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## **Finding Aid to the Sam Kagel Oral History, 1979MS 2465**

Finding aid prepared by California Historical Society staff; revised by Marie Dunlap in 2010.

California Historical Society

678 Mission Street

San Francisco, CA, 94105

415-357-1848

reference@calhist.org

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**Title:** Sam Kagel oral history

**Date:** 1980

**Collection Number:** MS 2465

**Creator:** Kagel, Sam

**Extent:** 1 folder(0.1 Linear feet)

**Contributing Institution:** California Historical Society

678 Mission Street

San Francisco, CA, 94105

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**Physical Location:** Collection is stored onsite.

**Abstract:** Contains a transcribed copy of Lucille Kendall's 1980 interview with arbitrator Sam Kagel documenting his role in San Francisco labor relations in the 1930s and 1940s, especially during the 1934 waterfront and general strike and the 1937 hotel strike.

**Language of Material:** Collection materials are in English.

**Access**

Collection is open for research. Readers must sign an agreement of use form.

**Publication Rights**

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**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Sam Kagel Oral History, MS 2465, California Historical Society.

[Bertha Metro Papers, MS 3422](#)

[Hotel & Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union Records, MS 458A](#)

[Louis Goldblatt Oral History, MS 3538](#)

[Phyllis Foley Oral History, MS 3537](#)

[Rene Battaglini Oral History, MS 3539](#)

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Arbitration, Industrial--California--San Francisco.

Bars (Drinking establishments)--Employees--Labor unions--California--San Francisco.

Hotels--Employees--Labor unions--California--San Francisco.

Restaurants--Employees--Labor unions--California--San Francisco.

Strikes and lockouts--California--San Francisco.

Oral histories.

**Donor**

This oral history was transcribed from an interview with Sam Kagel conducted by Lucille Kendall for the California Historical Society on February 8, 1980.

**Biographical Information**

As an employee of the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau, arbitrator, and lawyer, Sam Kagel played a significant role in Bay Area labor relations for 75 years. Born in San Francisco in 1909 to Russian Jewish immigrants, Kagel attended the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied economics. In 1932, he went to work for the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau, a firm that provided economic and legal counsel to labor unions, particularly during collective bargaining disputes. As an employee of the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau, Kagel played a pivotal role in the 1934 waterfront and general strike in San Francisco, serving on the Waterfront Strike Committee and the General Strike Committee. In the aftermath of the strike, he

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represented workers -- including the longshoremen -- in arbitration. Around 1936, he helped organize the Newspaper Guild of Northern California. During the San Francisco hotel strike of 1937, Kagel and the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau represented the Hotel & Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, playing a vital role in pre-strike talks and post-strike negotiations. From 1948 to 2002, Kagel served as chief arbitrator between the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association. Kagel died in 2007.

Lucille Kendall was a member and officer of the Hotel & Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, she conducted interviews of participants in the San Francisco culinary strikes of 1937, 1941-1942, and 1980 for the California Historical Society.

#### **Scope and Contents**

This oral history collection consists of a transcribed copy of Lucille Kendall's 1980 interview with San Francisco arbitrator Sam Kagel; an interview history; and a copy of an article about Kagel by Ira Kamin titled "King the Arbitrators," which appeared in the *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle* on August 10, 1980.

The Kagel interview sheds light on labor relations in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1930s and 1940s. While Kendall was primarily interested in documenting the San Francisco hotel strike of 1937, the Kagel interview covers a number of other labor-related themes, including: the activities of the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau; the 1934 waterfront and general strike in San Francisco; the ILWU's subsequent organizing drive, known as the "march inland;" and labor arbitration in San Francisco.

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