever had a board whom I had a battle with, as I did with that one, but it worked out. I should say I had a lot of help from you and Mr. Class, too. You remember you used to come out and help. I never will forget the time that I was leaving the Rosemary Cottage and we were having a farewell dinner. You were there. Was Class there?

MILNER: No, he wasn't.

MONTELIUS: None of the girls would speak to me. I was so embarrassed, and I felt so bad because I wanted to demonstrate how fond we all were of each other, and no one would even talk to me. There were a lot of hard experiences. A lot of the girls were really sort of emotionally disturbed. I'd have to take them to the Child Guidance Clinic, and I always felt so apologetic about that. I remember that sometimes I called the social workers, which I needn't have done, but I was sort of insecure too, and I'd say I just hoped they wouldn't believe everything that they said

about me or the way the Cottage ran, or whatever. It was just that same ambivalence you have about knowing people are talking about you.

MILNER: When you work with adolescents, you can expect it.

MONTELIUS: they were a handful, and they sure presented every problem, I think, that's known to human kind. There was quite a turnover. I think during those three and a half years I was there, we had about two hundred to two hundred and fifty girls. Just a really lot of them. One of the things that's interesting is that we had no black or minority girls. We did have one from Hawaii named Lalani. I remember her because once she broke the refrigerator door when she slammed it real hard.

MILNER: Throughout the Los Angeles area, including Pasadena and so forth, there were hardly any blacks or Chicano youngsters in institutions. There were active committees trying to change the policy.

MONTELIUS: Do you mean even now? Or then?

MILNER: No, at that time. I think, really, it was never changed greatly until about 1950. Can you remember any other special problems in child welfare in the area at the time? The shortage of services or...?

MONTELIUS: There really weren't many services available to these girls. Many were even referred by the sophisticated social agencies, but when they came, the story was that they would be receiving their casework individual services from the referring social worker. Somehow or another, that never happened. Basically, I could understand why, because most workers were also working with heavy case loads. It did turn out that each of those girls had to become pretty much my client. That was sort of difficult, because I had to be their case worker on an individual basis, and yet the disciplinarian and the administrator on another level. I can remember one little

girl--her name was Shawn--she was about thirteen or fourteen. She was wanting very much to be accepted by the girls. Evidently one test of being accepted was to smoke. It was a terrible violation to smoke at Rosemary Cottage, and I remember one evening telling her one time when we were talking to go ahead and smoke if this was important to her, but if I found her out, she was going to get punished just like the other girls. It must have been sort of confusing to them. I know we go through times when we give demerits, and then we go through times when we give merits. I'd have charts with stars on them, charts with minuses. Everything that was in the books we tried, but on the whole, I don't think any of them were damaged by my being there, but I don't know how much they were benefitted.

MILNER: I think some of them were helped. It was a good experience.

MONTELIUS: Oh, I'm sure they were, except towards the end. I still don't remember all of this, but I think there was some recognition that more of the girls were seriously impaired, psychologically and that they should have more of a treatment center, and I don't know how it went, but later they did employ a psychiatric social worker to come in. In fact, when I left, they had to employ about three or four people to take over the various jobs. I know that they increased the house-mother ratio. I don't know whether it worked out to have it more psychiatrically oriented or not. Do you?

MILNER: No, I really have not kept close to the agency. I knew it increased in size and staff and girls, too.

MONTELIUS: Many of the girls stayed in touch with me for some years afterward. Even when I moved to San Francisco, some of them came up to visit, and they wrote, and I heard about them getting married and different things.

MILNER: It shows you had a good relationship with them.

MONTELIUS: Those were the years when I became involved, sort of, with the alumni society at USC. I didn't really have much of a social life those years because that job was just so demanding. I had a real cute apartment down in Pasadena right behind Colorado Boulevard where the Armours and the Cudahys used to have their summer homes. I had one of those units and that was a lot of fun. I was able to entertain and have friends over, and I was particularly popular in the Rose Parade days because people would come in to use the facilities. It was a good experience.

MILNER: Absolutely.

MONTELIUS: I learned so much from Rita Reynolds and her husband because they took me under their wing, and I learned about art museums and going to the best hotels and it was really enriching from that standpoint. I did learn, eventually, something about budgeting. It never had been my strong point.

MILNER: Then when you left Rosemary, you decided to go where?

MONTELIUS: I was again recruited. I think Rosemary was a confining job for a young person. I told you I was only twenty-nine years old when I took that job. One of the big things we used to do was to go to the beach. That was always a big thing in Los Angeles, especially in those days. The girls all called me "Monty." Everywhere I've gone, I've had a different nickname, but at the beach, it always sounded like they were yelling "Mommy." It got to me that here I was not really old enough to be their mother and yet being called "Mommy" by all of these huge teenagers. I think I was getting ready to leave. I had a contact in San Francisco who wondered if I wouldn't like to come up there and try a new job being created by an agency to start a group work program with immigrants at the International Institute. So I took that job and really learned a lot and enjoyed that.

MILNER: Was this largely focused on helping them to orient themselves to life in this country?

MONTELIUS: Yes. This was 1949 to 1951, and this was after the War, and a lot of immigrants were coming into the country. A lot of Russians and Germans had left their countries and many of them would have gone to the Philippines or some other island. They were coming in by the boatloads; in fact, I remember once going down to meet a boatload. Here were all these people from these other countries and they were sort of behind barbed wires and it made a great impression on me. Many of them had a really hard time adjusting to life in this country because many of them had been professionals in their own countries and here they were lucky if they could find a job as a caretaker or janitor. I remember one man, his name was Dr. Primo, and I always referred to him as Dr. Primo. He said, "I just wish you wouldn't call me Dr. Primo. I used to be Dr. Primo, but now I am a janitor, so just call me Mr. Primo." I continued to call him doctor. Many of them were men with that kind of background. Then we had a lot of the Filipino Scouts coming in from the Philippines. These were men who were really isolated from their families but had the opportunity to come to this country and took it. A lot of Indonesians came, for some reason. I don't quite know why they were coming in. One of the things we did--I worked with the International Institute as a student when I was in Los Angeles, where most of the activities were developed along nationality lines: we had a German club and a French club and a Spanish club, whatever. But in this institute, we decided to do it differently, and that was to choose the subject and then have the people come regardless of their background. We thought if they were going to learn to adjust and adapt into America, they'd better learn to work with each other. So we had social groups. The one that I remember as being most successful was a group of young adults called the Worldlings. They were young people from all over the world. They developed their own system of leadership and their own social programs. I remember one of the problems I

had: it became basically a social dance group. I hadn't had a chance to learn how to dance, so I had to rush down to Arthur Murray's and take a series of dance lessons so that I could participate in these dances. I remember how differently the men from the different nationality groups dance. You know, the Latins with their tangos, the Indonesians, who hardly touch you, and yet you had to still keep up with their dance style.

We had a film program where a man from the public schools came out and showed films about America. That was very popular. Then we had a lot of English-as-a-second-language classes, discussion groups, all kinds of groups. Then the really popular group was a dramatics class, led by a very wonderful woman named Georgette Bonaso. They did some plays that were already written like "You Can't Take it With You." We even had that out at the little theater at Golden Gate Park. They developed some plays on their own based on their experiences. One of these plays that they did was called "Nostalgia." One of the real active participants in those dramatic clubs was C.Y. Lee, who wrote the "Flower Drum Song" and a couple of other books. He has one that's fairly recent. I saw it in the library the other day. It was a really good experience. I had students then from the University of Berkeley. I then also worked very closely with the casework staff because this was a multi-function agency; casework, group work, and community organization. Case workers did a lot of work with their own, with the languages of the clients, and then we would meet and discuss their problems from an individual standpoint as to how they were participating in the groups.

MILNER: Was this located in a central place, or did you have sub offices?

MONTELIUS: No, it was located in a beautiful old Victorian mansion out on Broadway. No, it wasn't Broadway; it was on Jackson. It has been torn down since. The cable car used to go right by it. It was a lovely old building. It wasn't too functional, but we functioned.



MILNER: Very good. Was there an employment service connected with it?

MONTELIUS: Yes, case workers were kind of employment services, although we did have some groups about how you prepared yourself for employment interviews. The other big thing we did was every month we get the names from the Immigration Department of all the people who arrived in San Francisco in the last month. We'd write them invitations to come to this open house that was held once a month and it was always fascinating to see the crowds of people that would come to these open houses. I guess it was sort of the first official invitation they had had as new immigrants. Those developed into wonderful evenings. Then people from the more established groups would begin to develop and to plan and present the programs and to mingle and get the other people included. It was a very good introduction to life in this country.

MILNER: Did that program continue after you left?

MONTELIUS: Yes, I think one of the things I've enjoyed in my work is having students and staff to work with and sort of prepare for their own careers. The fellow that was my assistant there, because the program did get to be pretty large, was Tom Brigham. Tom stayed on with the Institute for some time after I left and then eventually became the Dean of Social Work at Fresno State college.

MILNER: Yes, I remember him.

MONTELIUS: He was a dear man. He developed multiple sclerosis. In fact, I think he might have died because I didn't get a Christmas card this year. I have to check on that.

MILNER: After the emergency needs of immigrants in the War lessened, did they continue the program?

MONTELIUS: It continued. After I left, the International Institute sold that building, and they moved it to a much larger building on the basis of the participation on the Venice Avenue in San

Francisco. That's where I eventually became the director, but that's some time ahead.

MILNER: Yes. From here you went to what program?

MONTELIUS: From the Institute, I heard about Fulbright grants. These were also a result of the War; Senator Fulbright thought it would be good for American professionals and students to go abroad to other countries and really learn about what other countries are doing, and to teach some of the things that we were doing. You had to have a project and the proposal that I had was to visit institutions for adolescents. I was still very interested in that from my exposure at Rosemary. Following a number of different procedures for eligibility, I was selected to go on this little ride. I left in September of 1951 for England. That was really a plum because in so many of the countries, you had to have a different language. Because I didn't have a second language, I was lucky to get to England. There I had a very good experience.

MILNER: Were you stationed in London?

MONTELIUS: I was stationed at Bedford College, which was in London. I had a very rich experience because I had a very good sponsor who arranged for me to travel all around England and to stay at different institutions for from two weeks to a month, sometimes. Between placements, I'd be able to go back to London to stay in a central place. I had the best of both worlds. It wasn't always really fun, but I remember I stayed in a home for unmarried mothers, and I stayed in a remand home--which is for delinquent girls--and once in Dr. Bernardo's home for just children of any age or size. The big thing I learned there was how almost all of the future staff of Dr. Bernardo's were the children who were cared for there. They were sort of geared into keeping the institution a home. Did you know that?

MILNER: I'd heard that. When I was in England, I learned that he really raised them to raise each other. It was always a questionable practice.

MONTELIUS: They just weren't ever exposed to any other possibilities. They were just sort of geared into this service right off the bat.

MILNER: What were some of the differences that you found in the care of adolescents in England and those in the United States? Were any special?

MONTELIUS: They were much stricter in the homes in England. It was much more punitive, even for girls who were dependent, not delinquent. It just seemed to me that if you didn't have your own home and had to be placed, you were expected to behave in ways that other girls weren't required to. I found this sort of difficult. They weren't allowed to go out into the community by themselves; they always had to be chaperoned. The girls who had babies and were unmarried were expected to give them up for adoption whether or not they really wanted to keep them. It was much more restricted; I think that's true. They did have more treatment homes at that time than I had been aware of in our country, but it might have been that I just didn't know the ones over here. I think they were doing some real good experiments. I think that was about the time that Anna Freud was working in the care of children. I think there was some new law that was enacted in that period. They were beginning to evaluate their own experiences with child care and beginning to want to make some changes. They didn't really have professional social workers; I remember because they were wanting to have some extras come over from America to sort of evaluate their training experience. That was one of the times I was able to help Arlien, because I suggested her as being the ideal person to lead such a group. I think a year or so later, she did have a Fulbright.

MILNER: Where did you report back on your experience?

MONTELIUS: I reported back to Miss Cybil Clemmet-Brown. She was quite outstanding. She was a very austere woman, and I remember I upset her once because I asked her was I

supposed to call her Miss Clemmet or Miss Brown. I had never heard of a hyphenated name before. She looked down at me--she was quite a tall woman--and said, "My name is Miss Clemmet Brown." So I learned. I also got acquainted, I can't remember how, with Barbara Wootez, who was a really outstanding economist. She was a fascinating woman. She was very, very erudite, a brilliant woman. She married a taxi driver, on the basis, she said, of proving an educated woman and an uneducated man, or vice versa, could live a perfectly normal happy life together. I didn't really get too exposed to their lives, but I still felt there were a lot of differences between the two of them. Then, one of the best experiences of that year in London or in England, was for about eight weeks. Towards the end of my time, I lived in the room of an actress with the BBC, Gladys Spencer. Her speciality was accents. She could do any accent anybody needed. She was always on call from the BBC to do different accents. Through her, I met quite a number of the different actors and actresses from the BBC. I also became very familiar with the theater because the theaters at that time were really inexpensive, and I just went many times. During the summer when I left England, in June when the academic year was over, I had two or three months on the continent in France and Italy and really had a good time then. Living on a pittance, but it was fun.

MILNER: Were your experiences there written up?

MONTELIUS: Well, we all had to write a report and the report that I wrote was included in the Fulbright report for that year.

MILNER: So it has been published?

MONTELIUS: Yes.

MILNER: And that would have been what year?

MONTELIUS: In 1951-1952. The other thing I should mention is we were presented at court.

We met Prince Philip and Princess Elizabeth before she was crowned. I always remember her speaking in that real high voice. How fortunate she felt to meet us, and we should remember how she and her husband had never had the advantage of higher education. But she surely had a lot of other advantages. Then I remember when I came back one time to England, her father had just died and now all of London was in such deep mourning. All of the stores on Regent Street were decked either in black or purple. It was a real tragedy. You could just feel the sorrow that the people felt about his death.

MILNER: They really had admiration for a lot of the royalty.

MONTELIUS: it was a real rich experience. Some of the Fulbright students that year had kind of a miserable time. You know, it was real new. It was about its second or third year and some of the sponsors didn't really know what to do with their people. Some of the people didn't know what to do with themselves. For some of them it was just sort of a time dragging period. I just really felt lucky that I'd had the people in charge of my program that really went to work on it.

MILNER: Then you came back to the United States?

MONTELIUS: I really wanted to go back to San Francisco, but I didn't have any job, and it seemed it always to be the case when I left one job, I really had to have another job waiting, to not miss too many pay checks. Finally, I had a letter from the University of Chicago that I had been accepted for a mental health scholarship there. I really didn't have much to choose from, so I took it. I don't know whether I thought that I wanted to get a Ph.D. or not. Anyway, that was the one thing that seemed possible, although looking back, I think it was a mistake because it was the year of my whole professional life that I liked the least. For one thing, I had never been geared into psychiatric social work. I can't explain why that is so, but it just is talk as far as I am concerned. I just had a bad time there. I lived at International House, and I did make some good friends,

especially a girl who married a Greek Nomarky. We had some real good times with her.

That year in Chicago was just kind of a low point. My field work was at the Institute for Juvenile Research, which is formidable in itself. My supervisor was called Marjorie Brown. My first contact with her was being given a case that I didn't think had anything. I didn't see anything that I could do with it. It just seemed like such an ordinary case. So I told her I'd appreciate having another case, and she said she thought that was appropriate for me. And I said I'm not used, Miss Brown, to take cases that I don't want. She said it's time that you get used to that. So we started off with a beautiful arrangement, and suddenly it just went from worse to worse. Except, I don't think I did too badly with the clients. But I couldn't do well with her. I developed a terrible tick. It was just awful. In fact, at the very end of that experience, I either read or somebody told me that they thought my ego was so strong that it needed to be tested. And they tested it. Did you ever hear of anything like that? I just thought that was absolutely cruel, that they should have tried to build on the strength that I had instead of knocking it down. And then that Mrs. Perlman; I just got so confused. It turned out that what I was thinking was right, but I couldn't understand her language. I remember an example she would give of a person being in a box and how they would do this and do that to get out of the box. I could never relate that to a human being as a way of solving problems. But I did have some good experiences, because I did have Charlotte Towle on the dynamics of learning. She was the kindest, nicest person and took a little bit of interest in me, wasn't on this cruelty tactic. Another person I really learned from was Alton Linford, because I took every course I could from him in administration. Then this friend of mine, Julie, who was in the same field work place with me, did a lot to protect me from our supervisor. One of the things I did, which I should be ashamed of but I'm not: there was a big

social work convention, and she was giving a paper about working with a difficult graduate student. So I took Peter Sandi, and knowing I was going to be her prize example, we went to her meeting, her section room. I'll never forget the look on her face when she saw me walking in. I'm sure she had to adapt her paper. She was probably going to say how you broke down a person's ego, but she had to delete that. At least that was my impression.

MILNER: Oh, that's funny.

MONTELIUS: But I know the day I finished: I knew at that time that I never wanted to go on to have a Ph.D. It was such a waste of time, some of these really intelligent people who are taking four and five years out of the prime of their lives to spend around this school. Wasting time, I think. Al Feldman and Frances were there, and I must say they were a great comfort because I could see them once in a while and did things with them as a family. But I know that Al was having a hard time with his Ph.D. too.

But I just could see then that there was nothing that I wanted to do, and teaching was not something that I wanted to follow. But the day that I finished my last class was the day I got on that plane, and I never wanted to see Chicago again. In fact, I've never been back. It was a very dismal city as far as I'm concerned. So then I went back to San Francisco, and without a job, without any hope. Well, I did find a summer job at the Red Cross. But I really wanted a kind of decent job by that time, and there just didn't seem to be one in the Bay area.

Someone I must have known in the State of Washington called to see if I wanted to work on the State staff up there as a child welfare representative. And again, it seemed the better part of valor to take the job. So I took the train up there and stayed for a year. That was a real interesting experience. At that time, Washington was considered to have one of the best child welfare programs. They really expected a lot from their child welfare workers in the field.

Those in the State staff didn't actually supervise the field workers, but we had to see that they lived up to the State expectations in order to get their funding. I was assigned eight or ten counties in the farthest east, going from Pondergray in the north to Walla Walla in the south. The way it worked is you would drive out and, because it was such a long drive from Olympia territory, I was expected to stay out two weeks. I couldn't come home for the weekends like most of the people did. Well, you made friends among the child welfare staffs in the different counties. They also held you at a certain distance because you were there to sort of monitor their work. There were two or three who really weren't living up to the State's expectations. So it really wasn't much fun. Even if you went out with them socially in the evening, it was still kind of work. Those were the days when no one called each other by their first names. If there is any difference in status, you were always Miss this and Miss that or Mr. So we had fun back in Olympia. It was a real strenuous assignment for me. I would go back just exhausted. We had a very good supervisor, and she always knew how to help you pull yourselves together. So you'd have a couple of weeks back in Olympia with a round of social activities; but then you'd be back in the field again.

I liked it in a way, but I must say, I was glad when I had another letter back in San Francisco to take a job teaching at the University of California. While it wasn't my particular favorite subject--it was group work--it was an opportunity to get back where I wanted to go. So that job lasted from '54-'56, and I taught full time with the University. And it really wasn't too bad except I found out what I already knew, that I really didn't enjoy teaching. It just seemed to me it was so much work, using yourself so other people could the fun part of it. I just felt wasted. One of the things I did like was that you had to supervise the workers in their field work. So I became acquainted with all the different agencies in the whole Bay area, from Agnew State



Hospital up to the Folsom Prison. We really did have students in a lot of interesting new kind of placements. I think group work was becoming quite the thing then, working with people in groups. I was able to relate a lot of it to casework. In fact, I taught casework for group workers, group work for caseworkers. I taught cultural factors of social work after hours. One of the interesting things I did was to start a group myself over at the Florence Crittendon Home, not the Florence Crittendon, Salvation Army Home in Oakland. There I worked with the unmarried mothers in groups as a volunteer. One of the things that was interesting there is that we learned through staff meetings that the girls often said in groups things that their caseworkers have been trying to pull out of them for weeks and have not ever found out. I made some really good friends there. One of my friends, Helen Robinson, was the supervisor, and she was the one who was really influential in my coming down to Carmel. So that job was all right.

MILNER: Who was the Dean of the School at that time?

MONTELIUS: Dean Chernin. It was the year that four or five of us joined the faculty: Betty Phiffer, Jean Hoodman, in medical social work, and then my favorite who became a very good friend was Lydia Rappaport, who was the star in the psychiatric field and who died way too young.

MILNER: Yes, she did.

MONTELIUS: Those of us who were new formed a little cluster and sort of taught each other about teaching these classes. It wasn't altogether bad, but it was just not my menu. I really liked to be out on the front line. What happened then is that the director of the International Institute in San Francisco, who is a dear friend of mine, was retiring. They were looking over the field and eventually invited me to take on that job, so I did go to that job in 1956 and stayed until 1961, five years. The first three years I continued to teach the group work course and then Jane Bolton was brought in to do some of the teaching at Berkeley. The Institute, at that time, was going through

an interesting stage. It seems like the immigrant status changes each year. Those were the years of the Hungarian refugees. The revolution took place and the Hungarians were coming in large numbers and they needed a lot of help. What I remember the most about them is that the established Hungarian community, which had not been established that long, was very resistant and very critical of these new Hungarian arrivals. It seems a pattern repeats itself, that the established nationality community is very critical of the newly arriving one. The Hungarians really had a hard time with it. It was also a period when the country was experimenting and bringing Indians, American Indians, off the reservations into urban areas. Well, they weren't really immigrants; in a way, we considered that they were in relation to their cultural background, and we did a lot of work with those American Indians. But they had a hard time and eventually it was realized that that program didn't work, this transferring from the reservation to the community.

MILNER: Many Indians came into the San Francisco area?

MONTELIUS: I think there were several hundred. It was also the time when the Japanese war brides were coming in. I know we had a very large group of Japanese war brides. For them, we didn't have just a war bride group. They really needed a group of their own. They had one. I know we had a Japanese student who worked with them. Their cultural background was so different. They needed so much help and were having so many problems with their American Husbands. Then another group that was very big was the Philippine scouts who were still pretty much without their women and were beginning to feel it.

MILNER: Was there a law against Philippine women coming into California?

MONTELIUS: I think it was very hard to get them through immigration.

MILNER: I think it was outlawed for a long time.

MONTELIUS: They weren't getting their veteran benefits. There were just a lot of problems that they had. We had an outstanding Armenian worker who worked with the Filipino scouts. I know that I was involved in helping her to get the Koshland Award that year with the work she did with them. They were an interesting few years at the Institute. As I look back, it was one of the quieter times in my life. We had a good professional staff and a beautiful building, one of the really old Victorian buildings in San Francisco. It just lent itself to the program. But somehow I don't remember that I felt pressed. I seem to need to feel like I was working hard. I became active in the NASW and did a lot of things off the job that seemed to be all right because the job just sort of sailed along. It wasn't that hard. It was a good experience. I had my own beautiful little office with this little bathroom and a little couch which I could take naps on. It was a nice job. What amazes me is to still have the same kind of social work program that we'd started at the other Institute several years ago.

MILNER: It was really a transfer of knowledge, throughout your whole experience.

MONTELIUS: Yes, they all connect. Then, while in that job, I had another letter, this time from Los Angeles, asking if I'd like to go to Hong Kong. Well, I think in all of my born days, I'd never even thought of Hong Kong as a place for me. It was a letter out of the blue from a woman I didn't even know. Lydia Rappaport was living with me at the time. She was in the process of getting her house rebuilt. I remember reading that letter and saying isn't this a strange letter, and you know, I have a feeling I'm going to take this job. In a few months, I was off to Hong Kong. I should say that the year before I left for Hong Kong, I was president of the NASW in San Francisco. Maybe one reason I took Hong Kong was to get out of that. But Hong Kong, that goes back to child welfare again, because the basic program there was to arrange for the adoption

of abandoned Chinese babies in families outside of Hong Kong. In that time, Hong Kong didn't have an adoption law. Even European families who lived in Hong Kong couldn't adopt a child while they were there. Nor could the Chinese families who might have wanted to adopt. With a lot of legal work, it was possible to get the Chinese children adopted by approved families in other countries. International Social Service had offices in, I imagine, twenty or twenty-five countries at that time. All had qualified social workers. We worked through established agencies in the United States to do the home studies, and they would send us these studies to propose a child on whom we had done a study. The studies were done just pretty much on the basis of impressions of the staff in Hong Kong. All were Chinese except for me. None of them had had the kind of social work training that we expected adoption workers to have in this country, but they were pretty astute, able young people, and surely knew the Chinese culture. Basically, there wasn't much you could learn about these babies because they all had been abandoned and they were all in institutions. No one knew what their backgrounds were. You had to take them at face value. Even at that time there weren't even any psychiatrists in Hong Kong. So even with an older child, say three or four years old, you couldn't get any help to determine whether the child was intellectually okay or anything else. That staff was about eight or ten social workers, and I supervised all of them. They all were assigned various institutions. We'd go over the PAPs--prospective adoptive parents. Then we'd try to figure out how to match a child to the family. You could surely do it by sex, although sex wasn't really a problem because there were hardly any abandoned baby boys; they were almost always girls. The only boys we got were those with hare lips or tuberculosis, or having something radically wrong with them. We had the female population. We tried--this was important to the staff--that as many of the children as possible go to Chinese adoptive families. Then what I learned is that the Chinese are as

concerned about color of skin as blacks or any other nationality group. So we had a real hard time trying to figure out whether this child's skin would match the skin of these unseen PAPs in another country.

I think, on the whole, these adoptions worked out well. It sounds so nebulous to do that kind of matching when you know how it's done by some agencies in this country. On the whole, I guess it went well. The procedure was that when you had five children ready for adoption in another country, you arranged their flight and one of the staff accompanied the children to the destination, caring for them en route, but with a free trip back. This became a very popular thing for everybody to do. I know that I benefitted from it. I traveled to the Philippines and to Australia. I took a whole group of children there and to England. I even had a child in Ireland. For the Chinese staff, who never could have afforded a trip outside of Hong Kong, this was really a great activity. During those three and a half years, we were really part of the American Consulate. This program was sponsored by the high commissioner refugees out of Geneva. The funds of the program were expended through the United States Consulate in Hong Kong. So in some ways, I became like an ex-officio member of that staff and really had some very good experiences there.

I lived, in the beginning, in a very small apartment. When I took the job, the woman who recruited me said that a six hundred dollar a month salary would be like a five thousand dollar a month salary in this country. Well, it turned out that she was very, very wrong. I was, I think, on a harder economic level than any of my staff. Some of the staff used to come to work driven in limousines by their servants. But I had a visible little apartment the first year and hardly any money to spend. This woman really had given me a line. By the second year, it was realized that my salary was far too little. So that first year of window shopping really paid off. I was able to

buy some of the same suits I had had my eye on for a long time. But it was a real challenging kind of job because the Chinese workers were very suspicious of Caucasians. In fact, this woman who had recruited me, who had been indirectly related there had developed kind of a bad reputation because she treated the Chinese as servants, really as underlings. She'd have people take her shoes to be repaired, or go out and bring her a sandwich; it was a really autocratic kind of a pattern and was distasteful. But gradually the staff learned to trust me a little bit, and we did get to be on good terms. I know that they were so suspicious in the beginning that no one on the staff would come alone to see me. If anyone had a problem or wanted to talk about something, I'd see this group at my office door where they would present the problem, but always as a group. They had their offices, their desks all in a group, a great big room where they really couldn't do the best kind of work because they were having to talk to people on a confidential basis. Somehow, I was able to bribe them into accepting individual offices; they could choose the colors and the style of their office. We kept a big room that was a play room, and a room to help the children, a number of older children, to learn what a house was and how you went into a house, and what a bed was, and all the things that they really didn't know from their experience in institutions. So it really did work out.

One of the women was very, very able and became my assistant director. When I left Hong Kong, after a lapse of a few months, because she refused to take it until she felt she could really handle it, she became the director. In that time there was no Chinese directors of anything in Hong Kong. They were all led by Caucasians or Europeans of one kind or another. So I feel I made some entre to the system there, and I was also on a committee with an old Canadian worker and a couple of other people who developed an adoption law for Hong Kong. So now adoption is possible there. In fact, ISS still continues in Hong Kong. It has become much more of a

refugee-serving agency and almost like a traveler's aid. They get their annual reports every year, still. It has grown by leaps and bounds. They just have become a very wide-spread agency. But no longer is adoption one of their jobs.

The other thing I did while I was there was to teach at the University of Hong Kong. The course I had was the course that I really wasn't geared for. It was growth and development. What I remember about that is how I had to study at home to just be one class ahead of the class I was teaching the next week. It was a subject I wasn't too clear about. I remember the difficulty I had when I really came to grips with this oedipus complex because how could you teach about the oedipus complex to Chinese who have been raised homeless. They hardly knew their parents. It brought home to me that maybe it wasn't all the gospel truth or a gospel fact. Then I remember I'd be asked to give lectures to different places, mostly to good social workers or people working in the social work field. One of the things that intrigues me and still does, and I see people talking and then they are being translated, is I'd make a few remarks and then the person who was translating me would get up and talk. He'd talk way longer than I'd talked, and during the time that he'd talk, there would be these roars of laughter. Nothing which I had said had been funny. So it gave me a strong sense of insecurity. Di you ever go through that?

MILNER: I have, but not quite like that.

MONTELIUS: Then afterwards, I'd ask the translators what in the world have you been saying?

MILNER: I think he's been editorializing.

MONTELIUS: Whether it was to my advantage or not, I'll never know. But again, I made some real good friends there.

MILNER: Was there, while you were there, a man named Kenneth Chau on the faculty?

MONTELIUS: Was he a doctor?

MILNER: Well, he was later. He came and got his doctoral degree from our School.

MONTELIUS: That name does seem familiar. One of the things that we did, that I had to do, was the international; ISS didn't have a board of directors. So we had to establish a board of directors. In fact, one of the ISS American board people came over to help do that. Her name if Maybell Ingles, who turned out to have been the granddaughter of J.P. Morgan. When she was there, we lived in high style, taking trips on these boats around the Hong Kong harbor, and eating at the best restaurants. Then another kind of nice advantage I had was being semi-attached to the Consulate. I became what can only be called the "extra woman." You know, you hear a lot about these extra men, but I remember being invited to the Consulate when Senator Tower was there and oh, two or three other high officials from the government to go to the Consulate. They did everything according to rank, so I was often down at the end of the table. It was still an interesting experience. Then I did get some really good travels to many different parts of the world. I also had a lot of company. Gene Boulton's parents came and visited me while I was there.

MILNER: Oh, did they really? How nice of them.

MONTELIUS: That agency became hard to keep funded, too. What really motivated me to think about leaving Hong Kong, because I liked it in many ways, even though it was an isolated kind of a job, was that I was there when Kennedy was shot and killed. I remember listening to the Voice of America about two or three o'clock in the morning, my time in Hong Kong, and hearing about the cortege in Washington, D.C. It just seemed to me that I had no reason to be in Hong Kong any longer. Things were so bad in my own country. It was really very moving. They had a tremendous memorial service in one of the big churches in Hong Kong. I remember that the staff all brought me presents or messages of condolence, as though it had been a personal loss.



Yet none of them wanted to go to the funeral service. They said, “He was your president and you go,” but they didn’t want to go.

MILNER: Yes, how interesting, how very interesting.

MONTELIUS: I also took Chinese lessons there because I wanted to be able to speak a little bit, but it is a very difficult language. I had a Chinese teacher who would come in three days a week on my lunch hour. The big problem was, I think, that the Chinese people don’t want other people to learn their language because none of the staff would help me. The same word in a different tone could mean a very different kind of a thing, and they would just go into hysterical gales of laughter when I’d try to speak, or they would tell me that I was saying something that I didn’t want to be saying, so I didn’t keep up with that very much. But I really learned to like the Chinese people; it was a great experience.

MILNER: Yes, a wonderful experience to have.

MONTELIUS: When I went back to the States again, I had to have a job to go to, and this time, I wanted it to be in Washington, D.C. I had been interviewed to be a group work consultant with HEW, Bureau of Family Services. Lyndon Johnson had become the president after Kennedy was killed, and that was the beginning of his Great Society and the Hew was geared to services of every kind you could mention. I think it’s a great loss that we don’t still have some of those programs. One of the big ones, and a very popular one at that time, was learning to work with people in groups, groups of people who needed to learn how to apply for a job, people who were on their first

job and needed to be kept motivated to continue on the job, women with various kinds of problems. There just didn't seem to be any kind of problem around which a group couldn't be built to help. Welfare departments were saying that they had to spend too much staff time clarifying eligibility procedures; could it be done better in groups? Well, that became my job. I was in a special little unit with five specialists. One was homemaker services, one was community organization, and one was volunteers, and I was with the groups. Somehow, this group business became very popular because working for the government, we couldn't initiate the contacts; they had to come from the field. My speciality became very popular. It seemed as though I would no sooner be back from one assignment, then I had to be pressed to go out to another. I was quite the envy of the rest of the people in my unit, because nobody seemed that interested to volunteers, in homemakers, or community services. They all wanted these group services. It was really great, looking back, except, again, I evidently don't thrive on these travel jobs. I didn't like the one in the State of Washington and on this one, I would be out sometimes as many as three weeks out of a month. I no sooner got home, then I'd be packing to go out again

MILNER: You can't have any personal life.

MONTELIUS: You couldn't have any social life at all. In fact, I don't think I had any in Washington. I did have a little house which I liked real well, and I had three cats, but the expense of keeping those cats while I was traveling, got to be quite stupendous. But I surely got to see the country and learned to give speeches. I also learned the hard way that all these conferences that social workers have, depend a great deal upon the employed social service people for their speech makers. You didn't have any particularly talented ones on the agenda, but I gave a lot of speeches in those days--never with a lot of comfort. I think my heart was still in San Francisco and so, after three and a half years in Washington, and liking it to some degree, I thought I should just go back

to the Children's Bureau, which had been my first objective those many years ago. I found out that working for the Children's Bureau wasn't just on the basis of merit. There was a job opening in the Children's Bureau, which I really wanted, and I was very highly qualified for. I learned afterwards, it had already been promised to somebody who knew the chief, even before the job was advertised. What really bothered me was that they would advertise it when they had already made their selection--you know, going through this kind of false business. Anyhow, that disillusioned me completely, so I gave up then every thought of being the chief of the Children's Bureau.

But the job opportunity I learned about then was Traveler's Aid in San Francisco. I flew out there and met with a number of the board people. I didn't know whether it sounded like the right kind of an agency or not. I'd never done that kind of work, but I knew I wanted to get back to San Francisco. So I started there in the Fall of '67. That was, of course, the summer of the flower children, when all of the children in the United States were going to San Francisco to escape what they thought were the middle class values of their particular communities. It turned out to be, I think, the most challenging job I had. I stayed with it the longest--thirteen years. I really liked almost every minute of it. It was a changing job. Those first few years were mostly working with these young people and working with a lot of other agencies, both professional and lay groups who were concerned about them. The Diggers--I don't know if you remember those--the Huckleberries, which started for runaways. It was very hard. I learned to get an institution started under state requirements. No one under the age of eighteen could be placed in an institution without parental consent. Most of the children had run away from any kind of parental contact at all. Many of them were eighteen and older. One of the first things we did was

to get a facility started for young stranded adults. Basically, the homeless that we are talking about these days. So we had this real good facility called Aquarius that was a spin-off of Traveler's Aid. It lasted for several years, funded by different foundations, mostly the Rosenberg Foundation. As soon as I learned about the foundation game, I really took it up with a vengeance. For the rest of my time there, we were never without two or three foundation projects, covering the gamut. We had an after-hour street program where we had fellows on the streets work with stranded youth or youth of any kind. Towards the end, we had a psychiatric project called the Tender Lion. It was to provide psychiatric services to a number of established agencies. It was also the time in California when Reagan was letting all of the mentally ill out of the hospitals. On the basis--and I guess this was an honest assumption on his part--that the community would develop services to serve them. There was plenty of money because San Francisco got a good share of it, and I was very active in what was called the Northeast Mental Health Program. The northeast part of San Francisco, being in many ways maybe primarily the most disturbed community in San Francisco, it was the "Tenderloin," and our offices were in the heart of the tenderloin. We developed services of a variety of kinds: services to prisoners, to gays, to the different nationality groups that made up that particular area. I think a big problem with this program was that you had to depend so much on indigenous leaders. There was a real putdown of professionals during those years. That wasn't easy to do. But a lot was accomplished except, as we all know, the programs failed for a variety of reasons. Now the mentally ill are on the streets in greater and greater numbers. The tenderloin was surely bad enough when I was there, although in those thirteen years, I never really had a difficult experience.

I've almost forgotten that the biggest thing that we started was the TLC, the Tender Loin Center for Children in Crisis. This was a day-care program for the women who were living in

those rooms in the tenderloin and had no place to leave their children, often not enough to feed them. And so we started this. It was suggested to be a drop-in center for children at the YMCA. We had their whole big gymnasium, and we converted it into a day-care center. We provided breakfast and lunch and tried to keep it so that mother could use it only three times a week so that we could serve a larger number of children. But it turned out that you had to bring some of the children in every day, because their home circumstances were so difficult. We had trained social work staff there as well as the day-care centers. That program is still going on. I'm real pleased about that. I guess it is still going well. I think a little bit later, after I left, they also started a Head Start program in tenderloin. I think that psychiatric program was picked up by the Catholic Social Service. There were a number of services we did get started down there that are continuing to go well. That was a very rich experience. I used to get kind of upset with myself for staying so long, except then I could see that the job was changing under me rather than my having to change by going away. We developed a really good staff. They had a terribly hard job to do because these people had so little going for them and were a very unpopular group to serve. They were new arrivals, they had no roots, nothing. Yet I think a lot of them were helped. A number of the staff who got their experience there went on to really better jobs.

MILNER: I think it was your Aquarius program where you used an old hotel where elderly people were staying, and you moved the hippies in with the elderly, and they got along very well.

MONTELIUS: That was in the beginning. That was in the old Victorian Hotel. In fact, the other day I was in San Francisco and saw it. That was the beginning. They worked out real well together, too. It turned out that the man who ran that hotel was an alcoholic, and we couldn't stay there. By that time we had our old building out on the Avenue. Then that worked out well. In the beginning, when you start a new program, you have staff who are dedicated to the idea of the

program. They will work for very small wages because they are so committed. But then, as they keep the program going and compare things with other agencies or people, they want more.

There have been many people who went on for quite a while, but then you can't keep an agency going forever on foundation grants. There were no public funds for able-bodied, young people who were homeless. There should be, but there weren't. I think we all learned a lot from that.

MILNER: Oh, I think it would be invaluable. You were there fifteen years?

MONTELIUS: Thirteen. I left a couple of years before I needed to, but by that time, I'd had my house down here in Carmel for a long time, and I was really interested in starting a new life.

MILNER: Well deserved retirement.

MONTELIUS: That was a real hard job. One of the hardest things, which was awful, was a couple of years before I retired, our office was set on fire. I'm sure it was arson by one of our staff, a very disturbed fellow that we shouldn't have had. I was called in the middle of the night by this fellow and went down and the whole office was absolutely gutted; it was the most miserable experience. We had to rent space in a different building for the caseworkers to operate from, but I had to stay in this burned-out building with a single globe hanging over my desk, to keep up with the workmen who came periodically, to try to keep the agency afloat. It was just a real bad time. The only compensation was that our insurance covered enough that once it was re-built, we could get all new furniture and new equipment. It turned out to be kind of a modern building. But that really was awful. I think what was the worst was knowing that one of your own staff did it. In fact, what we heard afterwards was that this fellow was so disturbed, he was under suspicion of murder. I took an awful lot of chances on staff, more than I probably should have, at least according to some of my other staff.

MILNER: But you had to with everything you were dealing with.

MONTELIUS: I always felt that that was part of the job.

MILNER: You gained a great reputation there with what you achieved, whether you knew it or not. There was not nearly as much being done for the hippie group or the flower children in the Los Angeles area.

MONTELIUS: I can't help but to think that if I had stayed with Traveler's Aid during this time of the homeless, that we would have had more going for them. I can't say. It that evidently has a good director, now. A woman, I forget her name. But we had two men who just were horrible. About eight or nine years of Traveler's Aid were just wasted. But now--I just got a letter at Christmas that people are beginning to read about Traveler's Aid again. I think they have started a home for the homeless. But it takes a certain kind of a person. It takes a lot of energy and initiative and just fighting. You know so many people are scared of foundations. I really get very provoked with them, because I think basically, they have taken away the money that would ordinarily have gone to agencies by taking it themselves because there is more prestige to it, then having the right to decide which agency should get it back. So I really have been pushing foundations. In fact, I'm back on that foundation trail now, because I'm involved with a non-profit group that is buying a building and trying to get....

MILNER: A League of Women Voters?

MONTELIUS: No, the League of Women Voters is one of the non-profit agencies, but it includes the Red Cross and the YWCA and Alzheimer's, and, I think, ten or twelve of us. It's a million dollar building, and we've raised three or four hundred thousand, but have a long way to go. But I'm back into the grant writing business, again.

MILNER: Well, very good. Once a social worker, always a social worker.

MONTELIUS: I think that's true. When people ask you what you do, I don't know what I'm

supposed to say: I'm a retired social worker or a social worker. I always feel like I'm still a social worker.

MILNER: Just leave the re off and say a tired social worker.

MONTELIUS: Except I haven't been tired, I really have enjoyed my retirement.

MILNER: Oh, I think it is wonderful that you are giving volunteer services here in Carmel.

MONTELIUS: Well, it goes both way.

MILNER: I knew you were active when they were electing a movie actor as mayor here. You were active in the political scene.

MONTELIUS: I was on the planning commission. Sometimes I think that we can never achieve our goals.