

HISTORY OF THE  
U. S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Interview between:

J. Edward Kimlel

Retired Deputy Director,

Western District

and

Robert G. Porter

Sebastapol, California

October 11, 1978

## INTRODUCTION

This is a transcription of a taped interview, one of a series conducted by Robert G. Porter, who retired from the U. S. Food and Drug Administration in 1977.

The interviews were held with retired F.D.A. employees whose recollections may serve to enrich the written record. It is hoped that these narratives of things past will serve as source material for present and future researchers; that the stories of important accomplishments, interesting events, and distinguished leaders will find a place in training and orientation of new employees, and may be useful to enhance the morale of the organization; and finally, that they will be of value to Dr. James Harvey Young in the writing of the history of the Food and Drug Administration.

The tapes and transcriptions will become a part of the collection of the National Library of Medicine and copies of the transcriptions will be placed in the Library of Emory University.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

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GENERAL TOPIC OF INTERVIEW: History of the Food & Drug Administration

DATE: 10/11/78 PLACE: Sebastapol, California LENGTH: 85 minutes

INTERVIEWEE

INTERVIEWER

NAME: J. Edward Kimlel NAME: Robert G. Porter

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FDA SERVICE DATES: FROM 1918 TO 1949 RETIRED? Yes

TITLE: Deputy Director, Western District  
(If retired, title of last FDA position)

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Porter: This is a recording of an interview with J. Edward Kimlel who retired from the Food and Drug Administration in 1949 as a Special Assistant to the Commissioner. And before that, Mr. Kimlel had been the Deputy Director of Western District. My name is Bob Porter. The interview is being held at Mr. Kimlel's home in Sebastopol, California. The date is October the 11th, 1978. I wonder, Mr. Kimlel, if you could just give us a little brief sketch of your career in the Food and Drug Administration so that whoever listens to this recording will know who you are.

Kimlel: How much time do I have?

Porter: All morning if you want it. Well, you started in 1918 didn't you?

Kimlel: I started in 1918. Before that, you knew Dr. Wiley, of course. He had written a book Foods and Their Adulterations. Remember that? It was quite a volume, about 5 or 600 pages.

Porter: Oh, I have never read it.

Kimlel: I read that book and it intrigued me very much before I became interested in Food and Drug. So soon after that it just happened that Civil Service announced an examination for Food and Drug Inspector. So I took it; took the exam, passed it. Of course you have to wait awhile after you passed the examination before you're appointed.

Porter: I know.

Kimlel: So, I got a job. I was working as a chemist in

Peoria, Illinois. But I got a job at Texas A & M to teach chemistry. So I went down there; taught chemistry and substituted in geology. Came vacation time and I had to look about for a job for vacation. Well, it was just about that time somebody showed up from Food and Drug and offered me a job as a Food and Drug Inspector, temporary. So I thought well, that's fine I'll just take this for summer, then I'll come back here and teach in the winter. But I liked the job so much better as a Food and Drug Inspector that I stayed with them for 31 years.

Porter: Is that right? Let's pause just a minute and see if we're getting a recording.

Kimlel: I came to San Francisco to the Western District and I worked with Harry Moore. Then I went to Seattle where I worked with, I've forgotten the man's name up there, the Inspector. At that time there was only one man there, just an Inspector.

Porter: Oh, that wasn't Monfore?

Kimlel: Then I was sent to Denver. Well, I worked in Denver about 7 or 8 years and I was transferred to Los Angeles. I was down there about, oh, I guess about, 7 years when I was transferred back to Denver as, I wasn't Chief of the Station, I was made Acting Chief of Western District, of Denver Station.

Porter: They did that to keep the grade structure down,

didn't they?

Kimlel: I don't know why they did it. I really don't know why they did it. Well, anyway I was there for quite awhile and then I was transferred to Western District and from there then I went to Washington. Well, that's about all the traveling I did in Food and Drug. But I...about 8 of my years in the service or 10 or 12, something like that, I was a field man. And after that I was doing office work.

Porter: What was it like being an Inspector in 1918?

Kimlel: Well, you went out, you traveled by rail mostly. You didn't travel, you didn't have cars. And we didn't travel by bus very much; mostly by train. And you worked. You worked full time. You never took days off. If you got up in the morning at 7:00, you ate your breakfast and went to work. You disregarded time. And the same thing, you work all day and then you'd spend half the night writing a report. That's the way we, Inspectors worked in the old days. And if you did all right, you didn't hear much. See, if you made mistakes, you learned about them. But I didn't have too much trouble in that respect. And I enjoyed the work because I came and went as I wished. Nobody wired to tell me what to do. But of course we made reports continuously so the Station Chief as well as the District Chief and the Administration knew what you were

about.

Porter: How did you decide what to do?

Kimlel: Well, we had a meeting once a year in the District where we decided what we were going to work on during the year. And if it was time for inspection of tomato canneries, we'd go out and inspect tomato canneries. And if we had to watch shipping of apples to prevent too much spray residue on them, we worked that at the time, see. And when you worked in an active project like that, we were out collecting samples and making factory inspections.

Porter: Did you do some of the early work in western Colorado on spray residue?

Kimlel: Yes, I did some of that early work. And it was a pretty hectic time sometimes.

Porter: Do you remember any stories?

Kimlel: The farmers didn't take, and the fact, they didn't take readily to it. But of course we had the last say because if the apples weren't clean, we'd seize them at the other end. And they all knew that, see? So, they'd have meetings, they'd have meetings about what they were going to do with respect to sprays, spray residue. Well, they didn't decide much. They knew they had to get it off and they knew they had to put it on in order to save the apples. So it was just about that.

Porter: And that was lead arsenate?

Kimlel: That was lead arsenate, yes. Then we had a situation in tomatoes in Utah particularly where the corn ear worms had invaded the tomatoes. I don't know if you did much of that or not.

Porter: Yes, I've been in all of those ones.

Kimlel: I'm sure I initiated that, that project on these worms in tomatoes. I found them making tomato catsup and tomato juice out of those wormy tomatoes. Some of them I remember ran as high as 20% infested and this worm would be an inch and a half long; this tremendous creature. And they'd just grind them up and make tomato sauce out of them. Well, we had no methods you know to examine the stuff after it was manufactured. So Kenneth Monfore was in the laboratory and he was...he worked for quite a long time devising a method for finding out about the parts of these worms in the sauce. Then we learned that Washington already had a method. It was far superior to the one that Kenneth had devised.

Porter: Was that Wildman's, John Wildman's method?

Kimlel: No that was...who's the man in charge of microbiology laboratory there?

Porter: Was it Hunter? Howard...Yeah, Howard.

Kimlel: Howard, yes, Howard, Dr. Howard. He already had a method. So we brought it back. But anyway, we got that pretty well taken care. The next year then they



sprayed their tomatoes with calcium arsenate to keep out the worms. Then when they started to make catsup, they didn't get rid of the arsenic. So they had another problem. And I don't remember how it was finally...how they finally solved that problem, but anyway we got it pretty well licked at least for a few years, doing what they did after that.

Porter: Well, they were pretty good when I was there, generally speaking. They still had some mold problems.

Kimlel: Well, this year was particularly bad. Gee whiz, 20% of the tomatoes had worms in them. Couldn't sort them out. But one year, you remember Kathe?

Porter: Yeah, I don't know whether I ever met him but his name...I know his name.

Kimlel: Yeah, well he and I took the same Civil Service examination. But he was appointed a year before I was.

Porter: His first name was John wasn't it?

Kimlel: John, John B. Kathe, yeah. He and I went over to western slope on the apples. And maybe I shouldn't tell you this. But they'd had some heavy rains over there and we went out and looked at the stuff and we decided it was pretty well cleaned off. We wouldn't have to bother with them that year. So we took a few samples. They didn't show very much. So that was the end of the project on apples for that year. I suppose if we'd have really

followed it up well we'd found plenty of arsenic on the apples too at that time.

Porter: Maybe so.

Kimlel: But we were acting in good faith. We thought that was the thing to do.

Porter: What other things did you do in Denver? In your first...

Kimlel: Well, we had a project on eggs. A lot of farmers in western Colorado, I mean western Kansas and Nebraska would ship eggs in the summertime into Denver. Railroad would pick them up you know. Maybe only 2 or 3 or a half dozen cases at once. Well, we spent a lot of time candling eggs. This stuff coming in the summertime, see. Because the eggs were all, most of them were fertile. Because they didn't separate the roosters from the hens and they'd come into Denver there and they'd have big blood circles in them, blood clots. So we made a lot of seizures of those eggs there.

Porter: I suppose the farmers just took them several weeks to accumulate what they shipped.

Kimlel: Sure and these hens would lay out, would hide out a nest someplace on a farm and the farmer would find it. So he'd pick them all up and ship them to Denver. So we finally got that pretty well cleaned up too.

Well, let's see those were about the projects in Denver.

Oh yes, dairy products. We examined a lot of milk that was coming to the dairies and a lot of that stuff was really lousy. It was bad, lot's of it. You'd stir up a can of milk and we had these testers you know, hold about a pint of milk.

Porter: Wisconsin sediment tester.

Kimlel: Yes. And we'd run that milk through this pad about as big as a half dollar and you couldn't see the pad, there'd be that much dirt on the pad. By the time the dairy got through filtering it and running it through the centrifuge and so forth, why you couldn't find much sediment in it, but I imagine it imparted a flavor. I stayed away from it pretty well, myself, but we had a lot of trouble, we had a lot of dairies, there, that we were shipping out of the state, and the problem was, they were all adding too much water to their butter or short weighting. I got so I could feel a carton of butter and tell whether it was of short weight or not. You could just tell whether the carton was full, and if the carton had a little room in it, you knew that that wasn't a pound of butter. And we did a lot of work at the railroad station on outgoing stuff. Saved a lot of travel, until somebody told us that was illegal, so we quit that, but we made a lot of cases out of it before we were stopped.

Porter: Wasn't that a problem because a lot of it was

shipped parcel post? Wasn't it mail shipments?

Kimlel: No, there wasn't much, some of it was shipped parcel post all right, but much of it was shipped by freight. It would travel just about as quick and under just about as good of conditions whether by freight as it would by mail, and it was cheaper. So we got that pretty well taken care of. When the cartons; they got so scared, some of those dairies, that the carton wasn't big enough to hold their pound of butter, so that was another problem.

Porter: We were still doing that kind of work when I was in Denver. How about down in Southern California? Did you get involved in the fruit industry?

Kimlel: Well, Southern California, we got involved in the canning of bad fish, tuna. When I first went down there they were not using refrigeration on their tuna boats. They would just catch those tuna; throw them on the boats and bring them into the cannery. The cannery simply dressed them, that is took out the internal parts and then they baked them, they thoroughly baked them. Then after they baked them, they took them out and dressed them, scraped off the skin, cut off the heads and got rid of the bones. Then they cut them into certain lengths and put them in cans. Well, a lot of that stuff was, even after it was canned, it looked pretty good and it

didn't taste too bad, but you could still smell that it was bad fish. So, eventually they got to a point where they put refrigeration on their boats and that pretty well took care of that problem.

Porter: Do you think that was due to pressure by Food and Drug Administration?

Kimlel: Oh, I think so. Yes. I think so, because before the Food and Drug started on this deal, they didn't use refrigerators, and when we began to bear down on them, then they felt that they had to do something. And in Seattle, although I wasn't, I inspected those salmon canneries up there, I never got up to Alaska, and up there they, the situation was bad too because they'd catch these salmon. It wasn't the fishermen's fault then as it was with the tuna, because the fishermen would bring this salmon into the canneries, but the canneries would get behind, you see, and boy, they'd buy this fish, and they'd get a couple of days behind and even in Alaska they have some hot days, and that fish would spoil before they could get it into the cans, but since this cannery foreman had bought this fish, he had to put it in cans, so he put it in cans and we made him sort them out afterwards. And the way they were sorting it out, they simply punched a hole in the top of the can, poured out a little of the juice and smelled it. If it

smelled all right, they'd plug the hole and re-cook it. And if it wasn't, if it didn't smell all right, they would discard it. So I, maybe they, Food and Drug had something to do with cleaning up that situation, but salmon got scarcer too, so they didn't get so many in. That helped the situation too.

Porter: Well, that was in the 1920's.

Kimlel: Yes, that was in the '20's. All those canneries I inspected up there, when I first went into the service, well, they only worked part of one day a week, that's all. If you get in a few salmon then they'd can them right away, see. But up in Alaska, you see, why they'd just have to work double time and still it would catch up with them. And, it was really an industry at one time in Seattle, up in Washington, I mean. I remember one of those canneries had 18 lines.

Porter: Is that right?

Kimlel: 18 lines... And they only used one line part time. That was later, ah, 1918. But one time they used them all. That's what happened to the salmon industry in the Northwest.

Porter: Do you think that part of that was due to the fact that they canned so many bad fish that people wouldn't...

Kimlel: No, I think it was because they caught so many

salmon...

Porter: That the salmon were all gone.

Kimlel: Yes, the salmon were all gone. Well, for years and years and years the salmon just ran wild. Nobody bothered them. The Indians might catch a few of them, but couldn't sell them, so they ate what they wanted and didn't bother with the rest of them, so the salmon were getting through. They were going up these rivers to spawn and the young came out and the young came back, eventually, a good part of them did, but once the white man got in there and started canning that stuff, he took care of it see.

Porter: Yes.

Kimlel: They soon cleaned them out.

Porter: I suppose also, he probably ruined some of the spawning grounds so that maybe...

Kimlel: Oh, there was no question about it. Then we ran into this problem. That was infestation of flour mills and bakeries. Flour mills were made, originally, it was designed by an engineer and the only thing he thought about was how can I handle this stuff the best, see. And then in their flour mills, they run anywhere from four, five or six, maybe seven or eight different rollers where they grind the wheat that many times. Each time after they run it over these rolls, they sift it, they'd sift

the flour. And what doesn't go through the screen, they run back to the roller and grind it once more, send it back to the roller, grind it once more, and they'd do that maybe a half a dozen times. Well, many of those chutes were wooden chutes, square. And every one of them was insect infested; moths, and beetles. And it was coming through in the flour, parts of them. So we inspected flour mills from one part of the country to the next; took samples and inspected their mills. The only break I had, one time I was up in Montana, I went over to a flour mill and it had burned down the year before. I didn't have to inspect that one. Then the bread bakeries and the cracker manufacturers, they were in the same fix, you know. They had to handle the flour, and their equipment for handling the flour, well, they would dump the flour, many of them would dump the flour into a bin, you know, and then they would carry it up in an elevator and run it across to another part of the room in a round chute. Well, what they used to do, they would have a big screw in there, you know, about 6' in diameter, which would just screw a hole through that flour and all the rest of that flour never would move, it would stay there, and become heavily infested, and as the worms wiggled around to search new grounds I guess, they got loose and they would drop in the way of this screw and



got into the bread. So we got those guys started to a place where they would clean up once a week. Where they'd never cleaned up before.

Porter: Now, was this after the '38 Act, after 1939?

Kimlel: I've forgotten the time. They may have...

Porter: It probably was.

Kimlel: But we'd work on one project, and as you know, we'd work on one project for awhile and we'd get that pretty well cleaned up, and then there would be something else crop up. I made an inspection of a candy factory in Utah, and the place was lousy. They had mice all over the place and insects and what not. So, then the foreman had a, or the manager, the owner I guess it was, he had a picture frame in his office which carried a statement given him by a local inspector saying what a wonderful place he had, and I told him, I said, you know that's not true. Yes, he said, "I know it and you know it, but he said, "I'm going to leave it there." So he left the statement there in his place. But those guys, eventually, if you got after them, see, they would clean up. There was a place in Denver right close to the old office. You don't remember the old office.

Porter: No, but I remember the building. The building is gone now.

Kimlel: Oh, is it? Tabor Opera House? Just down the street

from where there was that fancy candy place.

Porter: Brecks.

Kimlel: Brecks Candy. No, not Brecks.

Porter: There was a Brecks and Brocks. I think it was Brecks.

Kimlel: I don't know. Well, anyway, it was the candy store of the town.

Porter: Oh, Bauers.

Kimlel: Bauers, yes. And they put out beautiful stuff. Well we went in there and inspected the place and he just closed down for a couple of days to clean up. Well, a fellow named Jacobs was at that time the manager of the whole place. He was a Jewish fellow. I guess he must have known what the situation was, but he didn't care until somebody forced him to do it. Of course then he didn't do much interstate business so we couldn't do much about it, see, but we could have sicked the state onto him. The state was pretty good there, you know. If you'd find a dirty place someplace and take them out and show it to them, they'd get busy and make them clean up.

Porter: I found them with infested flour in their cookie department once.

Kimlel: Yes, you'll find them most anyplace.

Porter: They did the same thing though. They had a fine reputation in Denver, and I know I came back with my

report and Wendell Vincent called them up and I don't know whether Jacobs was running it then or not, I seem to remember that name though. But whoever was running it, it did the same thing, they closed the place down and...

Kimlel: Well, they'll do it if you catch them at it, you see, because they don't want to take a chance on newspaper publicity.

Porter: What can you tell me about men who were Commissioners? What Commissioners did you know and what kind of people were they? You knew Campbell, I am sure.

Kimlel: You mean in the Food and Drug. Well, I knew Mr. Campbell of course, and I knew Dunbar, and Crawford. I liked Dunbar very much. And I liked Mr. Campbell, but he was pretty cold and you had to, he didn't have much time to be friendly or ask you how the wife was or anything.

Porter: When you look at his picture he has a little bit of that look to him.

Kimlel: He felt his responsibility, I think. That was the problem. And Larrick, as I told you, they offered me that job before Larrick got it, and I didn't want to leave the West Coast, so I stayed out here, and Mr. Larrick got the job. I trained Monfore and George Daughters. They both became District Managers, but I never got to be a District Manager. I was acting...

Porter: Well, you really were, though. You really were a

District Manager.

Kimlel: Oh, yes, sure. No question about it. Well, I did get out a lot, with the Inspectors, when I was at Denver Station. I got out a lot and worked with those guys in the field, you know, to really train them. Did you know Green?

Porter: Well, only by reputation. I guess I did meet him once. He was quite a character, I understand.

Kimlel: Well, Green was a much better Food and Drug man than a lot of people gave him credit for.

Porter: Is that right?

Kimlel: I knew him quite well. I worked with him quite a bit. Oh, he'd got overboard quite often, but if you could hold him in check... And he really was interested in doing the proper thing.

Porter: Do you know any stories about him?

Kimlel: Well, I know he was down in New Mexico, and he ran over a coyote and killed it, so he stopped, put the coyote in the back of his car and he...(tape stopped)

And if you didn't ride herd on him fairly well, he was apt to wander off onto non-essential things. But if you kept an eye on him and he didn't mind being directed. You could tell him which way to go and he was energetic. Never wasted any time that I knew.

Porter: He, did some of the early dairy work around there,

didn't he?

Kimlel: Yes, he did. Well he got to do all kinds of Food and Drug inspection work when he was in Denver. I guess he was there for quite awhile in Denver Station.

Porter: Yes, I think so.

Kimlel: But I know that many of the people in the Administration didn't regard him too highly. But I never had any real problem with him.

Porter: What kind of man was Harry Moore?

Kimlel: Well, I worked with Harry Moore when I first came in the service.

Porter: Was he one of the original Food and Drug Inspectors?

Kimlel: He was one of the original Food and Drug Inspectors, yes. He came in with Campbell.

Porter: I thought so.

Kimlel: You worked under him?

Porter: I worked for him. He was Chief of San Francisco.

Kimlel: Yes, you worked under, the boy who was Chief of the Western District....

Porter: Harvey. Do you mean Harvey?

Kimlel: Who?

Porter: Do you mean John L. Harvey?

Kimlel: Not Harvey.

Porter: Wendell Vincent?

Kimlel: Wendell Vincent.

Porter: Yes. Tell me some stories about Wendell Vincent. Everybody knows things about Vincent. Some are good and some are bad.

Kimlel: Well, he was only an Inspector for three years when they made Station Chief out of him.

Porter: Right.

Kimlel: And, his trouble was, well, he was a Food and Drug man all right. There was no question about that. He was loyal and that sort of thing, as far as I knew him at least, and I knew him pretty well. But he lived beyond his salary, and he borrowed money from people that he was regulating. It finally got so bad that they were going to bring action against him. So that's when he went to Denver and I went to San Francisco.

Porter: It seemed to me that he was a kind of a man who, even though, I wouldn't condone doing what he did, I don't think it ever effected his regulatory judgment at all.

Kimlel: No, I don't think so either. He even borrowed money from about half the employees that were there, see. And he borrowed about \$600 from me.

Porter: Is that right?

Kimlel: But he paid me off, eventually. It took about ten years, but he finally paid it. But I know a lot of the other guys that they just gave up. They didn't bother him, but I kept on nagging him. I said, "Come on,

Wendell, you haven't paid me what you owe me." He said, "Yes, I'll pay you." And he eventually did. Well, he was, I think he and I were always pretty good friends. We were always pretty close to each other.

Porter: I think his wife was one of his problems, don't you?

Kimlel: Oh, yes, yes.

Porter: If he'd had a different kind of a wife, he'd have been a different kind of man.

Kimlel: I think that daughter of his had her feet on the ground, though.

Porter: I never knew her.

Kimlel: I think she was probably a very stabilizing influence. Of course, she was wholly different from her mother. And I think after he went to Denver that his wife changed quite a bit too. He lost his mother, you know, in a train accident.

Porter: Oh, I never did know that.

Kimlel: He and his wife and daughter and his father and mother were traveling in separate cars down from New Mexico. I think they were going West someplace. But anyway, down there in New Mexico someplace or Arizona, Northern Arizona or New Mexico he got across the track, but his father and mother didn't. So the train hit them and the train killed his mother. But the father survived. Yes, that was a pretty bad shock.

Porter: I never heard him talk about that.

Kimlel: No, he didn't talk about it. But I know. I remember when it happened. It was in the papers, but everybody, including Food and Drug then knew about it. But I didn't hear much from him after he went to Denver.

Porter: Well, see, we both worked for him then after he moved to Denver.

Kimlel: Oh, yes, there was a clerk there, oh you were a Chemist, yes. Who was the clerk when you were there?

Porter: When I was there, there was a man named Lee something.

Kimlel: I didn't know him. But there was a woman there. I have forgotten her name. She was married about three times. Did you know her? She was a blonde. She was the Chief Clerk.

Porter: Was she? I wonder if she was gone by the time I was there? Because this man was the Chief Clerk. Lee, ah, I can't remember his name any more. And I think most of the other clerks were fairly new.

Kimlel: Well, I know this gal was Chief Clerk at the time, in the '20's when they started taking money out of your paycheck for retirement. She wouldn't let them take any of her's. She said she could take care of her own money. But she spent it all of course. She had nothing left when she retired.



Porter: Do you know any stories about Vincent? About, you know, his dealings with the trade or... I remember reading somewhere that back in the '30's he made a whole series of radio talks. Every week he was on the radio for...

Kimlel: Yes, I remember, but I don't remember much about that.

Porter: How about Harvey? You knew Harvey well.

Kimlel: I knew Harvey pretty well, yes. Well, Harvey as far as I was concerned he was just an Inspector. He was an Inspector when I was in the Denver Station. But I didn't know much about, in particular about him. I know he lost his first wife, you know. She shot herself. Yes, Harvey and I, we got along very well.

Porter: Well, what were some of the other...Perry Clark. You knew Perry Clark pretty well?

Kimlel: Yes, I knew Perry Clark.

Porter: Do you know any stories about Perry Clark? He's quite a character.

Kimlel: Well, Perry Clark, he was as far as the Food and Drug was concerned, I don't think he ever did anything particular, at least as far as I can tell he never had anything on his mind too much. He fiddled around with fish; smelting of fish, as far as I can see, that's about as far as he went.

Porter: I see. Did Gordon Wood work for you when he came in?

Kimlel: Gordon Wood, yes. Gordon Wood, he was at Denver. And he went to San Francisco. His parents were living out there, see. I mean he went out there on a visit. And he was driving the car, I think. But anyway, he was to stay so long in San Francisco, then he was to come to Idaho, and we were going to attend a dairymen's meeting in Wallace, I think it was, someplace in Idaho there. So I rode the train from Denver over there, but I only bought a one-way ticket, see. And when I got there, why Gordon didn't appear. So I had to buy another ticket to get back to Denver, and that cost me extra money, see. So Gordon hadn't consulted me about staying in San Francisco. He had asked Vincent if it's all right if he stayed another week in San Francisco, see. Vincent says, "Yes, it's all right with me." But he should have contacted me, see. So Gordon reimbursed me for what I had to pay extra on this ticket, see.

Porter: That's pretty interesting. He's a pretty, Gordon's quite a stickler for what you know, for details.

Kimlel: Yeah. I remember when Gordon came in. I hear from Gordon once in awhile.

Porter: Well, I saw him last winter, he looked good.

Kimlel: I haven't seen him for a long, long time, but I had a letter from him I guess about Christmas time or after that. He still writes a very nice letter. His wife

was related to a builder in Denver; he was a contractor there, maybe you knew about that. And we used to kid her a lot about one nail so and so, I've forgotten what we called him. He was always skimping on his building.

Porter: There's a big builder there still named, is it Wood, maybe it's Woods though, it might be.

Kimlel: It wasn't Woods, it was his wife's name.

Porter: Oh, I see, yeah.

Kimlel: They always kidded her about him sparing the nails in the lumber. There was another one...You know when they set standards on peaches and apricots, cherries, and one or two other substances, you could go ahead and sell this stuff, but you had to put a label on it "good food and not high grade", remember that?

Porter: Yes.

Kimlel: Well, we made it a sort of a password you know. We'd always ask well, how was the lunch? Well, good food and not high grade. I still catch myself saying that once in awhile.

Porter: What kind of changes in kind of a general way occurred in Food and Drug during your career, from the time you started until the time you went out? Was it a different organization?

Kimlel: Well, it was very much enlarged. When I first went in the service we only had two Inspectors at San Francisco;

one in Los Angeles and one in Seattle. Denver was a little bigger; there were two Inspectors in Denver. And the Chemists accordingly, well pretty soon, they had no laboratories in Los Angeles and they had no laboratories in Seattle at that time. And they had a laboratory in Denver. But then when they moved over to that new building there, I supervised the building of that laboratory in there; that happened while I was there. And overlooked one thing; that was to bring high power into the laboratory, so they had to bring that up from the basement and punch holes all the way through the floors to get it up to the top floor.

Porter: We're still using that laboratory. It's grown. That whole wing of the building is now the laboratory.

Kimlel: Oh?

Porter: The whole wing and we have the whole fifth floor of the building. And we have that same wing in the basement. That's how much space we have now. We have a bacteriological laboratory in the basement.

Kimlel: Oh, yes, that reminds me, I want to ask you a question. Does botulism infection occur through the air or only through contact with moist surfaces like the soil?

Porter: I thought it was the soil. I never heard of... but I'm not much of an expert at that. I don't know.

Kimlel: Well, the reason I asked you, I like to fish.

And the wife likes to fish also. We spent a lot of time on the Klamath and other streams up there fishing for salmon and steelhead. And I caught a lot of salmon and steelhead that I smoked and canned myself in pint jars. I knew personally the man who is a bacteriologist for the National Canner's Association laboratory in San Francisco. I've forgotten his name. But I wrote to him and I told him, that early in the game I wrote to him and I told him that I was processing this fish at 10 to 12 pounds pressure for 90 minutes. And he wrote back and he said, "Well, that's undoubtedly safe." But he said, "To be absolutely sure," he says, "Give it another 10 minutes, bring it a 100 minutes." So all the fish I canned after that, I heated for a 100 minutes from 10 to 12 pounds pressure. Well, after about 50 years you get tired of eating smoked salmon. So I still have about 5 to 6 dozen pints of this canned fish. And some of it is maybe 7, 8 years old, but I'm sure it's all right. And it's always been stored at room temperature, dry room temperature, never been wet or anything like that, see. It was cooled in the air. It wasn't cooled in water or anything like that, see. And I'm just worried...I'd like to eat some of them, but I'm just worried about botulism. Who could I write to that could give me an answer to that? I saw a statement in the paper that said that botulism is carried through the air as well

as other ways. But I always thought as a Food and Drug Inspector that it had to be contaminated from the soil or moisture or something else, like handling it or once it was thoroughly processed and never exposed to utensils or hands or anything like that, that it couldn't have botulism. It might leak, the seal might be broken and putrefying bacteria would get in there and cause it to spoil, but not botulism. Now the stuff looks all right, it looks beautiful. I'm sure it's all right, but I just don't want to eat it, that's the point.

Porter: Yeah, I don't know.

Kimlel: That smoked salmon is worth \$15 a pound now. So I hate to throw it away.

Porter: Why don't you write the San Francisco District and ask them to either write you back or have someone who knows call you on the phone and discuss it with you.

Because I don't know. I'm no bacteriologist, I'll tell you.

Kimlel: Well, I've got a pressure cooker like that, see. And every year before I went fishing, I took it in to the laboratory here and had it tested, my cooker, see. I know those people up there...you should see the methods they use to can that stuff, it's a wonder they're still alive.

Porter: Just open kettles, I suppose.

Kimlel: Yes. I got to be quite a well known authority up

there. People I never talked to you know, they'd come around to me and they'd ask me about processing the stuff, see. And that's what I'd always tell them. Put it in a jar, seal it up and give it 10 to 12 pounds of pressure for 100 minutes and check it. See that you're equipment is all right. So I got a lot of people started in the right direction up there.

Porter: Yes. I think it's a wonder that a lot of people haven't been hurt by home canned stuff that they didn't really know how to...

Kimlel: Yeah, that's another thing. We used to, you know, in the early days, we'd watch the newspapers. If there was anything said about botulism, we went there and made inquiry as to what happened. We weren't so much concerned about the individual that got the botulism, but we wanted to know if it was a commercial product so we could stop somebody else, see. We never tried to treat them or anything like that. So we ran into all sorts of things, see. And always it was through carelessness in processing this stuff, home canned stuff, see.

Porter: Yeah, a lot of home canned chili in New Mexico has caused a lot of trouble.

Kimlel: Yeah, and the Mexicans put that stuff up, green chilis, that sort of stuff. Then, I investigated one case way up in the Northwest part of Montana, Northeast part of

Montana, up there close to... I've forgotten the name of that town up there. Anyway, there was a guy living by himself up there and he had something, I've forgotten what it was. But anyway, he put it in a skillet and he stirred it around in the skillet, you know, cooked it. Then he put it in his jar and sealed it, that's all he did to it. Then he ate it. Well he died of botulism. I was up there at the funeral when it was in process, see. They told me what had happened. Then I investigated another case in Wyoming where a woman had eaten home canned beets. She had a whole house full of company, but she was the only one who came down with botulism. And I figured the only thing that could have happened was that she got a...she took these beets that she'd canned, and she put them in the skillet to heat them up before she served. I just figured here was a big piece that didn't get thoroughly heated when she, before she served it, because nobody else was injured.

Porter: Or else she tasted some first, before she cooked it.

Kimlel: Yes, she may have tasted it first.

And I investigated a case in Colorado, down there around Booneville someplace where a woman was sick. She had two girls in school. And the girls came home and they were going to prepare their dinner. So they opened a can of beans and they asked their mother to see if the beans



were all right. And the mother looked at them and tasted them and she died of botulism. But the kids cooked the beans and they survived. Lot's of stories like that. But we followed them all up. We followed them all up.

Porter: Did you do much drug work in those days out here?

Kimlel: Well, we didn't have so much drug work over there in Colorado because not much was manufactured there, see. Most of the drug work is done at the place where it's manufactured. You just don't go out and collect samples here, there and other places. But there was one guy in Colorado Srping. He pretended to be an Indian. And in his advertising he said that he was born 90 miles north of Holbrook, Arizona; that's about as near the desert as you can get, see. And that's where he was born. And he was putting out remedies for everything.

Porter: What did he call himself, do you remember?

Kimlel: I've forgotten what he called himself. But the people were cluttering up the roads and standing in line trying to get into his place. And he was peddling these drugs, you know. Well, I saw in the paper...I wondered what I could do with the guy because he wasn't shipping much in interstate commerce. Then I saw where his wife had sued him for divorce. So I hike down there to visit his wife, see. She told me all about him. And I really wrote a story about that guy. He was a German, born German.

He couldn't fool me. He came straight with me all right, once I'd pinned him down, see. After I'd been in to see his wife, she knew him, after I talked to her, why he didn't, I don't think he tried to keep anything secret from me. But he immediately took all his stuff off his labels. But they had this school of fraud in Washington where they called in a bunch of Inspectors you know, to learn about fraud investigations of these drug manufacturers. And I wasn't there, but various ones were. I think it was George Daughters and they told me that they spent a lot of time on that one report that I had issued about this German in Colorado Springs because he was really a fraud. So we did spend a lot of time on making these fraud investigations, on these drug manufacturers. Individuals you know that have visions of getting rich you know in short order...

Porter: This was under the Sherley Amendment where you had to prove fraud.

Kimlel: Yeah, we had to prove fraud. And I remember we prosecuted a guy down in Texas. We got a lot of stuff you know, all the dirt we could collect about these guys, see. And most of it wouldn't be admissible in court anyway, see. But anyway, it doesn't tell you what kind of a guy the fella is. We prosecuted one guy down there in Texas and he had a bath, he was a chiropractor and he had baths where

he kept people overnight and that sort of thing, see. He'd give them a hot bath and then put them to bed for the night. And it wasn't exactly moral in many respects, see. And some of these town fellas had been visiting this guy see; probably on the QT from home, oh, they thought it was probably all right. But anyway, they learned that we were investigating this guy and we were around and asking a lot of questions about him. And for a couple of days, Kenneth Monfore and I, we had a couple guys trailing us all the time, seeing where we were going. But anyway, the guy came in, plead guilty, paid his fine and that was that.

But there was always something to do. But if we didn't have anything else to do, if we had a day off, we'd go down to the freight depot and check outgoing freight. Porter: Yeah, I used to do some of that. In fact when I came in most of the Inspectors in Denver were out on the road and Wendell Vincent took me out himself and we'd bum around the freight docks.

Kimlel: Yes, he liked to go down there himself. He liked to go down there.

Then we got the cars. For a long time, as I said, we just traveled by rail. And we'd get into the station at 1:00 in the morning, we'd be routed out and get out and look for a hotel. I remember one hotel I stopped at in Wyoming. Got in there about midnight I guess, on the train.

I went up to the Chief Hotel and the place was full, they had no space for me. So I go to another place and the guy says, yes he had a room. And he got up and put on his overcoat and a cap, pulled the earmuffs down over his ears and showed me this room. I went to bed with all my clothes...(Mr. Kimlel's statement was cut short by the end of the tape).

Seattle now?

Porter: I was in Seattle just two weeks ago.

Kimlel: Oh, I see. See Monfore?

Porter: No, Monfore lives down in San Diego.

Kimlel: Well, I thought he had...I knew he had lived down there, but I thought he had gone back to Seattle.

Porter: No, I saw him last winter and I had heard the same thing. And he said he didn't know how that story got around. He hadn't moved back to the Northwest and he didn't intend to.

Kimlel: Yeah, well that's sort of funny. He lived in the same area where George Daughters lived.

Porter: Yes, and Larry Warden.

Kimlel: And Larry Warden lived... I stopped in there a few years ago when George was still living. His wife had just had an operation. And George didn't look very good. He was a weakened old man then. But he was a lively Inspector all right. He and I worked a lot together,

fished together. Like Wendell liked to fish too, Wendell Vincent, and we were fishing for trout. He and I went out, I've forgotten where we were. But anyway, his teeth bothered him, so he took his teeth out and put them in his pocket. But he also carried his worms in the same pocket. That didn't bother him too much. He had a short rod that folded into pieces about like that, see. And he could put it in a suitcase. And he carried that with him when he'd go out on trips. I know he took me up to Seattle when I first started in the service; showed me how to act as an Inspector see. Well, the first night we were on a boat, we went up there on a boat see, Anacortes was where we stopped, anyway someplace up there. And he'd gotten in a...(somebody at the door?)...yeah, that's somebody at the door, pardon me...

Porter: Well, you've been retired quite a long time haven't you?

Kimlel: Yes, I retired in '49. Just think, almost 29 years now.

Porter: Well would you kind of just like me to rack this up? You think we've...

Kimlel: Well, I don't know what else to tell you.

Porter: Okay. I don't want to press you too hard. I just... You might talk a little bit about Dunbar and Crawford if you, do you know things, not the kind of

things that will be in reports, but what kind of men they were and how they directed other men and so on.

Kimlel: I liked Dunbar very much. He read the comic strips and I read the comic strips. And Crawford was very much the same. I think I stood pretty well with both of those guys. I mean they were very friendly to me. Maybe they were friendly to everybody. But I liked them very much. I could talk to them about most anything. Much more friendly than Larrick ever was, or that I felt than Campbell ever was. I never could get close to him, see. But Dunbar had a wonderful personality and this guy Elliot, well, I wasn't too sure about Elliot.

Porter: Let's see what was his first...

Kimlel: He was one of the Assistants to Campbell.

Porter: Dr. Elliot, yeah.

Kimlel: There's another Elliot up in Seattle, see. Don't think they were related. But Dunbar, he'd talk about his family life and other things and Crawford's wife, I met Crawford's wife. I probably knew her as well as I did him. We used to visit with her and after Crawford passed away, she hob-knobbed with the gang for quite some time, see. So we really knew her better than we did Crawford. But Crawford was, he just wasn't quite as open as Dunbar was. I never could see that Dunbar was trying to hold out on me.

Porter: Dunbar was a very open sort of man. I liked him too.

Kimlel: Yeah. I liked him very much. He's the one that told me to go to, up to New England when I was having the hives in Washington, see. He said, "You've got a lot of leave coming, take some of it and go up into New England." Well, we went up to, I started actually, I started to Nova Scotia. I got up into Maine and I learned that the season was passed, when you could get fish up there, see. So I never went on up. But we got up into Maine, Portland, and went fishing there. And I wanted to learn where I could go fishing, so there was a roadside stand where they were selling fishing equipment. So I stopped there and I bought some lures that I didn't need, see, but I wanted to talk to this guy and I asked him where I could go to fish. And he told me by the lake that wasn't far away. And the wife and I went over there and sure enough, here was the guy there... he could rent boats, just plain boats you know, you have to row yourself on this lake. And I bought some worms from him and we rented this boat. And we went out there and we caught a lot of fish. And I'd row the boat and the wife would hold the line, see. When she'd get a fish,

I'd take it and reel it in because she was just recovering from this heart attack, see. And we cleaned these fish, salted them down, but they spoiled before we got them back to Washington so we had to throw them away. We ate some of them on the way though.

Porter: Do you think that reorganization in '48 was a good idea basically?

Kimlel: Well, I don't think it helped enforcement of the Food and Drug Act any. I really don't. I think that, I don't know about the Central and the Eastern District, but in the Western District we had, Vincent was Chief for a time, and a guy named, before Vincent, I forgot his...

Porter: it was a short name, wasn't it?

Kimlel: Yeah. Then Harvey came along. And everything was good natured. There never was any hard feelings anyplace that I knew of in the whole groups. We got along splendidly. And they were a hard working bunch, when we started. Course, as I said before, they didn't work so hard by the time I got ready to quit as we did in the earlier days. Course I have a souvenir from that early day work. I went into Santa Fe, New Mexico on a train. I met a guy on the train and we got in there about 4:00 in the afternoon, 5:00 I guess, that evening. He



says, "It's too late to do any work today, let's go out on the hill back of the town and look for Indian relics." So I says, "Ok". So we went out there and here was the remains of that old fort that was built in 1619 when the Spaniards first came up from Mexico into the United States. You know Santa Fe, New Mexico was the second oldest city in the United States. They built a fort there. And this fort had walls about that thick, mud walls, see. Well some places the walls of this fort had been eroded down level to the ground see, but other places it was still as high as this ceiling. So I got up on that wall and was walking along looking down, I saw something blue, and I took my knife and picked it out and it was a pendant, it was a turquoise pendant shaped kind of, shaped like that see, like an arch, thing that holds an arch in place you know, and a hole in the top so it's used as a pendant. So I still have that turquoise piece. I prize that very highly.

But we used to spend many weeks out. I've been out as long as a month at a time. My wife never complained. But I go up here to this senior group that meets right up here, they call themselves the Autumn Leaves, and they say they're non-sectarian but they are. They're strictly Catholic, see. But anyway they accept me, so I go there. Well, they've been going out on trips. A lot of these

senior groups around here, they're always planning trips going here, there, and other places. They made a trip to Reno. Stayed all night and a lot of them lost their shirts and some of them made some money. But I don't go. I don't make those trips because I've had all the trips that I want in my lifetime. But I did make a trip up to the geysers. Have you ever been up to the geysers here?

Porter: No.

Kimlel: Well, that's about 65 miles up in the mountains here. There used to be geysers there, but these geysers have been capped, see. So you go up there and you don't see anything except these power plants. There about three power plants there. And they're generating immense quantities of electricity up there from the natural forces there, see. And the road up there is really a marvelous highway. It's up and down and this way and that way because the mountains are rough and, well, we had about 35 in the bus, so I made that trip up there. I enjoyed the ride. I enjoyed looking at the scenery, see. See the road up there and the guy that's piloting that bus, he must know his business. But you can't see much when you get up there. The geysers have all been capped. And they wouldn't even take us through the power houses because it said there it was about a 120 degrees in there.

So they gave us a free lunch and the whole deal was offered by Union Oil Company. And I made the same trip about 25 years ago, same deal, free ride. And at that time they took us into a restaurant and gave us a dinner. But this time they only gave us a sack lunch see, a sandwich, and a chicken leg and an apple, I think for lunch. But it was a wonderful trip. But most of these trips like the trip to Reno, go over there and stay all night. But anyway, that pretty well upset the group because they have about 65 or 70 in the group and they took \$450 of the club's money to go up to Reno with and those that stayed home, they wondered where they were coming in see?

Porter: Well, why don't we cut off the recorder and... there's nothing else you really want to...

Kimlel: Oh, I think I've pretty well told you... I've talked a long time.

Porter: Oh, well, that's fine. I'm glad you did. I certainly appreciate it Mr. Kimlel, and I'm glad you could see us this morning and talk a little bit about old times.

Kimlel: Well, I once said I always had a lot of respect, I always had a lot of respect for the whole Food and Drug Administration, much more than I have for, well I really don't know much about it now, but I think it's more political now than it was then.

Porter: Well, it's larger and more impersonal. Well,  
thanks again.