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Thomas Crowley  
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT

An Interview Conducted by  
Karl Kortum and Willa Klug Baum

Appendix

A STATEMENT OF REFUTATION  
BY CYRIL MAGNIN

Made to Willa Klug Baum, 1975  
Page 282a ff.

Berkeley  
1967

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## INTERVIEWS ON THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in recent California history. The following interviews are part of a series sponsored by The Bancroft Library to document the social history of Northern California. Other interview series developed by ROHO-- (Art, Photography and Architecture; Books and Printing in the San Francisco Bay Area; University of California History)--may contain additional information on this subject.

### First Series

Arnstein, Lawrence	<u>Community Service in California Public Health and Social Welfare.</u> 1964
Bocqueraz, Leon	<u>Finding of the Drake Plate.</u> 1956
Braden, Amy Steinhart	<u>Child Welfare and Community Service.</u> 1965
Coggins, Herbert L.	<u>From Horatio Alger to Eugene Debs.</u> 1956
Farquhar, Francis P.	<u>Accountancy, Mountaineering, and the National Parks.</u> 1960
Graves, Roy D.	<u>Index to Roy D. Graves Photograph Collection.</u> 1964
Hornitos, Oldtimers	<u>Life in a Mining Town.</u> 1954
Mariposa Oldtimers	<u>Mariposa Reminiscences.</u> 1956
Maytas, Jennie	<u>Jennie Maytas and the ILGWU.</u> 1957
Norris, Kathleen	<u>An Interview with Kathleen Norris.</u> 1959
Olney, Mary McLean	<u>Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California, 1880-1895.</u> 1963
Richardson, Leon J.	<u>Berkeley Culture, University of California Highlights, and University Extension, 1892-1960.</u> 1962

Second Series

Crowley, Thomas	<u>Recollections of the San Francisco Waterfront.</u> 1967
Lehman, Benjamin	<u>Recollections and Reminiscences of Life in the Bay Area from 1920 Onward.</u> 1968
Levison, Alice Gerstle	<u>Family Reminiscences.</u> 1967
Lewis, Oscar	<u>Literary San Francisco.</u> 1965
Martinez, Elsie Whitaker	<u>San Francisco Bay Area Writers and Artists.</u> 1964 (Completed, 1968)
McLaughlin, Emma Moffat	<u>A Life in Community Service.</u> 1968
Turner, Ethel Duffy	<u>Writers and Revolutionists.</u> 1967

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewers: Willa K. Baum, head, Regional Oral History Office.  
Karl Kortum, director, San Francisco Maritime Museum.

Mr. Kortum was asked to assist as a co-interviewer because of his extensive knowledge of the San Francisco waterfront. During the past twelve years he has interviewed scores of seafaring men and waterfront figures with a view to creating on tape an oral record of the last days of sail as well as the days of steam schooners and the coastwise passenger trade.

Research and  
Planning:

Recommendations that Tom Crowley be interviewed came from Sam Kagel, Professor of Law, and James D. Hart, Professor of English, University of California at Berkeley, and from James deT. Abajian, librarian, California Historical Society.

Mr. Crowley consented to the interview in May 1963. He asked that before the interviewing begin, Mrs. Baum read over the scrapbooks held at the Crowley Launch and Tugboat Company, Pier 32, and the Red Stacks office, Pier 25, San Francisco. Mrs. Baum spent several days at each location. Mr. Crowley was then working at Pier 32 and would stop by the conference room where she was working to point out interesting items in the scrapbooks.

Captain W. J. Darragh, superintendent of Red Stacks since it became a Crowley business, was very hospitable, offering coffee and advice, and inviting Mrs. Baum to study the tugboat situation at firsthand by taking a ride on a tug. That trip, with Captain Allen Clark at the helm and Robert Barrazi assisting, was a most enjoyable part of the research.

An outline was then submitted to Mr. Crowley. Before starting the interviewing, he further suggested that Mrs. Baum look over several family scrapbooks at his home at 30 Florence Street, and this was done in July 1963. Mr. Crowley's home atop a high hill



affords a panoramic view of the Bay; a pair of powerful binoculars on the coffee table punctuated Captain Darragh's report that at any time one of the many offices of the Crowley enterprises could expect a call from Tom Crowley, Sr., asking just what that Crowley boat was doing out there in the Bay. Mr. Crowley always kept a close eye on all of his operations.

A shortage of funds made it necessary to postpone the interviewing at that time and the work was not continued until fall, 1965.

Time and  
Setting of  
Interviews:

Seven interviews were held weekly on Monday afternoons at two o'clock and lasted about two hours each. October 11, October 18, October 25, 1965--Mrs. Baum, interviewer.  
November 1, November 8, 1965--Mr. Kortum and Mrs. Baum, interviewers.  
November 23, 1965--Mr. Kortum, interviewer.

All interviews were held in Mr. Crowley's office at 260 California Street. This was one large room, furnished with a very large roll top desk and a conference table and chairs. At the front of the office near the door were the desk, files, and office equipment of the young man who served as Mr. Crowley's assistant, and he was present but engaged in his bookkeeping during all of the interviews. Occasionally one or another old friend from the maritime world would stop in--they seemed to have offices in the same building--to see if Mr. Crowley would accompany them to lunch or to some meeting. Otherwise the only persons present were Mr. Crowley and the interviewers.

Conduct of  
the  
Interviews:

About a four-page chronological-topical outline of Mr. Crowley's career was sent to him prior to beginning the interviews. In addition, a letter was sent to him each week setting out in a paragraph or two what the subjects were to be for the up-coming interview.

The interviews did not strictly follow the outline--

one idea led to another. Sometimes different aspects of the same event were discussed at different sessions; when this occurred the two accounts were fitted together in the final manuscript.

Mr. Crowley was very cooperative in the work and obviously enjoyed telling his memories of the old days. Had funds permitted, he would have been willing to spend more time on this enterprise.

In November Mr. Crowley had just been informed that the May Day Pictorial News, a monthly San Francisco maritime publication, was dedicating the December 1965 issue to Tom Crowley, "Dean of the Tugboat Industry," on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Mr. Crowley was very pleased about this and the maritime social events that went along with this honor. A few pages from this Crowley issue are included in the appendix.

Editing:

Transcribing and editing were delayed for two years for financial reasons. In the summer of 1967 Mrs. Baum went over the transcripts, combined repeated stories when necessary, arranged the material in chronological-topical order, and chaptered the manuscript.

The first chapter was sent to Mr. Crowley in September 1967, and subsequently two more chapters. Mr. Crowley looked over the material and made a few additions, but at age 92 he found the work burdensome and asked if someone else could check over the rest.

The manuscript was turned over to Harlan Soeten, curator of the San Francisco Maritime Museum, who went over it and added notes (indicated by H.S.) on points that were unclear. He also checked names of persons and firms where possible.

Mr. Kortum went over the interview he had done alone.

Willa Baum

15 July 1968  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley

## CHILDHOOD DAYS ON THE SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT, 1875-1890

### Family Background

Baum: Let's begin with your family. Your father had been a Whitehall boatman? I'm talking about your real father, not your stepfather.

Crowley: Well, they all came out. Almost all those fellows were sailors in ships themselves until they got here. Then they went into business for themselves.

Baum: How did your father get here?

Crowley: He came around the Horn in a deep-water ship.

Baum: Now David Crowley is the name of your stepfather, isn't it? What was the name of your real father?

Crowley: John Bannon.

Baum: Where did he come from?

Crowley: They were all from Ireland, but I don't know what particular place he came from. However, my stepfather came from County Cork. And my mother came from County Clare.

Baum: How did your mother get here?

Crowley: She came out from New York by steamer in the Castle Garden,

Crowley: you know, they went through that Imuring Station. Then she came out here afterwards. She had a sister out here.

Baum: How old was she when she came?

Crowley: Oh, she was quite young.

Baum: Do you know why she came?

Crowley: Well, it was to leave Ireland.

Baum: Those were the famine days, weren't they?

Crowley: Yes, it was a big thing. There was a big avalanche of Irish came over and then later the Italians because it was a better country to live in and they could live easier and better.

Baum: And your mother came alone to meet her sister here?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: That takes quite a bit of courage for a young girl to do.

Crowley: They all did the same thing. The sister before her did the same thing, of course. Came in a steamer, landed in New York, and then came out here by rail.

Baum: By rail. Oh, she came across country by rail. What did she use for money? Was the family able to pay her passage?

Crowley: I don't know how she did it. They used to borrow and do funny things to take care of their things.

Baum: That must have been awfully hard for those Irish people to get over here. And your father shipped out as a sailor?

Crowley: Both of them, yes, came out as sailors.

Baum: Then you were born in December...

Crowley: 1875, yes.

Baum: Did you have any older brothers or sisters?

Crowley: I had a sister named Mary.

Baum: You were second in the family?

Crowley: Yes. Then later when my mother married Crowley I had two stepbrothers and one stepsister.

Baum: I read somewhere that your father died after being out in a boat too long. Is that right?

Crowley: Well, you know in those days they used to contract TB, and it lasted two or three years. It was a long thing and doctors did not know much about it. Whenever they got that, it lingered along for two or three years.

Baum: So he had TB. I know that a lot of people did. Was that common for the sailors?

Crowley: No, not so much for the sailors. You see, they were aboard ships and they got clear fresh air, whereas here in the city you would not. There was a lot of smog and pollution that we knew nothing about in those days.

Baum: I thought in those days the situation was better than now.

Crowley: Well, we did not know it. As far as those days were concerned, we would never dream that air could hurt you. Those people that had TB, they used to go to the gas works, there was tar or some damned thing there that they breathed the fumes of. They said that it was good for their lungs. It

Crowley: was later that doctors had remedies for TB. They don't seem to have TB so much any more.

Baum: I never heard of breathing a special gas.

Crowley: It was not a gas; it was the fumes from the tar.

Baum: What was your stepfather's occupation? He was a Whitehall boatman too?

Crowley: Yes, his activities were devoted to the butcher shops. He worked for the Golden Shore Market. He would be outside of the Heads all the time bringing in incoming ships to get the business from them.

Baum: Did the ships buy their supplies from men who were waiting in the boats, or would they go out and shop around?

Crowley: No, they would not shop around. They would give him the order. Then he would get it in here. Then he gave it to a boat which had a way of delivering it to the vessel in the stream. The order was usually about fifty pounds of beef with vegetables daily.

Baum: Fifty pounds of beef! That is not very much. Was it a small ship, or didn't they feed them?

Crowley: This was every day. The British ships, you know how they did, they had rations. A man got his whack and that is all. They measured it out to them. "You get your whack and no more." That was an English expression.

Baum: I've heard that they got their grog. Or some type of alcoholic

Baum: beverage.

Crowley: Yes, they got that too. They just got a certain amount of rum.

### Telegraph Hill Neighborhood

Baum: Where did you live in those days when your father was going out for the Golden Shore Market?

Crowley: I was living right at the north end of Telegraph Hill. That was Bay Street. There was a dry dock nearby. All that was filled land.

Baum: And it was not filled yet?

Crowley: The way that they took care of it was to build a big bulkhead all along the waterfront. Then they filled it in from Telegraph Hill and other hills. Why, the water went up as far as Montgomery Street. [Long before Mr. Crowley's time. By 1860 the fill was about out to the present line in this area. H.S.]

Baum: You mentioned a long time ago that they were blasting Telegraph Hill and you were in danger of getting your house blasted with rocks.

Crowley: When we were up there, they excavated so close to the houses that they nearly went over the side; then they took them and

Crowley: moved them around the block and put them on a flat place there. Every once in awhile they would set off a blast and the rocks would go up and go through the house.

Kortum: What was that firm--Gray, wasn't it?

Crowley: Gray was one of them. He was a tough bird. All of them were the same. I forget the name of the contractor that blew that up two or three times.

Baum: There was no protection for the homeowners?

Crowley: No, if those rocks came down and went through your roof there was nothing you could do. You couldn't even get them to pay for it.

Baum: The city's attitude in not placing any restriction too...

Crowley: Well, there wasn't anything tougher than Gray Brothers.

Baum: Why were they doing all this cutting and blasting on Telegraph Hill?

Crowley: They were cutting down Telegraph Hill for two purposes: one was for filling in. Contractors did that. The other was to ballast the ship. You know we used to grow a lot of grain, and sometimes you would have a shortage of it. There would be such a flock of ships come for it that there would not be anything for them to do, and as they were light they could not go to sea unless they were ballasted. Therefore, they used to use a lot of Telegraph Hill for ballast for ships going away from here. Then other times they would lay here.



Crowley: They would be laid up here for a year until the next season. July was usually the month that they would load. They laid up in Mission Bay and they laid up in Sausalito. They came over for a grain cargo and sometimes they just waited for it. And sometimes something would go wrong, that is, the rate [freight H.S.] might not be high enough and they would not take it.

You know, we had a great deal of the grain coming into Port Costa. And the ships used to load up there and that is where all the grain towns were.

Baum: What can you remember about when you were a little boy? What was the neighborhood like? What did you kids do?

Crowley: Well, I did not do much because as soon as I got out of school I went to work as a boatboy.

Baum: I mean when you were smaller than that. What did kids do for fun?

Crowley: I don't know. You would float around somewhere or another. See, the place was not filled in. There were many ponds around. And there were boats, and we would play on the boats.

Crowley: In fact I remember one time when there were no boats available. Some fellow got a trunk. Then two or three others went home and got a trunk. Then we would get into it and sail right across the prevailing westerly wind. We had winds then.

Baum: Were the fathers of most of the kids around your neighborhood

Baum: connected with boating?

Crowley: Not much. There were various things that they did. There were lots of Italians there too. In those days the Italians used to make their own wine. You would see big wagonloads of grapes going to their place. Then when they got them in, they had big tubs, and they stamped the grapes to get the juice. We used to call it "foot juice."

Baum: Was there any ill feeling between the Irish and the Italians?

Crowley: Oh no. Sometimes the kids would fight about their nationality, the best of them would, but nothing to speak of. But there were Chinese there that would take a hell of a beating. Everybody was against them. "The Chinese must go!" We had an agitator around here by the name of Kearney, Dennis Kearney. He used to make a lot of speeches with his rag. [newspaper ? H.S.] "The Chinese must go! The Chinese are doing this! The Chinese are doing that!" So the Chinese were here in the laundry business and one or two other things--they used to peddle vegetables around. Many times the boys would take and throw rocks at them.

Baum: I suppose your mother stayed home and took care of the family? She did not work?

Crowley: That's true.

Baum: And was church a big part of your family life?

Crowley: Well, they were all strong for it. We went to St. Francis Church up there. Yes, religion played a big part. Every one

Crowley: of them were Catholics; the Irish and the Italians were Catholics too.

Baum: Were there special religious holidays that we don't have now?

Crowley: We did have saint's days and one thing or another, special days. We almost all went to church.

Baum: They even got you boys going to church? Did your father go to church too?

Crowley: I don't remember that. No, I don't think that he did.

Baum: You went to Garfield School?

Crowley: Yes, Garfield Primary School. That is up on Telegraph Hill.

Baum: Was it a good school? Did you like it?

Crowley: It was all right. A man by the name of True was the principal  
\*  
of the school. I will never forget one time, I was in a class and the teacher had a husband who went to sea in a whaler. About the day that he was due, she let me cut the day so that I could go down and find out if there was anything new about the whaler coming in.

Baum: So even the school was sort of interested in what was going on down at the waterfront? Do you remember any classes that you took there especially?

Crowley: No, we just took reading and writing, and that was about all.

Baum: Were you a very good, interested student, or were you glad to get out of school?

Crowley: I liked it, but we did not have anything, and we had to do

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\* Charles F. True was the principal of the Union Grammar School at this time.

Crowley: something. It was a necessity. So I went to work for one of the sailor boarding houses, where I was a boatboy, in 1890.

Baum: 1890. Well, that would make you not quite fifteen until the end of the year.

Crowley: No, I was not even fifteen; I was more like thirteen or fourteen.

Baum: And you were a boatboy, not a runner?

Crowley: Oh, no. That was a different occupation altogether.

A WHITEHALL BOATMAN, 1890-1904

A Boatboy for Wilson's Sailors' Boarding House

Baum: You were telling me about the Whitehall boats before we turned on the tape recorder. What was the name of the man you said brought them from England?

Crowley: Well, I don't know who brought them from England, but they went to New York in the first instance. There it was a very important thing. It was the only communication that they had from the city to these vessels coming in, but that was in the early days. They had to have men who understood boating to handle them.

Baum: So they were invented in England?

Crowley: Yes, they originated in England.

Baum: And why were they called Whitehalls?

Crowley: Well, that was the place that it was. It was on the Thames River. [According to Howard Chappelle the "Whitehall" boat originated in New York and was named for Whitehall Street where they were built. H.S.]

Baum: What did they look like?

Crowley: They were eighteen feet long and four feet eight inches wide. They had a center part in them in which two men could row. They also had sails that they could use when there was a tail-wind.

Baum: Were they flat?

Crowley: No, they were round.

Baum: And two men was their maximum?

Crowley: Oh, no. They could carry a lot of men, but that was all that could row the boat, was two men. Many times there was only one.

Baum: And did they use them for cargo or just to carry men?

Crowley: Well, they used them here in this Bay for everything that a ship needed out in the stream. In fact the vessels came here and always first anchored out in the Bay. And then the communication with them was always done through Whitehall Boats.

There were boatmen who worked for themselves. Then there were boatmen who worked for the stevedoring companies, and the supply companies. They solicited business for the different produce companies. Then the sailors, sailors' boarding houses, they had boats and they had runners and a boatboy to take them out there.

Baum: The runners and the boat boys were separate? Different fellows?

Crowley: Different fellows, sure. The boatboy was some man who was

Crowley: familiar with the boats. The runners weren't, in fact, when they went out in a boat they always had three or four flasks of whiskey to keep aboard the ship. Then the police were always aboard the ship too, but they could not interfere with the crew until she was anchored and the sails were furled up. Then they would usually have a conclave. Then the runners would tell them some kind of a cock-and-bull story about how fine it would be if they could come ashore and get a job at forty-five dollars a month on the coast. They were only getting fifteen dollars there. ["There"--on their present deep-water ship. "On the coast" meant on coastwise vessels. H.S.]

Baum: Fifteen dollars a month!

Crowley: On the British ships, yes, and less on the other foreign ships. There were British, German, French.

Baum: About what year was that? Was that when you were a boatboy, or before?

Crowley: Well, as to what year it was--it started in early, way before my time.

Kortum: When did you start with Whitehall boats?

Crowley: I started in in 1890, but I had been around the boats a great deal because I had gone to school up on Telegraph Hill. After school was out in the afternoon I went down to the docks and I was in the boats all the time. I also had a father who was a boatman. But he was not a boatman taking people back and forth

Crowley: to the ships. He was working steadily monthly for the Golden Shore Market. He was outside, beyond the Bar, and he had an assistant with him. They had keen competition, and they used to compete out here with one another to get to a ship first because they usually got the business that way.

Kortum: That was your dad. His first name was what?

Crowley: David.

Kortum: So you took to boating naturally.

Crowley: Well, because prior to that I used to be with the boats a great deal. I used to go down to the Vallejo Street Wharf, where they were all the time. I would do something on them. I stayed with the boating. In fact the first job that I got was up there at the sailor boarding house on Pacific Street. Wilson. I used to take the runner out to the ship.

Kortum: Wilson, what was his first name, do you remember?

Crowley: No, but he had a wife that was more of a nag than he was.

Kortum: What was her name?

Crowley: Mrs. Wilson, he used to call her. I don't know any other name.

Kortum: They had a boarding house where?

Crowley: The Franklin Hotel on Pacific near Battery.

Kortum: Do you remember in that vicinity the Old Ship Saloon?

Crowley: Yes, this wasn't far away. That Old Ship stayed there for a long time, didn't it?

Kortum: Yeah, I can still see the name on the side of the building.



Kortum: That was Henry Klee. Did you know the proprietor was Henry Klee?

Crowley: No.

Kortum: So your task on the Whitehall boat was to take the runner out to inward bound ships and try to talk the crew into leaving?

Crowley: Yes, we "bamboozled them with booze."

Kortum: How long did you keep that up?

Crowley: About a year or so.

Kortum: What did you do? Did you stay in the boat alongside?

Crowley: I took them back and forth because the runner did not know what he was doing on a boat. That was the only way they could get out there. As a rule, I stayed down in the boat when he went up in the ship. I hated to go up there and listen to the same lies all the time. Let me tell you the talk. They would go up there and tell them, "I don't see why you want to stay aboard a ship like this. You are getting fifteen dollars a month. You go ashore with me and I can put you on the coast for forty-five dollars a month. You get good food and everything else." Then the runner would give them a couple of shots. Being on a voyage as long as they had been, the liquor would hit them quickly. Then they would come ashore half stewed and go over to the house and get more.

Crowley: After I worked for the sailors' boarding house for awhile I then managed to dig up eighty dollars, and I bought a Whitehall boat and got into the business of boating.

Baum: Now let me see, you went to work for the sailors' boarding house when you were about fourteen? And did you quit school then?

Crowley: Yes. Yes, you had to quit school.

Baum: So that was the end of your formal education?

Crowley: Oh yes.

#### Boatboy on the Farallone Islands

Crowley: And I lived on the Farallones once.

Baum: What were you doing out there?

Crowley: I don't know. The Farallone Islands were twenty-four or twenty-five miles out, [beyond the Heads H.S.] and they had a lighthouse and the lightkeepers were there. Those men did very well--they killed seals, and they had the murre's eggs. That island produced tremendous numbers of eggs, and the fishermen came out there.

Baum: Was your family living out there on the Farallones?

Crowley: No, I was out there alone with the lightkeepers. As I said, they used to kill seals, then there were certain things that

Crowley: they used to take from them and sell. For instance, a seal's whiskers were ivory, which sold in Chinatown. Then there were other things that they got out of it too, liver and one thing or another.

Kortum: How many men were engaged in this seal activity?

Crowley: The whole lighthouse crew. I think there were three or four men. They were making a darned sight more money than anyone knew. They got me to come out. I went out and I lived with them. I had a boat there. When they wanted to send something into the city, they would give it to me. I would connect with some vessel going in, ask them to mail it, and that was that. Then the vessels that came out I would ascertain if they had any daily papers aboard and could they give them to me. So I was furnishing them mail and newspapers.

Kortum: You were kind of the boatman in attendance. It must have been kind of tricky navigating those little boats.

Crowley: Well, those vessels came rather close to the islands because that is what they headed for coming from sea. Then they would come in to the Bay from there.

Baum: How old were you when you lived out there?

Crowley: About fifteen or sixteen.

Kortum: How long did you live out there?

Crowley: Three or four months.

Kortum: Did you live with one of the men?

Crowley: Yes, they all had families and one thing or another.

Kortum: You found this a pleasant stay out there?

Crowley: Oh, yes, because out there there were a lot of things. For example, that island was covered with murre, you know that is the bird that gives the eggs that are called "Farallone eggs." The whole island was covered with eggs. Then the fishermen used to go out there to gather the eggs. They would bring them into San Francisco to sell to the bakeries and everybody else. That is what they used here for quite a long time. They were bigger than a duck egg.

Kortum: Was this during the time that you were out there?

Crowley: Oh, sure.

Kortum: That must have taken some scrambling around to get those eggs.

Crowley: Well, they had a shoe and they took the sole off of it and put mat on the soles. They could count on the lumps and that is it. We had our own shoes.

#### A Whitehall Boatman

Crowley: Then afterwards, as I said, I managed to get eighty dollars and bought a Whitehall boat second-hand.

Baum: How did you get eighty dollars?

Crowley: It was a hard time digging it up, I'll tell you that. You see I had a few dollars of my own because when I went to work for the sailors' boarding house I got five dollars a week. Then I saved something out of that.

Baum: Did your brothers go into boating as soon as they were old enough too?

Crowley: Yes, that is the stepbrothers. Otherwise they worked for me.

Baum: You got your boat and then they worked for you?

Crowley: Well, I worked that boat alone until I got more boats, then about 1904 I got a launch. Then we operated launches.

Baum: You started this business about 1890? You started out as a boatboy. How long did it take you before you got your Whitehall boat?

Crowley: I got that shortly after I went to work at the sailors' boarding house--about a year. There was not much in it; I could make more money if I got out and hustled myself.

I then engaged in the transportation of passengers to and from ships anchored in the stream. I was a boatman now, not a boatboy. The difference was this--the sailor boarding house had Whitehall boats of their own and they had a runner who went out to solicit the business, but he did not know anything about the boat so you had to take them out there, as did all the other boarding houses.

Baum: So when you worked for the sailors' boarding house you were

Baum: a boatboy, but when you got your own boat you were a boatman?

Then you had your own business?

Crowley: Yes, I started in there with the Whitehall boats for several years. Had three or four Whitehall boats working at that time.

Baum: Let's see. In 1890 you were fifteen, so you must have been around seventeen when you started your own business. And you got three or four boats within a short time?

Crowley: Yes, because we were doing fairly good business and I had one or two other helpers so I could get the other boats.

Baum: How did you solicit business?

Crowley: Sometimes I would let the helpers stay taking care of the business. I would go out in a boat to the Heads; I would meet a ship out there and get the business from him. Then later I had my two stepbrothers engaged in the business of taking people back and forth. One brother was David and the other was John; they were both younger than I. I guess they were five to seven years younger than I; John was the youngest.

Baum: Did they do like you did--go to the grammar school and then quit when they were about fourteen to go to work?

Crowley: Yes, Garfield Primary School. We all went there.

Baum: So you had your two stepbrothers. You must have had some other men working for you too.

Crowley: Yes, I had a big German named Dutch Albert. By this time I had an office on the bulkhead of Vallejo Street Wharf. I had a man who lived and slept there so if there was any call, he was there.

Baum: If he got a call, how would he get a boat?

Crowley: The boat was laying right there. We had two or three boats by that time, and we had them tied up on the bulkhead.

You know, when those ships came here we used to make it our business to go and solicit the business on the ship. The captain had to go back and forth. Many times he would use his own boat, but many times a great many of them would use the shore boat. You know, when they came ashore, they never knew when they were going back. They could not have their boat come in with a lot of apprentices who might have to lay there all night, so they would use the boatmen to take them out. We used to have our hands full too, because when we took one ashore in the morning we would ask him what time in the evening he intended to go back out to his ship. He would say, "five o'clock or six o'clock." Then you would go there to wait, and you would wait until one or two o'clock in the morning. There was nothing that you could do about it.

Baum: I should think that you would have a lot of business like that at night.

Crowley: The only men that could go out to the ship were either

1. In pursuit of business, Whitehall boatmen were indefatigable... Competition was often so keen that Whitehall boats were rowed outside the Golden Gate and waited for hours, sometimes all night, for arriving ships--one man rowing, one bailing. Boats carried a mast and sail which could be used on occasion. The last picture shows them on the thwarts to the left of the men; in this view the men have shipped their oars and are standing down the bay under sail. William Muir Collection. (Courtesy San Francisco Maritime Museum.)

2. The Whitehall boat was the water taxi of the nineteenth century... These sturdy, handsome craft did yeoman service in transporting men to and from ships in the stream before the day of steam and gasoline launches. When a deep-water ship entered the bay, she would be besieged by ship chandlers, boarding house runners, saloon advertisers, repairmen, and the like coming alongside in Whitehall boats. William Muir Collection. (Courtesy San Francisco Maritime Museum.)

3. Dave Crowley and a Whitehall boat.

4. "Running the lines" with a Whitehall boat. Photo probably in San Francisco Bay.

5. The Crowley men.



Crowley: businessmen or the captain of the ship. That was all; none of the rest could come and go. The sailors were not free to come and go. They were not allowed.

Baum: You mean after making that long trip over, they were not allowed to go ashore? No wonder they jumped off.

Crowley: They could never get ashore until the ship docked; then they could get ashore.

Baum: How did they get you when you were out in the water? How did they flag you down?

Crowley: Well, they had a red flag which in the code was the letter B, so they would hoist that red flag. Anytime that flag went up, anyone would make a rush for it, but if you had the business on the ship, why it was a little different. They could not do that.

Baum: Did you go out and try to get orders for stores or supplies or that sort of thing?

Crowley: Well, I did for the short time that I worked for my step-father going out there because that was quite a hazardous job. We used to go out there to the light ship and that was about ten or twelve miles outside of Cliff House.

Baum: I read that you had a little branch at Meiggs Wharf. Is that right?

Crowley: Yes, it is. It was at the time that I was at the Vallejo Street Wharf. It was a lookout station. We had to go

Crowley: there frequently, so we had a shack there with bunks in it and one thing or another. We maintained it for many years. That was where you got new business from; you started out from there. The Marine Exchange was there, and they would always tell you when a ship was coming, and there was plenty of competition.

Baum: What was the competition like?

Crowley: They were the same thing: they had Whitehall boats, and they were doing the same as we were doing. You had to be a pretty good man to get out to the ships before the others got the business. Sometimes a fellow would be lazy, or he would not know. It was kind of a tough game.

Baum: How many Whitehall boats did you get before you switched over to launches?

Crowley: We had about three or four Whitehall boats. We would go from Vallejo down to Meiggs Wharf. We would go down there by boat. If we had to go down against the tide it would take us more than two hours, but if we went down with the tide it would take us less than an hour.

Baum: How did you get news of in-coming vessels?

Crowley: There was an observer out there at Point Lobos in those days. He had a big glass there and could see ships at a long distance. Johnny Hyslop, I think his name was. Being familiar with it, he could then make a report and forward it to the

Crowley: Marine Exchange, which was a merchant's exchange in those days. Then that was spread out right away. You could then see all the boats go out rowing or sailing whenever the wind was good. They would go right along as far as they could. There was keen competition for the in-coming vessels.

We all lived down at Meiggs Wharf in those days. We slept there in a shack and ate there. There was nothing way down where the Fisherman's Wharf is now. There was not anything there in those days except Meiggs Wharf. There was a lot of Whitehall boats there. There were some vessels coming in with big catches and big pay days.

There was a couple of fellows down there that were there day and night just for this particular purpose. Sometimes during the night they would get the message the ship was coming in. Then they ran down to the boat landing where the boat was and they got their boats straightened out, but they stepped over to the other boats and threw the oars overboard so when their opposition came down they did not have any oars in their boat. They could not move and they could not pick them up, so these guys got a big start on them.

Baum: Was there any plan made to divide the number of ships coming in so that they did not have to compete so much, or was it always competitive?

Crowley: No, there was never such a thing as that. Anyhow, we would

Crowley: start early in the morning, sometimes before five o'clock.

We would go out with the tide, so it would be tough to try to get out on the flood tide. You would have to row all the way out. Then you could not get out around Fort Point because the tide was too strong. We used to have a big hook in the boat, and we would hook many steamers. We would go out with them. When we got far enough out we would let go and go about our business.

Kortum: Did you stay alongside or tow?

Crowley: That was back from the stern. In fact, that is the way we got ships outside--we would hook them. Then we always had twenty-five or thirty fathoms of rope in the boat. We would slack it out because the hook was about as thick as my thumb. It was about ten or eleven feet long. There was a big hook on it so that we could hook onto the ship, then play out the line and stop her just where we wanted her.

Kortum: Say you were hooked onto a steam schooner that is leaving port. She is going out, and you want to get a lift out to the bar. Steam schooners coming up and down the Bay underway, and you were out close to it. They don't stop for you or anything?

Crowley: No, but sometimes they were very decent. They would stand back, and then we would throw them a line. They would take it around the bit and tie it. Many times we used to do that too.

Kortum: In that case you would not use the iron hook?

Crowley: No.

Kortum: Then you would give them a hail, and they would toss you off when you got out as far as you wanted?

Crowley: Yes. Then on the other hand, there were the tugboats. There were the Black Stacks--Spreckles--and the Red Stacks. They had fierce competition; many times we would catch one of those fellows going to sea.

Kortum: They again would take your line and tow you astern.

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: That must be quite a wild ride behind a fast moving steam schooner.

Crowley: Sometimes it was because a steam schooner was not as fast as a tugboat. Some of the tugs had a fairly good clean stern. Some of the others were designed in such a way that there was always a damned lot of water around you.

Kortum: In other words, you were riding in the wake of the ship?

Crowley: Yes. We would go quite a way. We would go out to the bar where the pilot boats were out of bounds. Sometimes we would go to the Farallones.

Kortum: When you left the shack of Meiggs Wharf in the early hours of the morning you got a tow out, say behind a tugboat while that tug was going out to pick up the sailing ship?

Crowley: She was going out prospecting the same as we were. She was

Crowley: hoping to find a sailing ship. She may have had a report that some ship passed Point Reyes or gotten a report from Johnny Hyslop at Point Lobos. Then they would have a race out there.

In fact, a funny thing, I remember many times the captain of the tug would make a deal with the captain of the ship, that sometimes he would have competition so keen that he would agree to tow the ship in for free if he would give him his inside work.

Baum: When you were a boatman all those fellows would have to be single men, wouldn't they? It would ruin your family life to have to live down in a shack on the wharf.

Crowley: That is another funny thing. We would come in many nights all wet because on those boats you know how it is. We would go to bed in our wet clothes. You know why, because it was a damn sight easier to go to bed in your wet clothes when you are so tired than to get up and put on wet clothes. You would have them dry when you got up in the morning.

Baum: And nobody died of pneumonia? Those must have been tough young fellows.

Kortum: Out there on the bar there is a tugboat and say he is approaching a square-rigger trying to get his tugboat business. Then say you are approaching at the same time trying to get his butcher business...

Crowley: You know when the tug is towing us we know when to let go so as to go alongside the ship by her bow.

Kortum: So you went alongside while she was still out in the ocean.

Crowley: Oh sure.

Kortum: Then in the course of the day as the ship was towed in did your boat stay alongside the ship?

Crowley: Well, if that was the only ship and we wanted to come in, we would come in with her, but many times there were other ships out there, sometimes eighteen or twenty ships would come in during one day. We had to hop around a good deal. We did not have to go aboard; you could talk to the captain. He would be on the poop, and you would be on the quarter. You could hook him, drop down as far as the quarter, and communicate with him, get his order, and everything else.

Kortum: You would hook him so you were not rowing all the time.

Crowley: Oh no. What we had to do to seal the thing was to get an order for the first day's quantity that he needed. He needed meat, vegetables, potatoes, and one thing or another. The usual thing was about fifty pounds a day. So if you got the first order, you could get the rest.

Kortum: The order was verbal? The captain would say, "Okay, now when I get in, bring me out..."

Crowley: No, he would bring the steward up, and we would get the order from him, just what he needed and so forth. You

Crowley: would have an order of not less than fifty or seventy-five pounds of meat, a couple of sacks of potatoes, and three or four bags of vegetables. That would be a daily supply.

Kortum: This did not pertain to the coastal vessel because they had their local...

Crowley: Let me tell you another thing. Those Whitehall men who went out there boarding ships, they never even carried a bottle of water on the boat. They depended on getting their food or whatever they needed from the pilot boat, the tug-boat, or the incoming ships. Well, you could not very well take care of any kind of food on a Whitehall boat. They were lively, and there was no place to put it.

Kortum: You didn't even take a sandwich along?

Crowley: No, I always thought if I did and another fellow saw me, he would think that I was a softie.

Baum: Did any of the Whitehall boatmen get killed?

Crowley: They got drowned. It was fairly dangerous, but you had to have experience.

Baum: They would have to be pretty strong healthwise too.

Crowley: I will never forget. I had cut away from my father and when I got a Whitehall boat of my own, which I paid eighty dollars for, I was independent. I was an organization by myself. I used to get ships' business, take the captains back and forth, and so forth.



Crowley: There was a coasting ship came in, and she was anchored down at Meiggs Wharf. I brought the captain ashore; it was down there at Vallejo Street. Then he came down in the afternoon, and I took him down and put him aboard the ship. I came back and figured from the time I left until the time I came back was three hours: one dollar. So I met Captain Matson; he was nothing more than a sailor in those days. He said to me, "Say, if you give me a rate, I'll give you all the business."

I said, "Listen, I just went down with your captain to the Mohican or some damned vessel like that. I was three hours on the job and all I got was a dollar. I can't do that." What he was trying to get me was a fifty-cent raise.

Kortum: You couldn't do much on that. You bought your own Whitehall boat from whom?

Crowley: A fellow by the name of McClean. He had been a boarding house fellow, but then it folded up, so he sold me the boat.

Kortum: He had been operating a boat for a boarding house?

Crowley: Yes, for his own boarding house. Then I was in business like a cabbie.

Kortum: Would you say that you rowed the boat half the time?

Crowley: Whichever was the best advantage at getting it out there and back. We had to row with the tides against us many times; if we could sail, that would be fine. We always

Crowley: carried a sail.

Kortum: And they had a center board.

Crowley: Yes, they had a center board. You could not have done anything with a keel boat.

Kortum: Did you have a piece of canvas to keep your passenger sheltered to some extent?

Crowley: Nobody did that. We had oilskins in the boats.

Kortum: How did you go about finding your own business--you just solicited ships, the same style?

Crowley: Yes, every time the ships were coming in we would go out there and get them or meet them. We would go to sea to get them if we needed them bad. If we had several to attend to, why then we would stay in. We operated a little different from the rest of them. Most of those fellows depended upon their own boat and their own power, but I got a couple of fellows, a big Dutchman by the name of Albert was one of them, who had been a cook on the Red Stacks. I got him there. I gave him a shack to live in on Vallejo Street to wait for the captains who came in at night. Then he would take them out.

Kortum: So Albert in effect was your first employee.

Crowley: That is right.

Kortum: Then did you get a second Whitehall boat?

Crowley: Oh yes. I got three or four of them.

Kortum: How many shacks were there down at Meiggs Wharf that formed the living quarters for the Whitehall boatmen?

Crowley: Well, there were boarding houses down there too. I guess there were about seven or eight. There were two or three bunks in each one.

Kortum: Was that kind of an adventurous life for a young man? Would you get fish food from Fisherman's Wharf which was nearby?

Crowley: There was no Fisherman's Wharf in those days.

Kortum: With the seawall.

Baum: Where did you fellows eat when you lived down in the shack on Meiggs Wharf? Were there restaurants around there, or did you cook?

Crowley: There was a saloon or something, because in those days the saloons always had free lunch there.

Kortum: Do you remember which saloon was down there? [Crowley looking at Kemble book]

Crowley: Farrelly. There are a couple of Whitehall boatmen. That is Desmond; I would know him right away. He used to work for the Chinaman, Ah Sing, he used to go out to the ships and bring the washing ashore.

Kortum: That is the picture on page thirty-two of Kemble's book.

Crowley: This fellow is an oldtimer. He was up around Third Street. He was not much though. It was all smooth water up there. He was not a boatman like Peterson or the rest of the fellows.

Kortum: You mean he did not go out very far?

Crowley: No, he stayed up there taking them back and forth to barges in the Bay.

Baum: You mentioned a Chinese laundry. Was that part of his soliciting to get the laundry?

Crowley: Ah Sing was a Chinaman that made a specialty. He had his own boat and a boatman. He made a specialty of going and bringing the ship's washing ashore and then taking it back when it was dry.

Baum: Was there much competition on that, or did he have most of it?

Crowley: He had most of it, but every once in awhile some competitor would spring up and give him a little time, but he managed to get through.

Kortum: These two pictures on the top of page thirty-two show his boatman, Desmond. Was he around here for a long time?

Crowley: There was quite a family of them, yes. There was this fellow and his brother and two others who were some relation.

Kortum: And "Humpback," is that a nickname for somebody? You mentioned a "Humpback."

Crowley: "Humpback," he had a big hump on his back. He used to work for Levi--they were in the clothes business. Then the opposition always said to this boatman, "Here comes so-and-so's humpbacked boatman." It was not a nickname.

Kortum: Dave Crowley died quite a few years ago, didn't he?

Crowley: Yes, and Jack died too. They were stepbrothers.

Kortum: Were they also with the Whitehalls?

Crowley: They were in the business with me, yes.

Kortum: Then you developed your launch business?

Crowley: Yes, in fact they ran them for a while?

Kortum: How many Whitehall boats did you own prior to getting a gas boat?

Crowley: About three, that is all.

Kortum: And when you ran three, you operated on the basis of having a man down there to take out people in the early mornings, Dutch Albert.

Kortum: Do you remember the story you told me one time about the captain who sold the ship's copper in Australia? Was that the Olympic?

Crowley: Damned if I know. It was one of my vessels.

Kortum: It was a down east ship, a big...

Crowley: Yes, but I forget the details. That is right, the ship was down in Australia. The metal on the bottom was not any good so he took it off. Then they recoppered her; then he took the old stuff and sold it. He got a big price for it.

Kortum: You know, from the life of the boatmen, do you recall some incidents where the Whitehall boatman was drowned or injured?

Crowley: I can't recall right off hand. They had a risky business,

Crowley: but then they were all pretty clever. I don't know any incidents.

Kortum: Now in the business of the hook, you say that was about ten or twelve feet long and it had an eye on the end toward the hook. The radius was about a foot; at the other end was an eye where the rope was made fast.

Crowley: Yes, we had twenty-five fathoms of line to put on it. They came up alongside, and you hooked the vessel with it.

Baum: Oh, it was like a shepherd's crook?

Kortum: Yes, you would reach up...

Crowley: Well, you saw the stories in one of those papers that some reporter wrote about my father and called him "Hook-on" Crowley.

Kortum: Was that his nickname?

Crowley: Well, that story made him that way.

Baum: I was wondering about those Whitehall races I've heard about.

Crowley: The Whitehall race was on the Fourth of July. The city always put up prizes. We used to have Whitehall boats, yachts, fishing boats, and schooners. It used to be a big event on that day. Then the thing came down to just the Whitehall boats, and there were about twenty or twenty-five of them. They used to sail in the races, and they were all numbered, and they would black-letter the boats. They had new sails, and everything.

Baum: Where did they sail to?

Crowley: They would sail sometimes from Union Street Wharf out around Blossom Rock near Alcatraz, to Meiggs Wharf, down to Fort Point, and then back. Against the tide it was a long trip.

Baum: I understand that your father won quite a few.

Crowley: He won the races. I remember he won the championship in 1883 and 1884. I did not come into the picture until later. Then I sailed in the races, and I won in the races. In 1897 I won the first time.

There was some big event here, I forget what it was. They had a regatta because it was the big event. He won the big pennant. My father won it in 1883; then he won it in 1884, and had that placed on the flag. The mayor put up a big silver cup for this regatta, and I won it in 1897.

## SAILORS AND THEIR WAY OF LIFE

### An Unprofitable and Unpleasant Occupation

Baum: I wondered if all the sailors drank so much as said.

Crowley: Whenever they could get it. That was their downfall.

You know another funny thing. Those fellows would leave in British ships, say Liverpool or a place like that. They would sign articles on the ships--so much a month to be paid off on their return to the home port. When they got here the runners used to give them a cock-and-bull story to get them to come ashore. Then they would forfeit whatever they had earned.

They would then go to the boarding house. The next day or shortly after, they would be shipped in another ship going back to the place that they came from. The boarding house fellow, the shipping master, would get two months' salary, and many times, a bonus for shipping them in. So the two months' salary would come out of the sailor's pay. Then he would have to go into the "slop chest" to get more. Then when he got back to home port he would be in debt to the ship.



Baum: I can see how a man would get fooled on that once, but how did it happen more than one time? Were there different sailors each time? He must have lost all the money he made coming over.

Crowley: Sure. He would have to forfeit the money back. Then when he got back there the two months advance and probably the bonus would be charged against him. Then he would go into the "slop chest." They weren't too bright.

Baum: Conditions on the ships were not too good either, were they?

Crowley: No, they were pretty tough. Some of the ships were called "hellships." The worst thing in the shipping, and this includes the American ships, they always had a "buckomate," and he would raise hell with the men many times.

Baum: The cruelty that they used, was that the only method of discipline that they would understand on the ship?

Crowley: Many of those "buckomates" were just tough birds anyhow. They were hired for that purpose, but they were good sailors as well. The captains were generally pretty good men, but they had the mate to do all the tough stuff, chief officer.

When the ship got here they would go and get the mate arrested for cruelty on the high seas. Many fellows were convicted of it. It was quite a racket. In fact, as far as the sailors were concerned, they did not have sense enough to go to an attorney, but many of the attorneys made a business

Crowley: of looking those fellows up and then finding out what cruelty happened on the high seas. Then they would have the mate arrested. Then there would be a trial.

Baum: What did the attorney get out of it?

Crowley: He would get all that he could. He would rob the robber. He would get paid by the other side. Many times they would compromise, and many times they would convict the mates. Some of them went to the penitentiary for their cruelty on the high seas. They did all sorts of tricks, all sorts of cruelty.

Baum: Was that because the laws were stricter here than elsewhere that they would try to catch those "buckomates" here?

Crowley: Well, the ship was bound from New York to San Francisco. There was no other place to go to. This was the seaport.

Kortum: It was generally pretty hard though to keep the witnesses together, being seafaring men, wasn't that so? You know, to keep a crew together to testify?

Crowley: They did not keep the whole crew. They took two or three. The lawyer who was handling the case, who started it, you might say, he was the beneficiary all the way through.

Baum: Those sailors did not have any money to pay him though, did they?

Crowley: Oh no, they did not have any. They were lucky if they got a shot.

Kortum: In other words, he was taking a chance on a settlement.

Crowley: He was trying to shake them down.

Kortum: Maybe he thought they could get an out of court settlement.

Crowley: Yes, that is just what they wanted, and if they had to go all the way, they would sometimes get it.

#### Whaling--Three Years on a Whaler for One Dollar

Crowley: In the whalers--those whalers carried pretty good big crews because they had to man the boats when they went after the whales. They had a crew of about forty or fifty men aboard there. They could not get the men unless they got them from the boarding house. The boarding houses always insisted upon a bonus and so much advance in wages.

Baum: Now the boarding houses, it sounds as if some of these sailors only boarded there one day.

Crowley: Yes, but they had a good drunk. That was what they wanted and came ashore for.

I will never forget one of those fellows, he was up in the Arctic for three years. He came down and he was paid off with a dollar. He said, "Well, I did not make much but I had a good long ride."

As far as the whalers were concerned, they came out

Crowley: here from New Bedford when the Atlantic did not have any more whales. They came out here, they made this their headquarters, and they whaled up in the Arctic.

There was an outfit in New Bedford by the name of Wing Brothers. They controlled all the products that this whaling outfit brought in. That was whale oil and whale bone. Now he kept that whale bone under his control all the time. It was in a warehouse here or there. He only let it go at his certain price. In those days, women were wearing whalebone in their corsets, so there was a big demand for it. Whalebone was five dollars a pound. When the ships arrived here, it was down to nothing.

The lay would be a 150th part in the cargo they gained. There was nothing ever mentioned about the price of the product. The sailors would always be in the "slop chest" for this or that. After deducting the expenses and one thing or another, it was just a booking trick. When they figured it down and cut the price down the way they wanted it, he had nothing coming, but they had to give him a dollar to get him off the papers, [Articles H.S.] according to the law.

They always had to pay them off in something, so they would pay them off with a dollar, one dollar for this three years' work. This fellow I will never forget, he says, "You know, I had a good long ride; I did not make much, but I had

Crowley: the pleasure of the ride, three years in the Atlantic ocean."

Baum: They had to pay back what they took out of the "slop chest."  
Then the price of the Wing-controlled cargo would drop down when they came in, to such a point that their percentage was nothing.

Crowley: Yes, and they always gave them a pretty bad interest. It was figured out perfectly so that there would not be anything for them. If the ship went up and she got five or six whales, that was pretty good for the season. Sometimes they would stay up there for two or three years and forty or so whales. Well, these fellows were on a lay, and they participated in the take. They would get one whale out of 150 or 125. Well, they never caught that many.

There were two ways:

- (1) lay--what they had
- (2) the price of the stuff going down

Baum: Then this fellow Wing, he would take all the cargo.

Crowley: Yes. All the whaling was on the Atlantic side until they knocked them out. Then he would warehouse it until the price went back up. He would feed it out when he got his price and not before.

Baum: Weren't there Scandanavian whalers?

Crowley: Yes, but they did not come along this coast. Some of the Russians sometimes went into the Arctic, but not equipped

Crowley: like our boats. All these came out here because the Atlantic was fished out.

Baum: Now this sailor that you said got a nice ride for three years, and one dollar, did he go back? What would a man like that do after three years of bad experience?

Crowley: I don't know what happened to him. He might have gone back again.

Baum: They sound like pretty stupid fellows. What did you boatboys think of them? Did you think that they were pretty stupid?

Crowley: They were just like goats. You could get them to do anything. I did not have anything to do with them. I only worked in the boarding house for about a year. People up and down the waterfront made fun of them.

Kortum: Sometimes when you were a runner for Whitehall boats, did you go out to whaling ships? Did you take men out to whaling ships?

Crowley: No, as far as the whaling ships were concerned they were handled by Stabens-Friedman and Levi. They were two outfits. Stabens-Friedman was on Jackson Street, and Levi was on Battery and Washington.

Kortum: They handled all matters regarding shipping crews, etc. That was separate from merchant shipping?

Crowley: Oh yes, entirely separate.

1. A sailor's boarding house ...

Billy Clarke, Whitehall boatman, and a rival of Tom Crowley's (see page \*\*\*\*\*) is the man with arms folded seated under the window marked "12".

The scene is Harry Hanson's sailor's boarding house at 12 Union Street. The date is 1893. Hanson is the man with the dog.

Photo from W. White Collection  
San Francisco Maritime Museum  
White is Clarke's son.

2. Sons of a waterfront pioneer ...

Tom and Dave Crowley inspect a roll of tickets for their launch service at Vallejo St. Wharf. By the time this picture was taken, about 1905, gasoline launches had replaced the Whitehall boats. Their father was known as "Hooker-on Crowley" for his facility in attaching himself to inward bounders. In soliciting business he would be waded to hook 'er on, Crowley, a phrase that became his nick-name. (He was also known as "Hook-on Crowley".)

At the left is the steel bark WYNFORD, and on the other side of the slip is the river steamer F. M. SMITH. William Muir Collection, negative no. A12. 713.

(Maritime historian Howard T. Livingston believes this to be Howard Street rather than Vallejo.)

3. Cartoon

A group of whale hunters on Howard Street wharf.

[Sketched by an "Examiner" artist.]

4. While the coachman waits ...

Owners' wives or captains' daughters (the photograph is unidentified, but this is a good guess), come down to the San Francisco wharves to accept a gift of fox furs.

The whaling vessels are the BALAENA, built in San Francisco in 1883, and the ORCA, built in San Francisco in 1882. Both are wooden barks with auxilliary steam power built to tackle drift ice in the Arctic ocean bowhead fishery.

Sailors' Boarding Houses

Baum: Tell us about the sailors' boarding houses. They have a pretty bad reputation historically.

Crowley: We had boarding houses like Shanghai Brown, British Bill, Billy Shaw, Billy McCarthy, lots of sailor boarding houses, about fifteen or twenty deep-water houses. They were a low type of men--cold-blooded.

Kortum: What were the locations of those?

Crowley: Shanghai Brown was on Battery near Vallejo. British Bill was down on that little street right off Davis, between Pacific and Broadway. I forget the name of the darn street.

Kortum: Why did he have the name British Bill?

Crowley: Oh, they hung those names on one another all the time.

Kortum: He did not specialize in supplying the British deep-water ships?

Crowley: He would supply them to anybody. In those days there were German ships, British ships, French ships, and American vessels. Foreign ships all sign their crews on before they come before the consul in whatever country it was. On Battery Street the British Consul was there, and that was what they called Lime Juice Corner. There were stevedoring companies there and all that sort of thing.

Kortum: Lime Juice Corner was the intersection of what street?



Crowley: Across from the custom house.

Kortum: Was it really a corner?

Crowley: Oh no. It was a whole block.

Kortum: How did the sailors' boarding house system work?

Crowley: First let me tell you, there is a runner, then there is a boarding house master who keeps them in the house when they are off the ship. Then the shipping master was a go-between between the agents or captain of the ships and the boarding house master. He would pick the crew from each one of these houses and see that they all got a fair break. Many times they would get two months' advance and a bonus. Sometimes the bonus would get too high.

Kortum: I see. The shipping master was not attached to any particular boarding house.

Crowley: No, he was a go-between. There were three or four of them. Tommy Chandler was one. Tommy Chandler was the one who fought Duney Harris over on Goat Island.

Kortum: What was that?

Crowley: A prize fight. Then the funny thing about it, later, I don't know how it happened, he was shot in the hand. It went right through his hand and then he was one-handed. I mean he had the hand, but it was not much use to him. He was a shipping master.

Kortum: Who were some other shipping masters?

Crowley: A fellow by the name of Nunun, and Captain Hunt.

Baum: Captain Hunt, does the captain indicate that he used to be a captain on a ship, or was that just a title?

Crowley: I don't know.

Kortum: These shipping masters, you don't recall where their offices were? Their offices were in their hat?

Crowley: Well, for instance, Stewart Menjies, a stevedore owner, he had an office right on the street there and Chandler was in there most of the time. And Nunun was down a little further in a jewelry store.

Kortum: In other words there was a place where you knew you could find them if you needed a crew?

Crowley: Yes. They were the ones who solicited the business. The boarding house had to depend upon the shipping master. He picked the sailors. The boarding houses all got a part of it depending on how much of a layout they had.

Kortum: Returning to the period when you would go out to these ships and you would lay alongside. Then the runner would go aboard and he would bring the whiskey and soft-soap the crew so you would probably have to row back two or three men?

Crowley: If he got them. Don't forget there were a dozen other boats and boatmen there too. All these runners were trying to persuade the crew to quit. The runners would go aboard the

Crowley: ship and sing out, "Are any of Brown's old boarders here?"

There was "Shanghai" Brown and a whole lot of those fellows. That was the first thing they did when they went aboard the ship. They wanted to know if there were any of their old boarders there. Then they thought that they would give them a few drinks and they would go ashore right away. So all a sailor got out of his work was a one or two night drunk. They would do the same thing over again.

Baum: And the captain of the ship did not care?

Crowley: Well, he was rather anxious to see them go because they would forfeit all, whatever they had coming; they were 150 days coming out from Europe. They could not collect anything until they had made the round voyage. If they deserted here, they did not get anything.

Then when the ship took a new crew from here, the boarding house got two months' advance and a bonus, and the bonus, well, two months' advance would be fifty dollars, then the bonus would be another fifty or sixty dollars.

Kortum: The bonus was just plain love money so they would supply men.

Crowley: Yes, when they got back from where they had started from on this voyage, they had been in the "slop chest" because they needed this or that. Then they were in debt to the ship. They did not have anything coming.

Kortum: So the crew was often pleased to get out, and the captains were often glad to see them go...

Crowley: Because the captain got a five-dollar note from the shipping master on each man he shipped.

Kortum: You mean that was personally paid to the captain?

Crowley: From the shipping master. The shipping master charged a fee too.

Kortum: Did the ship or the company pay the bonus?

Crowley: Which company?

Kortum: The owner of the ship, in effect.

Crowley: Well, they had agents here. The captain was in charge of practically everything. The agents were not as experienced as the captain. The captain would make all the arrangements. They would only furnish the money if the captain endorsed it.

Kortum: Do I understand you right? The ship would pay, say forty dollars a man bonus to get the men. Then the captain was paid back by the shipping master? He was paid five dollars.

Crowley: He was paid five dollars on the side. The captains of those ships got small wages. That is what they looked for--the 10 per cent when they came into any port, from the butcher, baker, or anybody else.

Kortum: In other words, if you patronize, say British Bill, he would pay you five dollars because he wanted to keep your trade?

Crowley: No, you did not go to him. The shipping master...

Baum: He was a boarding house man. You would go to Tommy Chandler, wouldn't you?

Kortum: But Chandler would be pleased to pay the captain five dollars?

Crowley: Oh yes.

Baum: What did they make on the American ships?

Crowley: Out here they got twenty-five dollars, but on the coast they got forty-five dollars. That was a good job. They ran between here and Seattle.

Baum: A lot of these deep-water sailors just came in and spent one night at the boarding house and then the next day, they went out again into deep water?

Crowley: Like I told you, the boarding house always had a runner who would go out in the Bay to these ships when they arrived. When it was all ready, they would go in and have a chat and a folk sing with the men. They would always have the booze on them and slip these fellows a couple of drinks. That was the fall of those fellows. They had been away so long, and they were addicted to it. After a few shots they were altogether different. They would come ashore thinking that they were going to get a job on the coast and probably get more drink. The next morning they would be up at Lime Juice Corner signing before a British Consul or whatever it was.

You know, talking about "shanghai," that is kind of a misnomer in many ways. If a British ship was here and she

Crowley: had to sign a crew on, they had to sign before the British Consul, Germans before the German Consul, Norwegians before the Norwegian Consul, etc. Even for an American ship, you had to sign before a U.S. Commission. These men talk about "shanghai," but you've got to know what they are talking about.

Baum: But they were usually drunk when they signed, weren't they, or why did they sign on?

Crowley: There were many instances when the fellows used to give them a beating and make them do it. If the booze would not do it, then, as I said, they would give them a good licking.

Baum: I have heard many stories about people who have been shanghaied, and I was wondering if there was any danger to non-sailors?

Crowley: I'll tell you, you get more of that in whaling vessels because in whaling vessels they had to have a large crew and they did not care if they were sailors or not. Many of the stiffs could be put aboard a whaler, and that was the end of it.

Baum: So they did not have to be too well trained to be of value?

Crowley: On a whaler.

Baum: But on a deep-water ship you had to know what you were doing?

Crowley: If a man got on and he did not know his job he was called a "stiff," and that was bad.

Baum: So there were certain skills required. They could not just

Baum: get a guy out of a bar here and haul him away and expect him to perform?

Crowley: No, because those ships were square-riggers. They had to go aloft, unfurl the sails, and all that. They had to be sailors to do all that.

Have you ever heard of the Marine Hospital down here? It is down there on Main Street. It was abandoned as a hospital; it was a federal institution. Some of these fellows here had influence enough to take over under the guise of a sailors' home.

Baum: That was something I wanted to ask you. There was something called the San Francisco Ladies Seamen's Friends Society; was that the same one or not?

Crowley: No, that was a group who came out here from England. I knew them very well. They used to go out and try to do the best that they could for sailors aboard the ships, public service and one thing or another.

Baum: A religious organization, you mean.

Crowley: Yeah.

Baum: Now this other organization, you say, was called Sailors' Home?

Crowley: No, that was the Marine Hospital. It was not used and a couple of smart politicians got it.

Kortum: Farren?

Crowley: Johnny Farren, that's right! Johnny Farren was running it. He was a pretty small fellow. Then he had a fellow by the name of Oscar who handled them in the wagons and one thing or another that they had. They got a bigger proportion than the ordinary boarding house did because if a ship were going to sign a crew of say twelve men or something like that, they would get two or three men out of that and the rest were divided up; sometimes they would go shy--they could not get them all. The boarding houses had an association. They all divided up--took their turn. Some fellows got one, and some fellows got two depending on how much accomodations he had. So the Sailors' Home used to get three or four at a time.

Baum: So they were just one of the boarding houses, really.

Crowley: Yes, and they used to sign up before the British Consul there on Battery Street. It was called Lime Juice Corner. Then they brought them down in the conveyance, an express wagon or something, to Vallejo Street Wharf and then turned them over to the boatman who was taking them out to the ship.

Many times the boatman would have a bad time getting them back to the ship. They were half drunk, and they saw that they were going back to the same place. They used to cause trouble but the boatman always got the best of them because their boats were delicate and you could keep them off their feet all the time by just rocking the boat a little.



Crowley: Then they would get out alongside the ship. They would refuse to go aboard. They would throw down a line from the ship which the boatman would make fast and then they would pull them aboard. If a boatman ever lost one of those sailors he was finished. He would not get any more business. It was tough.

Baum: I was going to ask about Oriental crews. Were there many in the harbor?

Crowley: No.

Baum: There are quite a few now, aren't there? Don't a lot of the ships use Oriental crews--from Hong Kong and places?

Crowley: Those ships are different. They are foreign, and no one pays any attention to them. They were not accustomed, and did not drink.

Baum: So there were not many Oriental crewmen around?

Crowley: No.

Kortum: You were also mentioning wagons with regard to shipping crews.

Crowley: That was here in San Francisco. Yes, many times, like the Sailors' Home, they always had hustlers on the wagons they had. They would bring three or four men down with their beds and their clothing and one thing or another. They would bring them to the boat and get rid of them to a boatman. The same way with the rest of those fellows. They

Crowley: did not have as much business as the Sailors' Home.

Kortum: So the Sailors' Home was the only one that had their own wagon and large number of sailors on hand all the time.

Crowley: Murray had his own wagon, so did McCarthy. I will tell you a funny one. I was going along some years afterwards, and Patsy Cosgrove was on a dredge that was owned by the state. I looked at him and said, "What are you doing here?"

He said, "I am working."

I said, "Working? What do you get a month?"

He said, "I get seventy-five dollars."

I said, "You can't get by on that, can you?"

He said, "You know, I used to make five or six hundred dollars a week with the sailor money, but it is no good. I can get further along with the seventy-five dollars than I could with the five hundred dollars."

That is true because I will tell you. When they got five hundred or six hundred dollars from the boarding master, then they would hit the booze.

Kortum: Now Cosgrove, what was he doing...

Crowley: Patsy Cosgrove was a boarding house keeper. Before that he was a runner. He found that he could make more at seventy-five dollars than the five hundred dollars.

Kortum: Now when the Sailors' Home had a wagon, that was what-a wagon with sides on it?

Crowley: No, just a flat wagon.

Kortum: So they just put on a few seabags...

Crowley: You see they had to get the sailor from the boarding house down to the boat landing. The best way to do it was to take him in a wagon because he could not stop anywhere else.

Baum: I suppose that he was drunk when he went.

Crowley: They were as a rule.

Kortum: I suppose that he had to be persuaded from climbing off the wagon en route.

Crowley: There was always some fellow in there who kept them in there.

Kortum: But the wagons had no kinds of sides?

Crowley: No, they were just flat wagons. Murray did a big business. He was right on Davis Street. He had a couple of relations, I think they were, who watched the sailors from the boarding house to the boat.

Then there was another difficult thing--if a boatman ever lost a sailor going out to the ship--because many times the sailor would attempt in the boat to get you to put him ashore or do this or that. Well, the Whitehall boat was a very delicate thing in a way. Many times a sailor would be sitting aft, you could rock the boat and knock him over. Many times though you would rock him overboard. If you rocked him overboard, then you let him stay in the water until he was kind of exhausted, then you pulled him out so

Crowley: that he could not fight much when he got out. But if you lost the sailor, and the boarding house did not get anything for it, why they would not allow you to take the men out. They wanted somebody who was sure to make delivery. Therefore your reputation was at stake.

Kortum: You mean they might actually lose a man by drowning?

Crowley: No, you never let him drown. You would reach over and pick him up.

Kortum: But if he talked you into...

Crowley: He couldn't talk you into anything because, as I say, you can shake the boat and then he would fall down.

Kortum: But would he sometimes try to come at you?

Crowley: Oh yes! Many times they would make an attempt to do that. We always had what you call a stretcher. That was an oak bar that we put our feet on while rowing. We always had one close by us so that if the fellow came over to attack us, then we had the oak stretcher.

Kortum: Do you remember any incidents with regard to the American wooden Cape Horn ships?

Crowley: The Shenandoah and those vessels?

Kortum: Yes.

Crowley: Oh sure! American ships always had a "buckomate" on board. The mate was always a tough bird. He did all the crucifying.

Kortum: I suppose when you went out to one of those, the crew would

Kortum: be darned glad to get off.

Can you comment particularly on the French vessels?

Crowley: Well, the French vessels came out here under a bounty. That is, France gave every shipowner a bounty for building the ship. Those ships were taken care of pretty well. And there was not much sailor business on them.

Kortum: In other words, the French sailors just stayed with the ships. The men were paid a bounty too?

Crowley: I don't know about that; the ships were paid one. They built a big fleet of French ships.

Kortum: Yes, I know. Back about the turn of the century they built about 250 sailing ships or so.

What about the German ships? What characteristics did they have?

Crowley: Well, the German ships were very good, but the runners always got the crews partly out of the German ships.

Kortum: They were pretty tough on their crews. You say they were good ships--they were well maintained and well built?

Crowley: Yes, they built the German ships well. You know, we had nothing but sailing vessels coming in here, all nationalities. The first thing you know, I think it was the British--built tramp steamers that went any place all over the world. They came in here and that knocked the ships out.

Kortum: You use the word "ship" in the real old proper sense, that is, as a sailing vessel, not just any vessel. There was a time when there were more French and German vessels here just prior to the First World War than there were British.

Crowley: Yes, that is on account of the bombing.

Kortum: The coastal schooners were somewhat separate from this.

Crowley: They were definitely different because they were handling lumber from Puget Sound down to San Francisco, to San Pedro, to San Diego.

Kortum: And the coastal sailing schooners were outside of the Shanghai sailor boarding house system.

Crowley: Yes, there were sailing vessels carrying them up and down the coast and the sailing ships were in here. Then they were replaced by the steam schooners. [Mr. Crowley is indicating that the coastwise sailors shipped through the Sailors' Union. H.S.]

Baum: Those sailors did not change places from one kind of a ship to another?

Crowley: Oh no. There were a lot of boarding houses along East Street and the Embarcadero that did nothing but take care of coastal sailors. Coastal sailors were a different type of men. They got more money, and they did better.

Kortum: And the jobs were generally sought after.

Crowley: Yes.

- Baum: Were they more skilled?
- Crowley: Well, they could handle lumber.
- Baum: That is what I had read, that they were able to stow lumber and things that an ocean-going sailor did not know how to do.
- Crowley: Those fellows on deep-water ships did not handle lumber; they could not. You had to break him in to do it. They were mostly Swedes.
- Kortum: There were a lot of Finns too. In fact, Stewart Street was called Russian-Finn Alley, wasn't it?
- Baum: I guess the coastwise sailors were a smarter type.
- Crowley: Yes, they were; still they were not any too smart, but they were a whole lot better. They knew more, and they had more money.
- Baum: Some of them must have been a lot brighter, like your father and your stepfather. They came over as sailors, but they were smart enough to get into business.
- Crowley: That was the way most of them got into it. That was just a way to get to America; they were not sailors by trade. They knew seafaring but they did not want to follow it up because there is nothing in it. They just came over for the passage. Many others worked their way from there to here.

## HARBOR LIFE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Smuggling, Customs, and the Bubonic Plague, etc.

Baum: Were the Whitehall boats ever used for smuggling anything in?

Crowley: Yes, lots of times. In fact, as far as the British ships are concerned, they used to bring a lot of booze--Scotch whiskey and that sort of thing. Then they would bring a lot of the booze ashore from the ships at night and down on the dock there were lots of places that did not do anything except gobble up the stuff that came in that way.

As far as the Pacific Mail ships and steamers, they used to come over here with opium aboard. It got so bad that the customs officers had to have a boatman stay on the outside of the vessel as well as on the ship and on the dock.

Baum: Didn't they pass a rule that no Whitehall boatman could get on the ship until the customs officer had checked it over?

Crowley: Well, when the ship was coming in you were supposed not to board the ship until such time as they docked it and the



Crowley: customs had passed the ship, but that was the reason why the boats were out all the time. They were out there and their business was finished long before the customs ever came there. Many times a big fleet of ships would come in and they would do all their business out there.

Baum: But they would have to come in to deliver the order, wouldn't they?

Crowley: Oh, they would in a way.

Baum: So if your father for,instance,were waiting way out there, he would get on the ship before the customs officer?

Crowley: Yes, they always did that.

Baum: Wasn't that against the law?

Crowley: Sure! It never stopped them until the federal government came in here. That was the time that the bubonic plague broke out. That was when the federal government established that federal quarantine and those fellows were pretty tough.

Baum: You were talking about the bubonic plague. I think that was about 1904.

Crowley: Yes, previous to that we had the city quarantine, just a political racket it was. They had a doctor's boat that used to go out to the ship. The doctor who would go out would look over the ship, but at the same time he would have the ship employ him for the services that they needed him for. His minimum charge was forty dollars. Those fellows went

Crowley: out of business, then we had a federal quarantine office, and they were pretty strict.

Baum: But before 1904 this quarantine was just something on the books.

Crowley: It was run by the city and it was more political than anything else.

Baum: I had read about that, but I did not know that the Whitehall men were out there ahead of the doctor.

Crowley: When the city handled it, it did not make any difference, but when the federal government came in and took it over, they were very strict. They could not do anything about those fellows who boarded the ship outside though. So that still went on.

Baum: What happened to you?

Crowley: I boarded one of those ships and this federal officer got me and he put me over on Angel Island. I was detained over there for several hours. Many of the fellows went over to Angel Island, that was where the quarantine station was.

Baum: After that time did the smuggling stop or did that keep on?

Crowley: Well, that smuggling had nothing to do with that. The smuggling was down here at Pacific Mail ships which were running out to the Orient. That is where they would get the opium and other drugs and bring them in here. They were watched pretty carefully by the customs in those days. As I said,

Crowley: the customs had their boats outside the steamer and then they had them on the docks on both sides.

Baum: But they sent a man out immediately, didn't they, to search and see what was aboard?

Crowley: Well, the customs could go around to them right away, but that did not stop them. You could not look in everything. All the foreign ships that came in had a certain amount of booze and one thing or another that they wanted to get ashore. It belonged to the captain; the owners of the ship did not know anything about it. The seamen did not pay any attention to it.

Baum: It seems they could have made a little extra money there too.

Crowley: How could they? If they had had it, they would have drunk it, they would not carry it.

#### Bar Pilots

Baum: What type of regulations were there for bar pilots in those days?

Crowley: Well, the pilot boats were out there and they stayed on a cruise for four days. They always had enough pilots on board to take care of the in-coming ships. Sometimes we had a big fleet. Then they would have to send out more. They had

Crowley: three or four pilot boats. In fact, we used to spend a lot of time aboard the pilot boat because they had lots of good grub.

Baum: Was there any competition among the pilot boats or was that pretty well regulated?

Crowley: As far as the pilots were concerned, it was compulsory that every foreign ship had to take a pilot and pay whether they took him or not. There was no competition as to who would be the pilot. They all took their turn. They would make big money--I have forgotten just how much.

Baum: How could you get to be a bar pilot?

Crowley: You had to be a pretty good politician or have influence. Between you and I all those Irishmen out there, they were the ones in touch with the government. They were also the ones who would select the pilots. They made the pilots pay five thousand dollars for an appointment.

Baum: Did many men hope to be a bar pilot? Was that an ambition?

Crowley: Oh yes. There were fellows who were ambitious all their lives, but did not make it. Sometimes they were capable and sometimes they were not. Sometimes they did not have the influence. Many times some fellow who did not have a whole lot of ability, he made it because he had the influence.

Baum: Would the pilot boats stay out until all the pilots were on board a ship and then another ship would come out with more

Baum: pilots? [Ships going to sea would bring pilots so there would always be about the same number aboard the pilot boat. H.S.]

Crowley: They would all come back in here and take their turn. There were about twenty pilots.

Baum: How long would they wait out there for a ship?

Crowley: They would stay out there for four or five days. Pilot boats had good accommodations and good food. I remember boarding those vessels many times for no other purpose than to get a good square meal. When we were out there in the boats, we always went to the pilot boats because they always had good food, and there was plenty of it.

Baum: Did the pilots own the boats and pay for the living accommodations?

Crowley: Yes. The pilotage was compulsory. There was a state law that no ship could come in the harbor unless they took a state pilot. Those pilots made a lot of money in those days. They used to make fifteen thousand or eighteen thousand dollars per year. That was a lot of money then. One of the best things on the coast was to be a bar pilot. I knew them all pretty well. I had an uncle who was a pilot.

Baum: A bar pilot?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: What was his name?

Crowley: Wilson. He was married to my mother's sister, and his name was Wilson. Let me tell you something about that. There was a clique here, in fact they had control of that. He had to pay something like five thousand dollars to get the job.

Baum: And that was way back before 1900 that he had to pay five thousand dollars?

Crowley: Yes. [The five thousand dollars was probably to buy in the Pilot's Association, a private corporation with each pilot owning an equal share. It costs about twenty-five thousand dollars today. H.S.] He paid it off as he earned it. In fact, a man had to be qualified to be a pilot, you see; he had to bring the ships in over the bar and one thing or another. He can not have an accident.

Baum: I wanted to ask you about one of the captains that you had for a long time, George Pavrich. He became a bar pilot, didn't he?

Crowley: I don't think so.

Baum: I had a note that he had been a Red Stack captain for twenty-five years, then he became a Bay and river pilot--oh no, it was a Bay pilot, not a bar pilot. He replaced Captain Randall, who had died.

Crowley: Yes, that is right.

Baum: Also the bar pilots that I wanted to ask you about were

Baum: George Melanson and Ross O'Laughlin. They were two of your men, weren't they? How did they become bar pilots?

Crowley: Yes. They became bar pilots through influence.

Baum: What kind of influence? Did you have to know a lot of people?

Crowley: Political influence. You had to contribute to a campaign fund or something like that to the right fellow. It is like Brown up here in Sacramento. He's governor, isn't he? Where did he get the money to run that campaign? He got it from a lot of people, including one, and that is that fellow Magnin, the dressmaker. All right, but he is getting his money back fast. He has made him president of the Harbor Commission.

Baum: So these captains of yours had to contribute to a fund, or did you have to use your influence to do anything for them?

Crowley: No, I would have gladly helped them--given them a good letter of recommendation and so forth, but nothing else. Just tell the people that they were capable because when they are with us they have to go aboard every ship that they dock. They take charge of the ship, put the tug where they want it, dock the ship, and dock it quickly. They were very well qualified.

Baum: So if they can handle a tug, they can handle a bar pilot job?

Crowley: Well, they don't handle the tug; they handle the big ship.

Baum: So if they can handle the captainship of a tug, which means handling the big ship they go to assist, then they are qualified. Isn't that a loss to you if you lose your captains to bar pilots?

Crowley: Well, we have to expect that if they can better themselves. But they do make pretty good money with us, you know. They make about one thousand dollars a month with us.

Baum: They would make about fifteen thousand dollars a year as a bar pilot, wouldn't they? Do they have to work longer hours as a bar pilot or is it easier than a tug captain?

Crowley: They would have to go out on a pilot boat. Then they are assigned to a job to bring the ship in. The longest that they stay out there is five days. Then they come in and get a new group.

Baum: When they bring a ship over the bar, then a tug captain takes over?

Crowley: No, they bring it right in from the sea. There is no tug until they are ready to dock the ship. Then they run out and take charge. The bar pilot goes ashore in a boat, and we go and take charge of the ship. Our pilot goes on the bridge of the ship and gives all the orders. [Not always-- it's optional with the bar pilot. H.S.]

Baum: Of course, these men would be able to bring the ship right



Baum: in to the dock if they wanted to, wouldn't they?

Crowley: Yes. But it is sad, because if the tug pilots had an accident the underwriters would be likely to sue them for the loss. We have our hands full all the time because every once in awhile a mistake is made, and the underwriters try to put the blame on us.

#### Well-known Waterfront Personages

##### Captain William Matson

Baum: I wanted to ask you about some of these men like Spreckels and Matson and Robert Dollar. Did you see them around the waterfront much?

Crowley: I knew them intimately. Matson came out here on a ship as a sailor. He started in working for the Spreckels industry.

Baum: He was working for Spreckels?

Crowley: With Spreckels. Then he got a few sailing vessels of his own. They carried freight down there and back, and they brought passengers back. He built up his business from sailing vessels.

I remember one time a fellow came here from Los Angeles. He was an oil man who went to Honolulu and saw prospects down

Crowley: there for a pretty good business. So he came in and went to the Crocker Bank. He said that he had the oil down there and he could bring it up here, but he wanted some shipping man who could take the oil from here down to Honolulu. They said, "Well, we have the right man for you."

He said, "Who have you got?"

They said, "We will bring him up here." So they brought Matson up here. He said that he could take the oil down there, but it would take him a little time to bulkhead his ships so that the oil would not run from one side to the other.

They made a deal. They brought the cars up loaded with oil. Then they loaded it on the ship, took it down to Honolulu and discharged it. He was doing that for three or four months and doing very well with it.

Then the first thing you know this other fellow could not get any more tankers. At that time the oil interests and the Southern Pacific were all one. They saw this fellow opening up a market and they deprived them of cars.

Matson was very much disappointed so he went down to look over things. He got the idea that if he built a pipe line from the oil wells out to tide water he would be independent and he could go down there and load from the pipeline. He said, "I know that it is feasible, and I know that

Crowley: it can be done. But I had an estimate and they tell me that the cost will be at least two million dollars. I haven't any money like that so I have to throw it up."

Wellington Drake said to him, "You had better wait until I find out what William Crocker will think of this."

He waited and Crocker said that he was interested in it. He said, "I'll get more capital into it." With that Matson went down to southern California again and spread that they were going to put a pipeline from the well out to the boats. [I think this must be the Honolulu Oil property. H.S.] Those fellows all got together and made a deal with Crocker so that he would not. They gave him a pretty good price.

Baum: Did they give Matson any of that money or did they cut him out?

Crowley: No, they did not cut him out because it was only Crocker and Matson. He went down there to the oil field and he went scouting around. He bought up all kinds of land. Then he formed a corporation called the Honolulu Oil Company. He sold stock on the street here. It was down to one dollar a share.

Baum: Does that mean that no one had much confidence in it?

Crowley: I don't know; they did not know much about it. However, it eventually paid a lot of dividends and then it was sold

Crowley: eventually for one hundred dollars a share.

Baum: You didn't get in on that?

Crowley: No. I will never forget there was a broker who had an office over on California Street, in fact, right here in this building. There was a ship broker next door whose name was Ed Smith. His partner was the fellow who was down there at Matson. He came in and after a few minutes he said, "You know, Ed, I bought a thousand shares of Honolulu Oil." Ed said to him, "What did you pay for it?"

He said, "A dollar."

Ed said, "Oh no. It is ten dollars a share." He nearly died. He ran back again. He said, "I can't buy anything like that for ten dollars a share. I thought it was a dollar." So he gave him back the stock.

Baum: Did you buy stock in other investments? Or did you stick mostly to stuff that you could handle?

Crowley: I stayed in the shipping, but I bought steamers, and one thing and another. Mahoney and I bought--what the heck is the name of it? We had the steamers Breakwater, Kilburn, and George W. Elder. The Kilburn and Breakwater ran from here to Eureka, and then to Columbia River or Portland.

Baum: Doesn't your firm do a lot of business now to Alaska?

Crowley: Yes. We are running in connection with the railroads, a car float. We take the cars on at Seattle and we take them

Crowley: up to close to Anchorage, I forget the name of it. We connect then to the Alaska Railroad.

Baum: I expect that is a bigger and bigger trade now.

Crowley: It is getting better all the time. We are having a barge built out there at Bethel. They have been on strike for three months and the barge is laying there. We need it badly.

Baum: What kind of man was Captain Matson?

Crowley: He was a very practical fellow, a sailing man. And a very practical shipping man as well.

Baum: Was he popular with his friends and workers?

Crowley: Oh yes! But he was a pretty busy man all the time. His daughter married a man by the name of Bill Roth who was born and raised down in Honolulu. Matson passed away and then Roth was the head of the company. Then he passed away and his son is the one who is financing that Ghirardelli Square venture out there. That is a big venture.

Jack London

Baum: Did Jack London ever come within your range?

Crowley: Sure, I knew him when he was on the schooner Sophie Sutherland, which was a sealer.

Kortum: She was a three-masted schooner. She was sort of a small, sharp schooner, as I remember.

Crowley: He made a voyage up to the Arctic with them and came back. Then he used to knock around the waterfront all the time. Then he got to writing and one damn thing or another. Then The Camera, I think it was, picked him up and used him for many articles or any stories that came up.

Kortum: How do you remember him from the Sophie Sutherland days?

Crowley: I was down there at Meiggs Wharf at that time. We had Whitehall boats. I saw a good deal of him all the time back and forth. She was laying out there for a couple of weeks in the Bay.

Baum: He was very young then, wasn't he?

Crowley: Yes, he was. Yes, then afterwards he went to work for something and was here on the coast.

Kortum: He was in a scow schooner in the Bay one time, I believe, but that was just a trip.

Crowley: I'll tell you. He made his headquarters over there in Oakland. Then he got to raiding the oyster beds down there. They made it a business to go down there and gather those oysters. They were selling very well, too, in those days.

Kortum: That was a matter of going down and breaking through the fence and getting into somebody's...

Crowley: Well, it was out in the tidelands. I think there was some

Crowley: kind of a wire up, but that would not stop them. They would knock the wire down and get the oysters.

Kortum: Then they would sell them to some saloon or other?

Crowley: There was a saloon that he used to hang out at over there called the "Last Chance." He was just a boozier in those days.

Kortum: Did you have oyster pirates of other kinds? Were there some operating from this waterfront as well?

Crowley: I don't know, that was a long time ago.

Kortum: It was just a matter of getting a skiff, I suppose.

Crowley: That is about all. They did not have sloops. Some of them might have, but as a rule, they had nothing more than a rowboat.

Kortum: If they had just a rowboat, where would they row with their spoils?

Crowley: They would go back. They had a sail and they would go back to the Oakland beach.

#### Red Stack Captains

Baum: I have the names of some oldtimers here that I want to ask you about. I think I asked you about Captain Daniel Thomsen last week.

Crowley: Captain Daniel Thomsen. I knew him very well. Dan Thomsen, the Red Stack captain. He did that all his life. He had two sons--Dan and Oscar--and they were both captains.

Baum: Red Stack captains?

Crowley: Well, Oscar was, but not Dan.

Baum: What about Captain Max Jahn?

Crowley: He is at home now and his son is working for us. He used to tow the rafts. He was a good man for that.

Baum: Was that Red Stack that did that or did you use some other company for that?

Crowley: No, Red Stacks.

Baum: How long was he with your firm?

Crowley: He was with us for a long time. In fact, he was there when we took over. We were rather close with the Red Stacks all along because they were on one side of the dock and we were on the other. When we had Whitehall boats we used to get more or less business from the tugs, but then when we got launches we began to cut into their business. Later we bought a couple of tugs on our own and gave them opposition. Then the best opposition was the federal tax. They wanted to get out of the business then.

Baum: And Captain Gove. He was there a long time and finally he was lost at sea.

Crowley: Yes, something like that. I think that he was on some vessel



Crowley: going to Honolulu. I knew him well.

Baum: My record is that he was lost at sea just about 1921 so that must have been just shortly after you took over Red Stacks.

Crowley: Yes, we took over in 1918. He had been on Red Stacks for a long time before that. He was more of a sea-going captain than a tugboat man.

Baum: I am not sure about this but I have something written down about a captain William Clark who I think was with your father. I have his name from way back in the 1880's. Is that right?

Crowley: Bill Clark, that is the fellow that we called "Suck Eggs." He was a boatman. His father had a sailor boarding house.

Baum: Oh, what was his father's name? Any special name for his house?

Crowley: No, I don't remember that he had any nicknames or that his boarding house had any special name.

Baum: Did he and your father work together?

Crowley: No, they were competitors. They were just like the taxi cabs--that is the way that Whitehall boats were.

Baum: Don't you have a Captain Clark on your boats now? On your tugs?

Crowley: There may be but he is no relation to Bill Clark. There was just Clark, and he has passed away, and his father.

## John D. Spreckels

Baum: Then I want to ask you about these men--John D. Spreckels. What kind of a fellow was he? Did he come down to the waterfront or did he work from the...

Crowley: Yes, he did. He was very much interested in shipping. He first started running vessels to Honolulu. Captain Matson worked for him. They continued in that until some time later they got steamers.

Baum: This was sailing ships that Spreckels started with?

Crowley: Yes. Then Spreckels, you know, was the son of the Claus Spreckels who had the sugar business. They were pretty wealthy people. He had a big yacht on the Bay too. He had a yacht called the Lurline which was a two-masted schooner.

Baum: What sort of man was he?

Crowley: He was a very good man.

Baum: Did he understand sailing or was he a business man chiefly?

Crowley: Well, he did not sail the boat. He had a captain who sailed it for him. No, he got so that he had so many other things to do.

Baum: I know. He was in just about everything, wasn't he? That is why I wondered if he could pay much attention to the shipping end of the business.

Crowley: That is John D. Spreckels that you are talking about. Then

Crowley: he had a brother called Rudolph. And he had a father called Claus Spreckels. They were in the sugar business, the steamship business, the tugboat business.

Baum: Didn't they try to tugboat in competition with you about...

Crowley: No, they started in against the Red Stacks years ago.

Baum: Yes, but then I thought that they started in again about 1922?

Crowley: No, they did not start again. They were the Black Stacks and they operated for quite a few years in keen competition between the two. They used to race and all that sort of thing. Then afterwards they got tired of it and they made a deal to turn their boats in and take so much stock.

Baum: Someone started a tug competition with you in the 1920's and it did not last very long. I think you bought them out?

Crowley: No, I can't think of anybody.

Baum: I thought that Captain Gray was in on it.

Crowley: Captain Gray was with the Red Stacks. He was the superintendent for many years.

Baum: Then when you came in you replaced him. I can't find that note.

Crowley: We had a Merritt Chapman who came out here and went into the salvage business against us. That only lasted a couple of years though. Then they upped stakes and went back to New York. There was more shipping on the east coast than

Crowley: there was here. Also the competition was pretty keen here.

Baum: About when was that that they came out here?

Crowley: Some time ago. I don't know.

#### Whitehall Boatmen

[Karl Kortum comes in with a book to show Mr. Crowley--

San Francisco Bay, by John H. Kemble]

Kortum: That is on the Whitehall boating. I thought you might enjoy it.

Crowley: You know that is a funny thing, the Whitehall boatmen in those days were sailors who had sea experience and naturally, when they were here, they would try to promote themselves.

I was telling you about the boatmen. There were quite a number of them and they wanted to benefit themselves because they were married and had families or one thing and another. This was quite a big thing. A good many of them became bar pilots. That required a lot of influence, money, and everything else, but they all did very well.

Now I saw a couple of names here that I knew well: Thomas Barber and James Blood. Jim Blood I knew well, and Thomas Barber was a very good bar pilot, Captain Barber.

Crowley: Jim Blood lived right on Francisco Street, not far from where I lived. We lived up at the north end of Telegraph Hill. Then they came in and cut it away so we had to go down on the flat. They excavated that and started to fill in the tidelands with it.

Kortum: Down at the end of Francisco Street and a little before your time, is that where Millen Griffith built the Relief and the Monarch and so on?

Crowley: Yes, there was a shipyard there.

Kortum: What was his name--Cousins, wasn't it?

Crowley: I don't know whose dock it was but I remember that there was a dock further out. He could have done it. I don't know.

Kortum: Do you remember when it was a floating dry dock?

Crowley: I knew it was a shipyard. I was just a kid.

Kortum: What was the name of that other boatman who lived up there on Francisco Street?

Crowley: Jim Blood. He was much older than me and he lived in the middle of the block right near Midway Street.

Kortum: What kind of a looking man was he?

Crowley: He was a big stout fellow, well built.

Kortum: Was he still a Whitehall boatman in your day?

Crowley: No, he was doing something else; I have forgotten. He was a pilot or some other thing.

Kortum: Do you recall any nicknames on the waterfront?

Crowley: Oh God, there were all kinds of them. One fellow, Billy Clark, they used to call him "Suck Eggs." That's a funny name.

Kortum: He was a Whitehall boatman?

Crowley: Yes, and his father kept a boarding house.

Baum: What did this nickname mean?

Crowley: I'll be darned if I know. I didn't give it to him.

Kortum: And you mentioned British Bill and Shanghai Brown.

Crowley: Yes, you know Billy Clark's real name was White. His father's name was White, then his mother remarried and he took the name Clark. There is a fellow in one of these unions here who used to come in to see me every once in awhile...

Kortum: That is the one--Bill White--he is in a carpenter's union. So his father was "Suck Eggs" and his grandfather kept a sailor boarding house. Bill brought in a photograph of his grandfather's boarding house. I think that it is the only photo we have of a sailors' boarding house.

Crowley: I know he was right on Pacific near Davis on the north side of Pacific. I have passed it many times. You know we used to have a photographer here who used to go out in the Bay. He had his own boat and his own boatman. He used to take photographs of the crew aboard the ship and then he used to sell them.

Kortum: If you think of any more of these nicknames I would appreciate your listing them down. I have been keeping them for years.

Crowley: "Blinker" Tom. He was a boarding house runner.

[Referring to the book again] I was looking that picture over, and those fellows did not know the game because look, you see that boom, how high up in the air it is? That boom ought to come down here.

Kortum: That is page 184 of Kemble's book.

Crowley: Well, I don't know where those boats were, but I know that we used to sail a lot different from that.

Baum: The sailors figured that was the end of the race, the sailors that did not make it.

Kortum: The losers. In other words, they tucked their boom up too much in this picture. We have a Whitehall boat which we think is the only one in captivity on the Balclutha. I question whether it is a commercial Whitehall boat. Did they have one that you could rent to go fishing in too?

Crowley: No, they could not rent a Whitehall boat. It required a pretty strict code to handle one.

#### Ships, Scows, and Barges in the Harbor

Kortum: I would appreciate your taking a look at this book and

Kortum: making any comments.

Crowley: I remember that ship when she came out here as a British ship. Then she was later bought by the Alaska Packers, in fact she was called the Star of something.

Kortum: The Star of Alaska.

Crowley: Here is one that I did not get. She went down south and then they had a new name for her.

Kortum: The Pacific Queen.

Crowley: Yes, then they stuck her over in Sausalito. That is where you got her.

Kortum: That carnival man who had her pulled her off the mud flats. Then conveniently for us, he died. We dealt with his widow. She was tough enough. We could never have dealt with him. He was a nut, but he did do the good job of keeping that boat together for twenty years.

Crowley: The Alaska Packers, they always take pretty good care of their ships. They were always working on them. The Charles G. White, that vessel was built by White at North Beach. She had a race with the Gracy S. around the Farallones and back.

Kortum: Do you remember White and his shipyard down there at Mason Street?

Crowley: Yes, I knew him well.

Kortum: What kind of an operation did he have?

Crowley: He had a pretty good operation. He built a lot of vessels



Crowley: for the coastwise trade. That is sailing vessels and one thing or another.

Kortum: We never had much line on White; what kind of a man was he?

Crowley: I thought he was a pretty good man.

Kortum: What did he look like?

Crowley: I could not tell you that.

Kortum: What nationality was he?

Crowley: I think he was a Swede. He had some sons and children around. I knew them pretty well. [Referring to the book again] There are a bunch of ships laid up. They used to come here for a grain cargo. Sometimes the market would go down. Then they would get instructions from home to lay over for the winter. They loaded at Port Costa as a rule.

Kortum: Would they be laid up at Sausalito or up at Martinez?

Crowley: No, Mission Bay.

Kortum: This one is at Martinez.

Crowley: Well, the reason that they put them up there was that was fresh water and that would keep the bottom of them clean.

Kortum: Here are some of those American wooden ships. Did you use the term "downeaster" for those?

Crowley: No, they were all built on the coast here.

Kortum: No, I am speaking about those ships built in Maine.

Crowley: Yes, that was "down east."

Kortum: What was the common term on the waterfront for that class

Kortum: of ship?

Crowley: Darned if I know. There is one of Peterson's boats.

Kortum: Captain Charles Rock was one of his launches.

Crowley: Rock was with Matson Navigation. Captain Rock was a seafaring man. He named it that because he was with Matson and there was a good chance that he could get business out of the Matson Company.

Baum: That's pretty clever; did it work?

Crowley: He did fairly well with it.

Kortum: We were going to discuss scow schooners this time. They were extremely numerous when you first started in the Bay.

Crowley: All the up-river points like Petaluma, Napa, Stockton, there was a fleet of scow schooners that worked up there. They were loading, looking for cargo, and bringing it down here. They brought down hay, grain, and all sorts of products from up there. Scow schooners were all over the river.

Then there were some scows down here that had donkey engines on them. They handled coal, nitrous, lumber--heavy stuff. Like Alcatraz, Angel Island, Lime Point and all those places had a steam whistle there and they had to have coal. So these schooners were owned by Piper, Aden, and Goodall Company.

Kortum: They kept coming out to these lighthouse stations?

Crowley: All of these places in the Bay. Then a lot of other places

Crowley: wanted coal, like Mare Island and places of that kind. These men were all pretty good scow schooner men. They worked on shares and we towed them around all the time. Then eventually, Piper-Aden tried to get out of the picture so Captain John Barneson took over.

Then Barneson got mixed up down there in the oil business. Therefore, he made a deal with me to take the scows over and I did.

Kortum: About what time was that? Before the first World War?

Crowley: I guess it must have been. There were about twelve scows. We had the scow Mona; she was the biggest scow in the Bay.

Kortum: Yes, we have pictures of her down at the museum. The Mariposa was another big one.

Crowley: The Mariposa was not ours. The Mariposa was the Thomson Collie. That was another outfit. They usually carried grain and lumber up and down the river, but we just took coal and nitrate. We took it up to the Hercules Powder Company in Pinole. Ships could come in here with piles of nitrate from down in South America. We used to discharge the whole ship because there was not any place for them to go up there. We used to carry all the nitrate up there.

Kortum: That would be from American schooners?

Crowley: No, the foreign ships would come in here with a cargo of nitrate. Then we would have the deal with the Hercules

Crowley: Powder Works to take that cargo out and take it up to Pinole.

Kortum: I see, because there was not enough water up at Pinole?

Crowley: There were not any facilities at all for a ship to go in there. There wasn't water enough. All that could get in there was a barge.

Kortum: That was because of the shoal bay?

Crowley: It was always that way naturally, yes. All that side is the shoal; this is the water side.

Kortum: Now these Piper, Aden, and Goodall scows, did most of them have a steam donkey or some such?

Crowley: Every one of them had one. I called it the California Lighterage Company.

Baum: You took over the ownership of the scows?

Crowley: Yes, we bought them.

Baum: Was that a new departure for you?

Crowley: No, because I had been towing them all the time. We used to carry the newspapers across the Bay. Then we would pick up one of those scows and bring her over here because they could not sail out. They would sail up, but they could not sail out. So we did a lot of towing all the time for the scow schooners.

Kortum: You mean they would sail up Oakland Creek but they could not sail back out so you would tow them back out into the Bay?

Crowley: Yes, we towed them over to this side.

Kortum: In other words they would sail into Oakland Estuary...

Crowley: Well, they do not have to go so far up as they do today. We only went a short distance up but still they could not get back out.

Kortum: That would be a headwind across the Bay to San Francisco too, wouldn't it? Gets the northwester, I guess.

Crowley: Yes. But we moved them everywhere they went--over to the islands and all that sort of thing--sometimes they would load them down so deep that it was dangerous to sail with them.

Kortum: So what kind of an arrangement would you make with the scow schooner captain?

Crowley: We would not make any arrangement with him. We had it with the company. A fellow by the name of Sharkey was the port captain and we used to make all the arrangements with him. We had a kind of a rate.

Kortum: I see, this was the Piper, Aden, Goodall outfit prior to the time that you became the owner?

Crowley: Yes, we did all their business all the time.

Kortum: Would you say that more than other fleets they called tow-boats in or launches in?

Crowley: Well, the other scows around the Bay were a little more handy. They were a little smaller. You could handle them more but they would still have to be towed in a great many

Crowley: cases. The operating scows were the big scows and they required towing to get there. It was important too because a ship coming in here with say four thousand or five thousand tons of nitrate--that vessel could not lie in the stream. Their charter called for say, one thousand or two thousand tons a day discharge. If they did not the charterer would have to pay a lot of demurrage. So you see, we all had to move pretty lively.

Kortum: Still, scows were used rather than barges?

Crowley: There were not any barges to speak about outside of a few coming down from Stockton and Sacramento with grain.

Kortum: Apart from that there were not many barges around the Bay?

Crowley: There were a few down there owned by J.C. Freese and Company. He did some work down around Third and Townsend Street.

Kortum: What kind of work did he do?

Crowley: He handled a good deal of the lumber down there. He did the stevedoring as well as barging it in sometimes.

Kortum: Did Freese have his own towboat?

Crowley: No, he had Wilder down there who did it.

Kortum: Well, the Piper, Aden, Goodall scows could set sail if need be?

Crowley: Oh yes. They had good sails and they were good vessels. They had to have dispatch as I say because of the nitrate on them. They had to tow them up to Pinole and tow them

Crowley: back so that the vessel would not waste too much time here.

Kortum: In other words, with that nitrate business there was no attempt to sail them, it was towing both ways.

Baum: When you took over the scows, you just took over all the same men and they just operated it? You took over the whole crew and everything, you did not have to change management or anything?

Crowley: Oh no. I even took their superintendent, Sharkey.

Kortum: What was his background?

Crowley: He had been operating around the waterfront for many years.

Kortum: So you had the Mona, do you recall any others?

Crowley: I could think of it. Yes, I knew all of them.

Kortum: They did not have the Matilda, did they?

Crowley: No, that is Thomson Collie. Carrier Dove, Mona.

Kortum: Albertine?

Crowley: No, that is Thomson Collie. I knew a fellow who sailed her. They used to have a regatta here on the Bay on the Fourth of July. The city used to put up a big purse. It was for scow schooners, Whitehall boats, fishing boats, and sometimes yachts.

Kortum: The Albertine, was she in it?

Crowley: She was in the race. The big fellow--Chris Hansen sailed her. She sailed pretty well. Then a fellow by the name of Demings for Thomson Collie. He had a scow called the

Crowley: Nettie. There was a great deal of rivalry between the Albertine and the Nettie.

Kortum: Rivalry in the races or just around the Bay in general?

Crowley: Certainly in business, but there was nothing worse than rivalry in a race too.

Kortum: You know these Fourth of July races. We have just the bitts from the Albertine. She is moldering in the mud over in Sausalito. We cut off that winch and bitts for a museum piece.

The Alma, she belonged to Peterson.

Kortum: This Thomson Collie, what was the nature of their operation?

Crowley: They were up the river carrying grain, and lumber, and hay.

Kortum: But their offices were here?

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: Did they have as many scows as Piper, Aden, and Goodall?

Crowley: It was just about a stand-all. There were about a dozen on each fleet.

Kortum: How about the Lou Young?

Crowley: I don't know.

Kortum: I have talked to quite a number of people about these scow schooners but I have never talked to anyone in the operational end of it. I suppose that I ought to talk to Art Wellington.

Crowley: Well no, he was a later day fellow. He came in with the



Crowley: Bay Cities.

Kortum: That was mostly gas operation by then?

Crowley: Yes. You were talking of the scow schooners. We had a lot of Whitehall boats when the scows were here. Then when we got the launches, we got a lot of business out of the scow schooners. That brought us into contact with the scow schooners because it was business for us.

Kortum: In other words, a lot of the towing was not done by tow-boats; it was done by the launches.

Crowley: Oh sure! The towboats in those days would have big crews, or what would look like big crews, whereas we would only have one man.

Kortum: Didn't you call the fellow who ran it a "gas skinner?"

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: In other words, one fellow would take one of the launches out, say to take the newspapers over to Oakland...

Crowley: Well, those fellows who were on the newspaper run had to get up at three o'clock in the morning so they were special. But after they got over there they would bring the scow out and then they were finished for the day.

Kortum: Did they kind of have to shop around to find a scow?

Crowley: No, if some fellow was over there who had a scow, he would make a lot of noise and you would soon find out about it.

Kortum: That was very interesting to me about the Piper, etc. scows

Kortum: being used for these special things like the coal. Now that went out to the lighthouse service stations around the Bay?

Crowley: You know where Alcatraz is. They had steam boilers there and they had to have coal. Angel Island was the same way, and Lime Point.

Kortum: The steam boilers were to...

Crowley: They had to burn coal. They did not burn oil in those days. Oil came in afterwards.

Kortum: What was the purpose?

Crowley: So as to put steam in the boilers. Oh, you are talking about the Lime Point. I don't know. They had steam and they did this or that. In other words, they had fog whistles on all those places and they had to have steam to operate them.

Kortum: Then I guess there were many coal burning steamers in the Navy at Mare Island at that time.

Crowley: No, there were not.

Kortum: Why did Mare Island need coal then?

Crowley: I don't know. But most of our coal used to come from the mines up in British Columbia and down here. It would come down in steamers and one thing or another. They all had bunkers along the docks here that they would put it into. Then if a scow were going to take a load, they would go

Crowley: down to the bunkers and load up.

Kortum: Did the scow ever carry any coal down below deck?

Crowley: Sure.

Kortum: Just for stability, I suppose? Did they call in extra men to discharge the scow when she was loaded?

Crowley: No, they had buckets and she was shoveled into the buckets. Then they hoisted it out and dumped it. They hoisted it out with a steam engine.

Kortum: Did that donkey boiler stand out on deck?

Crowley: Yes, it was aft.

Baum: I think you mentioned last time that the bosses paid the men off in silver because it was not worth as much as gold.

Crowley: That was the shipyards that did that. They could get twenty-two dollars in silver for a twenty-dollar gold piece. Mostly the shipyards, because they had a payroll. They would manage to hold onto the gold and pay them off in silver. The men did not know any different. So they made a little profit by paying off in silver dollars.

Waterfront Newspaper Reporters

Baum: I wanted to ask you about Jack Foisie. He was on the waterfront for a long time as a reporter, wasn't he?

Crowley: Yes, he did the waterfront for one of the papers. I don't remember which one.

Baum: Do you still see him?

Crowley: No, I have not seen him in years. His father was here with the Shipowners Association; he was kind of a manager for them. This fellow came out in the newspapers.

Baum: They don't cover the waterfront like they used to.

Crowley: No. As far as that is concerned, the papers in those days always had men on the waterfront. They used to make our place their headquarters. We had Coblentz, "Scoop" Gleason, dozens of them. In fact we had Jack London too. I knew him, as I told you, when he was on the Sophie Sutherland. Then he came out and did more or less work around here and got over there to Oakland. Then the Examiner used to hire him and give him special jobs.

#### A False News Story on the Rio de Janeiro

Baum: Is there a picture of the Rio de Janeiro in that book? [San Francisco Bay, by John Kemble]

Crowley: How did you know about her?

Baum: I heard that it was quite a disaster.

Crowley: Well, she was coming into Fort Point, and she dropped off

Crowley: into deep water. The water was at a depth of three hundred feet. In those days you could not get a diver to go down that deep. She was supposed to have treasure aboard. I was working on it down there. In those days all the newspapermen used to make their headquarters in my place. The Examiner, very enterprising in those days, waited for me to come in and they said, "Look, what we want you to do is to get a couple of divers and let's take a look down there at the Rio de Janeiro. Then we can write a story to suit ourselves."

I said, "Well, I'll tell you, I just came up from there and I could not do a damn thing with the divers. It is a dangerous thing because there is always the tide running one way or the other. But there is a big floating that hooked onto the vessel through some long steel rods. I don't know why, but there she is. I can cut those rods and take it over there." I can't remember the name of the place now. "I'll pick a good background where nothing will show and you can take pictures. Then you can run your story to suit yourself. You can do anything you want with it because it is still water and protected, not like down there."

He said, "Go ahead."

We went over, screwed off that part of the deck, took

Crowley: it over there and ran a good story. Hearst was alive in those days. He used to run many stories like that.

Baum: So you took some photographs of divers going down there to the Rio de Janeiro which was supposedly in deep water and instead it was...

Crowley: Getting treasure, yes.

Baum: Did the Examiner run a lot of stories that were semi-true and semi-false?

Crowley: Oh heavens! They had a reporter on the waterfront by the name of Joe Jordan who was an enterprising, good reporter. He also had a good imagination. Every once in awhile he would call them up and tell them, "There is a fisherman on the rocks down there. I think that I will go down there and get him, but I need twenty dollars."

They would send him down twenty dollars. Then he would want the boat to take him into Harbor View, which was quite a place in those days. There was an amusement park there, and he would stay there and drink it up. Then he would come back with some cock-and-bull story.

Baum: About rescuing a fisherman?

Crowley: Taking them off the rocks. Sometimes he would take pictures or any damn thing.

Baum: I think that same year the ferry boats the Sausalito and the San Rafael had a collision?

Crowley: They had that over in back of Alcatraz Island. There was a heavy, thick fog that day.

#### Coblentz Gets a Scoop on Amundsen and the Northwest Passage

Crowley: There was a fleet of seal hunting schooners out of here, whalers, and then all those merchant marines such as the foreign ships, and we also had American ships. American ships only traded between New York and San Francisco; they were all wooden ships. The interesting thing many times was the different type of vessels--like the whalers.

They used to have vessels built for the occasion. In other words, whaling started in New Bedford in Maine. Then after the whaling got scarce and bad they came out here and discovered that they could get the whales from Alaska. So then they brought their fleets out and San Francisco was the headquarters for the whalers for many years.

Baum: What about the seal ships that you mentioned?

Crowley: The seal ships were foreign but we did work on those, yes. They were only sealing schooners. Do you know who worked on one of those vessels? Jack London. He was on the schooner Sophie Sutherland. He was with one of the McCleans. There were two brothers and they were pretty tough fellows. He

Crowley: wrote a story about it afterwards--The Sea Wolf.

When the ships went out whaling, as a rule they would stay out for two or three years. They would go and make their headquarters at Point Barrow, which is the northernmost point of Alaska.

One year they were up there at Point Barrow and a vessel came through the Northwest Passage and tied up alongside of them. That was the ship that Amundsen sailed through the Northwest Passage. Some of that crowd up there wrote a letter down here. How they got it ashore I don't know. It came to Stabens-Friedman, which was an outfitting place-- they were the ones who furnished the crews.

Friedman came over to me one day and said, "You know, I want you to read this letter."

I looked at it and I saw that it was from Point Barrow and it was the story about Amundsen making that Northwest Passage. It was a big news item. So I said to Friedman, "Let me have this letter."

He said, "What are you going to do with it?"

I said, "I am going to give it to Coblentz to be examined."

Hearst papers made a big scoop out of it. That vessel that made the passage was named Gjoa. She is out in Golden Gate Park.



Baum: Oh, I've seen that. It's just a little tiny vessel. Did you know Coblentz?

Crowley: Intimately. He came down as the Examiner's smart boy. He won a prize in the public schools for some darned thing or another. Then he got a job with the Examiner and came down to the waterfront. I broke him in and everything. He became quite a newsman, didn't he?

Baum: He was on the waterfront for many years, wasn't he?

Crowley: Yes, he started quite young. I was at a banquet of some kind for his fifty years in the newspaper business.

As I told you, we had a good many prominent fellows who came into the business, like Jack London. He was younger than I was, I think, when he was with the Sophie Sutherland. He was a very nice fellow--too much booze. They all drank a great deal in those days.

Baum: I know that Jack London drank a lot. He is known for that.

#### A Pickled Chinaman

Baum: You told me a story the last time that I saw you about unpacking some frozen fish once and finding something in that frozen fish. A frozen Chinaman?

Crowley: Oh, that was the Alaska ships coming in here. You know,

Crowley: these ships used to go to Alaska. They had canneries up there. They would send up the Chinese as a cannery crew. They would send up the fishermen to catch the fish. Then they would send up another crowd of workers. They would stay up there all year. They would catch the salmon and can it. Then they would ship it down here.

Many times when those Chinese were up there something happened. They got sick and died. The Chinese had a funny idea. They would take and put them in a barrel of salt brine and close the barrel. Then they would bring them down on the deck of the ship. So the fishermen... A big delicacy in those days was salmon bellies. They used to cut the salmon belly and salt it. Then all those fishermen coming down either had a keg or a barrel of them. Then the boys along the waterfront, when they would come out to a ship, that is what they were looking for--that keg of salmon bellies.

These two fellows went out there and managed to get two big barrels over the side into their boat. They brought them ashore down at Meiggs Wharf. They got them up on the dock and knocked the head in. Instead of it being the fish, it was the dead Chinaman.

Baum: I guess they were shipping those Chinese back to China, was that it? They wanted to go back to China to die or be buried?

Crowley: Yes, that's right.

## CROWLEY LAUNCH AND TUG COMPANY

First Launch--A Result of the Klondike Fur Trade

Crowley: Then this is the point that I was trying to get to--we had the Klondike strike, [1898] where they discovered the gold up there. All the people started coming out here. It is funny, but just about that time, the whalers were coming back. I used to do all the business with Stabens and Friedman. I used to take them out to the ships, but I was wise, I went out myself with them. The vessels that came in, instead of going and soliciting the business of the men, they went and bought the clothes that the men had [fur clothes] up in Alaska. Those vessels carried forty or fifty men, so there were a hell of a lot of things like that. Well, I waited until the next one came, and I was there ahead of both of them.

Our competitor was Levi, and I saw that as soon as they got aboard they went after the crew, looking to buy all the skin clothes, shoes, and all that sort of thing that they had, which they used up in the Arctic. It was

Crowley: very cold up there. They had fur clothes and valenke boots and all that regalia that they used up in the Arctic.

When I saw that they were going after this stuff I immediately got into the thing. There was Levi on one part of the deck, Stan Friedman on another part of the deck, and I on another. After you got a pile you could not leave it because the other fellow would go and steal it so you would have to get the garment in there and then you would pay them. You had sort of an understanding, you would pay them one dollar down. But I laughed like anything. It went along that way. When I got all these furs I put them in the basement at home and I kept them.

These other fellows were selling them because there were a lot of people coming out here from the east and they were going to the Klondike. They felt that they ought to have clothes for the place where they were going and the prices were very good. I held on to mine though.

Kortum: In other words Stabens and Friedman went out themselves to buy the furs.

Crowley: Yes, they gave up the idea of chasing after the men.

Kortum: They realized that there was more to be made by buying clothes than from the business of shipping men.

Crowley: Then the first thing you know, there were three of us buying all the time. I will never forget one time we were out on

Crowley: the deck of the ship, each one of us had a pile. First thing you know, the two Jews had a quarrel amongst themselves. One fellow outbid the other and he got mad.

I said, "Morris, go and punch him in the jaw." With that, they both stopped. When we got ashore I said, "Why didn't you go and punch him in the jaw?"

He said, "What a damned fool I would have been. If I had punched him in the jaw you would have had both of our loads!"

Kortum: Morris, was that Stabens or Friedman?

Crowley: Morris Friedman.

Kortum: Every time a whaler came in did she usually carry some furs?

Crowley: That is the kind of clothes they had to have up in that country. I don't know how they got them, whether from the natives, or the shipping one way or another, but they all had them. That is what they had to use. You could not do any work with just the light clothing; they had to be prepared for the weather.

Kortum: So what you were buying was the garments of the crew?

Crowley: Yes. Valenke boots, that was different from what we had here, and everything that they had. I bought as much as I could, and whatever I could, and paid as little as I could. Then I banked them into some basement.

Those two fellows had stores. There was a lot of these

Crowley: people coming so they went down to these stores and had a hell of a run on them.

Kortum: I see, for the miners.

Crowley: Yes. I figured I could not do that. That was retailing and I wanted to get rid of them in a lump. I got busy and found a fellow who wanted them. I made a deal with him. I think I got eight or nine hundred dollars. I had never seen that much in my life before.

I had a launch built--the Jenny Sea--by John Twigg and Sons. She was thirty-six feet long. She would carry about twenty-five passengers.

She cost \$1,700 or \$1,800 so I had to get a certain amount of credit from the boat-builders. I soon paid it up, though, and started building more right away. The next boat I built was forty-five feet long.

Baum: Was it better to have a boat built or were there second-hand boats that you could buy?

Crowley: No, there was not anything. You see, in those days as far as launches were concerned, it was the first time that any gas engines were built to propel a boat. They were new. They were built by the Union Gas Engine Company on First Street and the Hercules Engine Company on Bay Street. There was a lot of force to them and sometimes you would have a hard time making them go and this and that--all kinds of trouble with them because it was a new thing and the men

Crowley: who built them did not have too much experience. That was before the automobile came in. When the automobiles came in the engine companies gained a great deal of knowledge and built better engines. That was a big help.

#### Operating a Launch Business

Baum: How many men did it take to run a launch?

Crowley: Only one man could run it. He had some special business. Another man would go as a deck hand. You had to carry a lot of passengers here and there.

Baum: I suppose that your men had to be pretty good mechanics after that to keep those engines going?

Crowley: No, whenever anything went wrong with the engine we would telephone the company and they would send a mechanic down to fix it.

I will never forget, they used to charge us sixty cents an hour for the time of the men to repair. We thought that was robbery!

Baum: About when did you get your first launch?

Crowley: We had Whitehall boats from 1890 up to 1900, and then we got the launches about 1904, got the engines in 1904.

Then as far as the Whitehall boats were concerned,[they

Crowley: were finished] we could go out in the morning with the Jenny Sea and start off down at Meiggs Wharf and go amongst all those ships to pick up the captains and come ashore with ten or fifteen of them. What the hell--a Whitehall boat demanded at least a boat for every captain.

Kortum: The smaller of these two launches, the Jenny C., you kept both of these two launches?

Crowley: I started building and I never stopped building right along. The second one that I built, she was fifty-odd feet long. The other was only thirty-six feet. Anyhow, with our two launches, we got a job right away from the Examiner carrying papers across to Oakland. In those days the Chronicle and the Examiner had to get their papers over to Oakland for circulation over there. We had to get it about three o'clock in the morning. We would take them over there, throw them on the docks, and then the wagons were there to take them away. We did that for many years.

Kortum: You used the larger boat for that, not the Jenny C.?

Crowley: Yes.

Then Henry Peterson was up at Folsom Street and he had launches. He was in the business for a long time. He was up in what is called Mission Bay while I was down at this other end from the ferries. Well, we never came in contact with one another until such time as we got enough boats.



Thomas Crowley on stern of the Crowley.

Start of Crowley Fleet

#1 - Jennie C. - 35 H.P. Hercules Engine 1897 Captain Albert  
: Crowley - 50 H.P. Hercules Engine 1898 Captain Pete Nelson  
.  
The Spy - 9 H.P. Union Engine 1900 Captain William Figari  
(built by John Twigg)

Crowley No. 9 - Taken at San Pedro. Paladini Brothers fish trawler built  
by Frank Stone in Oakland. Purchased by Crowley from Paladini Company.

Crowley: He had two brothers--one was Charley and the other was Ed. They worked with him down there at Folsom.

Baum: Was Peterson usually a competitor?

Crowley: Yes, he was for many years.

Baum: Were you ever in business together?

Crowley: No, we were always competitors. We had no room for partners.

Kortum: Didn't you eventually combine launches with Peterson?

Crowley: No, I bought them out eventually. I forget just how it was done.

Kortum: Was that after the first World War?

Crowley: He died, and then his wife was trying to run it. She was the mother of Judge Carrigon. She could not operate the boats so one way or another I bought them.

Baum: Well, your brothers worked with you. Did you have any special employees? You had some that were with you for a long time back in those days, didn't you?

Crowley: Yes, I had some of those fellows who have only just retired recently. Now Figari, he just retired and he started in with me about 1900. McGillivary, who is running the outfit down in San Pedro for us, has also been with us since about 1900.

Baum: Has he always been down in San Pedro?

Crowley: No, he was up here and we had him running a launch. After we had him do that for awhile we got a Red Stack and made him captain of one. Then he was captain of a boat; then

Crowley: we had that business down there so we had to send someone down. We sent him and he had been down there for twelve years. Who do you think is with him? Tugboat Annie!

Let me tell you something, her name is Tillie and she has been down there for forty-odd years. What is the name of the fellow who wrote "Tugboat Annie's" story? [Norman Reilly Raine] He was down there and McGillivary gave him a lot of dope in connection with this "Tugboat Annie" because she was quite a girl. She is to this day. She goes out with her megaphone and hollers at the tug to do this or do that. She gives orders from the dock and all that.

Baum: That has been a popular series for a long time. They even made movies out of her story. So she is one of your employees? What about Jimmy Sinnott? He was older than you, wasn't he?

Crowley: He has passed away. He was one of my early employees.

Baum: Then I have the name of a Marie Carey.

Crowley: Oh yes, she was the bookkeeper down there. She was very good. She passed away too. All her life was spent down there. She passed away some years ago. I can't remember how long she was with me.

She had quite a job. She handled the books, kept the records, and all that sort of thing. She never let anyone get away with anything because they were a lot of burglars

Crowley: if they had a chance, but she always kept them in their place. She was a good Catholic too.

Earthquake and Fire, 1906

Baum: From your scrapbooks I know that your launches were very busy during the earthquake and fire.

Crowley: Yes, we were. The earthquake and the fire started about five o'clock in the morning that April, 1906. A great many people started to light fires in their homes to cook breakfast. They did not know that their chimneys were knocked out. With no chimney up there it did not take long for a fire to start.

The fires started out here at the south of Market and went around in a big circle up as far as Van Ness Avenue and then finished up down here at the foot of Telegraph Hill. We had everything to do with all upon the Bay. The ferry boats stopped running. Then we brought big grain barges three hundred feet long in and put them alongside the dock. The people all came down and put their things on the barge. Then we took the barge over and discharged it in Oakland.

That took three days. The fire and earthquake lasted three days. And as I say, the ferry boats stopped running,

Crowley: I don't know why, and there was no activity. Let me tell you something--all those banks with their money, like Gianninni of the Bank of America, he took all his money and he lived down in San Mateo, and he brought it down there--the securities and all the money. The rest of these banks wanted to put it out in the Bay in some kind of secure vessel and there was lots of it kept out there.

Baum: It just stood out in the Bay?

Crowley: Well, it was aboard a vessel. It kept it away from robbers and anything else. It was the safest way it could go.

Baum: But it tied up that boat.

Crowley: Yes, but she was tied up anyway. Let me tell you, there were a lot of passenger steamers out in the Bay and we were the only ones operating. I remember many fellows coming to me and saying, "Do you know anywhere that I can put my parents?" I'd say, "Yes, I'll fix it so as they can go aboard a passenger ship out in the Bay. There is a full crew aboard and he will sit like a king."

One of them was Abe Ruef, who was political boss of San Francisco. I put his mother and father aboard a German steamer laying out in the Bay. They stayed aboard until it was safe to come ashore.

Baum: Did many people want to hire you to go over to Oakland or some other place?

Crowley: Well, they were all flocking down there. There were no ferries running so naturally they came to us. The business rush got so big that we had to bring in those big barges instead of depending on the launches. But we took a great many over in the launches and we took a great many back too. That is, they came back for some purpose.

Baum: How about over to Marin County? Did a lot of people want to go over in that direction?

Crowley: Yes, but we could not go there. I will never forget one time in the shuffle, one of the boys came in to me and he said, "So and so is out here and she wants to go to Sausalito. And she wants to go exclusively by herself."

I said, "No, tell her we can not take her."

He came back to me again. She was very persistent.

I said, "Tell her it will cost her seventy-five dollars to go over there," thinking that would make her quit.

He came back and said, "She has agreed to pay the seventy-five dollars."

I said, "My God, we don't want the seventy-five dollars. I don't know what to do. There are a lot of people around here who want to go to Sausalito so go around and spread the news. Tell them there is a boat going to Sausalito and they can go in free."

He collected the seventy-five dollars and then the

Crowley: boat was filled up. She couldn't make any squawk, of course. She wrote a story about it.

Baum: Why couldn't you go over to Marin County ordinarily?

Crowley: Well, because it was too far a run and there was more traffic to go to Oakland, which was closer. We had to utilize our time to the best advantage that we could take the most people. That was the best way to do it. I did not want to go over to Sausalito. In other words there were people breaking their necks to get over there so by taking some of the equipment away and taking it to Sausalito I would have been out of business.

Baum: Where was your family at that time?

Crowley: Well, when my family came down, I sent them to Oakland and they stayed over there.

Baum: I guess a lot of people went over to Oakland and stayed.

Crowley: Sure, they stayed over there; lived over there for a long time.

Baum: As I understand it, that is when Oakland really started to build up. Many people just went over there and stayed because of the earthquake.

Crowley: I will never forget during the earthquake and fire, D. Brown, the head of the California Safe Deposit and Trust Company, where the Bank of America is now at California and Montgomery, during the fire he came down to see me. As I told you, we

Crowley: were very busy in those days. The ferryboats were not running. He wanted me to go up and get three or four cases of dynamite. I tried my damndest to keep away from doing it. He kept after me and there was nothing that I could do because I was banking with him and I had done business because he and another fellow brought the Western Pacific Railroad out here. I worked with them in connection with the Western Pacific Company when the Southern Pacific was going to block them.

There were two rock walls running out from Oakland Creek, as it was called then. So they called one day and said, "Do you know any of these dredging fellows?"

I said, "Yes, I know them well."

He said, "Can you pick out one good one who can do what we want?"

So I got him Harris, of the American Dredging Company, and brought him up there. They told him that they had this job coming up and they wanted him to be the low bidder. He got the job, and then he was to blow the material up over the north wall and build it up into a runway over to Rogers Street, where the train could come down. The ferryboat had to go out at the end of the pier. They got the job. Dowsell and those fellows made up the deficit. They had two or three run-ins with the Southern Pacific and someone



Crowley: tried to block them by running a piledriver across their right of way and so forth.

Then it got into the court and the place was filled with lawyers. Then they settled it afterwards.

Baum: So what did he want you to get the dynamite for at the time of the earthquake?

Crowley: This was out at the cliff side. It had nothing to do with the Southern Pacific. He came down and he wanted the dynamite. I could not get out of it so I sent the boat out. I told him that I didn't know how we could get it back in less than a day or two, but he said that that was all right, to go ahead. We went up and did not come back until the next day. Then I tried to get in touch with Don and there was no way of doing it because they had closed up the bank in the meantime.

Then I knew very well that he lived out there by that park on the other side of Van Ness Avenue so I rode out there somehow. I told him that I had the dynamite. He said, "Well, you got it in too late."

I said, "I told you all that beforehand." I said, "What am I going to do with dynamite?"

He said, "You can do whatever you want with it. It is your funeral."

I said, "No it isn't. It is your funeral."

Crowley: He said, "How do you mean?"

I said, "If you don't pay me for the trouble that I have gone to and you don't take the dynamite...I know what you wanted to use the dynamite for. You were going to blow up this building. Then your records would have gone with it and you would have been clear."

He [Brown] damn near died when I told him that. Then he made some kind of a deal with me; I forget what it was. It was about seven or eight months later that he was indicted and sent to San Quentin. Because you see, if he could have gotten the dynamite in time he could have blown it up and then there would have been no records.

Baum: He had been cheating somehow?

Crowley: Oh sure! And I knew about it from a roundabout way.

#### Lighters for Chile and Peru

Baum: I had a note that you had some lighters built to use in Chile and Peru way back in...

Crowley: I will come to that. That was W.R. Grace and Company. I did a lot of business with them and they asked me to go down there to look over the situation. There weren't any wharfs down in Chile and those places. They had big surf

Crowley: boats that used to be pulled out by other boats to the ship in the Bay. Then the cargo was loaded into it and they brought it in. It took a lot of time.

I was to size up the situation. Then I came back here and I built boats that had about twelve or fourteen horsepower, about twenty-eight feet long. Then I shipped them down to different ports. That hastened the loading and time of ships, which was very important.

Baum: Was there a lot of business then between Chile and Peru and this harbor?

Crowley: There was always a lot of business between Chile and Peru because first, all the nitrate came out of Chile. In fact, let me show you something. The two Graces came out to Callao, Peru, and then found that there were two islands lying off of Peru that had all kinds of guano on them. They were enterprising, they got vessels, and they loaded them up with guano and took it to Europe for fertilizer. They did very well with it for several years. They branched out into everything--they owned all sorts of things down there in Peru.

Baum: Who did you have build those lighters?

Crowley: Bill Cryer, he just really built the hulls. Then I bought the engines from the different companies--Standard Gas Engine Company or the Union Company. Standard came into

Crowley: the picture afterwards. They were an overflow from the Union Gas Engine Company. They built a better engine so then we took the Standard Engines. That went on until we got diesel engines, which was another improvement.

Baum: You didn't have any of your own boatworks at that time?

Crowley: Shipyards, no. Later on I had my own, in fact, I have two now.

Baum: Is that profitable, to have your own shipyards?

Crowley: Oh yes. You can always do a lot of outside work and you have your own work to do. A fellow can not run a shipyard without a profit.

#### The Panama Pacific Exposition, 1915

Crowley: You were talking about the Panama Pacific Exposition. That was to go in the marina down there. That was a submerged site. In other words, it was all water. James G. Fair, he had built a bulkhead down there with rock that he got down in San Mateo. About the time that he got it finished, he passed away. This was in 1914. When they were talking about the Exposition as a site was in 1913.

So they decided, C. C. Moore was the president of it, he decided on selecting that site and then having dredges

Crowley: come down there to pump it and fill it. They did. We worked down there at the Exposition from the beginning. We brought in sand, gravel, lumber, and every conceivable thing to the Exposition. In fact the whole year of 1914 we were working down there. Then when 1915 started, that was the opening of the Exposition, we had the yacht harbor down there. At the yacht harbor we had two double deck boats down there to take the people back and forth to the Oregon, which laid out in the Bay, and for trips around the Bay.

Baum: What was the Oregon?

Crowley: The Oregon was a United States battleship. She was laid off there and there were visitor's days and visiting hours. We took passengers out to visit her. Then when we did not have that, we took them around the Bay. There were a lot of strangers, tourists and one thing or another. That was quite a big business in that year.

Baum: You did this with your launches?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: What was the name of your company?

Crowley: The Crowley Launch and Tugboat Company.

Baum: You must have had quite a staff by that time.

Crowley: Yes, we did.

El Campo Amusement Park at Paradise Cove

Baum: I have a little note that you took excursion boats over to Paradise Cove.

Crowley: As far as Paradise Cove is concerned, we were running over there to El Campo with the double decker excursion boats. This was after the Exposition. El Campo was the name of the place. It was a big amusement park. It had a pavilion, it had all the requirements because in the early days the ferry boats were to run over there with big crowds.

That died off and then we went over there with these smaller boats. You could not get there any other way so we built up a pretty good business. We ran there for a long time. Paradise Cove is where the yachts used to come.

We had a restaurant there and a bar.

You know what a yachtsman is, don't you? Partly dressed and fully drunk. They used to come over in their boats and those fellows in the yachts always hid a lot of booze and there was no way of stopping them. And it was a good way to do it. So they anchored in the Cove. It was a nice clean place. Then when they got to feeling pretty good they would come ashore. They would come ashore drunk and only partly dressed.

Baum: You ran the restaurant and the bar?

Crowley: Ran the whole thing, yes. I didn't bother with it. I had someone else to run it for me--Ernest Tanner.

Baum: Eventually that going to amusement parks died out, didn't it?

Crowley: Well, I tell you, it went along for quite a few years. In the meantime we had bought the property. But when we first had it there was no such thing in the way of an automobile. In later years they built roads here and there. Then these fellows that wanted to go over there went over in automobiles and that knocked the water out. Then we kind of tossed it up because we could not operate there without getting the transportation. We could get by, but what was the use of doing it?

Baum: Transportation was your main interest?

Crowley: Yes.

#### Launches in Nevada, 1917

Crowley: Another thing you asked about in this outline you sent me was about running launches in Nevada at Walker Lake, and about Henry Peterson, and Jimmy Sinnott. Yes, that was about 1917. There was a big reservation owned by the government up there on the other side of Walker Lake. To

Crowley: get over to it you had to go over by boat. It was a lake about seven or eight miles wide and nearly one hundred miles long.

The opening of this reservation brought all kinds of prospectors, all types of fellows. Well, we were urged many times to take an interest in this thing because we would have a big business up there. The funny thing about it was that Peterson was running one business and I was running the other--we were competitors and we had been for many years, but we went up there together. We brought a launch up on a railcar. Then Jimmy Sinnott was one of my men; he came along too.

We got a boat in the water up there. Then we erected a tent and had our headquarters up there. So when the whistle blew for the opening of the reservation there was a hell of a run...

Baum: What was this--mining prospectors or the opening of land?

Crowley: Mining prospectors, and there were all types of fellows who came there. They got across. We were busy taking them back and forth. However, after they were there for a day or two we saw that they needed more or less stimulants like booze and one thing or another. We went down to Reno and bought several kegs of booze and sold it over there. We didn't touch it though. We stayed there until they



Crowley: simmered down, then we left the boat up there and came back,  
sold the boat when we got finished.

Baum: Weren't you thinking about opening a resort there maybe?

Crowley: No. It was just a temporary thing to take care of the rush  
up there.

SHIPS AND STEAM SCHOONERS--A WORLD WAR I VENTURE WITH  
ANDREW MAHONEY

- Baum: I wanted to ask you about the effects of the Spanish-American war on the business of the harbor here. The Spanish-American War was 1898.
- Crowley: I don't remember much about it. That is where the Oregon came in. She left here and went around the Horn. That was before the Canal was open. She did some big thing. I have forgotten what it was.
- Baum: But business did not increase noticeably during the war?
- Crowley: It always does when there is a war on. Even today, with Vietnam, that has started a lot of work.
- Baum: I suppose that World War I increased the business a great deal.
- Crowley: Oh yes. You know, as far as World War I is concerned, we got into the ship business. At least I did. I went in with Andrew Mahoney. We built three or four vessels up at Benicia and operated them between here and Australia and South America. We had quite a fleet. He had some of his own and I had some of my own. Then we had a flock that

Crowley: were owned between us.

Then we got into the steam schooner business. We bought out an outfit that operated between here and Eureka, Portland, and Seattle.

Baum: Was that mostly lumber?

Crowley: No, it carried freight and passengers.

Baum: This was before World War I or after?

Crowley: It was before 1918. I don't remember too many details about it. This book [San Francisco Bay, by John Kemble] may help to bring out those facts. It was given to me by the San Francisco Maritime Museum by Karl Kortum. I had given those fellows down in the museum a great deal of advice and equipment and one thing and another. There is a picture of a scow schooner.

Baum: They are not so big as I imagined.

Crowley: Some of them are pretty big. The ones that we had were the biggest on the Bay because we had to carry 150 tons of coal at least. We had one that carried 300 tons of coal so you can see that she was big.

Here is one of those grain barges that we brought in and carried refugees across the Bay in during the earthquake. See, those big barges would come down from Sacramento loaded with grain, or from Stockton, to go into these ships.

Funny thing was that the grain was always raised up

Crowley: there in the Valley. They used to load the ships at Port Costa, which was the closest place when the ships used to go up there to get it. Then of later years these fellows went way up above Sacramento and brought the grain down by barge. Just came up right alongside of a ship.

Baum: How far did your boats go up to get the grain?

Crowley: To Sacramento and Stockton.

Baum: Didn't some of your tugs pull those old boats over here to get set up for the Maritime Museum exhibit?

Crowley: Yeah, the Balclutha, we moved her around. That Balclutha is down there at Pier 43. She has a good berth, office, and a good rig. He got the idea that if he could get her down closer to the museum she would be better off and get more people. I happened to fall across him and he told me what he was going to do.

Baum: This is Karl Kortum?

Crowley: Yes. I said, "As far as that ship is concerned, today she is laying on the lee side of the dock. She has a big strong dock. Sometimes during a strong westerly wind you can see her lay over. But if you pull her down to that dock she will pull that whole dock down and you will make a mess of her. Don't take her from where she is; she is lucky to be where she is." He keeps her very nice, and he keeps her in good shape. He had gone along very well with her.

[From a later interview. Karl Kortum present]

Crowley: You know, talking about the Oakland Estuary, there were a lot of vessels over there and some of them had sunk. One was the City of Panama; she was a coal hull, previously a steamer owned by the Pacific Mail. We went over and raised her, repaired her, and made a five-masted schooner out of her and used her during the war; she made all kinds of trips.

Kortum: On one occasion we had an interesting conversation, Mr. Crowley, about the Crowley, the five-masted schooner that you outfitted in the first World War. We found it laid up over in the Oakland Estuary as an old stranded hulk.

Crowley: Well, let me tell you about that. She was one of the first that we picked up. She was a coal barge and she got into trouble some way or another over some object out in the "Butchertown" area and she sank. They left her there, so then the war came on...

She was the City of Panama, a steamer. So then they took the machinery out of her and made a coal barge out of her. I think it was Western Fuel; they got it and then abandoned it. Then we were looking around for any kind of a derelict that could be made into a vessel, and we discovered her. We put fellows to work there and we raised her.

Kortum: She had just sprung a leak as she was?

Crowley: She didn't have any cargo in her.

Kortum: And the conditions which led you to do this were that the freights to Australia were high?

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: To Australia or to the South Sea Islands?

Crowley: To Australia. So we fixed her up.

Kortum: You raised her from down near "Butchertown," you say?

Crowley: Yes, we fixed her up and made a five-masted schooner from her. Then we sent her up there under a charter to go to the Marquesas.

Kortum: I think it was there that they needed case oil so badly.

Crowley: I guess so, because the freight rates were very high. She carried 53,000 or 54,000 cases and I think that we got something like \$1.50 or \$1.75 for each case. Going down there she would take a cargo of something over to the Peruvian side or the Chilean side. I don't know; there were more or less things... [Believe she made South American ports on return voyage. San Francisco to Australia with coal oil, then to South America with coal and then return to San Francisco. H.S.]

Kortum: So she would go to the west coast of South America then?

Crowley: Yes, after discharging if she could not find anything she would come back. She would make out very well.

Kortum: How many voyages did The Crowley make?

Crowley: Oh, I don't know how many voyages, but we had her for about

Crowley: three or four years. One time we had her on the same route and she went from Chile or Peru, I forget which, up to the Gulf Ports. She went through the Canal. After she was discharged, the captain was a pretty wise fellow; there was a fellow came around and wanted to buy her so that he could send her down to Argentina. So we made a deal with him. We sold her, and she went down to Argentina.

Kortum: You sold her in the Gulf of Mexico?

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: Who was the master?

Crowley: I can't remember. I might think of it as I go along.

Kortum: Do you have that Captain Halcrow working for you on the Olympic?

Crowley: I met his son on the street just the other day.

Kortum: Where does his son work, by the way?

Crowley: He just came back. I don't know who he works for.

Kortum: Captain Halcrow was one of the real old, fine tug captains. He was a nice old man. He has been in a half a dozen old wooden American Cape Horn ships.

Crowley: I bought the Olympic. With Libby, McNeil, and Libby she had been a ship going to Alaska. She was the only ship of her kind. She was built on the Atlantic coast. She was built with two masts forward and two masts aft. She was a four-masted barkantine.

Kortum: She was called a "jackass bark;" she had two square rig masts and then two fore-and-aft rig masts.

Crowley: Yes, and that is the only rig of its kind that was ever made. We sent her to Australia several times, and then we sent her with lumber too. We operated her for a long time until it petered out. Then we sold her to a fellow who used her down in southern California. He anchored her off the shore out in the Bay and had people come out to her and fish off of her. She was a fishing vessel.

Kortum: And you found Halcrow a satisfactory ship master?

Crowley: Very satisfactory.

Kortum: Would you say that he was the best who worked for you?

Crowley: Oh no. I had others with me and I knew them all. I was trying to think of one fellow that I had with me who was a good man. I cannot think of his name now. You know, this is a period of years.

You asked about that City of Panama or the Crowley, as we called her afterwards. That was the first vessel. Then we picked the Olympic. Then we went over to Oakland. There was a whaler over there, the John N. Winthrop. We raised her and made a three-masted schooner out of her. She was a small vessel.

Kortum: I remember you telling me one time about the John N. Winthrop. She was beached too. Did she have water in her hold?



Crowley: Oh yes. She was right down below her decks.

Kortum: You must have gotten her fairly soon after she was beached or the worms would have done a lot of damage.

Crowley: Yes, but she was okay in the hull. Those whalers were very staunchly built.

Kortum: We recently got a picture of her.

Crowley: I think that the John N. Winthrop was named after the Knowles (?). They were in the whaling business for a long time.

Baum: When you had these ships during the war, was this when you were in with Mahoney?

Crowley: I will get to that in a minute. We started in with the Crowley. Then we picked up the Olympic and the John N. Winthrop. We put the John Winthrop in business. Oh, I think she went to Australia and two or three places like that. Then Mahoney and I doubled up. First thing we bought was two steam schooners over in France that had been built here. During the war they came over and bought those two steam schooners. One was the Sophie Christisson and the other was the Hanafie. We bought them and they were delivered in New York. So I was there and I received the vessels in New York. Then I got a charter from New York down to one of those southern ports. Then we got her out here.

Kortum: You were over in France at the time?

Crowley: They were originally built over here in Oakland by Christisson and Hanafie.

Kortum: The war was over at this time? It was after the war?

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: So you went to New York to arrange for the chartering of the vessel?

Crowley: I went to New York to receive her. Then after I received her, she wasn't stripped or anything. That was an old trick in the early days. The day when she arrived and you came there, all the gear in her was gone and that was bad, but if you got there first, they could not get away with anything.

Baum: Who would strip it, the former owners or the seamen who brought it over?

Crowley: All ship owners had the same fever. If they sold a ship that was not watched too closely, they would strip her.

Baum: You did not include that in the contract, what was purchased when you bought her?

Kortum: Well, you can't list everything.

Crowley: We bought it "as is" and that meant everything that was with it.

Baum: It was not very profitable shipping after the war, was it, as compared to during the war?

Crowley: Well, I don't know; we ran a loss for a long time. We

Crowley: bought those two steam schooners, brought them out here, and put them on the coast. One was called the Jean Nettleton, which we ran up to Seattle or down to San Pedro for years. The other was the Thomas Crowley.

Kortum: You were half owner with Mahoney in these. What kind of a fellow was Mahoney?

Crowley: He was a very fine fellow, but very impetuous; just like the Irish, he would jump at anything.

Kortum: He was a former shoe salesman or something, wasn't he?

Crowley: He was with Levi Strauss. He used to be a drummer on the road. In those days the Louisiana Lottery was played a great deal. He got a ticket and he got fifteen thousand dollars. That was the prize he won. He went in with Olsen then. Actually, Olsen went in with him because he had fifteen thousand dollars. They bought some steam schooners and they operated them. After a few years they had a quarrel, and he separated from Olsen. Then we came into contact. The first I saw of him, he had a deal going with Robertson at Benicia to build three vessels. One was the Rose Mahoney, the other was the Oronite, and the other was the La Merced.

Those last two were sold to the Standard Oil Company and the Rose Mahoney we operated. The Rose Mahoney was a four-masted schooner. It was eventually lost down in the Gulf Port. It went ashore down there.

Kortum: He had this contract with Robertson to build the vessels prior to the time that you knew Mahoney?

Crowley: Yes, in fact the contract had been finished. I came into them at the last part because we put engines into them and that was all my doing. He wanted the engines and then Standard Oil wanted them.

Kortum: Of those vessels, the La Merced is still kicking around up in Puget Sound. In fact, I ran into an antique store down on Union Street the other day and they had one of her mess room tables, one of those plain, oak kind, for \$250. It cost a lot just because it had been in a sailing ship.

Crowley: Well, Stanley would do that but nobody else would.

Kortum: I mean to say that now that she is in her old age, she has been stripped, and, I understand, she is going to be made into a breakwater, so the mere tables aboard have that much value just because they are from a sailing ship.

Crowley: Well, the sailing vessels, he had some of his own when he started in and I had some of my own. He didn't have any interest in the sailing vessels that I had and I did not have any interest in his; then we merged them afterwards.

Kortum: Did you continue in business with Mahoney for quite awhile?

Crowley: Yes, because then later we bought three vessels from the Grace and Company down in New Orleans. One was the Columbia, one was the Santa Inez and the other was Santa Rita. They

Crowley: were very nice steel vessels. We used them on the coast carrying lumber.

Kortum: So that lasted until when? The middle 1920's or what?

Crowley: Darned if I know; it has been so long.

Kortum: From your standpoint what was the advantage of being a partner with him? Did he look after the operations or something?

Crowley: No, as far as the vessels were concerned, it took money to get them and we did not take a lot of outsiders in. We mostly juggled the thing ourselves.

Kortum: I mean he made a good partner for you. Why was he better than someone else as a partner?

Crowley: I don't know. Well, he was honest and that is a big thing in dealing in business.

Baum: He was not a sea-faring man though before he started, was he?

Crowley: No, he wasn't. He was a police commissioner afterwards.

Mahoney and I used those two vessels that we got from France on the coast.

Kortum: The Jane Nettleton and the Thomas Crowley?

Crowley: Yes, and then the other vessels that we bought from Grace; we put them on the coast. Then we bought out Charles P. Doe and Company, that is the North Pacific Steamship Company. They had vessels which operated between here and Eureka,

Crowley: Portland, and Seattle. We had the F.A. Kilburne, the Breakwater, and then we had the George W. Elder. She was the bigger vessel. We chartered others: W.L. Grace and Company.

Kortum: So you operated the Kilburne and the Breakwater for awhile?

Crowley: Quite a long time. We operated from San Francisco to up north. Here is the funny thing about that. When those vessels got to Seattle, or Portland, I guess, it was dry at that time and the vessels could go into Eureka, then into Portland. When they got there the officers would be around to watch the vessel and they would find a lot of booze coming ashore. We were against that, but we never knew how the hell the booze got aboard. So I went up to Portland and I waited under the dock; it was a double dock there because of a high rise and fall of the tides. Well, I waited there until she came in. As soon as she came in I saw the sacks of booze going over the side. I waited until they got on the dock and then I went down and claimed it all.

I found out that they were getting this at Eureka, which is a small place. We never dreamed that they would do that. So naturally we stopped that and there was no more trouble.

Kortum: Where were they concealing it on board?

Crowley: Darned if I know. There were many likely places. I could not tell if the captain was in on it or not.

Baum: Someone was telling me that one of your coastwise partners was shipping his own stuff without telling you and so you were not getting the profits on that.

Crowley: Wasn't getting the freight money?

Baum: Was that Mahoney?

Crowley: No, I don't think so. I don't know as that ever happened. We knew what the vessel could carry. A fellow would have to go a long way to get around that.

Baum: Someone told me that is why you broke up with one of your partners; you found out that he was not quite playing square.

Crowley: Oh no!

Kortum: Well, that kind of thing is hard to conceal.

Crowley: We had a very nice vessel in the George W. Elder. She was quite a big vessel. We chartered her to Grace, and Grace ran her down to Panama and Central America. Had her for a long time.

Kortum: The Kilburne and Breakwater, they carried passengers.

Crowley: Yes, and so did the Elder a little, not much. The Kilburne and Breakwater were both passenger vessels. The Breakwater came out here from the East coast. Funny thing was that when I got about finished with her, those people expressed a desire for her so I sold her and she went back to her

Crowley: original place.

Baum: Something I read about that I wanted to ask you about were big cigar shaped lumber logs, log rafts. I read there was sabotage on these rafts.

Crowley: Now wait a minute. These logs were handled by a man named Benson from Portland. He owned the Benson Hotel up there. He had a mill down in San Diego. He made those rafts up there. Then they always had five or six million feet in them, and they were wrapped over with a chain a thousand feet long. We used to tow them from there down. Only one time I ever knew any sabotage.

One raft right here off the Farallones was sabotaged. Someone had planted a bomb on it and it exploded. Then the damned thing split up. We towed those rafts for years though, successfully. Then having the mill down there, they could cut it to any size that the customer wanted.

He was a very well-to-do man, Benson was.

Baum: They don't use that kind of raft any more, do they?

Crowley: No.

Baum: I thought that I read that during World War II they thought that there might be sabotage on them and they quit using them.

Crowley: I don't know.

Baum: Maybe it was that bomb that you mentioned?



Crowley: Well, that was planted in the raft when it was being built.

Baum: And you don't know why it was there--it was not labor trouble or anything like that?

Crowley: Somebody planted it, probably some of the union fellows.

Baum: That sounded like a good way to transport them. I am surprised that they don't do that any more.

Crowley: Well, we towed them for years. In fact, that was a ticklish job. Those vessels were a thousand feet long; and they were down in the water twenty feet. They contained about six million feet of lumber.

Baum: Was there anyone on them?

Crowley: No.

Baum: Was there a fire on one of them?

Crowley: Not that I know of. They always had a light on them so that we would not be bumped into.

Baum: I wanted to ask you about the Oliver Olson Company. Were they competitors of yours?

Crowley: No. Oliver Olson was in the steam schooner business and lumber on the coast. He formed a partnership with Andy Mahoney--Olson and Mahoney. They went on for several years operating that way.

Baum: Oh yes, you mentioned that Mahoney and Olson were partners before you and Mahoney joined together.

Crowley: Yes. You know, Mahoney worked for Levi Strauss, who was a

Crowley: drummer on the road. At that time we used to have a little Louisiana lottery. He won the capital prize--fifteen thousand dollars. Then he went in with Olson. In those days they used to start a vessel and then sell one sixtieth or one thirty-fourth to this fellow and that fellow and so forth, but when they had some money of their own they were better off.

He was there with him for several years. Quite a long time. Then they had a falling-out. He went on his own; then he came to me in connection with the North Pacific Steamship Companies. There were a couple of steamships down there, the Kilburne, the Breakwater, and the George W. Elder. I wanted the George W. Elder to charter to Grace and Company because they wanted to run down to the Canal. So anyhow we went in and bought the company. We operated them and chartered the George W. Elder to W.R. Grace and Company, who used to charter. From that we got a lot of sailing vessels because it was during the war and we built some and we bought some. As far as that was concerned, I had the bark Olympic, the John Winthrop, and the City of Panama. He had about the same, but we added them together and built more.

Baum: Was this the one you called the Emerald Line?

Crowley: That was the steamer line, yes. It was called the Emerald

Crowley: Line. Everything always had to be Irish with Mahoney.

Well, anyhow Olson went on for several years and his sons are in the business now. He passed away a long time ago.

Baum: But he was always coastwise?

Crowley: Yes, and his sons are coastwise now.

## RED STACK TUG COMPANY

(Shipowners and Merchants Tugboat Company)

Red Stacks Versus Black Stacks

Baum: You became an owner and the manager of the Red Stack tugs in 1918. I wonder if you could sketch in the history of that tugboat company in its early days and then explain how you came to take it over.

Crowley: You see, before the Red Stacks and the Black Stacks came into existence, there was a man by the name of Griffith. He had the tugboat company. He just soaked everybody. He was a tough old warrior.

Kortum: Captain Millen Griffith.

Crowley: Millen Griffith, that is right. Well, as I say, he went overboard in charging prices. For instance, a ship coming from Fort Bragg, he would charge fifteen hundred dollars for bringing it down here.

Kortum: He was the only firm?

Crowley: Yes, he had quite a fleet. Our headquarters was over at Vallejo Street and the tugboat was always there too, except

Crowley: the Spreckels. They were over on Pacific Street a couple of blocks away.

Millen Griffith was so stiff that all the owners got together and said that they had to stop that. They formed the Shipowners and Merchants Tugboat Company. Then they got the rates down. Then the next thing you know, Griffith sold out and walked out of the picture.

Kortum: So in the beginning, Shipowners and Merchants were to bring Millen Griffith to his senses.

Baum: Who was in charge of Red Stacks?

Crowley: Captain Gray. Don't forget, they were having competition between this new company and the Griffith Company. Griffith was eventually forced out. In the meantime John D. Spreckels and Brothers built tugboats and went into competition with the Red Stacks. Spreckels was the Black Stacks.

Baum: Who was in charge for him?

Crowley: I can not think of his name.

Baum: So there were just these two companies?

Crowley: Yes, and they had very active competition between them.

They used to run out to the bar to get ships to tow them in. They had very competitive conditions on the Bay. If they picked up a ship out there they would usually tow it in for so much money providing that the captain would agree to give them all his inside work. So you can see that they were

Crowley: outside, i.e., they were beyond the pilot boats, out by the bar.

Baum: About how many tugboats did each one have?

Crowley: About eight or ten apiece, I think. The Red Stacks had a lot of older boats. Spreckels coming in, he had a lot of newer boats. He was a very wealthy man and he got very good boats.

The Captain of the tugboat was really the most important man because he was the one who handled the ship when he went up alongside a ship in the harbor and went up on the bridge. [Usually, but not always. Sometimes the bar pilot or the master docks and undocks the vessel. Some vessels, depending on tide, and dock location, would not use tugs. H.S.] A pilot could not do it and a shipmaster could not do it. They would not know where to put the stuff and they would not know how to manipulate the vessel. Many times they encountered wing or shallow water. The tug captains know where to place the boats and what for.

Baum: So the main factor in the operations of the tugboat would be what good captains you had?

Crowley: Yes, but you see, those fellows started as deckboys, then became deckhands, then became mates, and then they became captains. They had very good training before they were ever allowed to go on the bridge. Sometimes some of them

Crowley: got on the bridge and they blew up. They had to be very good men because they had to do the job alone, do it quick, and do it without any damages. If they did any damage the tugboat company had to pay for it.

Baum: Were there plenty of men that could handle that job or just a few?

Crowley: They were good and bad, but they were a pretty good bunch of men--they had to be.

Baum: Were they organized into a union like they are now?

Crowley: No, there were no unions at all in those days. He had to depend on his ability.

Baum: Did that continue? (the Red and Black Stacks)

Crowley: Yes, that went on for several years and the competition was keen, rates were down, then some of these fellows were getting rates that were so low that these fellows were not making any money. Spreckels got disgusted and went over and made a deal with Babcock, who was the president of the Red Stacks. He turned his tugboats over for so much in stock.

Baum: I think that was about 1907.

Kortum: He turned Black Stacks over to the Red Stacks?

Crowley: Yes, for so much in stock.

Kortum: Which Babcock?

Crowley: W. F. Babcock. He was the president and a very well-to-do

Crowley: man.

Kortum: He has been here for quite a long time. He came back during the Gold Rush days, almost. He had a big ship, the W. F. Babcock. We have her steering wheel down at the museum.

#### Crowley Takes Over Red Stacks

Crowley: There was no competition after that. They went along until the first World War came along. Then there was a big tax placed on all corporations. These fellows had been in business and owned the boats but they had depreciated until they did not have any capital to invest. If you had a business and you invested capital you were always allowed a certain percentage on that. But they did not have any capital investment so they were crucified. So they got mixed up in that tax. They were up against a pretty tough game and they had to sell the business.

They sent a fellow out trying to find something and I got in the business. I went along with this situation. There were quite a few fellows who wanted to go into it because they thought that it was a good thing--a good many shipping men, business men, bankers, and one thing and



Crowley: another. All those corporations come down eventually to the man who controls it.

Some of those men who came in did not want me to control it. They wanted someone else. When it came to a showdown, the big holders like W. F. Grace and Sudden and Christenson, they stepped between and I had to bow to them, so that was control and that was the end of it.

Baum: Did you have to put your own money in?

Crowley: Naturally, but I was getting along pretty well then. We bought the outfit for a million dollars, so that required a lot of outside support. When I talked to them I agreed to take a quarter interest--\$250,000. Then Grace and Company for seventy and Sudden and Christenson for seventy.

Baum: So you with Sudden and Christenson and Grace behind you could have the controlling share?

Crowley: Yes, Grace and Company was a big firm; Sudden and Christenson was a big firm.

There was Fleishhacker, Rolph, and I don't know who else. Rolph had tugs for awhile too. He had the Rolph Coal Navigation Company. He used to get coal; he had a couple of barges that he would tow up the coast. Then he would load them and bring them down here.

Baum: Had the shipowners been satisfied with the Red Stacks before that? Had they been charging monopoly prices or

Baum: fair prices?

Crowley: No, there was much competition between Spreckels and the Red Stacks. The rates were low.

Baum: But after Spreckels went out of business?

Crowley: As Spreckels went out, they raised the rates a little, but they did not kick much about it because there were a lot of taxes--the beginning of it.

Baum: I see, the Black Stacks went out about the time that this tax business came up.

Crowley: No, the trouble came on about 1918 as the taxes came on. The Black Stacks had been in there for five or six years at that time.

Baum: I have a little note that you competed with Red Stacks to some extent with your launches.

Crowley: Well, I not only competed with them, but I also bought a couple of old tugboats. Then I operated them for awhile. Then when we could, we did more or less tie in with the launches, which they would have taken otherwise if they could, if we had not taken it.

Baum: Was there a lot of barge towing at that time?

Crowley: Well, there were not too many barges, but there were a good many scow schooners on the Bay. Scow schooners carried lumber, nitrates, coal, and all sorts of things like that. The biggest scow schooners were Piper-Aden-Goodall Company.

Baum: Could you tow those with your launches?

Crowley: Yes, we did. We towed them everywhere around the Bay. Those schooners were good-sized schooners. They carried coal to all the government places. We towed them over there and then towed them back.

Baum: This would have been work for the tugs otherwise, wouldn't it?

Crowley: The scow schooners could not afford to do that--hire a Red Stack or anything like that because it took too many men aboard. It took five or six men to operate a tug in the harbor. It only took two in the launch.

Baum: So you had already had experience with some tugs before you took over the Red Stacks.

Crowley: Yes, as far as that is concerned, I was familiar with the Red Stacks because many times we used to go out to sea with our boats so as to get the business from the ship out there. They were going out there to get the towing so we would go out for their business so I was aboard the tugs very much and knew everything.

Baum: So your experience included operating ten or more launches and two tugboats--this prior to taking over Red Stacks.

Kortum: What were the names of your tugboats?

Crowley: The Hercules was one and the other was the H. H. Buhne. I got her up at Eureka and the other is from Antioch. She

Crowley: was gone a long time ago. I operated those boats quite openly against the Red Stacks.

Then after awhile, Red Stacks did not like the opposition. I think what hurt them and messed them up was the fact that they had depreciated all their equipment. It was not on the books as anything. The result was that they were hit with the federal tax. I think it was 1913 or something like that. If you had a big fleet of boats and they cost you a lot of money, then you could put in a lot of depreciation and knock down your profits. They did not have anything to put in, though. They had been keeping books in the old way all the time. They never dreamed that this would come along. The result was that they had them down to nothing on their boats and everything they brought in was property. It ran up into quite a big amount. They said, "To hell with this!"

They then made up their minds that they would try to get out of it. First time Fred Sammuels, representing Spreckels, a pretty nice fellow, had the stock in it, he went out to what was called the Union Iron Works in those days. He went out and showed Joe Tynan at Bethel Shipyard, and said, "Joe, do you think you can dig up enough people to buy the Red Stacks?"

He said, "Well, I don't know. If she is for sale, give

Crowley: me a little time to think it over."

Tynan was a speculator as much as anything else, but he did not think his company would be interested in that.

So he went right up and talked to Herbert Fleishhacker. It was one of those schemes. He was always looking for a chance to grab a piece of change or a commission or some other damned thing. Well, he got Leslie Comyn and McCall and a few others.. He also got in touch with W. L. Grace and Company, John Roscoe. Roscoe is a very close friend of mine. In fact, W. L. Grace and Company is still an owner in the Red Stacks over all these years. It has not changed them a bit.

However, there was Roscoe and Ed Christenson of Stevenson-Christenson. I told these fellows that they were paying a million dollars for it. If I was going into it, then I wanted one fourth of the stock. I was not asleep there because I knew Fleishhacker and I knew the other bird. I was not going to take any chances when it came down to this matter. If I was going to run it, then I was going to run it. I subscribed \$250,000.

Then Grace doubled up with Stevenson-Christenson and they doubled up with me. Leslie Comyn found out right away that I had control of it. We did not have much more trouble after that.

Kortum: But Comyn was going to cause some trouble up until that time?

Crowley: Sure! If they could have controlled it, they probably would have put themselves on the payroll for a salary or their cousins or somebody else and they would have gotten it back.

Kortum: So this was the Comyn-McCall interest.

Crowley: Yes, and another fellow we had was Jim Rolph. He was governor afterwards, remember?

Baum: Yes, "Sunny" Jim.

Kortum: Comyn was from Portland, wasn't he?

Crowley: Leslie Comyn, he was a foreigner--British.

Kortum: Weren't they grain speculators up in Portland and Washington, a common family.

Crowley: I don't know. They were into more or less things on the side, importing and exporting.

Kortum: In other words, Shipowners and Merchants, when this new tax came along, they had depreciated their fleet already to the point where they could not depreciate it any more.

Crowley: Yes, and they had no invested capital. They were hooked and the only thing they could do was to go out and sell out, just walk out.

Kortum: That would have been the new income tax.

Crowley: Yes, that was a pretty heavy tax.

Kortum: That was the first time it was ever invoked.

Baum: Does that same thing apply now, that you have to keep

Baum: changing your capital stock, or ships, or whatever, for tax reasons?

Crowley: Today it is a little different. You watch the money that you put into the cup, then you are putting it in all the time. Then you save yourself by depreciating it down.

Baum: So you depreciate it down rapidly.

Crowley: No, you don't want to do that because then you have to get new equipment. We have more sense than to get into a spot like the Red Stacks got into.

#### Sale of Hercules to Jim Rolph

Crowley: One of the funniest things--Jim Rolph was one of the owners of Red Stacks. He was the Rolph Coal and Navigation Company; he was bringing in coal from a mine. He wanted a tug to tow his coal barge up and down. When we bought Red Stacks the Hercules went with it.

Rolph right from the beginning was always foxy. He made a deal, I think, with Ed Christenson, confirmed it. He agreed to buy the Hercules for \$300,000 or \$325,000, I forget which. So he paid some of it down, but anyway, we went along for quite a little while and he owed \$125,000. I saw it was

Crowley: running so long, and knowing him as I did...You don't get money out of him unless you put the finger on him. I wrote him a letter and told him to pay promptly, that it had been overdue for a long time and if he did not pay the \$125,000 I would take legal action.

When he got it, he was an actor. He took the letter over to the Moore Shipyard Company. Joe Moore was there. Bob Moore, who was the boss, was away in the East. Rolph told Joe Moore that if he did not dig up \$125,000 immediately that they would have him in bankruptcy. Joe did not want that so he wrote a check out.

Kortum: Rolph was related to the Moores, wasn't he?

Crowley: Yes. Then he got up to the bank, phoned me and told me to come up. He gave me the check. He said, "You know, I can get twice that much." He wanted to show me how good his credit was.

I said, "That is good." I didn't care.

Then some months elapsed and the note became due. Bob Moore had come back. He was a pretty tough business man. He insisted upon something being done, so he turned it over to his lawyer, Lillick. Lillick came to me and he said, "You know, Bob Moore gave me this claim to get settled. I would be glad to make some kind of a good reduction. Bob and I think that you could talk to him and get him to agree



Crowley: to some sum that we want."

I said, "How far will you go?"

He said, "Between you and me, Bob Moore would be willing to take \$60,000 cash for the \$125,000 note."

I said, "That is a damned good bargain and I know where he can pick up the \$60,000 too."

Well, I got hold of Rolph and I told him, I said, "Here is an opportunity for you now to get a damned good reduction. You only have to pay less than 50 per cent on what you owe."

He said, "Oh, that is fine, but how am I going to do it?"

I said, "Well, I have to get in touch with Lillick, and suppose that we make an agreement that I get in touch with you tomorrow morning about nine o'clock. Then we will go to Lillick's office and settle it there, and you'll have the money."

He said, "All right."

So we got there and he was a very evasive person sometimes. Lillick thought that it was all planned. He looked at me and said, "I thought you said this was all fixed."

I said, "It was before we came in here. I don't know what he is trying to do now."

No matter what we talked about he would not do a damned thing.

Baum: How were you going to get him the money? How was he

Baum: supposed to have it?

Crowley: Well, he was going to get it through a half a dozen ways that I knew of. Then Lillick said that it was no use to go on with that any further. So he walked out and Rolph and I walked out of the building. It was on Montgomery near California. We were walking downtown and I said, "Say, Jim, why didn't you go through with that deal? You promised me that you would."

He said, "Well, you know, I was thinking. I thought I might get you to put up the money."

I said, "Listen, didn't I have trouble enough with you? Why do I want to get into it any more?" And that is the way it goes! I don't know whether he ever paid the \$60,000 or not.

Baum: But you got your money.

Crowley: Yes, I got mine because that was some months before. We would have taken the boat away from him, but the boat would be no good to the Moore Shipyard.

Baum: Was Rolph a good business man? It does not sound like it.

Crowley: Well, he was and he wasn't.

Baum: This was way before he was the mayor? Yes, I guess that I have heard that his reputation was not too good.

Crowley: Yes, but just think of the gall of it all. He gave me a tough time getting my \$125,000, then he tried to pass it

Crowley: back to me. I had enough trouble with him. I did not want any more.

Some Personnel of Red Stacks

Baum: When you took over Red Stacks, Captain Gray was in charge of them, right?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: And then you had a lot of captains on the tugs. Now when you took over, did Captain Gray continue to manage?

Crowley: No, they were all finished.

Baum: How about the other captains--did they stick with their tugs?

Crowley: Well, the captains of the tugs, they went along all right. I knew them all pretty well anyhow.

Baum: What happened to Captain Gray?

Crowley: He retired. He was pretty old by then.

Baum: Then who managed the tug business?

Crowley: I did. I carried on with the same staff because they were glad to see a change.

Baum: Hadn't Captain Gray been very popular with the men?

Crowley: He was very close--he had to be because he went through a pretty tough period from the competition and all that.

Baum: What about Captain Darragh, was he one of the captains on the tug?

Crowley: Captain Darragh was a captain of a tug, yes. When I took over, I spoke to a fellow who had been there for a long time. I said, "Tell me, is there a young fellow around here someplace who could take Bill Randall's place?" Because under the former administration Bill Randall had done the dispatching and his brother was a kind of a sub-manager, a superintendent, you might say. I wanted him out because we had never gotten along.

This fellow told me there was a good man who was the captain of the tug Alert. I went down and looked him over. He was a young fellow and it was Captain Darragh. Captain Darragh's father had been a captain on the Bay here. Captain Darragh made a very good man in that position, and he was a good tugboat man as well.

Baum: And was McGillivary there when you took it over?

Crowley: No, McGillivary came in with us on the launches. Then he graduated up to the tugboats. So he was already with me when I took over. Then a few years later we sent him down there to take over the San Pedro Tugboat Company because the man who was operating it, something happened to him. I don't know what it was. When he got down there this Tillie Bunkus was there; she was very familiar with the business.

Crowley: She used to go out there with a megaphone and give orders to the tugs and all that.

That writer came along and saw it. He thought that it would make a wonderful story, so McGillivary helped him. He showed him all the things, put him in the tugs, and they built that story about "Tugboat Annie."

Baum: When did McGillivary go down to San Pedro? I didn't know you were down there that soon. It was about 1918 that you took over the Red Stacks.

Crowley: But they were down in San Pedro at that time too, I think. That was not the Red Stack though; that was the launch company. There were not any big tugs down there because there was not much in the way of a harbor down there. They were just building that artificial harbor.

Kortum: So you were competing for the business of going out to the sailing ship, delivering newspapers across the Bay, and everything else.

Crowley: Well, as far as the newspapers go, we did not try to undermine the other fellow. You got so much a month and you had to be right there on the job. If you were late, they would be right after you and want to know why you were late.

Not only that, Charley McNail took the papers from here over to Sausalito. He did that for years. He had launches too.

Kortum: Why didn't they use the ferryboats?

Crowley: Well, the ferryboats had schedules that did not fit the newspaper's schedule. This was early in the morning, and you had to get it there because you had to distribute the papers and one thing or another.

Kortum: You mentioned wagons being used to deliver the newspapers when they were being delivered on the other end. Where were they delivered, Oakland long wharf, or where?

Crowley: Oh no. We went up the Creek, to the foot of Broadway.

[From a later interview, October 25, 1965]

Crowley: Say, by the way, was it you who asked me who the author was who wrote Tugboat Annie? Here it is right here--Norman Reilly Raine.

It all originated right down in San Pedro. Tillie and McGillivary were the fellows who were responsible for it. The strange thing about it was that the Moran Company in New York tried to lay the scene in New York Harbor. Foss up in Seattle, he tried to lay the story in Tacoma. There were quite a few of them.

Baum: Did they have any women of that type? A woman who was so...

Crowley: Oh no. They did not have any women.

Baum: Did you know Eugene Moran?

Crowley: You know that Moran Company was three generations. Eugene was the second. The third was Ed Moran.

Baum: Eugene Moran was about your age, wasn't he? Your generation?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: I read somewhere in the paper that he came out here and they fixed up two of your tugs to look like Moran's.

Crowley: Well, that was a joke put up on him. He came in here from the Orient or somewhere on a steamer. We heard about it from some of his friends here. So we painted the stack his color, New York Harbor, and we went down there. He was called on deck and he looked and said, "My God! I didn't think our company would ever buy Crowley out!"

Baum: Did you ever have dealings with him?

Crowley: Yes, lots of dealings. He is an admiral, you know. He was picked up during the war through influence or something and was taken into the service. There he was given the title of Admiral Moran. Even to this day when you go into the office, you must refer to him as Admiral.

Baum: He was on the east coast. Would there be much business dealing that you would have with the east coast with his company?

Crowley: Yes, from time to time we would have. Ocean tows--those tows coming out from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast or vice versa.

Baum: Would his tugs haul them half way and then yours haul them

Baum: back?

Crowley: No, sometimes we could do that, but we never do as a rule.  
It was just a case of being successful and getting the tow.

Baum: Would his tugs get clear out here?

Crowley: Yes, he came out here and went there.

Baum: Do you remember Captain Daniel Thomsen? He was a Red Stack captain way back, even before you had Red Stacks.

Crowley: He was a Red Stack captain, yes. He had two sons--Oscar and Dan. You know, when I took over the Reds, I knew Dan Thomsen very well, that is the old man. Anyhow, don't forget that we were neighbors. We were on one side of the dock, and the Red Stacks was on the other. After we got launches, we kept getting bigger and bigger tows all the time. We used to watch out.

Baum: You watched each other's business?

Crowley: Oh sure! Well, I was over there one day just about as we were ready to take it over. I saw Dan Thomsen down in the basement; that is, it was a two-story affair and he was down in the bottom part. I said, "Hello, Dan. What the hell are you doing here?"

He said, "Well, they won't let me up in the office."

I said, "They won't, huh?"

"No."

So when I went upstairs, I said to Bill Randall, who



Crowley: was in charge, "What the hell have you got Dan Thomsen down there for?"

He said, "Oh, we don't want him up here."

I said, "You go to hell; you can go out and let him come up!"

Shortly after that, I went over to the tug Alert. I was told by an oldtimer there, Phil, the watchman, that there was a young fellow aboard there who would make a darned good man. It was Captain Darragh. I knew his father but I did not know him. I talked to him and found out that he was suitable. I brought him into the office and fired the two Randalls. Then old Dan was in his glory. Darragh was tickled to death to take over Randall's job in the office. Do you know how long he has been with us? Over sixty years! He is in a rest home now. He can't work.

Baum: That is just recent, isn't it?

Crowley: A couple of years ago.

Baum: Did he have a stroke or something?

Crowley: No, I don't know. He just petered out.

Kortum: What about Captain Shirley, does he still work for you?

Crowley: I haven't seen him for years. Yes. He was a pretty good fellow.

Baum: You did not tell us, why was Captain Thomsen having this squabble with Randall, that they would not let him up?

Crowley: As far as that is concerned, in those days a tugboat captain was a prima donna. A man who could do the job better than the other fellow was exalted. So there was a lot of competition that way. Randall was a good tugboat captain; Thomsen was a good tugboat captain. But Thomsen had a reputation for being a good man at sea, out at the bar, and up and down the coast. He was the fellow who towed the log rafts from Astoria down to San Diego.

Baum: He is the guy who brought the Goliath and the Hercules around the Cape, isn't he?

Crowley: Yes, they were built on the east coast, and he brought them out, one towing the other.

Baum: So it was just personality competition. Did Thomsen stay with you then for a long time?

Crowley: Oh yes. As long as he could.

Baum: You were telling me about his sons.

Crowley: He had one Dan and one Oscar. Dan was not much of a tugboat man, but Oscar was. We had him for many years. Oscar was a Red Stack captain.

Baum: Didn't he have a daughter?

Crowley: I don't know.

Kortum: Why were the Randalls upstairs in the office? How did that come about?

Crowley: Clem Randall was the superintendent. He was under Captain

Crowley: Gray. He had been on the coast as a tugboat man and also as a master of a steamer. But he went in there with the Reds. That was a shore job. He wanted to stay ashore; he did not want to go asea.

Kortum: That is Clem Randall?

Crowley: Yeah, Captain Gray was the boss. Then Clem Randall was under him. Bill Randall was a dispatcher, giving the orders and one thing or another.

Baum: So you got rid of Gray and the two Randalls?

Crowley: Yeah. We were at loggerheads all the time anyhow.

Kortum: This was after you took over and they had been there for some time?

Crowley: They had been there for years. I had nothing to do with Gray. He has two sons now. One is Carl and one is Bill. Bill has a yacht down there at Yacht Harbor. He is retired and he does not do anything except sail around in the yacht. I think he is a member of the St. Francis Yacht Club.

Baum: I have the name of John Wesley Curry, who was once an owner of the Shipowners and Merchants Tugboat Company. Is that right, Curry?

Crowley: He was a bookkeeper or something like that, not owner. It was a stock company. Curry, yes, the name is familiar to me.

Baum: But you did not know him very well? He was not a big man

Baum: in the outfit?

Crowley: I don't remember.

Baum: My notes say that he was a big man in the 1920's and he just died in 1948. So he lasted a long time and went back to the early days.

Crowley: He was with us somehow or another. I have forgotten just how.

Baum: I read something about a long tow that some of your tugs made--fourteen LST's from San Francisco to Orange, Texas. I guess that was right after World War II. Apparently it was quite a tremendous feat.

Crowley: Darned if I know. What you could do is to go down to the Red Stacks some day and ask them to give you the scrapbook so that you could go through that. Did you ever see the scrapbook down at Pier 32?

Baum: Yes.

Crowley: That is different than the one that they have down at Red  
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Stacks--different topics.

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Mr. Crowley has two large scrapbooks at his home, 30 Florence Street, San Francisco, which include newspaper clippings, programs, pictures, and other memorabilia on the Crowley family and businesses, ca. 1895-1960. A negative microfilm of these scrapbooks can be seen at the California Historical Society, 2090 Jackson Street, San Francisco.

A set of scrapbooks on the Crowley businesses and other transport companies is kept at Crowley Launch and Tugboat Company, Pier 32.

A set of scrapbooks on Red Stacks consisting mainly

## UNION ACTIVITIES ON THE WATERFRONT

Andrew Furuseth and the Sailors' Union

Baum: I'd like to go back and discuss the growth of the waterfront unions. You mentioned to me Andrew Furuseth. I was wondering what kind of a fellow he was. He was a pretty straight-laced fellow, wasn't he?

Crowley: I don't think that he took any money but he made a good living. He was a business agent for an organization. Everyone pays dues and that is a good lot of money.

Baum: He didn't live very well, did he?

Crowley: Well, I don't know how he lived. He was a "squarehead," Norwegian. He was one of those birds who planted the dynamite around here. He was accused of blowing up Curtin's boarding house, who had a lot of scabs in there, as they called them.

Baum: Weren't there quite a few bloody strikes during the years that you were on the waterfront?

Crowley: Yes, lots of them.

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of newspaper clippings on tugboat history is kept at the Red Stack Office, Pier 25.

The researcher is advised to consult all three of these sets of scrapbooks for detailed information on the Crowley enterprises.

Crowley:           A funny thing about Andrew Furuseth, he was a pretty strong Norwegian-Swede. He always had to have a boatman too. He had Hoodlum Harry, Harry Henrickson, a Swede, who had his own boat. He would go out in the Bay with these fellows. Then later in the afternoon or evening Harry would come in and go over to the saloon because in those days you could go into a saloon and for fifteen cents you could get a glass of beer and a quick lunch. He would get a few drinks in him and then he would tell us what he did. The story was eked out all the time, and we knew what was going on.

          He used to do dynamite in those days. He would dynamite the boarding house or something on the shore; he did not dynamite the ships. In fact, there was that big, sensational case here in which Curtin's boarding house was blown up. It was a sensational trial for a long time; I've forgotten what happened. He was one of them just the same. Anybody who had anything to do with them in any way that gave them trouble, they would not hesitate to dynamite the place. For instance, there was a little steam tug called the Ethlyn Marrium, and she used to take the non-union crews aboard the vessels laying in the Bay. They planted the dynamite bomb on her. That was in the beginning when the union was trying to get organized. There were many battles in those days.

Baum: The union got organized back when you were a boy, didn't it?

Crowley: It was not any too strong because as far as they were concerned, many times they would have a flare-up with the ship owners. The ship owners would bring in a lot of non-union men here as "scabs." They would have a ship out in the Bay. They would put them aboard there and then take them from there to the ship that needed them. There was nothing that the sailors' union could do about it. They afterwards had their own boat and they did a lot of stuff around.

Baum: Now, what would happen to a launch company during a strike?

Crowley: The strike was always on the dock. But as far as in the Bay was concerned, they could not go out there and do much.

#### Crowley in Court as an Eyewitness

Crowley: I will never forget one time, I was out alongside a steam schooner when a union boat came out there with the sailors who were striking. The man who represented the owners was there and he forbade them to come aboard. They did not pay any attention to him and started to come aboard. He was standing up on the bridge and he had a shotgun. He took a couple of shots at them. They got scared and jumped back into the boat and went ashore; then they had him arrested.

Crowley: I testified in the case, since I was an eyewitness. I testified, and then they cross-examined me about angles, measurement, and one thing and another.

In my testimony I had given a lot of statements with regard to the distances and angles. The attorney for the other side asked me many questions, not only what is the height of the room, but how high is the table, the chair, and all that sort of thing; the idea being that distance had a lot to do with the shooting, how close they were, and so forth. Then when the other side took on the cross-examination, they tried to contradict my estimated distance, and by God, they got rulers out and were quite sure of themselves. They measured it, and I was right in every instance. Just guessing.

Baum: Was your sympathy usually with the boat owners in these conflicts between the sailors and the owners?

Crowley: I was on the other side. I was against the unions. The boat that I owned was only a rowboat, but the ships that were owned, that was different. That was where we made our living, and that is where we got our business. Naturally we would be on their side.

Baum: I was wondering if when you were just a small business, a launch company, if you stayed out of the unions. It was



Baum: the coastwise sailors who used to belong, wasn't it?

Crowley: Well, in those days they used to strike, but the ship-owners used to bring in non-union men. There were a lot of fellows who made it a business to dig up non-union men and bring them in to break up a strike. There were two or three fellows. One's name was Lombard, and I forget the other fellow's name. They always brought in a big group of non-union men.

Baum: Then the fighting would go on on the docks?

Crowley: Yes, on the docks.

Baum: What about you and your launch men? Did you get mixed up in the middle or could you keep out?

Crowley: No, we kept out of it. There was nothing they could do with us. It might have looked like a tough place to be in, but we were not afraid.

#### Examples of Union Activities

Baum: Did you know this fellow who started the Coastwise Sailors' Union in 1885--Segismund Danielwicz?

Crowley: Well, I knew the Sailors' Union very well from the time that it was started. The Shipowners Association was down here. A fellow by the name of Kane was in charge of it.

Crowley: It was on East Street in those days. They call it the Embarcadero now.

Baum: That was to fight the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, was it?

Crowley: Yes. As far as the Shipowners Association was concerned, they were interested in coasting vessels. They did not want the Sailors' Union to run over it. The Sailors' Union would have done it. But we also had men here who could combat those unions very much. They were well-to-do men like A. B. Hammond, who had the Hammond Lumber Company down in Los Angeles. Then there was James Tyson and the Charles Nelson Company--Union Lumber Company, I'll think of the name. Those men were very strong men. They prevented the pickets of the unions from overriding anything. They kept them in their place.

Baum: I have a note that in 1892 there was a big strike between the Sailors' Union of the Pacific and Shipowners Association, and the sailors lost.

Crowley: Well, that was the usual thing in those days because the shipowners, the men who were operating it, were pretty strong, and they kept everybody in line, and they did beat the Sailors' Union.

You know, now we have a spread of unions. That was because all of these unions had a lot of money in their

Crowley: treasury, and they put money into every candidate's fight.

The result was that the candidate is now in office and is under obligation to them. They did not have that previously.

Baum: So you think that it was only through political power that they were able to make headway?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: Not through strikes?

Crowley: No. Now you notice that they have a say in almost everything, and they are pretty strong.

Baum: They are still especially strong here in San Francisco, aren't they?

Crowley: They are strong on the Atlantic coast too.

Baum: Yes, but I mean, it seems that Los Angeles often has a better competitive advantage.

Crowley: Well, no. Down there they had Harry Chandler and General Otis and they took care of it. That is gone now though, and it is different. Now they have to abide by the same rules that they run here in this port. You have Long Beach down there, and you've got San Diego, but they all run the same way.

Baum: I have another note that in 1901 there was another big strike between the Sailors' Union of the Pacific and the City Front Federation. What was the City Front Federation?

Crowley: Well, that was the Shipowners Association.

Baum: Then in 1915 the LaFollette Seaman's Act was passed. Do you recall if that made a big difference?

Crowley: It did not make a big difference, no.

Baum: Did it improve the conditions for the sailors?

Crowley: I could not say. I am not familiar with that. In 1918 the formation of the Inland Boatman's Union, well, that was deck hands.

Baum: Now, that is the one that affected your operations, isn't it?

Crowley: Yes, but let me tell you something--this Pauley's union, the fellow who really is the ringleader in this business--he tells the men certain things and nobody is going to refuse if they are in the union to get more money if they can without any effort on their part. He would go and tell them a cock-and-bull story about how he could get more money, and so forth. Then they would authorize him to go ahead and do it.

He was after the Red Stacks, giving us more or less bother, and so forth. It got so I said, "Nothing doing; get out!" So then they went out on a strike. They came down in the morning on picket duty. I went over and brought them aside and said, "Now listen, as far as you fellows are concerned, you are not making a dollar. You have paid in a lot of dues and you are going to be on it for a long time without earning anything. Now Vincellone,(that was the business

Crowley: agent) he is well provided for. He is getting nine hundred dollars a month and he has his wife on for five hundred dollars a month. He has his hand in the till for as far as it can go. As far as you suckers are concerned, he expects you fellows to pay dues now when you are on strike. What I would do would be to go up there and tell him, "Look here, we are out on strike and we are not on anybody's payroll. Now if we are going to stay in that situation, then you have got to get off the payroll. You may mark my word that he will not go off the payroll, but you fellows will go on the payroll."

Pacific Union put them on the payroll too. So when they put all these men on the payroll, it made a big dent in the treasury. This fellow Vince tried to see me and talk to me; I would not even talk with him. It took eight months for that treasury to slim down to nothing.

Baum: That was a lot later, wasn't it? That was in the thirties, wasn't it?

Crowley: Somewhere along in there. It was quite a long time ago. That was the Inland Boatman's Union.

Baum: Then from 1958 to 1960 there was a long, long tug strike by the Inland Boatman's Association versus San Francisco Towboat Owners. So I wonder if that is the one that you are talking about?

Crowley: Damned if I know.

Tugboat Crews and Officers

Crowley: Decrease in tug business and increase in launches--they always did what they could but they never had power enough to do what the tugboats did so it was very tough on the big ships going around without anybody.

Baum: But the launches could put a pilot aboard though.

Crowley: Well, there were more or less Bay pilots around, but they did not have any power or anything so they were at a disadvantage.

Baum: Then you don't think the tug business is going down?

Crowley: No, I guess there is more now. As far as the tugboat business is concerned, those men in the tugboats are very well trained. They start in a minor way, maybe as a deck boy, and get to be a deck hand. Then after they are a deck hand, they get to be a mate. Then they go up to captain. Then the tugboat company watches a new fellow very closely before he goes on the bridge of a ship. The tugboat's captain goes on the bridge of the ship and takes charge of the ship. He knows where to put the ship, when to pull ahead, pull astern, or anything like that. The whole thing is done under his

Crowley: supervision. It depends on the man himself.

Baum: In the case of one of these long strikes, where does the captain stand? Does he stand with the company or with the men?

Crowley: He tries to stand with the company, but he can't. Here is the idea in the union: you pay dues into a union. You don't want anything to do with them; in fact, they are hindering you in more ways than one, but you don't go near it. That is, the majority of them do. Some of them who are very inferior men and who are looking for something for nothing, they are the fellows who stick around the business agent and pull off this and that. But the majority of them don't want any union because the union is getting dues out of them and causing them trouble.

Baum: The captains don't belong to the same unions as the deck hands, do they?

Crowley: No, Masters, Mates, and Pilots is their union. There is Masters, Mates, and Pilots; there is the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association--that is the engineers; there is the Inland Boatman's Union--deck hands; and then there is the Marine Cooks and Stewards Association of the Pacific Coast.

Baum: Now your tugs don't have cooks on them, do they?

Crowley: Sure they do, even in the Bay. We would never get anything done if they got off to eat.

Baum: In the case of a strike, then where do the captains stand? Do the Masters, Mates, and Pilots go out with the Inland Boatman's Union?

Crowley: Well, they do out of sympathy and one thing or another. The union they belong to is tied up with the other union.

Baum: I should think that puts the captain in a rather hard spot.

Crowley: It does, yes. The captain gets pretty good money though. He gets eight or nine hundred a month and his board. Sometimes they get more than that.

Here is my payroll for the engineers. See what they make?

Baum: Let's see. Some of them make from nine hundred to one thousand dollars a month. Now here are the deck hands and cooks; they don't get paid so badly either.

Crowley: Now look. Here is this fellow Elliot. Last month he made nine hundred and twenty-four dollars and this month he made one thousand dollars. The total is one thousand, nine hundred dollars for two months. He is the chief engineer. He is first in command.

Baum: Is this on a tug or what?

Crowley: Yes, a tug.

Baum: What is the captain?

Crowley: Let's see if there is a captain on here. Here is a deck hand.



Baum: Deck hands make six hundred sixty-nine to seven hundred thirty-one dollars. So they average around seven hundred dollars a month.

Crowley: They get their board besides.

Baum: Do captains get paid by the time they are out?

Crowley: No, they get paid by the month. Here is a mate--they get very nearly the same thing. Here is their average out here, about seven hundred dollars a month.

Baum: How come those engineers make more than the captains and the mates?

Crowley: Well, they don't. That is, these fellows might not be as active as that. They don't get in overtime or anything. Overtime makes a great difference.

Baum: What is their regular work week--forty hours?

Crowley: Yes. Let me see something--there is a pension plan, welfare, and all that.

Baum: Now these captains average around eight hundred to nine hundred dollars a month.

Crowley: Yes, they are all active men. Then the mates make about seven hundred and fifty dollars. They might not have a good month there and then they have a better one here. Then sometimes if you average for two months or six months, you might even do better than that. They are paid pretty well.

Here is a payroll sheet for 1961.

Baum: Have wages gone up since then?

Crowley: Oh yes.

Baum: I wondered if the union bothered you about dictating on promotions? Or seniority? Or any of your control over the men?

Crowley: No, they cannot do that. A business agent from the union could not come and ask me about it because he is no judge; he does not know. It is the superintendent down at the tug company who knows what the men are doing. When we put a man on the bridge of a ship, if there is any damage we are stuck for it. He has a lot of responsibility.

Baum: So they have never tried to claim the right to speak to you about who should be advanced, etc.?

Crowley: Oh no. That would be a very dangerous thing.

Some Leaders Among the Unions and Shipowners, San Francisco  
and Los Angeles

Baum: Do you remember Walter McArthur?

Crowley: Yes. I knew him well. He was with the union. He was there a long time.

You asked about Roger Lapham and Tom Plant. Well,  
Roger Lapham was the head of the American-Hawaiian Steamship

Crowley: Company. He was a very good straight man. Plant was his assistant so Plant was representing the waterfront employers, and he did very good.

Baum: Tom Plant was president, wasn't he, of the Waterfront Employers?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: I wanted to ask you about this fellow who had the Bluebook Union, Jack Bryan.

Crowley: He was only a fellow making a living. The Bluebook, that was for the men, you mean.

Baum: Some people said that it was a company union--that the ship-owners controlled it. It was after the 1920 strike, I think. Some other people said no, that it was a pretty straight union.

Crowley: I don't know much about it. After you come out of one of those strikes, you don't bother about it afterwards, Bluebook or Redbook or anything else.

Say, here is another thing that you asked. Comments on Scharrenberg, Joe Lyon, and other prominent men in the labor union. Paul Scharrenberg was a lobbyist around Sacramento.

Baum: Did you come across him much?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: He was with the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, wasn't he?

Crowley: Yes, for years.

You know, another thing down there in San Pedro and Los Angeles, there were two men down there who practically ran the town. One was Harry Chandler, head of the Times; he owned the Times down there. The other was General Otis. Those two men kept that town free from labor trouble. Another good man down there was A. B. Hammond, he was in the lumber business.

Baum: He worked with Chandler and Otis?

Crowley: Yes, they worked with him because he was a very wealthy man and very tough. I remember going down with him one time when the Sailors' Union pulled a strike. When he got down there he called up the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, which was a big thing down there. He told them that he was down there in connection with the strike and that he wanted some help.

Baum: So he was not a Los Angeles man? He was from up north?

Crowley: He was from up here, yes. He had a big plant down there and a big plant up north.

Baum: And you hauled the lumber for him?

Crowley: No, he had his own vessels. We went down there. It was the IWW, wasn't it? What did they call them?

Baum: "Wobblies," wasn't it?

Crowley: Oh yes. So there was a big hill at San Pedro and they were

Crowley: all up on top of it. So Hammond called up the Southern Pacific and told them that he wanted a certain number of cars to come down there. Cars that just had the sides on them. They promised to send them. Then he called up the police department and said that he wanted them to assign a number of officers down there because there might be trouble and they should prevent it. So he took care of everything.

When the cars came there and the police were there, he sent the cops up to the top of the hill to drive them all down and put them on these flat-cars. So he had instructed the conductor of the railroad that when they got aboard and he gave them time to go, they would go up twenty-five miles beyond Los Angeles City and then dump them off and let them get along the best way that they knew how. He got them out of San Pedro and he got them out of Los Angeles. Los Angeles is twenty-five miles from San Pedro. Then twenty-five miles from that is fifty miles.

Baum: Some of them went down to San Diego then and caused trouble, didn't they?

Crowley: He went down there after them too. Then you had Harry Chandler there and General Otis. They wanted the town non-unionized.

Baum: Did you work with Hammond and the others on that?

Crowley: Many times I worked with him.

Baum: On business or did he also co-operate on other labor troubles?

Crowley: On labor trouble, because years before there was a strike here and they would put a vessel out in the Bay. Then they would bring in a lot of non-union men, and they would not have them knocking around the city. They would take them and put them aboard this vessel in the stream. There they would feed them, give them a place to sleep, and all that.

Baum: So they would be safe?

Crowley: Sure, then in the morning we would go out and get them for the different jobs that we wanted them for.

Baum: Who thought of that? That is a pretty good idea, because those men would have been in quite a bit of danger if they had been in town.

Crowley: Yes, they could have been waylaid or struck down.

Baum: Where did they get the non-union men from?

Crowley: In those days they had men around who made a business of picking up non-union men. They would bring them from somewhere halfway across the country, or up north, or anywhere they could get them. They would get in touch with those fellows that handled those men. I remember there was one fellow named Lumbard.

Baum: Then they would bring men to wherever there was a labor problem? Did some of them come from a considerable distance, like Los Angeles? Did they transport men that far?

Crowley: Sure! They would bring them a long way.

Baum: So they would not be local men. They would not have any connections here?

Crowley: No, they were just floating. They would go around in groups.

Baum: But were they good workers?

Crowley: Yes, they had to work because there was someone there to make them work.

#### Containerization

Crowley: On the other hand the trouble today is, and it was some time ago, the stealing that you had up and down the coast and in New York too. They would steal the cargo that you had. Well, that has been going on for a long time. Now they have a kind of a system that they can kind of knock it out. They have containers which are big--twenty feet long, eight feet high, and eight feet wide. They put the cargo in there and then lock it up. They cannot open it or anything else. Then it is handled in the containers.

Baum: I saw those big containers stacked up along the waterfront today and I wondered if your biggest savings came from the cutdown in the stealing or in the handling? They are much easier to handle too, aren't they?

Crowley: Don't forget that the shipowners here made a deal with the unions where they would pay fifteen cents to them for every ton that was discharged here, and fifteen cents for the other--loading, that is right. That amounts to \$4,500,000 or \$5,000,000 a year. Bridges and those fellows are sitting pretty. They have not fussed because they have been paid off. That is a lot of money.

Well, I'll tell you something. One day I was walking down the street down here somewhere and I met Harry Bridges. I said, "Harry, you are not a unionist anymore. You are a capitalist."

He said, "How do you figure that?"

I said, "That deal you just made with the shipowners, the containerization fund. I understand that it runs into four or five million dollars a year."

He said, "It runs into that, but I don't handle it. I have nothing to do with it."

I said, "That is funny. You always did before. How is it that you did not get into this?"

He gave me some kind of an answer and so forth. Then I went to work and I found out that this fund was handled by Melinkow's sister and another relation--two girls. Then I found out that they used to go up to a place there on Maiden Lane to have their lunch. The other girl was Bill



Crowley: Stanton's daughter, I think. She told me just what they used to say.

Baum: They were in charge of this containerization fund, right?

Crowley: Yes. They had the momey. I went into it further and I saw that they practically controlled it. Henry Melinkow and Sam Kagel [federal arbitrator H.S.] were the two fellows who first came out here. He and Kagel were the fellows who framed that other guy. They are out and out Commies. In that case the money was handled by the Communists.

Baum: So you think that they do not save any money on handling because they have to pay that big amount of money into the union anyway?

Crowley: Well, that is divided up a great deal by a lot of ships. It is better for them that way to avoid trouble. They don't have all the labor problems or all the pilferage either. That way the discharging and loading of it is much easier.

Lapham-Bridges Debate, 1936

Crowley: I knew Kagel intimately. There was a debate to come on between Roger Lapham and Harry Bridges. It was to be out there in Dreamland Rink on Stanyan Street.

Baum: That was during the 1936 strike, wasn't it?

Crowley: It was sometime around then. I don't remember just when. I went out. I sat close to the platform. Lapham was a pretty straight fellow. He made a pretty nice talk. Then when he finished, Bridges came down the aisle and he had three or four longshoremen with him. So he made his talk; it was not as good as it might be.

Sam Kagel was there, so after Bridges got finished Sam walked down and I said to him, "What the hell is the matter with you?"

He said, "Why?"

I said, "Well, you let Bridges come in with that "heat" on him. I don't see why you should go down there."

He said, "I'll tell you. I had a bout in the morning and I could not do anything with him, and Henry was not around. Henry is the only one who has any power over him. I did the best I could to get him here, but that is the way it was."

I think Lapham came out ahead because Bridges wasn't in shape.

Let me tell you. Melinkow came into this picture and Bridges was just a longshoreman. They must have sifted possibilities all the way through, and they came up with Bridges, who was a fellow who came up here from Australia. It is better to get a job like that than to work as a longshoreman. They groomed him and they made him a "Commie" and

Crowley: he went on from there.

Baum: What were Melinkow's and Kagel's positions?

Crowley: They represented labor, but you could not tell where they were. They were labor attorneys.

Baum: Did you ever come across Wayne Morse as an arbitrator?

Crowley: No, I don't think so.

#### Bombing of the Los Angeles Times

Baum: Now I remember you told me that you knew something about the Los Angeles Times bombing, something about the transport of the dynamite?

Crowley: No, not the dynamite. You know, in Los Angeles Harry Chandler had the Times, and General Otis. They were the two strong men down there and they always kept Los Angeles from being unionized. All the employers would bring that up to the unions-- we cannot compete with Los Angeles if we are going to be unionized and they are not.

The unions then decided that they would straighten out Los Angeles. They brought the two McNamaras and a fellow by the name of Smith out here from the east coast. They went down there and they planted those bombs, the dynamite in the Times building, and they killed quite a few people.

Crowley: They intended to try to kill Harry Chandler, but they didn't. Then they were arrested. The Burns Detective Agency was hired, and I furnished, more or less, the information, and they picked up these fellows. But don't say that!

Well, you know, Burns was here in the graft-busters. He was pretty well known. He was quite a man.

Baum: You were talking about the Los Angeles Times bombing.

Crowley: Oh yes. They were convicted down there and they went over to San Quentin. That was a long time ago; I forget the term they got. Anyhow, there was a girl came out here from the East who was the sister of Smith, who was one of those three. She used to go over there to visit him. Then there was a family here, a very well-to-do family, society and all that, by the name of Livermore. One of the girls in that Livermore family was named Beth Livermore, she used to go over with the sister to see him. She got acquainted with him. Then when he was released--scandal upon scandal--she married him. It nearly killed the Livermores. They traced their ancestors back quite a few years, and to think that she would marry a convict.

Baum: I thought that the dynamite came through San Francisco, the dynamite that was used in the Times bombing and some of the other bombings too. Do you know anything about that?

Crowley: Well yes, because all the dynamite was handled around here;

Crowley: I handled it.

Baum: I think during the L. A. bombing some dynamite came through here again, didn't it?

Crowley: I can't remember just how it did, but as a rule it usually came through here. I did have knowledge of the ship, but I cannot think of the facts. I know it came through here.

Baum: I wondered if that had anything to do with them convicting the McNamaras and Smith--tracing the dynamite through here.

Crowley: They traced those fellows from the east coast out here, and they were here and they made all their arrangements here and so forth.

Baum: Was there a lot of excitement here in San Francisco while that trial was going on?

Crowley: There was a great deal of it.

Baum: I suppose labor was in support of the McNamaras?

Crowley: The McNamaras were the labor representatives and they went down there to unionize Los Angeles...

Baum: Well, I know that a lot of people thought that they were not guilty, and then when it came out that they were, it was a terrible shock.

Crowley: There was no question about that; they were guilty and they were brought out here by the unions.

Baum: It was quite a black eye for labor.

## THOMAS CROWLEY FAMILY

Baum: I've forgotten to ask you about your wife and children.

You married Louise Gade in 1910. Did she participate in your boating business?

Crowley: No, she never took any part in the business.

Baum: Was she a San Francisco girl?

Crowley: Yes, born and raised here.

Baum: Was her family in boating too?

Crowley: No.

Baum: What were her particular interests?

Crowley: Oh, running the family, I guess.

Baum: Did she take part in church?

Crowley: No, she did not bother with church. We had four children-- three girls and one boy. The boy is now running the business and some of the children are over fifty years of age.

Baum: What are their names?

Crowley: The eldest one is Escher, Virginia Escher. Escher is her married name now. And Connie Bowles--her husband is head of the Miller and Lux Estate. They have three children too. Both of those girls have three. Jane Koven, who lives in

Crowley: New Jersey, is the other. She has five children. Her husband is in the manufacturing business: L. O. Koven Manufacturing, metals, boilers, and things of that kind.

Baum: Escher is with you?

Crowley: Yes. Bay Cities is what he is in, Bay City Transportation.

Baum: So two daughters are here and your son is here and the other daughter is in New Jersey.

Crowley: Yes, that is right. My son has married recently too. He is running the business.

Baum: Who are you going to have running the business someday? Which one of these grandsons is going to be the one?

Crowley: There are two or three of them coming up; they are both over twenty-one. One fellow is over in Vietnam; he is in the service. He has been over there for some time and expects to come back in December.

Baum: Which boy is that? Which family?

Crowley: Escher. He is Cassie Escher; he is over twenty-one. Then there is another one--Henry Bowles, who is graduating from Occidental College down in Los Angeles. He is over twenty-one too; he'll go to work when he comes up this time.

Baum: Both of those boys are interested in it?

Crowley: Yes, very much.

Baum: You have eleven grandchildren?

Crowley: Koven, she has five children, and the children are all

Crowley: married, and I couldn't even place them unless they got out a family tree so that I could size them up.

Baum: You mean you already have great-grandchildren there?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: I suppose they will stay in the East though?

Crowley: Oh yes. There is one there who just graduated from Vassar; her name is Bowles.

Baum: How about your children--Virginia, Connie and Jane--where did you send them to school?

Crowley: Well, Connie went to Sarah Lawrence school in the East. There was another school over here in Berkeley that the other two went to; some girls' school. In fact, even today, I call up one of them and they say, "One of my friends is here from school," and that was a long time ago.

Baum: So you sent them all to girls' schools to college?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: And what about your son? Where did he go?

Crowley: He went to Stanford.

Baum: Did they go to public school before they reached college age?

Crowley: Yes, well, there was a private school right next door to us up on Russian Hill--Miss Paul's School--they all went there. Then they went to public schools afterwards.

Anita Day Hubbard and I were quite friendly. Before she passed away, she gave me a bunch of forms to give to the



Crowley: children so that they could build up their family tree, but they never did.

Baum: Do you have any records of your family that go back past your father, any old records from Ireland?

Crowley: No. Now I'll answer this one. As far as the clubs go, I belonged to the Bohemian, Olympic, and Commercial.

Baum: When did you join the Olympic Club?

Crowley: I joined it, I think, in 1903 or 1904.

Baum: Were they especially interested in boating at that time?

Crowley: No, not in the Olympic. They had boxing and all that sort of thing. I also joined the Bohemian Club in 1918. In 1918; I am one of the old guard now. When you are over fifty, you get the run of those places; then you are one of the old guard.

You asked about the Lamb's Club of New York. If you remember, the Bohemian Club put on plays. I stayed at the Lamb's Club through the Bohemian Club.

Baum: Oh, I did not know that. I wondered how come you belonged to the Lamb's Club. That is a theatrical club for the most part, that is why I was surprised that you belonged.

Crowley: There was a fellow here by the name of Bob Haig who was a port engineer. He went with the Shipping Board. Then after he finished his time with the Shipping Board he went to work for Standard Oil of New Jersey. He lived in the Lamb's

Crowley: Club; he was quite a factor there. Then when the road play would come out here, he came out here with a whole special train filled with his firends.

Baum: I have in this little note that you like to play dominoes; is that right?

Crowley: Oh, I play up there, but that doesn't mean much. There is nothing to it; it is mostly just luck and a few tricks.

Baum: And is that right that you are a golfer?

Crowley: I used to; I haven't in a long time. I'm too old for golf. I played at Lakeside.

Baum: Was boating a sport of yours?

Crowley: No, I never did it for fun, only for a living.

Baum: But you never took to it as a sport, it was strictly business?

Crowley: Well, when the city used to put up a purse for a big celebration here on the Fourth of July, they put a certain amount aside for the Whitehall boat races. It was a very important thing. I sailed in those races.

Baum: I think I read that your son won some kind of a race then.

Crowley: He had a Bird class boat, i.e., a yacht, and he belonged to the St. Francis Yacht Club. They used to have races with those boats, a Bird boat. That was a little sloop with a mainsail, a jib, and a spinnaker.

Baum: Doesn't the Olympic Club do a lot of sports?

Crowley: Yes, they have a lot, cross country runs and all that sort

Crowley: of thing.

Baum: Did you have any other thing that you were interested in aside from your work?

Crowley: No, that kept me pretty busy.

All right, now you were asking about East and West Marin Islands. Those were owned by the federal government. Dry years, the U. S. government owned all the tidelands in front of all the properties along the frontage of Alameda, Berkeley, Oakland, and all those places. Now when these islands were put up, they advertised them, and I went there and bid on them. It was a public auction. I bought the first one and then I bought the second one at the same sale. [1922] I had acquired a lot of tidelands around the properties. It was all on tidelands. You know, someone could have bought those islands not knowing any different and never been able to get there, because I owned that, it was private land.

In fact, there was an idea at that time and I was in close touch with it, to run a bridge across from San Rafael to some place on San Pablo, which was a very short distance and would have cost about \$7,000,000 or \$8,000,000. There was, oh I forget his name, he was promoting it. Oscar Klapp, that's it. He was the fellow who built the Carquinez Bridge, he and his associates. He had planned this bridge close

Crowley: alongside of the islands, just a little north of them. He had all the plans, the estimate, and so forth. It was 1929, and the depression came, so he could not finance it.

Baum: So there was a possibility that the islands would have been used as footing for the bridge?

Crowley: No, they would not. Some people thought that, but I knew that the bridge was going a little north of them.

Baum: Then what were you going to do with the islands?

Crowley: Well, I built some houses on them.

Baum: Is that what you bought them for, a residence?

Crowley: Yes, all the children were small and we used to go over every Saturday and stay there until Sunday morning or Sunday night and then come back. They were kids and they used to have a lot of fun because we could fish, and swim, and many other things.

Baum: So it was a weekend house.

Crowley: Yes, it was beautiful, two nice places there. A couple of years afterwards the state government built a bridge in from Richmond to Point San Quentin. What do you think it cost? Five or six times more than this, and it was longer, and you landed at a penitentiary.

Baum: So do you know why they chose that longer route?

Crowley: Politics.

Baum: I remember the ferry rides over there.

Crowley: That was Olson Mahoney that had that ferry. Yes, they had a fellow in their employ who developed that and he got financing from Olson Mahoney. Well, when the bridge came in, that went out. That bridge cost \$60,000,000 or \$70,000,000.

Baum: I guess things cost more in those years.

Crowley: No, it was only a couple of years afterwards.

Baum: What do you do with those islands now?

Crowley: We don't do a darned thing with them.

Baum: Are they sea bird refuges, one of them?

Crowley: One of them is, but we did that. The smallest island is only two acres; the larger one is twelve acres. There were a lot of birds there, beautiful birds.

Baum: Egrets?

Crowley: Yes. They still come there. They are multiplying. At first when we started the island, we protected them. One day a couple of fellows came out in a skiff and got on the island and shot a lot of them. We made a mess out of it. We had them arrested. They got quite a scare; then no one bothered the birds afterwards. They kept multiplying and they are quite a sight now.

Let me tell you a funny thing. At the sale of this small island there was a fellow giving me a little bumping in connection with the price. He was bidding on it, so I outbid him. I said to him afterwards, "What did you want

Crowley: to do with the islands?" He gave me some kind of excuse, and so forth. Then I found out that he was a dope peddler. He was going to park his dope over there and dispose of it from there. Nothing ever came of it because we did not bother, then some time later he was arrested and went to jail for this business.

After he served his prison term and so forth, he came down to see me right away, I don't know why, and he told me about what happened. I asked him what he had intended to do with the island. He said, "Oh, that is what I was going to use for the handling of the dope."

Baum: They used to haul a lot of bootleg liquor around there, didn't they?

Crowley: Oh no.

Baum: I don't mean on the islands. I mean around Sausalito and in there.

Crowley: Oh yes. Part of the vessels came down from British Columbia. They laid off there. Then the boats would go out and bring it in and take it into Sausalito or to San Francisco. I saw many of them. Kerney was one of them. He used to bring in a lot of booze and he used to have the pier watchman fixed, and the Prohide fellow. He could get away with a lot of stuff and get a good price for it. He would pick up some extra money.

Crowley: Then his lawyer thought that he was fat enough so he ordered the Prohide fellow to arrest him. He went and got arrested. Then the lawyer would take all the money that he made from him.

Baum: What is Prohide?

Crowley: Prohibition.

Baum: "Prohide," you called them. Who was his lawyer?

Crowley: Darned if I know.

Baum: He didn't have a very good ally, did he?

Crowley: That is all those fellows who were lawyers ever did anyhow.

Baum: Have you taken part in politics at all?

Crowley: Oh sure. Not outstanding, always knew what was going on all the time.

Baum: Have you supported any particular candidate?

Crowley: No, I did not get mixed up in any political clubs; I had other things to do.

Baum: What candidates have you supported?

Crowley: I wouldn't know.

COMMENTS ON THE PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO AND THE  
HARBOR COMMISSION

Baum: I did want to ask you about the Port of San Francisco and some of the changes. Some of them do not seem like improvements. How about that for this time?

Crowley: The trouble is we have a board of commissioners now who are not familiar with that kind of business. They put a good deal of money into Brown's selection and then he appointed them to one thing or another. They are getting their dough back all the time and then something on top of that.

Baum: They are appointed for political reasons rather than for what they know about port management?

Crowley: As far as that is concerned, the docks are falling into the Bay, and the business is going to Oakland. Now these fellows are putting in this tunnel out at Islais Creek. They are diverting the business out there, but then the funny part of it was that more or less of us who knew what was happening bought more or less of that land.

Kortum: Oh, in shore from it.

Crowley: So they are all sitting back and they are going to get dough.



Crowley: They bought that Witmore Building at the corner of Pacific and Embarcadero. They bought it one day; they sold it the next day, and got \$100,000 profit on it.

Kortum: What was that, in the Golden Gateway area?

Crowley: Yes, in the Golden Gateway.

Kortum: Who bought that?

Crowley: Oh, Magnin, Ben Swig, George Killion, I would say.

I will tell you something. The election of Brown, these fellows all contributed to his campaign expenses. Cyril Magnin, this is something that I know is perfectly right and so forth. It does not reflect any credit to him at all. He has a man down there by the name of Shuman, who is the head of the Foreign Trade Association. He has been very close with Magnin all the time.

They had a launch. I don't know whose launch it was; it was supposed to be Shuman's. They ordered, that is at least Magnin himself, ordered the superintendent of dredges to bring a float in and put it between the bulkheads of 16 and 18. The funny thing was that the superintendent's office was right there. My office is over here. I am on Pier 14 and this is 16 and 18. Naturally when the float came in, I wanted to see it.

So they towed it in and put the piledrivers to work and one thing and another. It was quite a job putting it in.

Crowley: It remained there for about six months, but the first thing that I heard about it was--Shuman came in with a launch and they were drunk or something. They got out of the slip all right, but they never came back. That thing laid there for about six months and there was nothing there at all.

Then the first thing you know, the superintendent got instructions to take it out. So after they took it out, I got in contact with him. I talked with him and said, "Tell me, what do you figure it cost to put that float in and take it out?"

He said, "That is very funny. You know, I kept an estimate on that all the way through. I am telling you right now that it never cost less than \$15,000."

So that \$15,000 was spent for the benefit of those two fellows, but it was out of the state's fund. That is giving you an angle on it.

Now the next thing that I saw him do was he brought a float, a barge into the ferry slips, put her into the ferry slips.

Baum: This is Magnin?

Crowley: Yes. Then he had a plan for it and he had his girls come down from the store. One girl in particular took charge of the thing. They had a plan to make on this barge Noah's Ark. It required a great deal of material--lumber, rope,

Crowley: and God knows what. Well, she telephoned every department of the Harbor Commission and got whatever she wanted, although every once in awhile one of these men in charge would rebel and want to know why. She would say, "Well, do you want to ask Mr. Magnin? I am getting my orders from Mr. Magnin." That killed it all. It went on like that until the barge was finished.

Baum: About how long was that?

Crowley: Oh, they had all kinds of help and all the material. There was not a single thing that did not belong to the state that did not go in there--even to the gangways, to the towing of it down, every little thing. God only knows how much money! They got it finished. Then he sent an order to these girls to go to the Associated Charities and tell them that this was a charitable matter. They wanted the Associated Charities to send women who could collect tickets and sell tickets at the docks. They were going to move down close to where the Balclutha lay. They came in contact with Kortum and gave them a lot of worries.

Baum: Why, did the barge get too close to the Balclutha?

Crowley: They were taking revenue from the Balclutha, and the Balclutha is the only revenue that the Maritime Museum had. When they stated that it was going to be for charity, then someone got into the picture and wanted to know what portion would go

Aboard the Balclutha: Tom Crowley, ex-Whitehall boatman, Johnny Kortum, and Karl Kortum, (center) 1965. Crowley is 90 years old in this picture.

Crowley: to charity. He said, "We are going to charge sixty cents to go aboard this vessel. Ten cents of it is going to charity."

He put it down there in the vicinity of the Maritime Museum. They could not yell because if they had, he would have put their rates up and hooked them badly. They were under obligations to him anyhow because they had that big vessel laying there doing nothing.

This barge, Noah's Ark, lay there for a year. I don't know what kind of business he had, but towards the end of the year, about winter, he took it away, and I never heard any more of it. That was another thing that he did that to my way of thinking was practically embezzlement.

Baum: It was just state funds and use of state facilities.

Crowley: Now this fellow Shuman, he is down there, the head of it. Both of them are in the same business--dressmakers, we call them. They have been very close. Here is the type of man-- I was dumbfounded when I read that the other day. Read that.

Baum: October 6, 1965 Examiner: "Leslie Cohen, one-time San Francisco bookmaker and now a legal Las Vegas gambler, is out on bail following his conviction on two counts of taking bets in Nevada by telephone from a San Francisco businessman. Cohen faces on each federal count five years in prison and a thousand dollar fine...Judge Albert C. Wollenberg will

Baum: impose sentence November 12th. Cohen was acquitted on three other counts of taking interstate telephone bets from another San Francisco businessman. His conviction on the two counts followed testimony by Adolf Shuman, President of the Lilli Ann Corporation, a dress goods business, that he was 99 per cent sure he was talking to Cohen when he placed bets and received betting information from Las Vegas in 1962." [Oh, Adolf Shuman is the president of Lilli Ann] "Shuman, an executive of the World Trade Authority, told a jury of ten men and two women he placed a wager with the Saratoga Race Sports Book September 25, 1962 on the Liston-Patterson bout."

So this is interstate telephone bets, which have been illegal since 1961, I see.

Crowley: He is just as guilty as the fellow who was convicted. I just thought I would show you that so you could see what type of man he is. That is a nice man to be head of the World Trade Authority, isn't it?

Baum: What does the World Trade Authority do? They don't come in contact with your shipping much, do they?

Crowley: No, that is foreign, import and export. That is a business by itself. They have all the ferry building loaded up down there with all of its products.

Baum: They have that free port, don't they?

Crowley: Yes, and it is a fine racket.

Baum: Why do you say "racket?"

Crowley: It is just like everything else. People don't know what is happening.

Baum: Do you feel this is because the harbor is under the state? Would it be better to have it under the city?

Crowley: The city did not originally have the money to build this. The state owned the tidelands. See, originally the tidelands were owned by the federal government. Then they deeded them to the state. Then there were these tidelands that covered all around the Bay. But here, in front of San Francisco, when it went to the state, they stood pat and held it. They never sold any of it.

The Port of San Francisco was invited to build their docks. It ran into millions and they did not have the money and the city wasn't big enough to do it--that is, in the early days. Then the state came along and built the docks.

Baum: Now most of the other harbors belong to the city.

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: So San Francisco is alone in that respect.

Crowley: Well, San Francisco is alone, but we have never had such a situation as we have now, where they let the docks go to the devil; they are all caving in and falling in. The business is going to pieces. See what Oakland and the rest

Crowley: of them... Read that story.

Baum: "Oakland sets industrial land policy..." [The rest is not read aloud]. Now they are trying to attract new business to Oakland.

Crowley: Yes, and they are making improvements and they are getting a great deal of it.

Baum: You think Oakland is ahead of San Francisco in the ability to attract new business?

Crowley: Well, they haven't the facilities because that is an artificial harbor; this is a natural harbor. Over there, that is the lee side and everything that goes over there shallows up quickly. The natural harbor, you have got to dredge all the time at any of them, but this dredging stays awhile. In 1958 the Harbor Commission had a bond issue on the ballot for \$50,000,000 to repair the waterfront and restore it to its original condition. 1958--today is 1965. That was seven years ago. All right, they never did a damned thing with this after it passsd. Oh, I'll tell you one thing though that they did.

There is a fellow who comes into this by the name of Killion, George Killion. He is the campaign manager. He sent out letters to different people. Like I got one letter. He wrote to me, "Your pro rata for the advertising expense of the bond issue will be \$12,500." I threw it in the wastebasket, you see.



Crowley: I had a friend and he got one for \$10,000. He came in and talked to me about it. He said, "You know, I am in a funny fix."

I said, "In what way?"

He said, "I am doing the stevedoring up there for the American President Line. They have got us in a jam and we don't make any money. I am going to go to him and tell him that I am not going to pay any \$10,000 to that fund because the business that I do does not justify it. Not only that, but he has the right, according to the contract that we made, to inspect our books every month. If we make any profit, then we have to cut the price down so we have been doing it at a loss right along. We can't give him money and then have him take it away from us."

Baum: So the stevedoring company was not making any money working with the American President Line?

Crowley: No, but the American President Line, Killion...

Baum: Killion was head of this bond issue.

Crowley: Yes, Killion and Magnin were very close. He had been the fellow who handled the campaign fund all the time for the waterfront. He got after every shipping company between here and New York. Nobody knows how much money he got. He did that in all the political campaigns too. He must must have got some dough out of it.

Baum: For publicity or what kind of political...

Crowley: You know, it would cost money to put out ads and one thing or another.

Baum: And they tried to tap each company who used the waterfront as a pro rata for what their amount of business was?

Crowley: No, I don't think it depended on that. It all depended on their fancy. They would smoke a fellow out one way or another. Then the fellow is afraid of losing out in some of the transactions that he does if he does not comply with their request.

Baum: Especially someone who would deal with the American President Line, which I suppose includes many of the companies on the waterfront.

Crowley: I tell you, the ship chandler, Joseph Henry, this is some years back, sold them all the supplies. I was talking with him one day. He told me that he was doing the business for the American President Line. That is a big outfit, Henry the chandler, they have everything on hand, and so forth.

He said, "You know, I am disgusted. I don't want to sell anything to those people because as soon as I sell it, they are up here for a political contribution. They are taking it away from me all the time." He went along like that. I didn't pay any attention, but somehow they got out of the picture.

Crowley: This \$50,000,000 is still in the control of these fellows down there--Magnin, Killion and the rest of them. I understood that they put \$150,000 into the World Trade Club down there. They built it up. That is not the docks either.

Now then, the Natomas is a corporation, a holding company. It owns the American President Line, the (Pacific) Far East Line, and the American Mail Line. The American Mail Line is in Seattle. These other two are here. American President Line, they made a very extravagant expenditure over there at Pier 50 for the American President Line ships. I have an idea way down that those fellows are all together.

The money now that they are putting in over at this creek amounts to about \$35,000,000 or \$40,000,000. There is no indication of who is going there, but they have also brought the Pacific Far East Line here and they are down at 32. They have got four or five wharfs down there and they have extended the bulkhead, given them moorings, and put an office building on it, put a containerization station there. Containerization is that method they have of putting cargo into big boxes and shipping them that way. They are locked and so forth. That is a way of getting away from pilferage, which was terrible on account of the stevedores robbing everything.

Crowley: I forgot to say there that the Pacific Far East Line, the thing that the Harbor Commissions is fixing up for them, the cost is over \$10,000,000!

Baum: You mean the facilities for the Far East Line?

Crowley: Yes. Now that is the \$50,000,000. They have held it a long time. They put it in the Club; they put it in the Far East Line. I think I was telling you, that land over there at Islais Creek where they are putting so much money--I am quite sure that some of these fellows own that and built it up. They have it disguised in some way, I don't know how. I know that there is something doing that way.

Now as far as Magnin is concerned. He has a big poster out down there at Fisherman's Wharf stating what he is going to do. He is going to do this and do that for the fishermen. You know that has been quite a place. Big crowds go there and so forth. It is a pretty big business. Magnin tried to horn in a half a dozen places there. I don't know if he succeeded or not, but there is one there that looks fishy and that is the Franciscan. It is put on a bulkhead; nobody with any common sense or any idea of economy would dare put a building like that on the dock with only piles beneath it. Those piles, water reeks them; they rot in time. Then how are you going to put in piles in there?

In the meantime that is where they are--on a bulkhead

Crowley: there like this. Then the wharf runs out; they put it up here to give them a view. Then the wharf ran out for about three or four hundred feet. This fellow who runs it is named Berger, I think. He made some kind of a deal with him whereby he took over this property, this dock. He is using it as a storage place for cars. Nobody wanted to build docks for somebody to rent as a storage place for cars. If you ever went down there and looked at it, you would open your eyes and see because there is space for over two hundred cars. I don't know what rent he is getting or any other thing.

Baum: Well, they certainly are building up a lot of business there at Fisherman's Wharf, and not shipping business, but tourist business.

Crowley: They tried to horn into different places down there. Some places he did not get into so the first thing you know, he put a restriction on them in this way: in addition to the rent they pay, they have to pay 5 per cent of their gross to the Harbor Commission.

Baum: Really? That is just some of the businesses down there.

Crowley: All they do is raise the prices.

Baum: One of your companies has the excursion boats down there, don't they?

Crowley: Yes, we are at 43 1/2. In fact, the harbor--the tug and

Crowley: barge company was up at 14. They were alongside of us.

Then the dock caved in so they had to move out so they took that site down at 43. We had to go to 32. Then the dock is still lying there falling into the Bay.

Baum: Those excursion boats seem to be doing well. It seems that they have increased their number of boats.

Crowley: They have, and they have worked hard doing it. They give the people pretty good service.

Baum: Yes, they have added a good deal to San Francisco. I know you have that picture of your excursion boat back during the Panama-Pacific Exposition, but I wondered, is that a very profitable kind of business?

Crowley: I'll tell you. We had quite a lot to do with the Panama-Pacific Exposition. We worked there in 1914 all year because they had to have a lot of experienced people with sand, and everything that came in there, we brought it in. Then while I was there, I got the concession for the Yacht Harbor. We ran out of there with those boats. Those boats were built for that job. Those boats are all gone. I don't know where they are. These boats that the harbor has got are all new boats.

Baum: I wondered, did you keep up the excursion business through the years or did you just build it up again later?

Crowley: I tell you, prior to that we had El Campo, which is over in

Crowley: Marin County. We used to run to the park over there, Paradise Park. People used to go over for a picnic on the Bay. We were busy taking them back and forth. Then the first thing you know, in came the automobiles and roads. They went there in cars. So we threw it up.

Baum: So the thing that stopped you there was the transportation, not the park. Wasn't it just recently that you really built up the excursion boat business? It seems to me that there were not so many facilities for that ten or fifteen years ago as there are now?

Crowley: Well, there are more people here now and there are more strangers, but we did a lot of business advertising the visitors' day at the warships.

We used to have a big fleet of warships come in here. We used to take the people out and bring them back. We did a big business like that.

Baum: Are there any other companies in the excursion boat business?

Crowley: Down there we had Henry Peterson, our competitor. He used to take people.

Baum: But that was many years ago, wasn't it? Has there been any competition recently?

Crowley: No, it is a big investment down there.

Baum: So Henry Peterson used to do that?

Crowley: Yes, he was at Folsom Street.

Baum: Did he have big excursion boats or just little private ones?

Crowley: He had pretty good-sized boats but they were not double deckers. These boats are built particularly for excursions and no other purpose. That did not look possible years ago but it has come true and that is the reason these fellows keep doing it, but don't forget that they have a winter and there is damned little business. If you do a fairly good business in the summertime and then don't do anything in the winter, then when you get finished, you have not got very much.

Baum: It seems as if the tourist business is picking up even in the winter around here.

Crowley: It doesn't pick up with speed or anything like that. I happened to be down there yesterday. It looked like rain. As soon as it did, there was not any traffic at all.

Baum: I went by Fisherman's Wharf today and it was really jumping, and here it is a Monday. It must be tourists because everyone else is at work.

Crowley: What attracts them is the food they serve down there.

Baum: And those ships that are on exhibit: the Balclutha and the other ships that the Maritime Museum has out there.

Crowley: They have the Balclutha but that is the only one that means much. They have some other vessels away further down but they don't mean much.



Crowley: Let me tell you something. There is a senator who is the son-in-law of that fellow who was the Rent Commissioner here in the Ferry Building in the other administration. He started that Tarantino's, you know. Then he put the building on it. He was pretty well fixed, so he retired and his son-in-law took over. He has been running it ever since. He has built out over the water. He also runs a place over in Sausalito and he is on state property--political. Now he is working for these fellows on the Harbor Commission.

Baum: What is your objection to the Harbor Commission as far as keeping up the facilities of the harbor?

Crowley: It is frightful. Have you ever been along the waterfront?

Baum: It looks pretty run down.

Crowley: Get someone who knows the places. They can show them to you. The damn place is going to hell. It has been that way for a long time. As far as I am concerned, all these fellows are doing is looking for the dough. Like that place on the corner of Pacific and Embarcadero--Loom and Pecks. They bought it on D-Day and sold it the next day, whoever that Golden Gateway is. They got \$100,000 profit in twenty-four hours.

Baum: Has shipping decreased on the waterfront here in San Francisco?

Crowley: Yes, one time all the ships were here on the waterfront. Then

Crowley: if there was any cargo, it was brought over on barges and put alongside the ship. Now the ships come in and go direct to Oakland, Richmond, Stockton, Sacramento, and Redwood City.

You know, there is another strange thing about it. That is the mainland over there. That is where all the rail towns are. Now the rails used to come across the bridge and then come in here with the cars. The Harbor Commission had the Belt Railroad, which was quite an affair. Now they are still operating that, but they have no business, and it is going to the dogs.

Baum: I have heard that it has very little business any more, and that it is badly operated.

Crowley: Frightfully, it is all a racket.

Baum: Couldn't it be because all these other harbors have decided that is where the cargo originates? If those harbors would build up their facilities, as apparently they are doing, that would cut out one step of transferring cargo.

Crowley: You understand, this is the San Francisco waterfront. This is that other shore over there. The wind comes in here, and water, and one thing and another; well, the shallow water comes in all along there. Over here we are protected with the land on this side so this is the weather side. That is the leeseide, but they are making it now so that will be attractive and the ships will go there directly and pass up

Crowley: San Francisco. That is what is going on all the time.

Baum: Do you think that an efficient Harbor Commission could reverse that trend?

Crowley: I've seen a good many harbors, but I never saw any worse than this. It is the worst that it has ever been, and they are all racketeers, but undercover, in a very indirect way.

Baum: Do you think that is because it is a state commission and it does not have the interest of San Francisco as a city at heart?

Crowley: As far as Magnin is concerned, he has the interest of nothing except the dollar.

Baum: He ought to have the interest of San Francisco, he is a San Francisco man.

Crowley: Those fellows should, but they don't.

Baum: You mentioned that you didn't go along with Killion in contributing that money. Wouldn't that lose you a lot of business?

Crowley: No, I don't know what the business lost, but I was not going to be a sucker to him. What is more, I could stick him sometime or another, then he would not be so smart. Sometimes if there is a gale wind and he needs a tug, he could not get them.

Baum: So he needs your tugs just as much as you need his business?

Crowley: Yes, so I did not care much about that point.

Baum: So you are not in a position that he can squeeze you out?

Crowley: Oh no. The funny thing about him was that he never had any experience around ships. He was a newspaper man. He was with Charley Michaelson, the Democratic National Committee. Charley used to be a waterfront reporter here, and I knew him intimately.

When I was East some time ago--it was years back--I was with Charley a great deal of the time, and then I saw a good deal of Killion. He eventually got the appointment out here.

You see, where Killion comes into it, Ralph K. Davis was with the Standard Oil Company. Then he was appointed to the Petroleum Department in Washington. When the war ended, he did not go back with Standard Oil Company at all. He went on his own. Davis got the American President Line, the International Building up here at California and Kearny; he has got the Natomas.

## COMMENTS ON RECENT CONDITIONS IN SHIPPING

Government Versus Private Enterprise in the Towing Business

Baum: Somewhere I read that your objection to the government was that they furnished coast guard tugs rather than have shippers call for private tugs.

Crowley: Some years ago one of the steamship companies called us one evening. They wanted us to send a tug immediately to a ship that broke down about eight hundred miles off shore. So we made the arrangement with them. We told them that it would take a little time to get the boat ready because we had to fill it with oil, provisions, a crew, and one thing or another.

About eight o'clock the next morning, we were just about ready to sail when a representative from this steamship company came down and said to me, "I was sent down to tell you that they want to cancel that order." Well, I was following it pretty close and I knew that was the move. As far as that is concerned, the coast guard, their headquarters were in Washington. The commandant was there.

Crowley:           The underwriters have a lobby in Washington, insurance. Whenever the coast guard needed or wanted anything, they would go to the insurance lobby. The insurance lobby had power and standing and could accomplish anything that the coast guard wanted. Then those guys in turn wanted to do a favor for the underwriters. You know, picking up the ship at sea and bringing her in runs into a lot of money. You are particularly entitled because of risk and one thing or another to a salvage reward. Here were these fellows working hand and glove with one another.

          I remember, you see, as far as the underwriters were concerned that included the London underwriters as well, all over the world. There was an agent here for a certain foreign line. He was a foreigner too. When one of the ships got into trouble, he appealed to the other fellow, and they got the coast guard to go and bring it in.

          The ship got in. Then the next day, they said to him, "Now, the coast guard saved you a lot of money. What you ought to do now is contribute a token to these men on the coast guard--the crew, the officers, and everybody else. About \$1,500 or something like that."

          The towing would have amounted to about \$3,000 or \$4,000, so the \$1,500 was very reasonable.

Baum:           There was not any regular towing charge from the coast guard

Baum: for this? All they did was give them a little gift?

Crowley: Yes. Well, I got ahead of my story. This outfit had us working all night to get the ship ready, then they cancelled the ship. I said to him, "Did he get hold of the coast guard?"

He said, "I don't know." He had all right.

I said, "You can tell him that I am not going to stop. I am not going to have the citizens of the United States paying for your towing in. You are getting good premiums and you are making plenty of money so there is no reason why they should have to."

Then they got a little scared. The boat that they sent was out around the Farallone Islands. That is where they sent word to them to proceed to the ship and they gave them the directions.

Baum: This was the coast guard ship that was out there at the Farallones?

Crowley: Yes. Then Captain Stanley, who is the head here of the coast guard, went to Pier 43, where the Marine Exchange is. He had an entry made in their logbook that the vessel sailed from here at a certain time from this port. Well, I found that out and knew damn well that it was bad for him. We waited a couple of days. I don't know if we towed it in or who towed it in, but anyhow it was all ruined.

Crowley:           However, they were pretty badly worried. I went on to Washington. I went with the Commandant and told them my story. He said, "Well, that is unfortunate, but I don't know what I can do. If I had to bring Captain Stanely here, that is rather costly."

                  I said, "It would not cost any more to bring him here than it cost me to come, would it?"

                  He said, "Well, no."

                  I said, "Look, Captain, I came three thousand miles, and don't think I am going away from here unless I get some kind of satisfactory work-out in connection with this."

                  He said, "All right, I will wire him and have him fly out here. Then I will meet you in the office here at ten o'clock tomorrow."

                  At ten o'clock in the morning I showed up and Captain Stanley was there and the Commandant. The Commandant asked him a lot of questions and he answered them. It did not mean a damned thing. So when he got finished, he said to me, "Okay, now you can ask what questions you want."

                  So the question I asked, he would not reply to. Nothing I asked would get a reply from him. What I was trying to do was trip him up on this entry that he made in the book down here as to where the vessel sailed from, and so forth. Well, he was lucky to take that attitude because he did not divulge



Crowley: anything.

Baum: This was Captain Stanley who would not give you any answers?

Crowley: Yes, it was Captain Stanley. The Commandant said, "Well, if he won't answer any questions then there is nothing coming out of this."

I said, "I tell you, I came three thousand miles, and I did not come for my health! I am going along with this."

I knew Charley Michaelson, who was the head of the Democratic National Committee. I went over and told Charley my story; he used to be a waterfront reporter. I did not get any satisfaction from Stanley. When I went to Charley, I knew that the Interior Department was over the coast guard.

So he said to me, "Well, I'll tell you. The fellow who is running the coast guard in the Interior Department is a friend of mine. I'll call him up now and tell him that you are coming over, and then you go over and tell him the story. You can have confidence in him." He did.

I went over and told him the story. He said, "Be in tomorrow at ten o'clock." I was there and when I got there, who the devil was there but the Commandant. He damn near died when he saw me. So this fellow knew the whole story. It was not necessary for me to say anything. He asked the Commandant more or less questions. Then at last he said to him, "Haven't you a book of rules and regulations?"

Crowley: He said, "Yes."

This fellow in the Interior Department knew well enough about the rules and regulations, because they made the book up. He said, "Well, let me see it." So he got the book out and he went through it. There was a clause of a section in there that stated explicitly that the coast guard was not to interfere with private enterprise and it wasn't in the book. So he asked the Commandant how about it? He professed that he did not know how it got out or anything else.

Baum: Wait, I don't understand--that section was not in the Commandant's book?

Crowley: That's right, the rules and regulations. It was not torn out or anything; they just had a new book printed, and it was not in there.

Baum: So what was the answer to that?

Crowley: He ordered them to destroy the book that they had, get a new one, and comply with the regulations. Then they got pretty leery because I was pretty persistent, stayed around there causing a lot of trouble and so forth. Then they began to back up, but it was pretty hard with these insurance companies because they have lots of dough and lots of places to go.

When you come right down to it, it costs a lot of money to operate the coast guard. The funny thing is, that there

Crowley: are no practical men in it. You know it shows you how things are. Years ago we had life saving stations up and down the coast and on the east coast the same way. They were built, say, out on Ocean Beach there. When a vessel got into trouble or anything, or anybody got into trouble, they would shove their boat out, go out to the vessel and give help.

The navy theory all the time is to build up and build up for themselves. Then they conceived this idea of the coast guard. Then they would do away with the life stations. The first boats that the coast guard built were boats that cost between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000. That is what they have been operating ever since--big coast guard boats. Sometimes an accident happens four or five miles away from the beach. These vessels are so big and draw so much water that they cannot go into the shallow water. Now the life saving station could do that and take care of the vessel. But they were going along with this coast guard service, and they are running all over the coast, the east coast as well as this coast.

Baum: What are the limitations between what they can do and what can be done by a private tug?

Crowley: They don't stop at anything. They will do anything that they can. They are a little afraid of my stirring up something. They do it undercover or the sneakiest damn way they

Crowley: can. The Navy is in back of them, but in the background.

Navy Development of Hunter's Point

Crowley: The navy, for instance, like here some years back, the navy was located up here on Mare Island, which is across from Vallejo. Everybody that worked on Mare Island on some type of government job lived in Vallejo. Then living in Vallejo they got acquainted, and they were acquainted with the congressmen, the senators, and all the politicians over there. They used to make it a little troublesome for the navy over at Mare Island. They did not want that, but they were wrong, and these fellows were showing them up, so they had to do a little better.

They decided that they were going to do something, so they came down here and had a big mess. They said that the Mare Island shipyard was obsolete, out of date, and should be torn down. Then they went out and they congregated on the Hunter's Point dock. Buckham Shipbuilding Company had it. They went in then and took charge of the dock.

Oh, when they went out there they did not want to have any more interference or anything else. They brought in nothing but Negroes, -all Negroes--they went out there. You

Crowley: have seen many, many times, trouble out there because of it. Well, they were all thugs and every other damned thing. They stood people up and all that sort of thing. That was all the navy's doing.

On the other hand, the navy always has three, four, or five press agents undercover. There is never any reflection on the navy.

Baum: Now, you are saying that the navy moved out to Hunter's Point to get rid of the interference from the Vallejo representatives so they could start from scratch out there at Hunter's Point and have it their own way?

Crowley: Sure, they would not have anybody out there to bother them or take the information over to Vallejo. Besides, they were colored fellows and they did not know anything anyhow.

Baum: So they brought all their own workers out there who would not have any political influence?

Crowley: They were all strangers; they had not worked for them before. I don't know where they got them. They must have brought them in from one of the southern states.

Baum: They sure brought in a lot of trouble!

Crowley: Not only that, but they brought in a lot of clowns who were not shipbuilders or anything else. They did a lot of all kinds of bad work. It cost them all kinds of money.

Baum: This was so the navy could do more things that would have

Baum:       been considered private enterprise if the politicians had known what they were doing, is that right?

Crowley: The object was that they did not want anyone to interfere with them. They wanted to go along alone on their own rope. They did not want any interference down here when they came like they had in Vallejo. When they came down here, they knew that they could not do the same thing down here because it was a big city and it was pretty hard to get that kind of influence. When they took over Hunter's Point, the grounds were between twenty-five and thirty acres. They brought negroes out there, put in housing and everything else for them. Then they were there only a short time when they began to cut off streets, enlarging the plant. The last time I heard of it, it was a thousand acres!

Baum:       That is shipbuilding and repair. Do they handle coast guard vessels?

Crowley: Well, no. I guess if they wanted repairs, they would go to the navy and get them.

Baum:       Well, I think that I saw a newspaper report that apparently your complaint did some good because the coast guard has cut down on towing private vessels--or had at the point I read.

Crowley: They got a little scared.

Baum:       How about now?

Crowley: They have to be careful because they never know when we will go after them. They have to do it undercover.

It is just like I say at Hunter's Point. They have three or four press agents. They work around a story in such a way and then go and deliver it to the newspapers. Today the newspapers do not have the reporters that they had so they take for granted everything that is given and they publish it in the paper.

Baum: The newspapers don't send out their own reporters like they used to, they just take handout stories?

Crowley: Yes, fact is, I called up one of the city editors, I think it was the Examiner. I gave him a good lead as to a good story. I did not see a move or anything done in connection with it. Then I found out afterwards that their situation is such that they do not have any reporters.

What I was saying was that the coast guard, the navy, the army and those fellows have all their own press agents. As far as the stories are concerned, it is fixed up in such a way that they go right to the newspapers. They will take it and run it because they do not have enough reporters. They have to be careful about any article they take so that it will not lose any advertisement. If it would lose advertisement, they would not report it.

Kortum: To what do you attribute in general the fact that they no longer do that?

Crowley: I don't know. The grass got short and they are down to a point now that you see they have amalgamated. They are putting out a very bum paper. There is not any local news in it or anything else. What they have to do is look out for their advertising. What they have to look out for is that they run no kind of a news story that would interfere with their advertising or prevent them from getting it.

I used to do a lot for the Hearst gang. When they were operating the paper, those fellows like Coblentz--did you ever know Coblentz?

Kortum: I met him once many years ago, yes.

Crowley: Coblentz was head. He was the Examiner's smart boy and sent down to the waterfront to cover the waterfront. He was just a kid then out of school. He got better and better all the time. When he got head of this one, he went to New York. He has passed away since.

Crowley: Then we had "Scoop" Gleason, Lindsey Campbell, and a lot of those fellows. They were all good reporters. As that is concerned, we had Jack London.

#### Expansion of Crowley's Business

Baum: What is your responsibility on the tug for a loss? If you make a mistake, any mistake, then your company is responsible?



Crowley: Yes, if there is any damage.

Baum: I guess you are insured rather heavily?

Crowley: Not so heavy, because they charge us pretty high and they are not so nice when they get a claim, they try to get out of it altogether. Sometimes I have gone for four or five years without a bit of insurance.

Baum: You would rather cover the risk yourself?

Crowley: Yes, because sometimes you have some of the underwriters who are very unfair. They are damned glad to get your premium, but they are not good to make the loss up.

Baum: Is there anything that you can do to make them pay up?

Crowley: No, you could go into court, but that would not do you much good because the underwriters are all together. In fact, they take in Lloyd's of London. Insurance has spread everywhere.

Baum: Even though your firm has expanded, you feel that you can go with less insurance than a smaller firm.

Crowley: Sometimes we feel that we can do better than paying them premiums. Did I tell you about the run-in that I had with the coast guard, and I went to Washington?

Baum: That showed the powers of the underwriters?

Crowley: They had a lobby there in Washington. Then they catered to the coast guard. The coast guard then, in turn, would do anything for them for nothing.

Baum: When the case comes to court, do the underwriters try to influence the court unduly?

Crowley: They have all kinds of lawyers. They put it in the lawyers' hands; they are in the background.

Baum: What law firms have you had to handle your business?

Crowley: Quite a number of them.

Baum: Do some of the firms specialize in maritime cases?

Crowley: There are dozens of them.

Baum: I was wondering if you could trust them to represent you or if some of them actually work with the underwriters?

Crowley: There is something to that. Many times the underwriters have more business to give to those fellows than you have so they play up to them that way.

Baum: I should think that with all the different businesses that you are involved in that your firm would have quite a bit of business to give to them.

Crowley: We do but we have to be careful just the same.

Baum: I was wondering why you have so many different companies.

Crowley: To begin with, let me tell you first, as far as having different companies, we also have Red Stacks. We have seventeen or eighteen tugs and every one of them is a corporation.

Baum: Why is that? Is that for tax reasons?

Crowley: No, that is because of liability. They may go out on a

Crowley: job and do damage to the extent of a half a million dollars. One time we had a vessel come in from California Packing up in Alameda, way up. It came down, and there was a bridge between Alameda and Oakland. Coming down, for some reason or another, he hit the bottom somewhere. He sheared the bridge and knocked it out.

Well, that damage amounted to God only knows--maybe a half a million dollars. They know that as far as that boat that did the job, it is insured and the most that they could ever get is the insured value.

Baum: Of that single boat, not the whole Red Stacks?

Crowley: Yes, if you did not, they could get back on all your boats, see. Now they have to do it one boat at a time. That is limited risk.

Baum: It seems so complex to have so many operations.

Crowley: It would be if you took them on all at once, but we did it over a period of years and went at it one way and another.

Baum: And you don't run into anti-trust laws then by having so many corporations?

Crowley: No, because there is just one owner; we don't make any combination with anybody. One man can own as many companies as he wants.

Baum: I was wondering what some of your companies did? San Pedro Tugboat Company, that is just your tugs down there?

Crowley: At the Port of San Pedro, yes. That is where McGillivray and Tugboat Tillie are.

Baum: Then what about Crowley Launch and Tugboat Company?

Crowley: That is located here.

Baum: But what does that cover? Because the Shipowners and Merchants Tug Company, is that the old name for Red Stacks?

Crowley: Yes. That is down there a separate corporation. All of them are separate. We have the Crowley, the Shipowners, United Towing, United Transportation. United Towing takes care of barges in the harbor. United Transportation takes ownership of barges going up and down the coast carrying oil. They come into the harbor, but they are on the coast. Don't forget there is a definite advantage too in taxes because if it were just one outfit, they would slaughter us with federal taxes. This way you can break it up.

Baum: Can you transfer ownership from one company to another, a barge for example, and start your depreciation over?

Crowley: No, they watch that. They are around our necks all the time. The federal income tax men are the biggest burglars that we have come in contact with.

Baum: Then do you have to sell your vessels fairly often and get new ones to keep a depreciation factor? That is why you took on Red Stacks in the beginning, wasn't it?

Crowley: That's what they had, but they were over a period of years,

Crowley: and that stung pretty hard.

Baum: I know people have to buy and sell their buildings pretty often or they run out of depreciation.

Crowley: If they do they are in bad luck. We don't do that though. We put a life on tugs--fifteen or twenty years. Then in that time we add new boats and new engines and so forth. Then we can repair them and so forth. We have our own shipyard too.

Baum: You have two, don't you?

Crowley: Yes. There is Pacific Dry Dock and Martinolich Dry Dock, that is an Italian name.

Baum: Do they specialize in a different type of work?

Crowley: No, they take any type of work they can get.

Baum: So instead of having one company to handle many operations, you have one company to handle each separate type of operation?

Crowley: Yes. It is the same thing in all the big ports like New York.

Baum: You mean the other ship companies like Moran would do the same thing?

Crowley: Yes.

Baum: You have quite a few operations up in Puget Sound.

Crowley: We've had the Drummond Lighterage Company up there which we bought many years ago.

- Baum: I have a note that you bought it about 1920. Does that sound right?
- Crowley: I think it may have been further back than that. Then we bought the Cary Davis Company. Then we formed a new corporation called the Puget Sound Tug and Barge Company. We took in Foss and two or three more that way.
- Baum: I have a note that John Lee was the president of a number of the companies.
- Crowley: Puget Sound Tug and Barge, yes.
- Baum: Was he a Seattle man?
- Crowley: Yes. He was one of the employees working for the Drummond Lighterage Company. He is still up there running it.
- Baum: Where did your Puget Sound operations go? That is mainly up to Alaska, isn't it?
- Crowley: They operate all over the Sound, the port towns and everywhere else. Then they have that car-float business from Seattle up to Alaska.
- Baum: Has that become quite a substantial business since Alaska became a state?
- Crowley: This is very recently, only a year or two. We have four or five big car boats carrying the cars. We take them up and put them on the rail for the Alaska Railroad.
- Baum: That is what I wanted to ask you. The Alaska-British Columbia Transportation Company, is that the one?

Crowley: No, that is Canadian. I don't own any of that company.

They cannot do the many things that we can do. I don't know how they get rid of their stuff when they get it up to Alaska, but we deliver it.

Baum: That works with the Canadian National Railroad?

Crowley: No, it is mostly American Railroads that connect with us up there. If they have to go on the Canadian freight, they make them pay extra for it.

Baum: So this is strictly American from Washington out to Alaska?

Crowley: It can come out from the East. Railroads like the Western Pacific, Union Pacific, etc., load there.

Baum: Do most of those load up in Seattle or do some of them load up down here?

Crowley: They load anywhere as far as New York. That is, they come out here after they have been loaded there.

Baum: Do they come out from New York by railroad or by ship?

Crowley: By railroad.

Baum: But you don't pick them up in San Diego or any other location; you just pick them up in Seattle?

Crowley: Yeah.

Baum: Do you have car-floats to Hawaii?

Crowley: No, it would be feasible, but it is a long way. It may come because Honolulu and those places are getting better and bigger all the time. There are more people; they are getting

Crowley: more attention, and they have more freight. In the meantime there are a lot of barges running from here to there and back. Then you have Matson running.

Baum: Well, you do a lot of barging to Hawaii, is that right?

Crowley: Once in a great while. We do oil. We have gone down to Johnson's Islands down there for a long time.

Baum: Is that a safe trip?

Crowley: Oh yes. The barges are sea-worthy.

Baum: You also have some oil terminals.

Crowley: Yes, we have an oil terminal at Eureka, and another one at Crescent City. Then we have one down there at Alviso and one or two up the river.

Baum: And those are separate organizations too?

Crowley: Yes. We have been at Crescent City for some years now. In fact, we put the tanks in there first.

Baum: What is Pacific Coast Engineering?

Crowley: That is a big plant over there in Alameda. It builds the barges for us; they do a lot of steel work too--cranes and one thing and another.

Baum: Is that your company?

Crowley: No, I have nothing to do with it. I just buy a lot of my equipment there. They do good work.

Baum: I guess I read that you also had water taxis.

Crowley: We had them years ago.



Baum: Were you going to do some water taxiing from Alameda to Oakland?

Crowley: No, there is a fellow now--Reagan or Hagan or whatever his name is--he has got one of those high speed boats that cost a lot of money. He is getting big prices for bringing people back and forth. He gets ten dollars one way. There are not many people around who can do that. He goes from Oakland over to this side to the airport.

## VESSELS AND SAILORS ON THE BAY

[The following interview was conducted by Karl Kortum in Mr. Crowley's office on November 23, 1965. It is included here verbatim, although other aspects of some of the subjects have already been discussed in earlier interviews.]

Scow Schooners on the Bay

Kortum: We are continuing with a series of interviews with Mr. Crowley on the subject of the waterfront as he knew it. Today we are going to talk about scow schooners.

Crowley: As far as scow schooners are concerned, they did a great deal of their business on the Sacramento and the San Joaquin rivers. There was shallow water there and they were flat bottom. They could get in and out under their own sail. For many years they hauled grain, hay, and other things from the river points. We had the Thomson Collie Company which had quite a number of scows doing that particular business. Then we had the Piper-Aden Company which had a lot of scows. They were hauling coal, nitrate, lumber and other things around the harbor and up the river.

Kortum: In other words there were two large fleets here?\*

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\*The following scow schooner companies are listed:

1897 San Francisco City Directory

Piper, Aden, Goodall Co.

R. J. R. Aden, president, Harry W. Goodall, vice president, Arthur L. Piper, secretary, Alfred E. Pryor, general manager, bay and river freighting, steamers, schooners and barges.

24 Clay tel. Main 641

Crowley: Three, Tietjen\* had some scows. He carried some coal once in a while but he was not comparable in any way with Piper-Aden and Thomson Collie.

Kortum: Now Thomson Collie, they were the upriver people?

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: And Piper-Aden you said was the firm that you later bought.

Crowley: Yes, I bought it and named it the California Lighterage Company. These scows were used in a pretty heavy trade. For instance, they handled all the nitrate that came for the powder works up at Pinole. When a ship came in here they wanted to get it quickly dispatched. We had to hustle a great deal--have a number of scows so that the vessel would not be delayed and could get out earlier.

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\*Collie, Thomson & Co.  
 (Thomson Collie, Peter Demings and John Erikson)  
 bay and river freighting.  
 107 Steuart

Tietjen, Berut H., bay and river freighting and agent tug IDA W.  
 44 East South

1901 San Francisco City Directory

Piper, Aden & Goodall Co.  
 Same except A. E. Pryor replaces Goodall as vice president  
 and general manager.

Collie, Thomson  
 Same - but also listed as Thomson Collie & Co.

- Crowley: Also we handled the coal for all the companies around here like Western Fuel, the Rolph Coal & Navigation Company, Rosenfeld\* and Company.
- Kortum: King Coal Company?
- Crowley: Well, that was the Western Fuel Company. Then the King Coal came afterwards. That was Jim Smith...King Coal grew out of that.
- Kortum: These Piper-Aden scows had steam donkeys although they were sailing scows. Where were these steam donkeys located on the deck?
- Crowley: It was aft. Every one of the scows was equipped with the donkey engine. They did a lot of heavy work with it. These scows supplied all the government stations; at that time they were all using coal for fuel--Lime Point, Alcatraz, Angel Island, Mare Island.
- Kortum: Those Piper-Aden schooners going to Mare Island, say, would they be under sail?
- Crowley: Yes.
- Kortum: When you were discharging nitrate and they were anxious to hurry it along to avoid laydays, in that case you used tug boats or launches to tow the scow to Pinole?
- Crowley: No, they went up on their own sail. The vessel that had the nitrate was anchored in the Bay just north of the present

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\* John Rosenfeld's Sons  
Agents New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company  
Wholesale coal dealers  
Bunkers Pier # 4

Crowley: Bay Bridge. It was actually west of the Bay Bridge.

Kortum: Why did they sail way down here?

Crowley: It was to get away from the variable winds. There was usually a westerly wind down here and you could get sailing right away. The scow could let go of the launch and drop down on the tide and go right along.

Kortum: So the scow schooners would load from the vessel which would come up from South America...take in the nitrate, which was in what form?

Crowley: It was in bulk form and a certain amount in sacks too. We would fill the hull up first. Then they would cast off and sail up to Pinole which could only be reached by scow schooner at that time. There were so many places near those river points that were shallow water that the best you could do was to go in with a flat bottom vessel.

For instance, there was the California Transportation Company which had big, long barges going up to Sacramento and Stockton. They were big operators for a long time. They had very big, long barges, at least three hundred feet long. They were mostly grain barges.

Kortum: Did you ever meet Piper?

Crowley: Yes, but Aden came from Vallejo up around Mare Island. He joined the firm then. They had been in business a long time.

Kortum: Who was the dominant man between the two in the company?

Crowley: They had a superintendent by the name of Sharkey; I think he was the one who directed the scows and the whole thing.

Kortum: What kind of appearing man was Piper?

Crowley: Piper stood about 5'6" and pretty well conditioned.

Kortum: You would meet him along California Street?

Crowley: No, in those days we stayed along the waterfront.

Kortum: What was Aden's appearance?

Crowley: He was a very active man. He had been active all his life. Don't forget Goodall was in here too. Goodall-Perkins\* operated a great many vessels--coastwise vessels from the Broadway Wharf up to Seattle and all the way down to San Pedro.

Kortum: This was the same Goodall?

Crowley: There were two or three Goodalls; there was Minor Goodall, and his brother, I forget his first name. But this Goodall with this thing, he paid attention to this business. His brother Minor was more of a financier.

Kortum: At the time that you bought the firm though, Goodall had dropped out and there was just Piper-Aden?

Crowley: Yes, and by that time Captain Barneson got in there some way or another and he operated for awhile. Remember there was a firm of Barneson and Hibberd.

Kortum: I think you said that Piper-Aden had about a dozen large scow schooners.

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\*Proprietors of Pacific Coast Steamship Company.

Crowley: Yes, fully that.

Kortum: Now about the other firm-- Thomson Collie.

Crowley: They had smaller vessels but they had quite a number too, just about a similar amount.

Kortum: Which Thomson was that?

Crowley: That went way back. There was a man by the name of Demings in it. He had been operating scows and they brought him into the picture. He had a very strong hand in the operation.

Kortum: What about Thomson himself?

Crowley: Well, that was a corporate name. Those fellows were part of it and there were others operating it than the ones who owned it. Neither Thomson nor Collie in my day were there. Deming was the leading figure; he took a big interest in it.

These were smaller upriver scow schooners--they carried hay and grain.

Another thing of interest. All the crews on the scows, particularly on our end of it, worked on a basis of the earnings. I have forgotten just what the percentage was, but I think it was something like a third of the freight money which was divided up amongst them. Then they all hustled and they all did very well financially too.

Kortum: The firms or the individual operators?

Crowley: The crews of the scows. Another thing that you ought to consider--Captain Anderson had a transportation company

Crowley: that operated from down there at the dock up to Sacramento and Stockton. They were very nice vessels. He built them especially for that trade and he used to carry passengers and freight. They were stern wheel steamers, just like on the Mississippi. They were big boats with good accommodations and many people used them to go up there all the time.

Then they had competition at one time and they had a cut rate war. They were operating under a rate of something like \$.50 or \$1.00 from here to Sacramento.

Kortum: What boats did Captain Anderson have?

Crowley: He had the Capital City, and then he had another one; then the Delta King and the Delta Queen, he built those. They were steel boats. One is now operating on the Mississippi River and the other one is up at Stockton.

Kortum: Then he also built the Fort Sutter and the Capital City.

Crowley: Those were the two boats that he first built. They were wooden boats. They were very nice and many people used them. They had everything on board. Then later he built two finer boats of steel--the Delta King and the Delta Queen. And he was keen for looking after his crew, seeing to it that they had accommodations and everything else, the best of everything. He treated his men very good, but the unions came in and made it impossible for him to operate.



Crowley: He also had a clubhouse right down on the dock for the crews.

Afterwards Fay, who had been operating against them, took over the California Transportation Company and called it the River Lines. He operated for many years, but there was not the business there had been. Roads got built up and the automobiles can go up so much faster and quicker so it is all automobile trade now.

Kortum: Now there were some scows built very early out on Goat Island.

Crowley: I never heard of that. In those days they were built out this side of Hunters Point. There was old Anderson, Cristofani, the Munder brothers, Siemer. That is where they were repaired; they had ways for hauling vessels. They built some of them there too. That was the type of building they were familiar with.

#### Whitehall Boat Builders

Kortum: I was interested in your remarks the other day about where the Whitehall boats were built.

Crowley: The Whitehall boats got their name from Whitehall down at the Battery. Then the boats were built by a man named

1. Light winds ...

The Fourth of July Whitehall boat race described by Tom Crowley

2. Whitehall boats "hooked on" behind a British full rigged ship towing in to San Francisco bay. The ship is the BARFILLAN, her iron sides rusty from a long voyage around Cape Horn. Seamen are furling the main t'gallant; a third Whitehall boat is alongside.

Tom Crowley's step-father, a famous Whitehall boatman, was nicknamed "Hook-on (sometimes Hooker-on) Crowley."

3. A Whitehall boat during the Fourth of July races; Oakland Long Wharf with square-riggers in the background.

4. A Whitehall boat under the bows of the British four mast bark LYDERHORN at anchor in San Francisco bay.

Crimp's boats frequently took deserting seamen aboard from this position, out of sight of the ship's officers aft.

Photographs courtesy of San Francisco Maritime Museum

Crowley: Everson in Elizabeth, New Jersey. They came out here on the deck of the sailing ships and they got put into the water here. Then we had outfits here--John Twigg and Sons, and Daniel O'Connell. They were good builders and built the boats very well, so I always had them built here.

Kortum: Where was O'Connell?

Crowley: He was down around Powell Street and Meiggs Wharf. Twigg was down at the foot of Stockton Street for awhile, but he originally came from the foot of Third Street. O'Connell had been here for a long time. Both he and Twigg were here about the same. They were competitive from the beginning.

Kortum: How many orders would a man like that get for boats during the course of a year, would you say?

Crowley: They did repair work as well and that kept them going. They did not build so much that it kept them busy all the time. The man from New Jersey went out of the picture entirely. If you could have a boat built here, you could go down and see her being constructed and that sort of thing. You never knew what would happen from the east coast and anyway these fellows here built better boats than they did in New Jersey.

Kortum: You told me you got your first launch from Twigg. Did you get your Whitehall boats from him too?

Crowley: Yes. You know I had a stepfather--David Crowley--in the

Crowley: business and he always had his boats built by Twigg. There were a lot of Whitehall boats here and you could buy them secondhand for eighty dollars.

Kortum: You were looking at our Whitehall boat on the Balclutha the other day and said that you thought her gunwales were too heavy.

Crowley: Yes, she was too heavily built because sometimes one man would have to row that boat against the tide anywhere in the Bay. That would have been too heavy a boat. Another thing, that boat was not eighteen feet long. They were eighteen feet long and four feet eight inches wide.

#### Fourth of July Race

Crowley: You asked me about the Fourth of July races. They prepared for the race by making new sails and jibs. Then they hauled that boat out and black-leaded it all over. These boats were built of Port Orford cedar. That race went on for a great many years, and it went a great many years back. I remember in 1883 in addition to the cash prize which was something like \$100 or \$125 there would be a championship silk flag. I remember my father won that race, and there were about twenty boats in it. Then he won again in 1884

Crowley: and put '84 on it. He retained the flag.

Those boats carried a crew of four men. There was the captain who sailed her, then the main sheet man, the jib tender, and the bailer. The bailer was a strong young kid who could throw the water out when it came in. Those boats coming back in the race always had a big sail and they came on pretty lively. They all had new sails made-- bigger and better. In July the westerly wind blew quite heavy.

I sailed in the races two or three years before I won one. I won in 1904. A silver cup was presented by the mayor up there on North Beach somewhere. There were eighteen or twenty competitors. There was always a big fleet. They prepared for it; it was a big event in all our lives.

Kortum: Did you ever have to reef down?

Crowley: No, you could not do that. We could ease off the sheet, but that is about all.

Kortum: Were the scow schooners racing still in those races?

Crowley: You know, in the beginning the city put up this purse for the Fourth of July celebration. The fishing boats sailed in it, the scow schooners, the outside schooners, and the Whitehall boats. There were four or five different classes. Then we also had a lot of yachts around here like the Aggie

Crowley: and the Lurline, they were all owned by well-to-do men. Spreckels had the Lurline and White had the Aggie.

You know the funny thing about that race I remember well. Demings sailed the scow schooner Nettie, and he won the race. That is the same Demings of Thomson Collie.

I won three or four Whitehall races. The first time I won, my stepfather was in it. I managed to beat all of them.

Kortum: When Demings was sailing the scow schooner Nettie, didn't you tell me that the Albertine was the contender?

Crowley: Yes, those two scows used to have a battle because they were about the same. Demings took it very seriously. Chris Hansen, I think, owned the Albertine and sailed her. They used to compete every Fourth of July.

But the appropriation knocked out the scows and the fishing boats until there was only the Whitehall boats for several years after.

Kortum: But in the years you were racing, how many scows would you say turned out?

Crowley: The scows sailed in earlier years. I guess there were ten or fifteen scows that sailed in the race. But the years that I was racing there were only Whitehall boats. I think the races with the Whitehalls continued up until about 1905.

Kortum: Did you know Captain Laurentzen in Petaluma--in sand and gravel? He told me that he used to race those scows on the Fourth of July. He said that they would have a keg of beer on deck. He recalled one time when they were drinking so much beer that they were not handling the vessel correctly and over she went; she capsized.

Crowley: Yes, I used to see the scow races. They were bigger vessels; they could do that. The Whitehall boats though were taken too seriously. They used to spend so much time fixing up, practicing, and so forth.

Kortum: Did you have a freedom of rig on the Whitehall boats?

Crowley: You had a mainsail and jib. In the race you could carry as much sail as you wanted. If you did put too much on, you could not get anywhere because you could not carry it. The boom--the longest I remember--was twenty feet long. Then there was a jib. When you were coming home and had to put up a wing sail, the wing sail had to be pretty good sized, to balance it. It was called a spinnaker in those days. It was a big trick too to set that spinnaker after you got around the stake boat because you had a big mainsail out there with a twenty foot boom on it. The boom had to be kept out of the water. If it was not, you went right over.

Kortum: What happened when some of them did capsize?

Crowley: They were picked up by other boats that were watching the

Crowley: race.

Kortum: Did you know Bichard here? He was an old timer here. He was in an early cod fishing venture.

Crowley: Well, Greenbaum was in it, City Codfish. There was a place over at Belvedere where they used to dry the fish. They would bring the codfish in and dry it on the hillside. They had a place up in the grass. Then there was another place over at Paradise Cover up near El Campo. That is the one Anita Day Hubbard's people were connected with, Lynde-Hough.

Bichard had big vessels too, I think. He had some kind of a junk yard, or pretty good venture. He is a very old timer. He had a lot of vessels, ocean going vessels.

#### Gasoline Launches

Kortum: I wanted to ask you about the engines in the gas launches. For instance, what was the early favorite when you got your gas launch?

Crowley: For my first gas launch I got an engine from the Hercules Engine Company on Bay Street near Powell. That was rather a fair engine, and the second engine I also got from them.



Crowley: But the Union Gas Engine was down here on First Street and they built a heavier engine. It had less revolutions. It did not run so fast and you got better results. So then we used Union engines. It was much heavier and slower speed, which was better for us. Then Standard Engines came into existence. That was on account of the strike at the Union Gas Engine. Quite a number of his men went out and formed this company and built the Standard engines. They were quite successful.

Then there was another engine that came into existence called the Atlas. That was Harris. So there was the Union, the Hercules, Standard, and Atlas. Atlas was very similar to the Standard. The Standard was a better engine than the Union was; that is, in my opinion. Both the Standard and the Atlas were made over in Oakland.

As far as the marine engines were concerned, there was a certain amount of backwardness as far as the men who built them were concerned. There were a lot of faults in the engines at different times.

Then the automobiles started to come in and those fellows in the automobile business improved the engine a whole lot and these marine fellows got information from them.

Kortum: Now where did you get the first Hercules engine?

Crowley: Down on Bay Street; they were made there. I put that in the Jennie C., which was thirty-six feet long. Then we built another boat, the Crowley, just after that, which was fifty feet long. She had a pretty good engine, a Hercules, in her.

Kortum: How about the Hicks?

Crowley: Well, that was built here but that never got into the business much at all. They were smaller engines; I think that they were fishing boat engines. These other engines were too big and had too much power for the little fishing boats.

Kortum: Then there was an engine called the Golden Gate, or something?

Crowley: I never heard of that.

Billy Clark,\* a Competitor of Crowley's

Kortum: Bill White, the son of Billy Clark, the Whitehall boatman, called me the other day. He had located one of these engines up in some old fisherman's basement. Bill has always been a good scout for us.

Crowley: His father was down there; he was a competitor of ours

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\* 1895 San Francisco City Directory

Clark, William, boatman, residence 1322 Montgomery.

Crowley: for many years. I will never forget his father was in the sailor boarding house business. I had about two boats, launches, at that time. Prior to that we were in Whitehall boats. It was very competitive. Just like the taxis.

Well, I was going along pretty good with these two boats. Then Clark managed to get his mother to put up money for a boat. He built a very good boat called the William W. I remember that there was a ship reported coming in and he started out for it to get the business. I got ready and went out with the Crowley and we beat him to the ship. He probably had it in mind that that boat would get him a lot of business, but it never did. First thing you know, I used a dummy and I bought the boat from him. It was a very good boat. It was a wooden boat built by that fellow over in Oakland. I think it had either a Union or Standard engine in it.

Kortum: In other words, you had a race between your gas launch and his and you beat him?

Crowley: Yes, the boats were about the same size but the Crowley had more power.

Kortum: Then how long did Clark stay in business?

Crowley: Oh, he stayed in for awhile. Then he got married and kind of got out of it. I guess his father had some money. He

Crowley: had been a boatman for some time though, a Whitehall boatman. He was pretty good. I remember one time we were both in Whitehall boats down at Fort Point. We went down, we heard some steamer. We hooked on astern of him.

Then the steamer came close to the ship that was coming in and I waited until he let go. When he let go, then I let go, see, so I could come around him that way. He got alongside; he was on the inside of me. He hooked the bumpkin; then he was going to go up over the ship's side. I jumped into his boat and went up on his back on deck. I found out that the captain was forward instead of aft. He ran aft and I ran forward so I got the captain.

Kortum: [Laughter] What did he think of your climbing up on his back?

Crowley: Well, he was a dangerous fellow. He would hit you as quick as he would look at you. But we did not have any talk about it.

Kortum: Was your boat tied up outside of his?

Crowley: Yes, I had another fellow in the boat with me who looked out for it. He had the same.

#### Hooking Onto Vessels

Kortum: You say you hooked onto a steamer going out. That would

Kortum: be a steam schooner, I suppose?

Crowley: A steam schooner or any Pacific coast vessel. You could hook onto any vessel that went to sea. We had a long hook about ten feet long and about as thick as my thumb, about three-fourths inch.

Kortum: Well, in this case you are both out there and you want to let go. How do you get your hook off? How did you get it adrift?

Crowley: We could slack it and then give it a flip. We did not have to do that though because the ship was going to stop somewhere here in the anchorage. If we were going out with the steamers, we would arrange to have somebody throw the hook off from the vessel or we would try to bump it off ourselves by swinging on the tow line. We had twenty-five fathoms of line. We had lots of line.

Kortum: Did you hook onto the chains or the bumpkin?

Crowley: Well, on sailing vessels they always had bumpkins out to haul the braces in. That was a very good thing to hook onto. We would find something on each ship, though, to hook onto. We would hook aft as far as we could get. There was an eye on the end of the long hook. That is what we made our line fast to. We had to hook from underneath so we could drop off easier by just giving a flip of the line. This threw up the end of the iron hook and

Crowley: it would fall off. If it were hooked over the bumpkin, say, then you could not do that.

Kortum: Can you recall any incidents of the Whitehall boats getting into trouble outside the Heads? Capsizing in the ocean?

Crowley: No, if they ever capsized out there, they were finished. Those boats that went out there, they were manned by good boatmen. They hung around at the Whistling Buoy which was at the outside end of the bar. There were the pilot boats there where they could go aboard and get a meal. That was at the outer end of the bar. The bar was just like a horse-shoe; it runs from both sides out.

Kortum: How could they get a meal from the pilot boats?

Crowley: You had to pay aboard the tugboats but you did not pay aboard the pilot boats. The pilots didn't pay much attention to the food bill. The steward had the authority to do anything. They did not care about the cost because they were making big money. In the tugboats though, the cook was allowed only so much. He had to get paid for a meal or he would be stuck.

#### Tugboat Competition

Crowley: In those days the Red Stacks and the J. D. Spreckels and

Crowley: Company were rivals. They always had boats out there hanging around as far out as the Farallones. Many times a ship would come around Point Reyes and then there would be a race to see which tug could get there first. Many times they made a deal with the captain who was on the ship to tow him in for nothing if he would give them his inside work.

Kortum: They would tow up to Port Costa or something like that, I suppose.

Crowley: They all came in for grain. They had to go from San Francisco to Port Costa, and from Port Costa down here and then to sea again. They could not move without a tug. Some of those bar pilots used to be Whitehall boatmen. They had had sea experience before, too. I think there were twenty pilots and the Port Captain. They would make \$10,000 or \$15,000 a year apiece. It was quite a prize to get to be a bar pilot.

I remember there was one boatman named Steve Castle and he was appointed a bar pilot. There were several others whose names I can't remember now. You know sometimes the bar would break. It would be too tough to come in over the bar. They would then go north and come down the North Channel, which was the land from Point Reyes down to Point Bonita. That was the North Channel and they came in that way.

Kortum: Are you speaking of a Whitehall boat that is caught out there?

Crowley: No, I am talking about a big ship. You had to have a tugboat, though, if you were coming down the North Channel. The Channel was rather narrow and had good deep water in it.

Kortum: Well, you would also have to have a tugboat coming in the other way, wouldn't you?

Crowley: Sometimes if there was a good breeze, the ships could sail in.

A funny story--once a ship was coming in and the tugs raced to the ship and they saw that the ship had her chains down into the water, both chains. As soon as the tugs spoke to the ship captain, the captain said, "How much do you want?"

They said, "So-and-so."

The ship captain said, "Well, I was anchored out there and I can anchor in here if I want. So I will not pay any such price."

Well, he jewed them down to very little and then he agreed on it. The tug went forward and threw his heaving line up on the ship and put his towing hawser aboard. Then as he was pulling in on his hawser, the ship hoisted up the chains and there was not an anchor on them. He had lost both anchors. Well, you know, if the tug had known that,



Crowley: he would have plastered him with any kind of price.

Kortum: He just paid out some anchor chain and let it hang there?

Crowley: He would hove it up when he lost the anchors, then he put it down again to fool the tugs.

Kortum: Would you say that he had enough put out to be dragging on the bottom?

Crowley: No, he would not have it dragging. It would be down far enough so it would look as if it had a little tension on it.

Another thing I saw. It was a foggy day and the ship was coming in with a fairly good breeze. The tug got onto the bow and threw his sounding line to get the depth of the water. He shouted to the captain of the ship; he said, "Captain, you had better look out. The bottom is getting closer to us all the time. If there is not sufficient water, you will go ashore."

The captain did not know exactly where he was, so he made a deal with the tugboat right then and there. Then he found out later that the fellow had fooled him.

Kortum: He did what with the sounding line?

Crowley: He had a man in the forward bow where the ship captain could just see him and he was casting the lead all the time, sounding. Then he would shout how many fathoms he had. He scared the captain by shouting out less fathoms

Crowley: each time than there really were. It was outside the bar. The fog was so thick that the captain could not see anything and did not know exactly where he was.

Kortum: Perhaps you have heard the old chestnut in the early days of tugboating here.

The ship was on fire and so the tugs arrived out there-- it was a deep water sailing ship, an iron ship. The captain did not want the tugboat people to know that he was on fire. The sides of the ship were all scorched so just before he arrived on the pilot grounds he put a stage over on one side of the ship and the mate had some men get out and they painted the side of the ship. Of course, the paint would curl and blister right away. But they painted both sides. Then the tug came hustling up. The tugboat started to dicker and so the captain would walk slowly back and forth around the stern of the ship, around the curve of the stern. The tugboat would follow so he could keep the bargaining going. Then when the captain got the tugboat on one side of the ship, the mate would put the stage out on the other and he would put on more paint. Then the captain would walk back around, the tug would follow, and they would put more paint on the other side. Finally, they arrived at a normal towing charge and the tug said, "All right...agreed. Where shall I tow you?"

Kortum: The captain said, "Tow me to the Sausalito mud flats; I'm on fire." The bargain had already been made for the price.

Crowley: Yes, but on the other hand, if that captain told that tug master that he was on fire, he would have made no bother but towed him in for salvage.

Kortum: That's what I mean. He was trying to avoid salvage claims.

Crowley: Well, the ship was no doubt insured and it would have been taken care of by Lloyd's.

Kortum: Did you have any tugboats prior to really getting in to tug operations, prior to the time that you took over the Red Stacks?

Crowley: Yes, I had two. I bought one, the Hercules, from Hooper-- that fellow up in Martinez or above Martinez. Then I bought another one from Eureka, the H. H. Buhne, so I had two of them operating.

Kortum: What were you doing with those tugs in the early days?

Crowley: I was out hustling business. When we got the launches, we got into their business more and more. We did more or less towing with the launches. Then it began to look as though we could horn into the big ships' business so we bought these two tugs and we operated them. By that time Spreckels had turned over his fleet of tugs to the Reds and he had stock in the company.

Kortum: That was the H. H. Buhne? He was a lumber man up there, wasn't he?

Crowley: Yes, that's right.

Kortum: I think there were some sailing schooners with that Buhne name too. Did you do any barge work with those two tugs?

Crowley: If there was occasion and we wanted to get somewhere.

Kortum: You did not own barges at this time?

Crowley: Yes, I did. We didn't have anything bigger than the launches could handle. Sometimes if there was a special trip somewhere, why we used the tug on them.

You know the funny thing then, the Reds came into competition with me. They built some launches and they built some barges so we had quite a battle for a long time. Captain Gray and Randall handled that. There was lots of feeling, too, against me; they were bitter fellows.

Kortum: Gray had been here for a long time, hadn't he?

Crowley: Oh, yes. He had been captain of a tug one time. In fact I think he was the captain for Millen Griffiths.

Kortum: They were tied up over at the Vallejo Street Wharf?

Crowley: Yes, the Shipowners and Merchants Tugboat Company. That was their headquarters. And the Spreckels boats were over at Pacific Street, four wharves over. A fellow by the name of Manning was the superintendent there.

Kortum: The big Hercules was built as a Black Stack tug, wasn't she?

Crowley: No, she was built as a Red Stack tug. She was built on the Atlantic coast. That is the vessel that Rolph managed to get from the Reds when we were buying it out. That is, he got it from us. That is when he got the money from Moore that I told you about before.

Kortum: Rolph had that big tug, The Storm King.

Crowley: Yes, well you see, he was in the coal business. He got to bring his coal in from Nanaimo so he acquired an ocean going tug.

Kortum: I used to work on her for four bits an hour for a fellow called Rasmussen. He was fixing her up for Flood in the first part of the war. Jimmy Flood had her just before the war started in the spring of '41.

#### Some Waterfront Personalities

Crowley: I know Rasmussen; what was he doing?

Kortum: This is Pete Rasmussen; he was the son of the captain of the Lottie Bennett, the schooner.

Crowley: As far as the schooner Lottie Bennett was concerned, I knew the schooner very well. That was Captain Bennett's\* daughter.

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\*Operated Yale and Harvard in coastal passenger trade.  
[Karl Kortum]

Kortum: Well, the first captain of the Lottie Bennett, as I understand it from old Pete, was Captain Rasmussen. He had a son and a daughter. The son was kind of an artistic type, a piano player, so the captain did not think much of him, I guess. So he kind of drifted through life and when I worked for him, he had this job cleaning up this old wooden tugboat for Jim Flood, who had put some money in her. This was in the start of '41 when all those vessels had some value. So I was painting on her.

Crowley: Rasmussen was a name that was quite familiar. There was a Captain Rasmussen in the Red Stacks for many years. He has passed away many years ago.

Kortum: When a Whitehall boat was hanging around out there by the Whistling Buoy, how long did they stay there? They were just plain waiting for a ship to come? So they could be out there overnight or longer?

Crowley: Well, you see, those men were working for a monthly wage for the different supply houses like the Golden Shore Market and the Washington Market. They were out there to get that business. They exclusively did nothing but that. They stayed out there. Then the boatmen who were around Vallejo Street had to stay there to do business, but every once in awhile, when business got slow, they went out to the Whistling Buoy to pick up some business if they could.

Kortum: Was Vallejo Street then the headquarters for the Whitehall boatmen as well as the Red Stacks?

Crowley: The Red Stacks were on one side of the dock and the Whitehall boats were on the other. Then there were Whitehall boats also at Meiggs Wharf, Washington Street Wharf, and Folsom Street. Washington Wharf was George Engels and Tommy Kendall. At Folsom was Peterson, who was a national figure for a while. Meiggs Wharf had quite a number down there. The Marine Exchange had a boat operating from there. There was Maurice Behan who was a police officer afterwards. Heine Benges was there and Bill Fitzgerald; his brother was in charge of the Marine Exchange down there as well.

Engels who was at Washington Street had the idea that he was a great Whitehall boat rower so he came down to Meiggs Wharf one day; there is a saloon down there and two fellows got him a little excited so he said, "Hell, we have a fellow here who will beat you going around Alcatraz and back." So he started off Heine Benges and this Engels and damned if Heine Benges did not beat him.

Henry Peterson, though, was a professional. He had two brothers with him--Charley and Ed. Then Tom McNamara was there.

Another funny thing, the Customs were down there at

Crowley: Meiggs and they had a Whitehall boat. When they went to a ship, they had two boatmen take them out and bring them back. Later they had a steam boat, but for a long time they had nothing but Whitehall boats.

Those foreign ships that came in here always had more or less liquor which they thought they could bring ashore to sell, so the Customs was down there. Many times these Custom officers would come on board and seal the hatches. If the ship would not produce anything, they would seal up everything.

Kortum: In other words, they would like a bottle for themselves. Then you could be classed as a Meiggs Wharf operation since you were down there for some time.

Crowley: Yes, I was a boatman down there when I was quite young. Then my permanent place became Vallejo Street after I got the gas launches.

Kortum: Who was at Folsom now?

Crowley: There was Peterson and his two brothers. Then McNamara was his competitor and there was a fellow by the name of Johnson with him.

Kortum: Washington Street?

Crowley: That was George Engels. He also had sloops--yacht sloops-- to take crowds out on Sundays, and for parties around the Bay. The other was Kendall who afterwards got that concern



Crowley: over at Lake Merritt and developed it until he had a lot of boats for rent over there. He was there for quite a number of years.

Kortum: Which Whitehall boatmen were at Vallejo Street?

Crowley: Jack and Bill Gately, who were brothers, Billy Clark, whom you know as Billy White, "Dummy Mike," and then I came there. I had Whitehall boats at Vallejo for a long time. In fact, I got permission from the Harbor Commission to put a building in there. I had a nice place there. Upstairs we had bunks and I had quite a number of fellows working there doing night work and extra work that I had around. They were boatmen too but they were working for me. This was before the gas launches. I had a fellow named "Dutch Albert" who ran the first launch for me. He slept on the dock there because captains came down at all hours of the day and night. We always had night service as well as day.

Kortum: You were still a boatman yourself, though, when you got the money to buy that first launch by buying those furs?

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: This "Dutch Albert" worked on the Jennie C.?

Crowley: I had him in the Whitehall boats first and then he became the engineer of the Jennie C.. He had worked in the Red Stacks as a cook or something.

Crowley Tugs at San Pedro and Seattle

Kortum: At what point did the scows start to have engines put in them?

Crowley: That was in late years. There were very few who put engines in them. What happened was that first there were the scows. They moved by sailing and they had crews. Then the barges came into the picture. Those barges would take three hundred or four hundred tons at first. They they got bigger and bigger until there was not any room for the scows at all. The barges replaced them. The tugs would tow them.

Kortum: And that was about 1910 or so?

Crowley: In fact, as far as the barges are concerned, they took charge here in the harbor and in Seattle and somewhat in San Pedro.

Kortum: How did it come about that you established tugboats in other ports? Was San Pedro the first port after San Francisco where you started a tugboat company?

Crowley: It might have been Seattle before that, but whichever way, I went down there and started that company. It has been running for quite a number of years. That is the San Pedro Tugboat Company. That is where that writer, Norman Reilley Raine wrote that story about "Tugboat Annie."

Kortum: "Tugboat Annie" was a dispatcher?

Crowley: Yes, she kept books for us as well. When we first went down there, they needed a bookkeeper so they got her some way or another and she developed right into it.

She used to come out with a megaphone and give orders. You know, San Pedro Harbor is narrow and the tugs can be on the other side and you can yell to them and tell them what to do.

Kortum: How come they did not have a tugboat company down there prior to your arrival on the scene?

Crowley: There was not much in the way of shipping going in there. The Wrigley Company bought Catalina Island and they used a few boats for taking water out there and the necessary supplies. Then they looked around for business, so they have been competitors of ours ever since that time and that has been many years ago. That is Wrigley, the gum man. He doesn't know much about the tug business though.

Kortum: How many tugs operate in San Pedro?

Crowley: About sixteen, I think. There may be twenty. Wrigley has about ten and we have about ten. His firm is the Wilmington Transportation Company. He used to operate two or three steamers from Wilmington, Los Angeles to the Island. They carried 1,500 or 2,000 passengers and they did a very big business.

Kortum: I suppose the airplane put them out?

Crowley: Yes, they have their own airplane now.

Kortum: That is quite a few tugs for that port; of course, there is quite a bit of shipping.

Crowley: Then Long Beach is right beside it. They are both ports which are reserved by the two fleets, Wrigley's and mine. Barges are used there for carrying water around and one thing or another.

Kortum: How did you get started up at Seattle?

Crowley: I bought the Drummond Lighterage Company. It was a very old outfit. They had a terminal up there and they did warehousing and barging. Cary-Davis, another corporation, did the towing for Drummond so later we bought the Cary-Davis Company. Then we formed a combination up there. We incorporated the Puget Sound Tug and Barge Company and operated quite a few boats for some years. Now we are operating car-floats from Seattle to Alaska. They are big steel barges four hundred feet long which carry railway cars. We carry cars from all the railroads coming in there. Then we take them to Alaska where they hook up with the Alaska Railroad Company, a government line. We have five of them operating up there.

That is called the Hydro-train Company. It goes to the Port of Whittier, Alaska. That links up the railhead of Alaska there at Whittier to Seattle.

Crowley: No, let's see, those are four hundred feet long--  
four hundred by seventy-six by twenty.

Kortum: Did you establish any tugboats in any other ports?  
Aren't you involved in one in San Diego?

Crowley: Yes, we still operate San Diego. That is the Star and  
Crescent Company. Oakley Hall used to have them. We  
bought him out. Then they run a little excursion boat.

#### More on Scow Schooners

Kortum: Mainly I am interested in getting the old stories around  
this port. (Names a long list of scow schooners.)

Crowley: There is one thing there that you don't mention and that  
is about the Mona; she was the biggest scow ever on the  
bay. She was one of ours. Piper, Aden, and Goodall built  
her.

Kortum: I would assume that the Annie Aden, which was built about  
1875, was a Piper - Aden vessel.

Crowley: Yes, I think he was up around Mare Island at the time.

Kortum: Aden was?

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: If you recall any particular instance with any of these,  
just stop me. (Continues with his list of schooners.)

Carrier Dove...Catalina...Crockett...

Crowley: Carrier Dove was one of ours. The Catalina was owned by Whitelaw and he used it in the salvage business for picking up weights and carrying that stuff around. The Crockett was Thomson Collie.

Kortum: George W. McNear.

Crowley: McNear had a brick plant over there in Marin County somewhere. He had scows that carried the brick over here. There were two or three brick plants over there and he operated his own scows.

Kortum: Where were bricks discharged on this side?

Crowley: At any of the convenient wharves. It was not like the hay wharf where they had a special wharf.

Kortum: Georgia Woods...H. Eppinger...

Crowley: That was one of ours for coal. Eppinger is one of Thomson Collie's grain scows. It was named after the Eppinger who was a big grain man.

Kortum: Mission Canal was the one that Captain Matson started on.

Crowley: Did I ever tell you the story about Matson? He was in the scow schooner business. Somebody had some dealings with him. He said, "You know, if my name was written on the mainsail, I could not read it."

Kortum: You mean when he was getting started, he did not know the English language. He came out here as a sailor and I think the Mission Canal and the John Frederick were his first two schooners. That was in the 70's or 80's though.

Crowley: Let me tell you. I took his captain from Vallejo Street down to a vessel laying off of Meiggs Wharf, down inside of Alcatraz. The tide was against me and I rowed all the way down there, put the captain aboard and sailed back. When I got back, I figured I was three hours on the job. Then I went somewhere and I ran into Matson. He said, "You are just the fellow I want to see."

I said, "Yes, what do you want?"

He said, "Well, I'll tell you. If you will reduce your rate, I will give you all our business."

I said, "I just took a captain down; I was three hours on the job and I got a dollar for it. Now I could not reduce that."

Kortum: So you did not strike up a bargain with him?

Crowley: No, you could not very well.

You know another thing, those scows all had center boards so you could sail on the wind. Many people did not know that but they did.

Kortum: I notice that the Nettie Sunborg was built by Charles G. White. Did you know him?

Crowley: That was a long time ago down at Meiggs Wharf. He was there while I was there in the later part of his time. He built a few boats that I saw. I was a kid then. He was a good builder. He built the Charles White. Then

Crowley: there was somebody else here who had just built the boat for the pilots. I think her name was the Bonita. Somehow or another the thing came up as to which was the fastest vessel. They had a race around the Farallone Islands and back. I can't remember who won it. It was quite an event.

Kortum: What kind of appearing man was Charles White?

Crowley: He was a big stout Swede. I knew him and all his sons. I used to go into the shipyard and look at it every once in awhile. When he built the Charles White, I went and saw her.

Kortum: How did a shipbuilder of that day dress? I suppose he wore a vest and shirt sleeves.

Crowley: Yes.

Kortum: What kind of a personality did he have?

Crowley: He was all right. He was a nice man, had a nice family. I knew his sons well.

Kortum: White later moved up to Puget Sound to establish his shipyards. He was building up there for awhile about the turn of the century. (Continuing his list of schooners) Pike County...

Crowley: She had a lot of power in her.

Kortum: She is really an old scow; she was built in 1851.

Crowley: They rebuilt her, I guess, and put the engine in her.

Kortum: Pinole...Port Costa...



Crowley: That was one of ours. The Port Costa was Thomson Collie.

That is where the grain was all loaded, Port Costa.

Kortum: ...the Robert Henry...

Crowley: That was the vessel that used to carry and haul cord wood down to the Henry's place. It came from up country somewhere. Henry had a cordwood yard down at the foot of Powell Street.

Kortum: Was there much cordwood being carried in the early days?

Crowley: Yes, there was quite a lot brought in here.

Kortum: It was a matter in private homes of either burning coal or cordwood, I guess.

Crowley: That's right. But a lot of people wanted to get cordwood and it was a pretty good market. He had quite a big yard down there.

Kortum: That is very interesting. I have never run across a scow engaged in the cordwood trade.

The following refutation of remarks by Thomas Crowley was recorded on October 6, 1975 in an interview with Cyril Magnin. Mr. Crowley's initial remarks about Cyril Magnin's tenure as President of the Port Commission had come to Mr. Magnin's attention. While recognizing the right of any citizen to criticize the actions of a public official, he found Mr. Crowley's examples to be erroneous and asked for the opportunity to set the record straight, with documentation.

The interview was held in Mr. Magnin's office in the Joseph Magnin Building, 59 Harrison Street, San Francisco. Present, in addition to Mr. Magnin and the interviewer, were Mr. William Evers, Mr. Magnin's attorney who had helped prepare the information for the refutation, and Mr. Magnin's little black dog. Correction of the transcript was delayed while Mr. Magnin journeyed to China as the guest of the People's Republic of China, an invitation that came to him in appreciation of his major role in arranging for the exhibit of the Archeological Finds of the People's Republic of China to come to the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.

In November, after his return, Mr. Magnin read and approved the transcript, which is now appended to all copies of the Thomas Crowley transcript.

Willa Klug Baum  
Interviewer

December 1975  
Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library  
University of California/Berkeley

Refutation of Cyril Magnin to Thomas Crowley Oral History Transcript

Date of Interview: October 6, 1975

Witmore Building, Corner of Pacific and Embarcadero

Baum: I want to thank you, Mr. Magnin, for giving us this opportunity to get the facts down on these inaccurate statements of Mr. Crowley's. I would like to go over the different points that were mentioned in Mr. Crowley's volume, step by step, and get the remarks that you have to add to this and copies of the documents you have collected.

First is the Witmore Building at the corner of Pacific and Embarcadero.

Referring to Mr. Crowley's statements on pages 205 and 220 of the transcript, I understand that you deny the truth of Mr. Crowley's allegations that the Witmore Building, located at the corner of Pacific and Embarcadero in San Francisco, was bought by you, Ben Swig and George Killion and that you made \$100,000 overnight on the transaction. Would you care to speak to this matter?

Magnin: Yes.

First, I have never owned, directly or indirectly, any real estate in San Francisco other than a home for some years in Sea Cliff.

Second, I had no interest whatsoever in the Witmore Building or any similar real estate.

Third, I have here a letter from Joseph Tinney, Assessor for the City and County of San Francisco, dated March 25, 1975. This letter states that the subject property was bought by Benjamin H. Swig on September 18, 1957 and that Mr. Swig sold a portion of the property on July 23, 1959, almost two years after purchase, and the remaining portion on March 1, 1960. I had no connection whatsoever with the ownership of this property and cite the inaccuracy of Mr. Crowley's allegation of overnight profits to cast doubt on his other accusations. The letter from Mr. Tinney should be included in the transcript.

Baum: Very well. We certainly will be happy to include the letter that you are showing me.



## JOSEPH E. TINNEY

ASSESSOR

CITY HALL, SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94102

• TELEPHONE: 558-4011 — 558-4351

March 25, 1975

Mr. Cyril Magnin  
59 Harrison Street  
San Francisco, California  
94105

Dear Mr. Magnin:

Re: Block 171

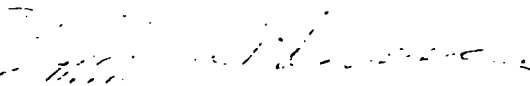
The records of this office indicate:

The above block, Embarcadero between Jackson and Pacific, was formerly Block 170. Further, in 1957 and continuously prior to 1914 the owner of 301 Embarcadero (being then Block 170, Lot 9), was Wellman Peck & Company, which sold this property on 9-18-57 to Benjamin H. Swig.

Benjamin H. Swig sold a portion of said Lot 9 to Glen D. and Beatrice Nolan on 7-23-59, and this portion was renumbered Lot 11.

Benjamin H. Swig sold the remaining portion of said Lot 9 to San Francisco Redevelopment Agency on 3-1-60, and this portion was renumbered Lot 10. Thereafter San Francisco Redevelopment Agency acquired the whole block which has been known as 171 since 1964.

JOSEPH E. TINNEY,  
Assessor

By:   
Samuel Duca,  
Chief Assistant Assessor

bw

Launch

Baum: Mr. Magnin, there was a statement Mr. Crowley made regarding a launch.

Referring to pages 205 and 206 of the transcript of Mr. Crowley's oral history, I understand that you deny the truth of Mr. Crowley's allegation that a berth for a launch, presumably owned by Mr. Schuman was built between the bulkheads of piers 16 and 18 and then the launch berthed there, all at no expense to Mr. Schuman. Would you care to comment on that, Mr. Magnin?

Magnin: Yes.

First, Mr. Schuman owned a boat. He kindly offered the Port the use of his boat for no charge. The idea was that the boat could be used for trade promotions. The Port agreed that there would be no dockage charge while the boat was berthed at one of the Port's piers and that Port personnel would operate the boat when used for this purpose.

Second, the proposal was not carried out, the boat was never berthed at a Port facility. Mr. Schuman informs me that the boat was always berthed at St. Francis Yacht Harbor, and he further said to me, after I discussed it with him, that he has bills to prove his statement that the boat was berthed at the St. Francis Yacht Club until such time as he sold it.

Third, as far as I know, no money was ever spent on preparing a boat dock at piers 16 and 18. I don't know what Mr. Crowley was talking about, and doubt if he did.

Fourth, I have a letter here from Paul A. Hartman, Chief Wharf-finger of the Port, dated April 1, 1975, that completely substantiates what I have just said. He closes by writing: 'As I recall, the proposal was not carried out and the boat never berthed at a Port of San Francisco facility.' This letter should be included in the transcript.

Baum: Very well. We will include this letter.

PORT OF  
FERRY BUILDING



282e  
CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO • JOSEPH L. ALIOTO, MAYOR  
**SAN FRANCISCO**  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111 • TEL.: (415) 391-8000

April 1, 1975

Mr. Cyril Magnin  
Joseph Magnin Company  
59 Harrison Street  
San Francisco, California 94105

Dear Cyril:

About ten years ago Adolph Schuman offered the Port the use of his boat for a trade promotion effort to show important persons port facilities as viewed from the water side. The proposal was that there would be no dockage charge while the boat was berthed at one of our piers and and that some port personnel would operate the boat when used for this purpose.

As I recall, the proposal was not carried out and the boat never berthed at a Port of San Francisco facility.

Yours very truly,

PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul A. Hartman".

Paul A. Hartman  
Chief Wharfinger

PAH:sc

Barge/Noah's Ark

Baum: Mr. Magnin, the next subject we want to bring up is the barge that was going to be a Noah's Ark.

Referring to pages 206, 207, and 208 of the Crowley transcript, I understand that you deny the truth of Mr. Crowley's allegations concerning the method of outfitting a barge to resemble Noah's Ark, having the "Associated Charities" charge admission to the barge but getting only ten cents out of each sixty cents admission. Do you wish to comment on this matter?

Magnin: Yes, I do wish to comment.

One, there never was a barge of any type in which I had any interest, direct or indirect. Also, I do not know of any interest of Mr. Shuman in any type of barge.

Two, the Port was never cajoled by me or any other person into outfitting any barge either to make it look like Noah's Ark or otherwise.

Three, a barge belonging to Determined Productions, Inc., a company in which I have never had any interests whatsoever, did occupy the area Mr. Crowley refers to from July 1, 1959 to September 30, 1959. Their barge was outfitted to resemble Noah's Ark. It was open to the public and Determined Productions paid \$100 per month minimum against 5% of gross revenue to the Port as rent. This represented fair market rental.

Four, I had no connection whatsoever with any barge or boat represented as donating receipts to any charity. I do not believe there ever was or now is an "Associated Charities" organization. Mr. Crowley again appears to have been confused. I received no income from any such project and have no idea what Mr. Crowley is alluding to. As far as I know, no similar venture has ever been sanctioned by the Port.

I have here a letter dated September 5, 1975 from H. J. Theimann, Commercial Property Manager of the Port, verifying the information given above concerning Determined Productions. This letter should be made a part of the transcript.

Baum: We will include a copy of that letter.

Have you any idea how Mr. Crowley could have been confused into thinking you were in some way related to Determined Productions?

Magnin: The only connection I could see is that these people in Determined Productions used to work for Joseph Magnin in our creative department. Later they became a millionaire concern working with this

PORT OF  
FERRY BUILDING



282ff  
CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO • JOSEPH L. ALIOTO, MAYOR  
**SAN FRANCISCO**  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111 • TEL.: (415) 391-8000

September 5, 1975

Cyril Magnin  
c/o Joseph Magnin Company  
59 Harrison Street  
San Francisco, California 94105

Dear Mr. Magnin:

This will confirm our recent telephone conversation whereby I advised you that from July 1, 1959 through September 30, 1959 Determined Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 672, San Mateo, California occupied berthing space at Pier 41 for a house barge with an exhibit open to the public. The rent was \$100,00 per month minimum against 5% of gross revenues.

Very truly yours,

PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO

*H. J. Thiemann*  
H. J. Thiemann

Commercial Property Manager



Magnin: fellow Charles Schultz, you know, who does Peanuts. They have all the rights of production. And they made a fortune. I think they did this Noah's Ark as a little charity thing.

Baum: They started out working for Joseph Magnin, but they had no connection with you...

Magnin: No connection. Determined Production is a millionaire concern today. They made it all off of Peanuts. They got Schultz to give them the right to sheets, T-shirts, dolls--everything.

Baum: Had they worked for Joseph Magnin's before Noah's Ark?

Magnin: Yes, long before. I'll give you the exact--I'll call them and find out when they started business.

These two kids--Connie Boucher and Jimmy Young--worked for us for some time. One was head of our display, the other was in our creative department, and they're very creative young people; I wish they had stayed with the company. They went out on their own, probably did better...

Baum: It sounds like their Noah's Ark venture didn't profit.

Magnin: I'm certain they didn't do it for profit. But they were paying rental, as you can see. We can show you; that's our usual procedure.

Baum: Yes. It sounds like a reasonable deal for the Port to make.

World Trade Club

Baum: The next issue is the World Trade Club.

Mr. Magnin, Mr. Crowley mentions twice, on pages 214 and 215 of his transcript, that you put part of \$50,000,000 of State Harbor Bond moneys into the World Trade Club. I understand you deny the truth of this accusation and wish to refute it.

Magnin: I do.

One, no part of the 50 Million State Harbor Bond money was donated or given to the World Trade Club.

Two, in formal, public proceedings \$250,000 was loaned by the Port to the World Trade Club. This loan was secured by a chattel mortgage on all of the Club's property. The loan was paid off prior to its maturity.

Three, all improvements made by the World Trade Club will revert to the Port at the end of its lease term.

Four, the World Trade Club has been very instrumental in promoting the business of the Port and, particularly, the World Trade Center at the Ferry Building.

Before we made the agreement with the Club we were having a hard time renting space in the building. The minute the Club moved in, it became a World Trade Building and it filled right up. It was a good business judgment to have loaned them the \$250,000. We never gave them anything.

Five, I have here a letter dated March 25, 1975, from Arthur H. Connolly, Jr., attorney for the World Trade Club since its inception which verifies what I have just said. This letter should be made a part of the transcript.

Six, there was no "gift" of bond money or any other money to the World Trade Club. A fair market, arms length lease and loan were made. Mr. Crowley appears to again be confused.

That loan was paid off. If it hadn't been, it certainly would have been a good investment for the Port. We would have owned that and could have leased it as a restaurant for probably a lot more money than the World Trade Club was paying us. Because they did everything; they started from scratch. We turned over the empty space and they went out and raised money. George Killion was the first president.

This letter from Mr. Connelly gives the details.

Baum: Yes. We want to copy that.

SULLIVAN, ROCHE & JOHNSON  
 ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
 MILLS TOWER, 220 BUSH STREET  
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94104  
 TELEPHONE (415) 362-2822

THEODORE ROCHE, JR.  
 THEODORE A. KOLB  
 VINCENT J. MULLINS  
 ARTHUR H. CONNOLLY, JR.  
 GERALD J. O'CONNOR  
 RONALD H. KAHN  
 RICHARD H. WISE, JR.  
 PATRICK J. MALONEY, JR.  
 NORBERT J. DICKMAN  
 PATRICK H. FABIAN  
 GEOFFREY F. GAJDOS

MATT I. SULLIVAN (1857-1937)  
 THO. J. ROCHE (1870-1958)  
 HIRAN W. JOHNSON (1880-1945)

March 25, 1975

PERSONAL

Cyril Magnin  
 J. Magnin Company  
 59 Harrison Street  
 San Francisco, CA

Re: World Trade Club of  
 San Francisco

Dear Cyril:

It is my present understanding that a statement has been made to the general effect that while you were Chairman of the San Francisco Port Authority, then a state agency, you "gave" some \$150,000.00 of "State moneys" to the World Trade Club.

As the attorney for the World Trade Club since its inception in 1957, and as a Past President of the Club and presently a member of its Board of Directors, I have personal knowledge of the entire transaction presumably referred to, and can state categorically that the statement above referred to is totally false.

The true facts of the matter, which can be fully documented if and when desired, are as follows:

After the initial incorporation of the World Trade Club in 1957, the Club raised some \$200,000.00 from the sale of memberships, and borrowed \$250,000.00 from the San Francisco Port Authority, with the total going to defray the costs of constructing and furnishing the Club's quarters in the World Trade Center.

Under the terms of its original lease of the premises dated October 1, 1959, the Club agreed to pay the Port the sum of \$2,109.75 per month on the indebtedness, with interest at 6% per annum on the principal of the loan, in addition to monthly rental for the premises in the amount of \$2,433.60. The Club gave the Port a Chattel Mortgage on all of its property as security for the loan.

Page Two  
March 25, 1975  
Mr. Cyril Magnin

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The Club adhered strictly to the repayment schedule on the loan, and in fact accelerated the payment thereof, to the extent that on February 21, 1968, the Port issued to the Club its receipt for full payment of the entire indebtedness, with interest, and the chattel mortgage was then released and discharged.

It should be noted parenthetically that the original lease further provided that all leasehold improvements installed by the Club in the premises, amounting to some \$350,000.00 in value, became, and they still are, the property of the Port.

The original loan transaction above referred to was accomplished by formal action of the Port Authority, as lender, and the World Trade Club, as borrower, spread on the minutes of both organizations and the assist which was thereby rendered to the Port's promotion of the development of the new World Trade Center adequately demonstrates the good business judgment in the making of the loan as above described. The World Trade Club, now one of the most prestigious organizations of its kind in the world, has unquestionably made a most valuable contribution to the success of the entire World Trade Center operation, to the benefit of both the State of California and the City and County of San Francisco.

If further details on the foregoing are desired, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Arthur H. Connolly, Jr.

AHC/pcf

APL-PFEL - Use of Bond Funds

Baum: The next issue was the use of bond funds for the American President Lines and the Pacific Far East Lines.

Mr. Magnin, on pages 214 and 215 of Mr. Crowley's transcript he states that around 50 million dollars had been spent on improving port facilities on the southern waterfront, primarily for the use of the Natomas group of companies, American President Line, Pacific Far East Line and the American Mail Line. Mr. Crowley states that he feels that you, George Killion and the Natomas people were in some sort of a conspiracy in using the bond money. He also indicates that "some of those fellows" owned an interest in the land near the southern waterfront and caused the Port to improve the area so that the owners may benefit. Do you wish to refute these charges?

Magnin: Yes, I would like to refute Mr. Crowley's statements. This is probably the most ridiculous of all the charges.

One, the Harbor Bond money was prudently spent on new facilities in the southern waterfront area, and certainly 50 million dollars hasn't been spent yet. The piers on the northern waterfront could not efficiently accommodate modern cargo handling and, therefore, new facilities had to be built on the southern waterfront in order to attract or keep the shipping lines.

That was a result of a study made by Arthur D. Little. You can have a copy of that study. They said if the Port of San Francisco is to survive, it must move south to where there is adequate back-up land for containers, and develop enough money from the northern waterfront to pay for some of the cost of development on the south. They are a very reputable company, one of the best in the U.S. You can have a copy of the report.

Baum: I would like a copy.

Magnin: As far as the Pacific Far East Lines goes, they are still growling that they pay too much rent. They still complain. We get an enormous rent from them, and they would have gone to Oakland hadn't we done that. So we saved them for San Francisco.

Two, the Port was exceedingly fortunate to be able to have the business of the Natomas group. There was no subsidy of them by the Port; all arrangements were arm's length and at fair market value. In fact, my personal relationship with Ralph Davies, Chairman of the Board of Natomas, was a primary reason for their remaining in San Francisco. That's a fact. His people wanted him to move to Oakland. Since his death, American President Lines has moved to Oakland in order to obtain what they consider to be a more favorable set-up. This is hardly evidence of any favoritism, conspiracy or secret effort as hinted at by Mr. Crowley.

Magnin: Three, as I just indicated, there never was any conspiracy or joint effort or other devious activity involving George Killion, Ralph Davies and myself or any other Port personnel or other persons relative to Port business or otherwise. Such an accusation is totally unfounded and untrue. Mr. Crowley was not well informed and seems to have jumped to conclusions without having the facts.

Four, as I stated earlier, I have never owned any property in San Francisco other than a house in Sea Cliff. I am not aware of any member of my family nor the companies with which I am associated, nor Mr. Killion having any interest in real estate near the Port's southern waterfront improvements. Again, Mr. Crowley is totally misinformed.

Baum: Thank you for that information.

Fisherman's Wharf

Baum: Mr. Magnin, Mr. Crowley talked about Fisherman's Wharf.

On pages 215 and 216 of Mr. Crowley's transcript, he states that you "tried to horn in in a half a dozen places" on Fisherman's Wharf. He also questions the arrangement made with the Franciscan Restaurant. He further alleges that because you did not succeed in "horning in", you caused the Port to charge the restaurants 5% of their gross income. Would you care to comment regarding these statements?

Magnin: Yes, I wish to refute Mr. Crowley's statements.

One, I never attempted to "horn in" on any restaurant in the Fisherman's Wharf area. In fact, I avoided any involvements whatsoever in order to assure that there could be no conflict of interest problems.

Two, contrary to Mr. Crowley's intimation, I was instrumental in raising the aggregate lease payments to the Port of the restaurants in the area from approximately \$100,000 per year, when I first became involved with the Port, to over \$1,000,000 at the end of my tenure. That's a fact. -

In addition, when I first became involved, the restaurants were not paying taxes on their possessory interests nor were they maintaining the piling under their establishments. During my tenure as Chairman of the Port Commission we instituted changes that have resulted in the restaurant tenants now paying possessory interest taxes to the City and also maintaining the piling under their units. The Port does not spend one cent any more in improving their property or maintaining their property. And the leases we made with them, they must maintain them in first and satisfactory condition at all times.

They are stuck with all that maintenance and they are stuck with a tremendous amount of possessory interest tax. I can get the amount from the Assessor's office. I would guess it runs to \$200,000 or \$300,000 a year they pay in addition to their rent, which the City never got before. [Chuckles]

Baum: You must be fairly unpopular there. Hard to get a meal down there.

Magnin: I never go down there. [Laughter]

Three, as to the Franciscan, Mr. Berger, the proprietor, financed and built ~~his~~ restaurant. He is ready to prove that. He is responsible for maintaining the piling beneath it, he always was, and he pays approximately the same lease payments as the other restaurant tenants. The same applied to the parking area. No special "deal"

Magnin: was made with Mr. Berger. The parking area was not usable for cargo handling or other maritime related activities. It made sense to use it for parking and the Port receives rental for this use. A percentage rental as well. And Mr. Berger paid for all that development of parking.

Four, the restaurants were not "punished" for not letting me get involved; as I stated, I never asked to be involved. In fact, I assiduously avoid any involvement. Their rents were raised and a percentage override put on because that was the fair market value of their leasehold. These are valuable properties at a unique location. The Port was being underpaid and, thus, the restaurants subsidized. Mr. Crowley's statement shows he did not understand the leases nor how such leases are normally handled.

I might put in that Mr. Berger paid 5% rent from the start. He was the first one to go on a percentage rental. We tried it on him, before any of the other restaurants. Subsequently we raised the percentage rental to 5% on food, 6 1/2% on gifts and liquor. I wanted more - you check the record - I wanted 6% and 8% but the Commission voted it down.

#### General Statement

Baum: Mr. Magnin, you have now given specific statements that you feel refute Mr. Crowley's specific allegations of wrongdoing on your part. Do you wish to add anything further?

Magnin: Yes. From the general tenor of Mr. Crowley's remarks, it appears he had some prejudice towards me. His statements are irresponsible and not based on the facts. I recognize that he was over ninety years old when his oral history was recorded. Perhaps the charitable judgment would be to ascribe his inaccuracies to his age. I hope that my testimony has set the record straight.

Baum: Do you have any idea why Mr. Crowley might have been prejudiced against you?

Magnin: Well, I have no factual information on that. But I have a feeling that he had a grudge against me for two reasons.

One, we put in another competitor to his Harbor Tours business, a small company owned by a woman. We felt that we should do this, first, because of the income and, further, under the free enterprise system, we always try to encourage competition.

Secondly, and very importantly, I was always urging--I never could get the Commission to do it--to put him on a percentage rental which would have brought in substantially more money and would have



Magnin: cost him a lot of money. Subsequently we did it. But he never forgave me for those two things. With his old age and everything, his prejudice came out.

Of course, I can't substantiate any of his reasons, but I think I have substantiated my refutations of his allegations.

Baum: Yes. We are grateful to you for these corrections and additions.

## APPENDIX

Letter from Thomas Crowley to Willa Baum

Pages from December 1965 issue of May Day Pictorial News dedicated to Tom Crowley, "Dean of the Tugboat Industry," on his 90th birthday

Article on the Whitehall Boat

News report of sale of H.C. Peterson Company, May 29, 1917

*removed for copyright*

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## PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENT

Photographs courtesy Crowley family.

Thomas Crowley - 1898.

Meiggs Wharf - 1865.

Letter from John Bannon - San Francisco, March 9, 1874.

Spreckels' Vigilant - 1899.

Typical waterfront scene before the 1906 fire.

Billy and Harry's. Davis Street - 1904.

"The Men Behind" Crowley's Fleet.

Picture taken about 1907 at the south side of Howard Street. Crowley office was moved by barge from Vallejo Street to Howard Street, the later part of 1906. Wellington coal Bunkers was at #2. Auto believed to be E.M.F. Studebaker. Office shown is where Walter Westman worked in 1906, and where Miss Marie Carey worked in 1907. Shown in picture: Thomas Crowley, David Crowley, and James Madden of Hercules Powder Company.

San Francisco Bay, Mt. Diablo, Oakland, Goat Island and showing terminus of C.P.R.R. from Telegraph Hill.

Picture of northside of Pier 25 taken about 1910. Vallejo Street wharf had coal bunkers on northside. Crowley Brothers and Bill Clark boat houses were on bulkhead between Vallejo Street and Green Street wharf. Red Stack moved from Vallejo Street wharf, to northside Green Street wharf, then to northside Pier 25.

This picture taken 1909. Howard Street Wharf.

Crowley Launch and Tugboat Company, 1910.

Sea Queen.

Eleu.

Thomas Crowley and wife on trip to west coast of South America - 1915.

"Scoop" Gleason of the Call Bulletin, Mr. Crowley, and Chronicle newspaper man.

Crowley No. 23 - built by Lester Stone, 1911.

Double decker built for 1915 Fair.

Schooner Crowley - 1918.

J. Kirkpatrick, Thomas Crowley and Andrew Mahoney.

Smith Rice derrick on northside of Harrison Street Wharf raising Black Stack Defiance.

Sea Lion - built by Lester Stone 1920-1921.

Thomas Crowley, Thomas B. Crowley, 1922.

Ozmo, wrecked on Coos Bay Bay, may 19, 1922.

Tanker Lyman Stuart, Lands End 1926.

Thomas Crowley, Andrew Mahoney.

Left to right - Mrs. Caspar Escher, Mrs. Gustan Koven, Mrs. Crowley, Thomas B. Crowley; Foreground - Mrs. Henry Miller Bowles.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Crowley - 1928.

Bird Boat launched - 1930. Thomas Crowley, center front.

Exposition - 1939.

Thomas Crowley with his first grandson, Ted Koven - 1940.

Willa Klug Baum

Grew up in Middle West and Southern California.

B.A., Whittier College, in American history and philosophy; teaching assistant in American history and constitution.

Newspaper reporter.

M.A., Mills College, in American history and political science; teaching fellow in humanities. Graduate work, University of California at Berkeley, 1949-1954, in American and California history; teaching assistant in American history and recent United States history.

Adult school teacher, Oakland, in English and Americanization, 1948-1967; author of teaching materials for English, and summer session instructor in English for foreign students, Speech Department, University of California, Berkeley.

Interviewer and then department head of Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, 1954 to present.

Active in developing the techniques of oral history through practice, participation in professional association meetings and training workshops, and writing and speaking on oral history. Author of Oral History for the Local Historical Society, an oral history manual published by the American Association for State and Local History, fourth printing, 1975. Member, Oral History Association (council member, 1967-1969; co-chairman, Colloquium, 1970); Western History Association; Conference of California Historical Societies; Society of American Archivists (committee on oral history); Society of California Archivists; International Association of Sound Archives.