

Harry Pannor
Interviewed by Ben Cohen
on December 7th 1993
Tape One

COHEN: I am interviewing Harry Pannor on behalf of the California Archives Committee, Social Welfare Archives. Have you been involved with such an interview before?

PANNOR: No.

COHEN: Okay, whoops, all right. Now tell me what led you into the field of social work?

PANNOR: Well, I originally was, when I was going to undergraduate school at Cornell. I was, interestingly enough, making animal ????. And I felt the last few years that I ??? in a book about artificial insemination and high-tech pregnancies. In my experiences at Cornell ?????? came back to me, because I had a minor in artificial insemination. Actually, I began to ??????????. (Could barely make out the first couple minutes)

But anyhow, I got interested in the rural sociology and working in rural communities during the summers. Did some fieldwork out of Cornell in a rural community, and I learned an awful lot. I realized how well organized some rural communities were, as far as the social services. People did not realize that they thought, out in the rural areas, they got nothing, but they were much better organized, at least at that time.

We were in an urban community, so I got interested in social work. I took classes at Cornell. They were several teachers there who sort of encouraged me.

COHEN: This is your senior? undergraduate?

PANNOR: Undergraduate. So, when I graduated from Cornell - at Cornell, actually, I became involved in a social work club there. And it's a field ?????were in after I graduated and then applied to Colombia Social School. That's really how I got interested in it.

COHEN: So you went to Colombia?

PANNOR: Yes.

COHEN: You got your masters there?

PANNOR: Right.

COHEN: Where'd you go from there?

PANNOR: I went to Pennsylvania at ????? Lee High Valley Guidance Clinic.????, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. And I worked there mainly for three years. I did that purposefully. I wanted that kind of experience. And I found it very interesting, The experience was very good. It was a community wide clinic that served the whole ???Valley and had a nice range of experiences like, psychiatrists, diagnostic work, and serving the community. It was a good follow-up to what I had been doing in rural communities. So from there...

COHEN: How long did you stay there?

PANNOR: About three years. Then, in 1953, I came to California and went to work at Vista Del Mar Child Care, a ??? child care agency. I stayed there for 33 years. I found the experience very rewarding and that's why I stayed so long.

I had many opportunities to do some innovative work, which is somewhat difficult to define in traditional agencies, particularly on the East Coast. I was really pleasantly surprised to find that on the West Coast, things are much looser and flexible,

and social workers are encouraged to be more experimental, try new ideas. I had the opportunity...

COHEN: This was true when you started with..?

PANNOR: Right, right. First of all, they were very happy to have me with experience and particularly, the research experience I had. The fact that I was interested in that aspect of social work???

So, in there about 3 years, and I began to become very interested in the foster home program and pregnancy counseling program, which was part of the adoption program. Then I began to publish papers on some of the things I was working on, particularly, with fathers and fathers of teenage fathers. That's what got me started in the adoption field.

Then I was approached by PTW???, Health, Education and Welfare, Childrens Bureau, at that time. I went to do a research project on teen pregnancy, and that really got me going doing more research and encouragement to stay. I guess I had this opportunity, and I really wanted to do that.

The research project, at that time, was a very good one. Interestingly, that was in the early '60s, late '50s, '60s. At that time, what was interesting about it was that Health, Education, and Welfare had decided they could do something about teen pregnancy. So, they formed a task force and said, "Child welfare problems are enormous. We are going to take one piece, one area and we are going to see if we concentrate on it, if we can do something to reduce the rate of pregnancy."

So, they actually came and asked if I would submit a proposal for a grant. It's just kind of interesting, how they said we want this grant, this project done and it was to

focus on two ??????projects. Next thing you know, I am on a four-year grant. It was a very good grant at that time, the grant was about \$350,000?????. That was worth a lot back then. It needed us to do a really very fine, precise project on teen pregnancy and the effect of fathers. The reason I mention that is that now, in 1993, the issue is again surfacing, where they cut the administration.

COHEN: Man.

PANNOR: I saw this in today's paper, as a matter of fact. I am kind of following it. They're going to assemble a task force again to tackle the problem of teen pregnancy. They decided that this is an issue that they can do something about. It's gotten out of hand, and they feel that they have the tools to do it with. Well, here it is again.

COHEN: So, have you been offering your services?

PANNOR: Well, I'm thinking, I may, but, I think they have the tools to work better and they know where and how to approach it. It will be interesting to see if they can really do it. I hope they can, hope they can.

COHEN: This administration maybe can do it?

PANNOR: Well, I felt a lot of ??? and hope from the social work community.

COHEN: You have the feeling that the Clinton Administration has a good feeling about the social work field?

PANNOR: Yes, I do. They are much more involved. Much more open and receptive to the calling of ??????. There are many social workers who are helping the Clinton Administration. They feel closer to them than any other previous government. I think they will use me in ????? and people who can really spearhead. The structure is there and there are good social agencies around this country that just need to be revitalized to take

on this job. So, I hope it will be done. There is a horrendous problem, a problem that perpetuates itself and brings a lot of ?????????.

It can be done. Teen pregnancies - they're getting a lot of headway in reducing teen pregnancy among the middle class and the better educated. For example, among the college students, teen pregnancy just disappeared practically. At one time, it was a problem????? Oh, I guess the educational approach was really the approach that helped the most. Along with the educational approach came encouraging students to move ahead and to position careers for themselves.

The '60s being a sexual revolution, also helped. It allowed more information to be disseminated into the college campuses. Teachers and students were receptive to it. Human sexuality ????? began to blossom on college campuses and still does. I do not think there are too many college campuses, for example, well not all the campuses are?????. Many classes are taken.

So, it was effective. It shows that education can be a very effective tool. The results, in fact, were that at college campuses, college pregnancy among students - something like 10-12% - went to almost zero. So, that approach can become effective too, if done early and ????? Of course, there are other social and economic problems and threats, but it can be a heavy job. I am very pleased that this administration wants to do it. It's so positive.

COHEN: Now go back to your experience at Vista Del Mar, kind of things you got satisfaction from and problems that you ran into.

PANNOR: Following this project on fathers which resulted in - also it is interesting that this is a co-operative effort to get the bureau ????? (Something about the Jewish

Federation, the tape is really hard to hear and he is mumbling...????????). It was the research department of the Jewish Federation and we worked with them. We had signed two people: a researcher and a director at the time, to work with us on this. This allowed us to develop some rather useful sophisticated tools.

We published a book that was widely distributed among agencies, child welfare agencies, and lots of articles published ????, 20 articles published in nearly all the journals on procedures to follow for a working father who is facing pregnancy problems. It became very, very useful.

Then, of course, shortly after our project, it came out in the Supreme Court - the ruling of fathers. It said that they had to have their day in court, which changed the whole thing. They had to, whether they wanted to or not, there was now a mandate, by law, to include them in the services they offered. Even today, you can read about these things, about cases going on dealing with the rights of fathers in the court that refer back to that important decision.

In that decision, ??????????I found that the research that was very much a part of the findings of Stanley v. Illinois back the '60s. Still in force, some modifications, but still the primary force of the movement going forward. I learned from that: a legal decision can do more to move practice ahead than all the articles that are written. I am very popular, I am a circuit talker????, I travel around the country, and I do workshops and what not. It is very interesting, but I did not see a heck of a lot of progress going on until the Supreme Court ruling. It turned it around within one year.

So, from that I became interested in ???? and adoption and foster care and the experiences in the residential programs. One of the things I liked about working at an

agency like this in human services is that I had an opportunity to work in all the various departments. At one point, I was in charge of one of the residential units. From there I got some very, very valuable ?????, I discovered there that many of the kids were adopted children. We did not even know that. See, back then, in in-take, this was in the '60s, we didn't bother to find out whether a child who came in was adopted. There was very little, very little research done on adoption. A very important point, every other field in ????????

Somehow, we assume that adoption is a different process. After all got together - a birth family and a birth mother, usually a teenager, and you place a child in that family who is dying to get a child. And what else, I mean I wish them well and that's it, but never bothering to pose this kind of research to other fields of child welfare.

So, when I discovered there were so many kids in the residential that were adopted, I began to take note of that. I was also supervising the in-take department at that time. I said, "Okay, we are going to track this," and we found that every third child coming in to placement was adopted. I correlated that with the fact that we had always simplified adoption as a ????? and have failed to give it the time and attention for study and examination and research it like we did in every other field. The result is, the problem resurfaces. And I saw it.

I began to concentrate on that. I had access to a network around the country, and I discovered that this was not just a phenomenon in Vista; this was true all over the country. Any residential program, correctional facility, in guidance clinics, that the percentage of adopted kids is very high around 20-30 percent. The correctional facility, I

remember surveying them and some areas where like, God, like half the kids were adopted. Well anyway, as a result of that, I began doing research in adoption.

And the other interesting thing, that served me well, was I always kept an involvement in practices. I felt that it was very important. I learned this from two of the teachers at USC. One was John Milner, who was very much into foster care, and from June Black. As a result, I went back to school, periodically, to do a lecture on adoption. From June, I learned something very important and I began to realize, just the last few years, that adoption really belongs in child welfare and belongs in social institutes. (messy sentence, I know) Adoption is too important to let it remain with lawyers and baby brokers. She kept telling me that every time I would go there and do a lecture and she said, "Rubin, when are you going to learn that this belongs with child welfare?"

I got into the research of adoption. Than ??????(mumbling). And the third really important step we did was to look back and look at what does this problem mean, what does it come from? What can we do about it? Primarily, it was to identify. In this project, we worked jointly with a research psychiatrist at UCLA: Dr. Markus ??and Colin?????. The three of us worked on this, but we did not do it alone. We had help from all over the country: agencies, people who were interested in what we were doing, and other organizations.

As a result, we compiled volumes of information from people who were helpful. It is an interesting research project that involves people who are not directly involved in it but who help in interviewing and so on. As a result of that, we published a book called *Adoption Triangle*. That book is still going very strongly and has sold over a hundred thousand copies. And it is a classic adoption ??????. You know, there have been a number

of cases Divor Case????(mumbling), this past year, where it constantly references the *Adoption Triangle*, and in all the writing that has gone on around this case ???????(mumbling).

The research by the book *Adoption Triangle* influenced adoption practices tremendously in ways that this particular lawyer did not like. He said, “They were oversimplifying it.” He said you have to look at the?????. That became, I think, a very important (mumbling) the whole field of adoption. What we were saying, basically, was that we have overlooked the impact on a birth mother who has to give up a child and how to focus on agencies.

Originally, I was finding homes for children who needed homes, not just infants, but children of all ages. That was child welfare. In adoption, it did not take long for us to shift that focus to finding babies for infertile couples. That was a totally different focus. It changed the practice in many of the ways. I admit that our main concern was to find babies. ...

COHEN: Rather than take care of the children?

PANNOR: Right, we weren't ????? We were looking for parents, primarily infertile couples, and that practice went on and on. It did not take long for our practice to become very rigid on adoption. ??? field records had to be anonymous and confidential and that the birth mother would sign and relinquish and has an understanding of what that means. She has to take a look at it. It says very clearly that you are giving up all your rights forever.

The assumption was that the birth mother would forget it, and somehow, she would put it behind her and not have to worry about or think about it too much and get on

with her life. Our research shows that that does not happen, and it also shows that relinquishing a child is one of the most emotionally loaded things that any human being could every do.

So, then we began to look at the problem the adoptive children had themselves: the feelings they had, the secrecy that surrounds them. The fact that couples who adopted children wanted to ignore the fact that these children had a whole history, a connection, a historical connection, a genetic connection. We couldn't just cut-it out, we couldn't end that these children have another identity. So, we saw all across the results, a new identity, an identity fusion?????(mumbling).

We correlated that with what we had seen in cases around the country and concluded that our practice had been skewed in the wrong direction. For adoption to be successful, a child had to be able to incorporate the identity of both birth parents and the birth family, not just birth parent, and the adoptive family. You have to answer the child's question; you have to know why he was given up for adoption. You have to know who these people were; you have to see them as real people.

And that became the essence of what we call adoption reform. Interestingly enough, I think this is a very interesting social work field that the reform movement in adoption did not come from a social agency. It came from people who were victims of all the problems with adoption. They came from communities, people who would have been our clients, and they formed their own organization.

COHEN: That's the birth parents?

PANNOR: Well, the birth parents formed their own, and a national organization that they formed has chapters all over the country. Their organization is more concerned with

the rights of birth parents. They have national conferences, and I am a frequent speaker at their national conferences. This year, I did a keynote event at their conference in Colorado, a national conference.

There is an organization formed to push and fight for the right of adoptees. Adoptees must learn, it is ironic to realize, that they don't know their rights. Adoptees had no rights to information about their background, no rights to identifying information. Adoptees who need to apply for a passport would have to show their original adoption papers, and sometimes they are hard to find. The adoption creed is something that people hang on to. An adoptee is denied the rights of people who are not adopted. Those of us who have thought about this can get any information we wanted, we can find our roots and we can find out as much as we wanted about our historical connection, but an adoptee could not.

So, an organization was formed called ????. Started by woman, she was ????. That's the largest of all the reform movements with chapters all over this country and in other countries. They also operate an exchange of adoption and registering birth parents to register. There are several exchanges like that. But also, an unborn ??? agency encourages you. There are now about three or four national organization that have chapters all over the country, that have groups, support groups, and so on, who are fighting for the rights of adoptees, rights of birth parents, and the rights of the adoptive parents.

That was very interesting to me. What happened is that the reform was a movement picked up where the agencies had failed to (mumbling) This could have been done, agencies could have pushed for the reform but they did not. The reform came from

the outside. In the last ten years, there has been a movement to bring together an agency now by people who (mumbling). And now in adoption, what we're hoping is going to happen is that adoption will go back to agency practice and go into the field of child welfare.

What happened in ????? was very important work and decisions. What's happening in the last ten years is that attorneys have gotten into the field of adoption, and if one wants to adopt an infant, for example, he either goes to a social agency or he can go to an attorney. This is called an independent adoption. In an independent adoption they have - there are very few regulations. In fact, there are practically none. ????? actually are going to attract people much more than going through an agency, where a couple is going to have to talk about why they want to adopt, the understanding of adoption, the infertility problems. This is a process that I think is very important.

COHEN: Are they suitable?

PANNOR: Yes, all of that. Yes, a background check. It is the responsibility that we have to the children that are going to be placed, and to the birth parents. So, an independent adoption, none of this takes place. And anyone can go; you can be seventy-five years old and adopt a child if you have the money to pay for it.

That began to attract people away from making these practices, and as a result, in the '70s and '80s, many agencies just disappeared, many agencies disappeared. That was a major crisis in a sense of the agency's health. We began to look into what's going on, and what we found was basically to adopt a child independently you had to have money, which removed it from that egalitarian mode, which meant that only people who could afford it would adopt. Their method of getting babies was outrageous because what they

were doing was primarily advertising for babies. This is now, and continues to be, the practice for adoption right now. I've seen ads in the personal columns and I've seen this in the ???? ads and the attorney's will construct and train people exactly how to entice people, in other words. I've seen ads and books of them: Caucasian, white, Christian couple have everything to offer a child. Will pay for all expenses. Will give a child a wonderful home a birth mother will not be able to provide: along that line.

Also, what I have found, what is very involved in this issue, is that the advertising takes place in certain parts of the country, primarily, the Bible belt. What you find there is prejudice, stigmatizing un-wed pregnancies, practically no sex education and poverty. I correlated the poverty in the country and many of the major newspapers, in the past few years, have run lots of stories on poverty. USA Today had a beautiful map of the poverty belt. Well, I correlated that with the Bible belt and then correlated where babies come from, and I found that it is almost exact.

In the last few years, I've been getting data birth, excellent data, because I continue to work with adoptive couples and recently adopted children. I do most of the post adoption work at this ???? when I was a consultant. What I had found disturbs me a great deal. That whereas, not so long ago in adoption, if you ran across an adopted married couple who are going to relinquish a child to adoption, or ran across a couple who had children who are going to relinquish a child to adoption is very rare, very rare. We would call a big conference immediately and say, "Well this can't be, "The family has to hold together." And we would.

What I am finding now is that 40% of couples of relinquishments of infants come from the Bible belt and come from married couples who have two or three children and

they're poor. And this is primarily where these couples are today. They are coming from the college campuses, they are coming from the middle-class, the upper middle-class, the ??????. They are not coming from certain religious groups, for example. The fact is, we see zero Jewish babies; that just doesn't exist. And you've seen babies from fundamentalist groups coming poor and married with children now.

Think of the ramifications of that. That reversal ??? family is poor and having to give up a child. So, the ramifications for the children are kept in childhood delinquents and the family getting the child, and the whole business has sort of become, it has become a very lucrative business. We have finally arrived at something that we can all support and that is that adoption should only be handled by social agencies and that it belongs in child welfare. And this is where I learned what to do wrong.

Why does it belong in child welfare? Because the focus should be to keep families together, should be family reunification and to do that, you have to have a family approach and you have to be in a child welfare approach, which is child welfare. What I now believe is that adoption should be handled by children and family agencies solely, where you can do all this and you can help to keep a family together and where adoption should be limited to only those cases where there absolutely is no other alternative, cause separating children from their families, permanently as they do in adoption should be a very last resort.

Now, overriding all of this, we came by interesting - also, finding out that what is the practice around the country. There I learned some very interesting things. I provided ??? with a number of international conferences on adoption. I learned that the practice of sealing the records, of having an anonymous type of adoption, of using the kind of

relinquishment procedures we use, is unique to this country. We are the only country in the world to use this practice. In France, it is not practiced. In France, you adopt a child as a very last resort and you do not alter the child's birth certificate, which we do here. When you alter a birth certificate, you are saying to the family, change this child who was born to you. In France, they never even thought that way. The birth certificate and the identity of his birth family go with him.

COHEN: Totally fair?

PANNOR: It's fair, and it works fine there. I had a very interesting experience with a social worker in Israel. I was invited to give a paper in Israel. In fact, an international conference that dealt with adoption. It was in the '70s. Israel social workers were just putting a program into affect, and they wanted to copy our procedure here. We said to them, "We're in the process of evaluating our procedure, but we don't recommend your copying it." But, they did copy it. They thought, well, well we do everything so well here. So they did, they put into affect field records and anonymous ?????? and the ?????? threw it out. They said, "No way." They said, "If we cut off a child's roots and connections, historical connections, then we're violating the basic premises of the whole state of Israel, which is based on connections that go from one generation to another, part of our whole fabric of our society, and our religious beliefs, our barmitvahs, (mumbling???)" And they said that this practice cannot be ??????

COHEN: Fascinating.

PANNOR: So, they changed it. In Israel, they have open adoption. I mean, now doing open adoption in this country. So, they came over and they apologized for it. They said,

“Sorry, we didn’t listen to you. But we are going to work our practice now, according to what you were recommending, but with the changes that we were talking about.”

So, this is their practice. And they have very interesting adoption practices. They have integrated the various groups that make up Israel. It’s in Eastern Europe now and so on. They have been able to do. And if the proposal we make can be open, not to limit to cut-off roots, worked very well for them. It wouldn’t have worked otherwise.

Anyway, in 1975, Annette and I published a paper in social work that said we should consider a new practice that we had developed. Theoretically, we should open adoption. We published a paper called *Open Adoption*.

COHEN: What year?

PANNOR: In 1975. They were very interesting. It was very hard to get an article published in social work, we discovered. But when we got this article, the editor called and said, “This came across his desk and this is an innovation and we want to publish it right away.” This surprised us in a way. They published it and that received a lot of the attention.

We were saying the old system had too many problems. It created problems for everyone concerned, including the agency. We had people who were searching; we had adoptees who were developing problems. Everything was just going haywire and we said let us at least experiment with adoption. So, we began to do that.

In 1984, I published another paper that said open adoption, published in child welfare mag???, should be the standard practice for open adoption and ????. Now, in 1993, it is the standard practice. All of the attention that Vista Del Mar (mumbling) as do other agencies, Catholic agencies were now doing it. They were the most resistant to it.

There are still a few hang-ons, hang-overs, but still it is just a couple that still want to keep secrecy.

Their problem now is that birth mothers don't want to relinquish to agencies that only practice secrecy. They want to know who the family is and the family wants to know them. It works out so much better. It is a new practice, including an independent adoption and that we feel very good about

One of the studies from research that I was involved in, that has really taken hold now as a practice (mumbling)??? and I was also very pleased to learn that the closer I could live with the experiment - that's what I called it - in this country and other countries like Pakistan and the major religions around the world that do not permit that kind of practice. For instance, Islamic religion does not permit closed adoption practice. I did not realize that until we began to study it.

That was very gratifying to see, that this had happened, and I was also very pleased to see it sort of came together for me. The things that I began to realize, teachers at schools of social work have known for a long time. It was an interesting coming together. For many years, I had been told by you people, out in the agencies, that you're setting the pace, we're following it. The understanding that someone like June Brown can really hold up ??????. But you know that's what the main problem along with the family, ??(mumbling)...is basic rights. If you see her, tell her.

COHEN: I will. She is a member of the group, and at the next meeting, if she is there, I will give her the message.

PANNOR: Yes, I really would like her to know that. I said that at a conference this year (mumbling)...a conference in New York City this year on adoption. And what I said is

that what I am proposing now is that agencies shouldn't be the center for working with pregnancy problems and problem pregnancy issues.

And I said that I have finally come around to realize is that what I've learned from one of the teachers at USC, June Brown, is where we need to go. It makes a lot of sense to me.

Over the years, I was also very involved in child welfare in America. I was appointed to their task force on standards for adoption practices. You know, they put out a booklet on standards in various fields of social work. I worked on their standard committee for Lee Todd ????, a former director. The last time, they adopted the fact that open adoption should be considered as a practice, and they also said that to keep it in the ??? there had to be ???(mumbling)???. They could be in deep trouble, legally, if they continued that practice. (mumbling again???) They incorporated a lot of the reforms that I had been pushing forward for years. I was pleased with that. So, it sort of came together.

COHEN: And you got a lot of satisfaction out of that?

PANNOR: Yes, I had. Right.

COHEN: ??????

PANNOR: ?????, and I continued it because I kind of wanted to see if I could consolidate more and go on and I think it will. The thing that I see now is that our attention really and our energies and focus should be on the broad field ??? of child welfare. For example, I think too much attention is focused on infant adoption. Infant adoption compose maybe 50, 000, and of those, ten are older children adoption. A large number of those are family adoptions. The number of infant adoption is something under

20,000. The number of children who are not living with their families in this country since 1993, is almost a half a million. These children are the ones who we should be focusing on. Our energy should be devoted to finding proper homes for these children. These are special need children and minority children and black children and handicapped children and family units with older children. They need better services than we have been giving them.

Foster homes services ????. We can learn so much from John, because John Miller always - first of all, I always invited him to our foster home meetings, because that was his interest. And he always said, he say to me, you know we have the strength in the ????? We can make a real viable program ??????MUMBLING???????

I feel over the years, he was right. He gave foster homes a place with ????. It got a bad rap when it comes to revitalizing the whole system. And then it got to be a system that worked and it can work.

And I was very pleased at the conference that I spoke at in New York, to meet the Director of the Child Welfare Program in New York City, to learn that they were putting into practical practice what they were talking about. That the old system doesn't work here, we have to work with kinship groups. We have to help these children stay within their family unit. It doesn't necessarily have to be their mother or father, it doesn't have to be a grandmother. It could be an aunt and uncle; it can even reach down to cousin, second cousins; to keep them a part of the family. He said the old system wasn't working and they are switching over. And now, in New York City, about over 50% of all their placements are within kinship and they are moving towards making that their practice.

And if can work in New York it will work in other metropolitan areas. And it's working very nicely. And the person in charge of that program is Dr. Robert Little.??

I learned an interesting little thing about Dr. Little, first of all, very articulate social worker, graduate social worker. A fine well trained person, the right person for that job, the Director and Chief of Child Welfare. I was very impressed with Dr. Little.

Anyhow, that was last year, I got a notice about a conference that was taking place here in Los Angeles by a bunch of black social workers who think that Dr. Robert Little is???? and that Dr. Robert Little is the brother of Malcolm X. That was a rather pleasant surprise for me to learn and than I realized - you know the movie Malcolm X - he was a very important person in the movie. And it is an interesting movie. You'll recognize him. ?????????? (mumbling, doesn't make sense)????? important experience in foster home.

We learn in many different ways.

Anyhow, that was also a rewarding thing to know that now working with the metropolitan areas seeing the need to know think ????? Administration is now more with it. Moving in a more positive direction.

COHEN: I can't tell you how much I appreciate the goods things on the tape. It has been a revelation to me. I want to just ask you if you have any personal papers or hand-ins or any items that can remain available for research.

PANNOR: Yes, I do. I have to go through the stuff I have, and I would like to do that, as a matter of fact. In fact, I have something, I have a personal note with father, ??????, I have the original. I have about halfway???? of a book that wasn't published. This one would be much more interesting to you. It shows the methodology, it shows the

equipment, ??????. the federation counsel. It is a useful thing, and I wish I had one like that who was interested in the subject of change.

Also I served on the commission at the State Legislature. They studied surrogate parenting and that became a big issue. Anyway, we came up with a report that is probably the best piece of research material available anyplace in the country. Wonderful job as chairman of commission, the chairman of the ethics commission of ??????. ??? (Ambulance in the backround??). It was a wonderful study. So, I would like to give that to the school. And then I have other papers that I would be very happy to donate to you. I did present to the school the three books that I co-authored. You can have those.

COHEN: mumbling?????

PANNOR: Thank you very much.

COHEN: That where these???????

PANNOR: Johnson, yes, right. I will go through that and how do I get this to them?

COHEN: We can meet you or if you want to go to the Arlein Johnson Library, Do you know exactly where it is?

PANNOR: Yes, I've been there.

COHEN: Okay, the library is in that building and I am trying to think of the name of the person who is very much involved with this. I'll call you and give you his name.

PANNOR: Yea, I know that somebody had spoken to me about it once before and promised it to them and I never really followed through. There are some things that I was going to give to the library; you know the library in Vista Del Mar they wanted. But I would be very glad to pull it together and get it to the library.

COHEN: School of Social Work, that's the one that called the Arlein Johnson School.
It's right in the building where the school is on the first floor.

PANNOR: I think I've been there, I know I have.

COHEN: And this archives ??? really emanates ??? the kind of relationship the
School of Social Work likes. Well, thank you very much.

PANNOR: Well, you are very welcome.

Harry Pannor
Interviewed by Ben Cohen
No date given on Tape
Tape Two

COHEN: I'm interviewing Harry Pannor on behalf of the California Archives
Committee. Harry when did you decide to go into social work, what made you go into the
field of social work?

PANNOR: Uh, when I was in undergraduate work, when I came back from the service. That was in latter part of '35, I think. I thought that I wanted to go back to school. I had been going to Cornell before I went to the service and I got discharged and came back. I knew I wanted to go into some branch of social service, but I didn't know what exactly. And then I just kept looking, groping around to see what I could find. I went back to Cornell, ?????? one or two semesters then I left and came out to California.

While I was out here, I worked here and there ???, then I went to Santa Barbara. I liked to climb ???. I found out that my brother had been going to Columbia in New York. ?????mumbling????.

I majored in social science and looked for a channel that through social work I could find what I wanted to do. I was interested then to get into some phase of social work that was working with unions in large ???. I thought that they had a social service department at that time. I found out to get in there, you really needed to get into mental health. So that (mumbling ???). I applied at three or four schools, and I decided to stay here to, and ??????????

COHEN: So, you went to USC?

PANNOR: Yes, it was on a GI Bill.

COHEN: I know that. I was under the same situation. So, once you got out, were you still interested in social work for unions?

PANNOR: Yes, I was. As a matter of fact, I went up to San Francisco and I took some more classes in Child Welfare Labor School. I worked, I did some work as a longshoreman. Then I went to the gas company...

COHEN: Doing social work at the gas company?

PANNOR: No, just as a longshoreman. When I went back to school, things had changed. They started to change. So, I graduated 'SC and went to work for a buddy who I had ???????. He's a big ship??? (mumbling - I am not sure what he is talking about) We were getting close to the McCarthy era. We were under a lot of pressure.

COHEN: How did you happen to go fix Jewish Big Brother?

PANNOR: Because they had a placement there.

COHEN: Oh you had a placement there.

PANNOR: Second-year placement.

COHEN: Okay, so, you knew the agency and decided that's where you fit.

PANNOR: They recruited me.

COHEN: You and I have that in common.

PANNOR: Right.

COHEN: Okay, what happened at Jewish Big Brother and how did that work out?

PANNOR: Well, it worked out fine. I stayed there for about thirty-three years.

COHEN: How many?

PANNOR: About thirty-three years.

COHEN: Wow, I didn't realize that. Thirty-two years in Jewish Big Brother! That's a long time.

PANNOR: Yes, it is. So, I finished my placement there and was offered a job with them and I took it and stayed. And I liked it because I stayed there a long time.

COHEN: What did you find most gratifying personally?

PANNOR: There? Well, I think the main thing that kept me there was the fact that I had opportunities here to grow and see changes take place, pretty dramatic changes from

when I first came to the agency then when I left. There were progressive changes constantly. In (mumbling?????) the agency grew dramatically in programs ??????? primary ???

COHEN: What was your position there Harry?

PANNOR: Well, I started as a caseworker. My next role was a student fieldwork supervisor. And then I spent a couple years - two years I became a supervisor. And then I moved to caseload director, and then I ultimately became the director of all the social services, caseload services.

COHEN: What were some of the changes that took place, and how were you involved in the affecting the changes?

PANNOR: Well, I first came there; you were there then.

COHEN: Yes, I realize that.

PANNOR: They were working on a – I - we were sort of working on a classical approach in social workers and kids and how the worker would see the mother. And that was about as far as we went. At that time, it was a fairly active agency: we had a guidance program, a big brother program, a ??? program, a diversity program.

But, they were still in the classical mode. And some of the problems that were evident: one, we weren't reaching enough people and the directors ??? goal the more people we served. (not really understanding what he is talking about???) And it's understandable. I think we were still kind of trapped in the analytical model that was respected by people who had done a lot worked.

It's amazing when you look back at it. For example, after the first couple of years, you begin to wonder how come you don't see fathers. I got married since then, I had a

baby, but what the hell is this, why don't I see fathers? Today, it is such a simplistic concept but you wonder, was it impossible.....

COHEN: ...a substitute father.....

PANNOR: Yes, Big Brother. So even that didn't work because that was in situations where there wasn't a father. When you work with a branch like I did ????? that's developing for the Jewish Family Service was not a rescue program. (mumbling???)

I asked the question at that time, among other things Grover???. was receptive in terms of the casework, the program, clinical, whichever way you want to look at it. He was receptive; he liked the idea and said, "Well, go ahead. Maybe you are onto something." We had stats and we talked about why and had all these reason why mothers were not with the fathers and really, it involved a process: a mother-child. The main obstacle at that time.

COHEN: They were.

PANNOR: So, we decided to work one night a week. I mean that as total: come in at 1:30 and stay till 9:00.

Then the issue became how are you going to get them in here? I thought about it and thought about it and came up with all kinds of community resistance. They don't want them there and on and on. I remember later on doing a workshop on it, somebody asked that question. Mumbling....???? Well, I will tell you how to do it?????

We debated it, talked about it for about a month and then we decided that with each individual application that we sent out, we would state that fathers are expected to come in for the interview. And that's how we did it. And they all came in.

COHEN: You met some even during the day?

PANNOR: Right, it was that simple. All we were doing was bringing them in for the intake interview. Then we decided by seeing them, they were very interested. Most of them were pleased to be called and be worthy of involvement.

So, we started seeing fathers, but again, we still stayed with that old model. The father would be seen separately, the mother would be seen separately, and the kid would be seen separately.

COHEN: Never the three shall meet.

PANNOR: Yes, so that if the board ???? What a waste of time. A lot of people being seen you know. You got a caseload of maybe seven families and you got to think about what you're doing here.

COHEN: So, it was economics?

PANNOR: That was one of the propelling things, economics and bring in more people. But the major factor was the beginning of getting away from the one-on-one. Again, go back to the analytical model; that apparently there was a feeling like this is how you resolve problems and you give me one-on-one with a ???? problem. And there was very little conception of inter-communication. Meet people.

You know, when you think about a man who has ??? The only way answer is when they reflect it off somebody else. If somebody likes them, they feel better about themselves.

Communication is now a big deal. In addition to that, we weren't reinventing the wheel. My first placement, I was at the Belvedere, and when we would go down to the confirmation ?????? ??????. out of the home so that they could get their money. We were just, you know, ????? something for years. So, you did it together. They were both

concerned about the kids. It started right away, mother says one thing, the father said another thing. You wanted to have a togetherness. You know you look back now, who is that ?????? It was a struggle. I remember I called it a conjoint interview.

I remember I gave a lecture at 'SC about it. When I got through, ????? you know you gave a strong case for that. I look back now and I think he was right. How permanent some of that stuff seemed to be.

COHEN: Rose was still not into that?

PANNOR: Nobody was into it. They were still sticking to the old model. We sort of paired together and that stayed. Then the next step from that was about ten years into it already. ???????? I kept noticing that the mothers and fathers, the parents would come in and bring the kids with them because they did not have babysitters. Kid would sit in the waiting room. We did not have a place to set up, so they would go down the hall and sit at the door to listen to what was going on here.

From that, I started inviting them in. Why don't you come in?

COHEN: The parents didn't object?

PANNOR: No. They left it up to us. From that, already there had been some movement of that ?????? Some other people ?????? We decided to bring children in. And we did at first selectively. We would bring them in and see how they would interact. We only started with parents first and then ???????? Know we would give an assessment ??? (really hard to hear and understand he is mumbling and talking low?????) but the same workers. That in itself was a ?????? And when we saw all the members of the family, you know you are like connected to them.

COHEN: All the interaction, their view.

PANNOR: Right.

COHEN: What are the ages of the children you saw?

PANNOR: Five through ???. But we saw them when we called a family interview when they were in crisis, call a family interview when we were getting close to ending. And we assumed from that everybody ??? They took credit for innovating it. Then they took credit for innovating it back in NY. ????? Were you there when ???

COHEN: No.

PANNOR: ??????mumbling????

COHEN: ???mumbling????

PANNOR: That what they said. But actually ??? forever ???

COHEN: Did you participate?

PANNOR: Yes, we started doing it ourselves. And that also was a big step. You know, traditionally we looked at what the worker did, whether it was the workers ???????. Nobody knew what they did, except for what was written on paper. They did long interview, which by the way, we did also ??????. Of course, again, administration wanted to put all this energy into what was the purpose of trying to figure it out.

COHEN: So no longer dictated?

PANNOR: Remember when we used to have dictating rooms, and we sat there all day dictating?

COHEN: Yes, I remember.

PANNOR: In one week we eliminated that whole thing. We decided what do we need for administration? What do we need for records and files, what do we need for supervision, where is the work going? So, we decided there was very little we needed for

administration, for supervision, needing long records, I said you said, was useless. So, then we said for the worker you can keep your own notes ??????. And that's it. Then all we would have is a summary. ?????? A brief closing summary. Then what we did after that, we put them on tape and did not bother to transcribe them immediately. So, they stayed there and very rarely somebody would come in re-open them and transcribe them.

COHEN: ??????

PANNOR: They were useful and would free workers to spend more time with people. They also changed the whole concept of supervision. The whole I said ??? I didn't really mean that. It was not a good way to keep a file: it was a good way of publishing. ????? Supervision then became more verbal. It freed the workers.?????

The other thing with family member, there was always a tremendous resistance that what was said before ?????? No one ever knew what somebody did with a kid, it was always recorded as he said, I said. But the idea of exposing that was really fresh. Nobody wanted to expose that, especially the staff. So, they gave all kinds of reasons, the mothers wouldn't like that, no ??????.

It demonstrated a concept ??? I think we knew. It is not important what we do with a kid but what's important is what the parents do with them. We can look good. I used to say. Of course the kid is going to like coming into to see me. I let them play, do whatever he likes. I'm not going to reprimand him. I'm going to listen to him. I'm going to be supportive and understand everything he does. If he hits his brother on the hand, I'm going to say, "Well, you must have been angry at him." So, why shouldn't he come back? It did not change anything because having a good relationship with me is not going to help him along. See me once a week with the parents ???.

The shift began to move towards that parent's relationship. That had to be done very carefully so the parents didn't feel that they were to blame or ????? that had to be dealt with and we were not used to that. As soon as they walk in there, they're at fault. Soon as they say hello, you're blaming them. What do you call them in for? So, we had to work out how to help them understand that they are the best change agents, binding, lasting. ?????? I thought that was a major shift. ?????? ??????. Adolescent kids are ????? but even there, a lot has changed. ?????.

Again you look back at how easily this stuff went on for so many years. For years and years. It is almost like poor treatment by concentrating on ?????. You know, a lot of that still goes on. ?????? You have to have rare exceptions ????? That really needs special guidance. The education, physical therapist ?????. I believe that anybody who is going to be treating the kids should be the parents. ????????

COHEN: How long did the average case go on?

PANNOR: Well, it depended on, you know, whether it was ????? wherever. And the beauty of that was if the kid had a Big Brother, it could on as long as the Big Brother is in the picture. So, that doesn't mean the kid was in treatment all that time, but he and the parent and the Big Brother were there for check-ups, physical check-ups. And when we began, it would be emotional check-ups. Then we would have a built-in community, there is no way you can ??????. That combination was responsible to do periodic check-ups. How are the kids growing? That in that situation the family could go on as long as the kid was around, it made up a pretty sizable part of the population.

In other situations, we functioned too much like a welfare child clinic. Some cases - I did not like the word "cases" - the kids, the situations with the families, ?????? would

be short, some would be longer. We never turned down unless we - really, I can't really think of a situation. We would have all of us ????. But, you know, one time in the eighties, we had long waiting lists. We used to have in-take clients.

COHEN: Is that right?

PANNOR: Intake workers or ????. The people who are in-take workers were the elite, the best. What they did screwed up the whole program. When they got through working with the in-take, they would then be handed over to lowly counselor workers. That transition would lose about 1/3rd of the clients. They would in the in-take, they would really receive treatment for the first time and work up about four, five, six times. They would connect and then you don't transfer. What makes them more skilled than the worker that - I eliminated that. Everybody did their own in-takes.

That was an innovation. All agencies had in-take requirements. You know, you look back on it ????. That we had long waiting list, and the in-take workers seventy, eighty cases that ???. I decided this is not the way to do it. We have to do something to help these people. Every time something happened, it was perceived that I did it.

We called people who were on the waiting list and offered them a series of six sessions to sustain them until ??????. What are we going to do with them? We worked out a program where that the number one ingredient was going to be a very active interaction. We would listen to what it is ??????. Rubs everyone the wrong way. Meaning we would give them things to work on. Try this, try this and work on this. The main agreement was them, then we would call them when we had openings.

What we found out was that two thirds of those on that waiting list didn't need any help after that.

COHEN: All they needed was the initial....

PANNOR: And the four to six sessions that we ????. After that came short-term treatment. These things were starting to happen, but very few places were implementing it, you know, doing it. Some were, and it worked out, it worked out very well. What we wound up with is what we called people who came in, they were hard-core cases.

Another issue. But it did begin to innovate being more active rather than passive listeners.

So, that's one of the things that kept me moving ?????

COHEN: It's great you had that kind of feeling about a job, position?

PANNOR: Oh, yea, I don't think I would have stayed.

COHEN: Continued to be stimulated. Well, I am learning some things about the agency I didn't know. I never knew these details. I lost track of the agency a long time ago in 1953.

PANNOR: And we also encouraged people to write up what they did.

COHEN: And submit if for publishing ????

PANNOR: Hundreds of workshops. That was, I thought, significant. When you make contributions ????

COHEN: So, here is a question I have to ask you. What social movements or activities that you were involved with seemed to you important but did not achieve the goals that you were to obtain? In other words, what kind of movements or activities did you get involved with in the job or in general, that you put a lot of effort into where you reached the goal ??? in your life, your career. (pretty messy question).

PANNOR: Well, I just think that the movement, you know we also had within the Eighties, a big program with the juvenile courts; a large program. I thought that we were

on track to, even back then, we were on track to, we think we would get ????. I think we were. Remember that?

COHEN: Oh, I remember that very well.

PANNOR: At that time they didn't have the advocacy program, the family court system. We would go into court and we were told to pick up everybody involved and whip up a program ????? and present a plan. Basically, to do the prevention and the treatment. Here was an intensive kind of program. I felt that over the years, when we were into that, the thing was successful, it was successful.

COHEN: What made the agency stop?

PANNOR: It shifted from being a family to an adversary court. Then the kid had an attorney and ??????. We were not really in a position to have a role because the kid was considered to be innocent for an adult whom was guilty. So, how could we go in there and interview them. As soon as we got into the act, we were saying, "Hmm, he is guilty." So it destroyed the whole system.

And it was effective. There was no question about it. I think that had that system been maintained, it would have made a difference in the problems that we have today, you know, off the map.

COHEN: Some of those ??????

PANNOR: I know we would do periodic work-ups to see how they are doing, where they are going ??????. We tried to trace ??????. And some of them did, and they were also successful. I remember they used to give presentations on accomplishments and figure out it cost fifteen/twenty thousand bucks a year to keep a kid in detention. For six hundred dollars a year you could have ??????. And it worked. Why wouldn't it work?

You know, they dabble around with it now, today. There's nothing really doing it if you think about it ????. It is not as if, you know, they don't know what to do. It is just not being done.

COHEN: Anything else you can think of? What did you learn from that, from there? Do you have any thoughts about how that might be re-instituted?

PANNOR: Yes, I think that the money that is spent, millions and billions of dollars, could be re-directed. I know that ????? program, but the transition ????. But would that make the program? Well, you do have a lot of one-on-one; there is no substitute for it. You have to have one-on-one ?????.

Also. I think one of things I mentioned before is that there ought to be programs that are available to people all the time, like check-ups. Like a national health care worker. These kind of check-ups ?????. I hope that that does happen ?????.

COHEN: Are there any things that the Jewish Big Brothers instituted that have taken off at other agencies or organizations that you can think of that really had an impact on the field?

PANNOR: Well, some of the things I mentioned is the use of volunteers effectiveness, ????? with good support systems. That is, wherever that has been duplicated, it works because you have ????? ?????.

COHEN: One of my jobs, when I started working with the agency ????? was to serve as a consultant at camp rec, to bring to the counselors any information that would be helpful in dealing with the youngsters ?????.

PANNOR: ????? Yes, it was, and we did that with the English, science workers during the sessions, and they stayed out there and continued on. ????? to shifted the emphasis to

family ??? avenues ??? within the frame work of working with families, we also looked at this. But that was limited. I think what we demonstrated was that because we offered the services, preventive work could be done effectively through the agency. And that was, did become part of what they did ???. We only worked with people who were sick with problems. We did not know much about ???. It is tough to work with people who don't. because you have to distinguish who does that. It is a fine line, it is a fine line.

It demonstrated that the kind of service that we ?????? What it did is that ??? we would emphasize ???

COHEN: Very important item?

PANNOR: For example, if a kid went to camp, they were going to a camp and what did you hope to accomplish for the community at a camp. ??? ???. You got problems with this. We did not keep our eye on that. Would you like to hear what happened? ??????.

Anybody who committed an interview, a follow-up interview obviously didn't work out. This worked out fine. You know, in this area, it could use a little more help and we have a program to help. So, what I mentioned that ?????? killing everybody in the household.

COHEN: ?????

PANNOR: ????

COHEN: Okay, Harry, do you have any materials in your possession that you want to turn over to the Archives?

PANNOR: I probably do, because I got ??????. Yes, I could get something...

COHEN: You could look through, I am very anxious to get those.

PANNOR: Okay, but some of the stuff is ??????. What do you want me to do with it?
Get it to you?

COHEN: Yes, yes.

PANNOR: I would be happy to do that.

COHEN: Were you ever interviewed by anyone this spring? Anything else you want to add to this to put down for posterity? Although, you may feel that we are wasting time doing all this, and having a secretary record it part of the way.

PANNOR: ????? people using it, doctors who are just looking up stuff?

COHEN: I'm not sure. I really don't know.

PANNOR: I hope it is used ???. I hope it will bolster the community of social work.

COHEN: People still feel that I, as a social worker, that you work for the country, you know, hard work.

PANNOR: Well, after all these years ?????, I don't hear much being done about it. Is it the way we tend to blow over things and carry on? There is no damage control.

COHEN: Harry, I thank you very much, it has been a pleasure. Let me just check on the last.....