

September 20, 2013
Henry Barba, H
Danny Barba, D
Cheri Roe, C
Craig Deutsche, Cr

interview at home of Henry Barba, Santa Margarita, CA

[Material in square brackets was not part of the interview but was added to the transcript by way of explanation.]

START DISK ONE

[0:00]

Cr: It is September 20, 2013. We are at the home of Henry Barba in Santa Margarita. The conversation is with his grandson, I believe it is, Danny Barba, Henry Barba. Cheri Roe is here with the Santa Margarita Historical Society. I'm Craig Deutsche. It is Henry that we are talking with, and so when were you born? Where were you born? How long have you lived in Santa Margarita?

H: I was born October, the 19th, 1913. I've been her all of my life with the exception of about thirteen years. I lived ten years in San Luis, and I was gone for Uncle Sam for the World War II, about two and a half, three years.

Cr: You grew up here.

H: I grew up here in Santa Margarita.

Cr: Those would have been the years of the First World War and the flu that followed and then the roaring twenties. Do you have memories of those years?

H: I was three years old when President Wilson was first president. He was elected in 1916, I think.

Cr: I don't know.

H: Anyway, I've lived through, up to Obama, and he's on a second term.

Cr: Do you have memories of, was the influenza of 1918 important?

H: At that time there was an influenza. I think they called it the Spanish flu, and it killed hundreds of people.

Cr: Did it kill people here in Santa Margarita?

H: I don't recall that at that time.

Cr: Your family?

H: No. My brother had it so bad, but he was okay, my oldest brother.

Cr: You would have been five or six at the time.

H: The Spanish flu, yes. About five.

Cr: Do you remember if your brother was treated at home or . . .

H: At home, yeah.

C: What was the address where you were born? On the corner of . . .

H: Yerba Buena and K.

C: And you were born at home?

H: I was born at home. As far as numbers, they didn't have numbers.

C: That's right.

D: Yerba Buena or Encina and K?

H: This is Yerba Buena here.

D: Goes up that direction. It was Encina and K, wasn't it?

H: Probably. Okay.

C: Encina.

H: Yeah, yeah. Encina and K. All right.

C: Did you ever go to the hospital?

H: No. I think it was . . .

C: You never did. You got hurt; your momma treated it?

H: Yes. That's right. Later years, yes.

D: Didn't old Doctor French come over once to take Cecil's tonsils out?

H: No. He came before that. Asthma. Not for me, but for my brother.

C: We had a doctor in town?

D: Doctor French from San Luis, French Hospital.

H: In those days the doctors came to your house.

Cr: I know Doctor French's son quite well, actually.

H: Really?

Cr: And Doctor French also went, did not go out to the Carrisa Plains, but he . . . there was a nurse out there that phoned him, or talked with him regularly, and he prescribed treatment for people out there. So Doctor French was, your doctor was all over San Luis Obispo County. Do you have memories of, what does a kid do growing up in Santa Margarita in 1920 and 1925? You had school here?

H: Yeah, we had school. Yes. In those days . . .

Cr: No television.

H: You started in the first grade.

C: Did you go to the wooden schoolhouse?

H: No. The concrete.

C: Cause the concrete wasn't until the 20s. [Correction: Concrete school built in 1916]

H: The 20s? Well, I didn't go to the wooden one.

Cr: Was it a one-room school, or a bigger school.

C: Well, that would make sense, cause he'd be seven.

H: It was a, the concrete, it was a nice old school. I hate to see it go down.

Cr: Was it a one-room school or a two-room school?

H: No. It was . . . see, they had first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth.

Cr: All in one room?

[5:02]

H: No, no.

Cr: Oh, separate.

C: [can't make this out]

H: And a large auditorium for playing basketball and stuff. It was pretty good sized.

C: That school came down in the sixties, didn't it? We still call it the new school even though it's gone, because forever it was the new school. It was Mediterranean, beautiful, wasn't it?

D: You were a fairy in a play there, weren't you, in 1921.

H: There was three of us were fairies.

C: What was the name of the play?

H: Well, I forgot. I think it was a Christmas, it was a Christmas play.

C: Cute.

Cr: Does everyone have to be in the Christmas program? Is everyone in the class in the Christmas program?

H: Mostly, yes. Mostly everyone, yes.

Cr: Do you remember your teacher or teachers from those years.

H: Oh, boy. I think my first grade, her name was Miss Wilson.

Cr: Was she strict?

H: She was nice looking.

Cr: Was she strict?

H: The one that I really liked was Miss Castner.

Cr: What grade was this?

H: That was the third grade. She was a young girl, and later years she was living in Paso . . . , and she sent me a Christmas card.

Cr: That's very nice.

H: I wish I would have answered it. Living in Pasadena.

D: When you were a kid, g\Gramp, obviously everybody was too poor to have toys, so what kind of . . . well, what .

..

H: It rains, you know, it rains so much, when it really rained we couldn't go to school cause it came down in buckets.

Cr: Mud in the street, or the school leaked, or . . . ?

H: The school was all right. They had school. We couldn't get . . . It's not like today. They go up there in cars and pick them up.

C: It was all mud, wasn't it?

H: That's right.

Cr: Were the streets here paved?
H: No, no. They was all dirt and gravel.
Cr: Did you have a bicycle?
H: Oh, not till later. No, not like they do now.
Cr: Horse?
H: No.
C: Did you have a stick and a ball? You had something.
H: We played a little . . . we had a sponge ball. and they guys, it was all chewed up. They said that I was the one chewing on it. That's the only ball we had.
C: You played baseball, didn't you?
H: A little baseball. It was hard, I mean softball with a twelve inch ball.
C: Was that on a team?
H: That's right. I as on the '76 Team, from town here.
Cr: This was when you were older, then?
D: Later in life.
H: Oh, yes, yes, yeah.
D: But when you were little, you used to play like you were Tom Mix. [not clear]
H: We played down at the creek over here. This Yerba Buena was wide and deeper. It had a lot of water, but not now. It's just like a little ditch.
C: It hasn't rained in years. So you played cowboys?
H: We played cowboys and Indians.
Cr: Was there a movie theater here when where you saw the movies?
H: It was a hall they called Fraternal Brotherhood. It was a building, a Lodge Hall. Mr Woods from Moro Bay, and Mr. Curtis later, used to come and give movies, had the movies.
D: That was on the Keffury house, wasn't it?
H: It was next to Keffury. And he used to give us, we could go in free, two or three of us, if we went out announcing "Show Tonight. Fifteen and Twenty-five," though the town. "Fifteen and Twenty-five." We got in free.
Cr: Do you remember what the movies were, or were these the westerns with Tom Mix?
H: A lot westerns and a lot of the, Rin Tin Tin, Where the North Begins.
C: That was inside, you went inside to see them?
H: Inside, yeah. In the summertime it was so hot you had to put all the windows . . . some guys would get ladders, cause they couldn't pay to get in, they'd look . . .
C: Look through the windows.
D: The windows.

[10:02]

C: And where was the Keffury house?
H: It was down here at the . . .
D: Next block down. The big white house with the big Black Oak, Black Walnut tree in the front.
C: Karen's [?] house?
H: Huh.
C: Karen [xxx]'s house? Karen Hardeman's house.
H: That's right. And next door at those years was a fraternal brotherhood lodge.
D: The Keffurys were highly involved in it, and about, if you remember where Abe used to have his garden, right about there is where the hall sat. From what grandpa showed me I can show you the spot where it sat. On election night of 1932 . . . kind of jumping ahead just a tiny bit, didn't Mr. Keffury and Mr. Weeks were big time Republicans here, weren't they?
H: Mr. Weeks, he was really Republican from way back. And Mr . . . no, Black, Mr. Black was running for supervisor. In 1932 that hall, Mr. Keffury had a heart attack. He died right there.
Cr: In the hall?
H: In the hall.
D: Counting ballots.
H: They were listening to ballot, I mean election returns.
Cr: He was that disappointed?

D: Yes. I have heard through him and his brother that he was highly emotional, you know. He was of Syrian descent, and you know, very emotional, and . . .

Cr: And when FDR was . . .

D: Oh, that had to have killed him.

C: It did, didn't it?

H: It guess it could be that, a heart attack.

D: Yeah. He's out there in the cemetery.

H: I couldn't vote for Roosevelt the first time. I wasn't twenty-one, but I did the second . . . You had to be twenty-one to vote then. Now you can vote at eighteen, I think.

Cr: So the years then, it was the Depression years, and what are your memories of Santa Margarita during the Depression years?

H: Oh, it wasn't good. People, they were making four dollars a day, or their husband was making six and a half a day, it's like millionaires. But most of the people here . . . there was no free stuff.

D: So the highest paid people worked for the railroad, right?

H: Well, at that time, yeah. But I worked for the railroad, started here on section gang for thirty-seven cents and hour.

Cr: Laying track?

H: Yeah, fixing . . . thirty-seven cents an hour.

Cr: How long did you do , for how many years or how long did you do that?

H: I only stayed with them four or five months.

C: How old were you?

H: I was about twenty-three, I think. Later I went to work for, in San Luis at the roundhouse. That's were the . . .

Cr: What did you do there?

H: I was shoveling sand because for thirty-nine cents an hour. After a little while a guy comes up to me and says if you want to continue, we can break you in putting grease packs, changing grease packs for the engines. That was the thirty-nine cents an hour.

Cr: This was during the Depression.

H: During the Depression.

D: And how long, what did you have to do to earn that job?

H: Well, and then he says, cause it would only go a while and be through, and so he said, "We want to break you in as an engine, building fires on the engines." He said you'll get forty-one cents and hour, but for the first two weeks you got to work for nothing.

Cr: Is this coal, steam engines, coal engines?

D: Steam.

Cr: And shoveling coal . . .

H: It was oil. So I drove from here to San Luis for two weeks for nothing. Nowadays . . . [not clear] In those days it didn't matter. I drove for two weeks for nothing.

[14:55]

D: But taking you back to the early thirties, al little bit, when you were working out on the Margarita Ranch on the old harvesters as a tamper.

H: No. That was in the Plains.

D: Okay, out in the Plains.

H: I only worked in the Plains two and a half a day, ten hours a day.

Cr: Who were you working for?

H: I was working for Fred Cavanagh.

Cr: I interviewed his grandchildren. I've spoken with his grandchildren. And this would have been way on the east side of the Plains?

H: That's right.

Cr: You said "on the harvester."

H: It was the Pimentel Ranch, I think.

Cr: Yes. This would have been late summer when you were out there.

H: That's right.

Cr: What was the temperature out there when you were doing . . .

H: A hundred and ten, it'd be high.

C: How did you get there? You took a . . .
H: We stayed there. We got two and a half a day with found [meals].
Cr: With food though.
H: Yeah, with found. Over here at the ranch, I worked at the ranch for sixty dollars a month.
Cr: What ranch?
D: Santa Margarita.
H: Santa Margarita Ranch. Sixty dollars a month. I made fifty dollars a month, but no found. We didn't get a turkey for Christmas because we didn't work there long enough.
Cr: Were you working for Mr. Black.
H: No. I was working for Mr. Miller. He was . . .
Cr: At the Margarita Ranch?
H: Yeah.
Cr: He was the foreman. He was not the owner.
C: It was Mr. Reese would have been the owner.
H: Reese was the owner then, yeah.
Cr: What did you do out on the Pimentel when you were working? This was in high school years?
H: That's right. I was in high school.
Cr: What was your job?
H: I was on the harvester. I was tamping down the sacks. When they were full, I would take them off and press over here to the sack sewer. He would sew them up.
Cr: Was this a horse drawn harvester?
H: No.
Cr: Or diesel tractor?
H: Tractor. He would sew them up, and he'd put them on a chute. The chute held five sacks, and when the were full he'd dump it. And later the guys would come to pick them up and take them away.
Cr: How heavy were the sacks? Do you . . .
H: Oh, boy. They were heavy. Over a hundred, I think.
Cr: I was going to ask, what did you eat out there? what did the feed you out there? Oh . . . On Saturdays, he always went to McKittrick, and we'd have a barbecue with everything to go with it. It was good. The meals during the week was good too. You couldn't holler about it. They were all good.
Cr: Was that a good job? Did you like it?
H: Well, in those days, what else?
D: You also used to work as a young boy on the horse drawn harvesters. How did you get the collars on the horses?
H: There was a young boy. His name was Fred Higuera. He was older than I was, taller, and he would put the harness on the horse for me and get it all ready. That's how I managed to . . .
Cr: Where did you work on the horse drawn harvesters?
H: Different fields here.
Cr: In Santa Margarita.

[18:27]

H: Mr. Swain was the . . . and he had a home right here in the corner, right in the corner there. It had been, he was there for a hundred years.
Cr: There were some dairies here near Santa Margarita. Did you ever work on any of these?
H: No. I didn't work on any dairy. No.
Cr: The people who did, didn't like . . . that I talked to didn't like the job anyway.
H: No. I didn't.
C: There was a chicken processing plant, wasn't there?
H: Oh, that was Atascadero, wasn't it?
C: No. It was on "I" street.
H: It was?
Cr: Cause I saw an article where it caught on fire. You may have been away then.
D: The only business he told me he remembers on "I" was Mr. Weeks's dry goods stores.
C: And Lawrence's.
D: And he built coffins too.
H: Lawrence's was over here at the other corner.

C: But on "I" street?
H: No.
C: "H"
H: "H" street. Right on the corner.
C: So Mr. Weeks was on "I?"
H: Yeah. Right down, right at the corner of Margarita and "I." He was a strong Republican.
C: Did you tell me the story about going down to Mr. Weeks when the
H: He used to also make coffins.
Cr: Mr. Weeks?
H: Mr. Weeks, yeah. He made coffins.
Cr: That's a job that's never out of date.
C: Somebody was talking about when the train would come in with bodies, they were packed in ice. Did you remember that? And Mr. Weeks would knock up coffins for them?
H: Well, I know he made them, but I don't know about that part.

[20:10]

Cr: What other jobs did you have before you went into the military. You said you worked harvester, and you . . .
H: Odd jobs here and there at the S.P. and stuff.
Cr: S.P.?
C: Southern Pacific.
H: It was Southern Pacific then.
Cr: You were on a section gang you said.
H: Well, that was the very first, thirty-seven.
Cr: Okay. And then?
H: Southern Pacific Railroad. Now it's Union.
Cr: Section gang, and then . . . ?
C: Shoveling sand.
H: Shoveling sand, and then breaking in as fireman in the roundhouse to build up fires for the engines that were going to go out.
Cr: So you stayed in the roundhouse? You didn't travel on the train, then?
H: No. And this here was a twenty-four hour station.
Cr: What does that mean?
H: That means that around the clock they had operator, a telegrapher.
Cr: Here in Santa Margarita?
H: Santa Margarita. And there was a lot of trains at night. They had several trains and also had freight trains, but [couldn't make this out] [passenger trains too]. In those days the fireman used to, I mean the brakeman used to walk on top of the, with the train going, now . . .
D: What was that train that they used to run all night here called?
H: It was the Lark going . . . we called it north and south, but railroad talk is west and east. That's railroad talk. We called it north and south.
D: You were working at the station up here when they had the last one come through. What happened?
H: When the last freight . . . they were going to take the Larks off. They were considered the fast trains to San Francisco and LA. The last one, and I knew cause I read the paper, was going to be the last one.
Cr: When was this? What year, do you know?
H: Oh, in the early 40s, I guess. And I was working Union Station down here, and I was working the morning shift, and they went by two-thirty or later, and as he was going that way . . .
Cr: At night or afternoon?
H: In the morning. I knew, so I went out there, and I waved, and he tooted the horn, cause he knew that I knew . . .
D: The last one.
H: Would be the last one. They were something.
C: Do you remember when the Lark wrecked on the Grade? You would have been about twelve or fourteen.
H: What's that?
C: The Lark, it wrecked on the Grade. One person got killed. I guess everybody came out to see it.
Cr: This would be the Cuesta Grade.
C: Yeah, on this side of it at that turn. But that was the luxury. The Lark was the fanciest.

H: Yeah. They were it, in those days.
C: It had movie stars in it, huh?
Cr: Where did you spent World War II? You said you were in the military.
H: I was at . . . first at Camp McQuaide. That's between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. It was a lot of area there, but a few years ago we went back, and you couldn't tell where the camp was. It's all built up.
C: What branch? What branch of the military?
H: I was in the San Francisco's 250th Coast Artillery. They called it San Francisco's Own.
D: Battery G.
H: Battery G.
D: What did "G" stand for?
H: Glamor Boys.
C: What?
H: Glamor Boys
D: 250th Coast Artillery, Battery G.
Cr: So where were you stationed, then?
H: I was in Kodiak, Alaska.
Cr: For long, for how many years?
H: I wasn't there years. I was there months because in those days, about that time, if you had any children, you could get out on the dependency clause. They called it dependency. So when we left Camp McQuaide, the First Sargent said, "Henry, you're going to have to go with us. You're going to have to go to Alaska, but when your papers come through, you can come back."

[25:10]

Cr: So were you part of a gun crew?
H: No. Searchlight. We'd go out there . . .
Cr: I've been to Kodiak Island. Up high on the cliffs there are bunkers, bunkers up there. Were you stationed in those on the cliff.
H: No. We were right alongside the ocean . . .
Cr: In the town?
H: With a truck with a searchlight thing in the back.
Cr: Did you ever see anything in the searchlights?
C: So you were looking up in the sky for Japanese airplanes?
H: We were supposed to, but we'd go out there and fall asleep.
D: What happened once you got up there? They were shipping all the older guys out. What happened with that?H: Before I went, guys over twenty-eight could get out. There was a shipload of them left Kodiak and went into Seattle. They was quite a while getting there, but when they got there War Two broke out. They had to come back. They shipped them back.
Cr: Were you in Kodiak Island in summer or winter?
H: I was xxxx some winter. It wasn't bad, they called it the Japanese Current.
C: It stays warm.
H: Japanese Current.
D: Did you have cannons?
H: A few. Wasn't much, no.
D: I mean, what did they have instead of cannons sticking up in the air?
H: They had a couple of planes made out of wood, I guess.
D: And some telephone poles, instead of cannons. Right?
C: To make it look . . .
H: I had to xxx of quarters, you had forty-five. Well, mine was made out of wood
Cr: Oh, dear.
C: You'd throw it at them?
H: They didn't have anything.
Cr: Did it rain while you were up there?
H: It did some.
Cr: It did a lot, I think. Kodiak is famous for rain.
H: We had some snow too. It weren't that bad though.

C: Were you in a barracks?
H: Later. When we got there we were in tents. And then they built the barracks, and we were in the barracks for a while.
C: And this was with the Coast Guard?
H: The army.
D: The artillery.
Cr: And so when you came back from . . . unless there's more we should ask . . .
C: Did you enlist or were you drafted?
H: I was drafted. Another boy from here, his name was Brown, we were both drafted from Santa Margarita.
C: Did it come in the mail? You got something in the mail?
H: We got greetings from the President.
C: Now were you married when you got the greetings?
H: No, no. Yes, I'd just got married. I was married on the 24th, Christmas Eve, 1940. And I went into the service the 21st of January. And we came back to Monterey where they sent out guys that were going to go, this boy with me, he went to Seventeenth Infantry . . .
Cr: And was sent . . . ? Where?
H: Up here at Monterey, and then they later was on the, remember when the Japanese struck the Aleutians, he was there on that . . . I didn't see him any more till after the war was over, and he came back. He made it all right. He was okay.
C: Did Jessie go back and live with her parents when you were in the war?
Cr: Jessie is your wife.
C: His wife.
H: Just for a while, yeah.
Cr: Here in Santa Margarita?
H: San Luis, at that time. Anyway, after I was home a while, I got a notice from the government saying I'd have to be, I'd really have to be coming back, see. Jessie was working on the draft board, and she . . . later, it was another one [notice] came and says, from the government, said, "Disregard orders of so-and-so." And she always told me, she says "I was the one who got you out." I don't believe it. I think she was [a bit confused here]
Cr: When you came back from Alaska, you were discharged? Or you continued in the service for the rest of the war?
H: No. I was discharged from I think it was Fort Watson in Washington, Seattle, Washington.
Cr: How did that happen?
H: Well, I got out on dependency clause.
C: Because you were married?
H: I was married.
C: No kids.
H: Yes.
D: My dad was born one week after Pearl Harbor to the day.

[30:19]

Cr: So the rest of the war you were in Santa Margarita?
H: No. I was married. I was living in San Luis. Then I went to work for Union Oil Company.
Cr: Doing what?
H: I was . . . this station right down here.
C: A pumping station.
H: Yeah. A pumping station. And I went to work for . . .
Cr: This would be 1941 or . . .
D: Four.
H: Forty-two. It was May 14th, I think, 1942, I went to work for UniCal, and I had to go out 1978. You had to go out at sixty-five, company policy. It was at age sixty-five.
Cr: So what were you doing at the pumping station? What did the pumping station do, and what did you do?
H: I was an engineer. We had two pumps there, one with a big flywheel, and the other was a straight-line, and pump oil both ways. To the coast mostly, to the coast at Avila. And then later we could . . .
Cr: From where?
H: From the Valley, San Joaquin Valley.
Cr: And then at Avila it went onto a ship? Or?

H: It went onto . . . the Japanese sure taking a lot, but after the war broke out, then that stopped that. A lot of oil went out.

Cr: So what was your job at the pumping station? You got up in the morning. You went to work, and what happened then?

H: Well, you had the pumps to watch and everything. You had switches to make. Sometimes you made switches. It was raining like the dickens out in the field. Different streams would go different ways.

Cr: So you directed the oil to the tanks or to the pipes?

H: The pumps were pumping, mostly then it was pumping to the coast. It was all coming from . . .

C: Gasoline?

H: No, no. Heavy oil. Crude.

Cr: From the fields at Bakersfield, I suppose?

H: All those fields over here, that's where it came from The big flywheel, that's the one I really liked. That could go eleven hundred barrels an hour.

C: Did it run twenty-four hours a day?

H: We were running twenty-four hours a day.

C: And what were the big tanks for? Storage?

H: When the had to have oil, they'd pump and fill them up, then later we'd pump them out. What else was there?

Cr: Were you, for all of those years. were you at the station, or did you have other jobs?H: No, no. I was there.

When I retired, I had thirty-six and a half years from UniCal.

Cr: At the same station?

H: At the same station.

Cr: Did the work change during those years.

H: I was working in San Luis, and the boss one morning, he come up, he says, "Margarita for you for two weeks." I was there thirty-two years.

Cr: Did the job change during those thirty years, or was it done the same way?

H: The same, it's got . . . all the steam is gone, it's natural gas.

Cr: I suppose your salary when you finished was higher than when you started.

H: At that time I was chief engineer, nine thirty-eight, thirty-five an hour.

Cr: When you finished? Yes. And you started at . . .

H: That's almost as bad as . .

Cr: Minimum wage.

D: That's McDonalds today.

Cr: When you started, it must have been . . .

H: I had the top job there, nine thirty-eight an hour.

C: It was good money then.

Cr: When you started, you didn't get nine dollars an hour.

H: No. It was . . . washing boilers, I think I was getting five something an hour.

Cr: Washing boilers?

H: You had to take care . . . once in a while, you had to come down, you had to clean the tubes. You had to do lot of things on the boilers.

Cr: These were steam boilers to operate the pump?

H: Yeah. The steam that . . . we had to have the boilers to run the pumps.

[34:59]

D: Tell them what your schedule was a week. You worked five days. What hours did you do?

H: I was . . . we worked around the clock. It was from eight to four, four to midnight, and midnight to eight. Now there's just nobody there.

D: A couple days a week, one day a week you'd work like four to eight. Then a couple days he'd work graveyard.

H: Back and forth.

D: For thirty some years.

C: He never had a regular schedule

D: He never . . . as a little boy, I remember him going off graveyard.

C: You know those three houses that were on that property.

H: What's that?

C: Those three houses, Harrington's and . . . Who lived in those houses?

H: Well, the guys that worked, Jack Harrington was . . .

C: But not you.

H: No. I never lived in those houses, no. They were moved in here to town. There's still two here.

C: Do you know when those houses got moved? Were you there when that happened?

H: No. I think I'd left after they moved in here. No, no, no. They were moved way before . . .

Johnny Colter bought one, and I think he bought two of them. Jack Harrington, the chief, when he went out, he bought one.

C: Okay, and moved it to where it is now.

H: And moved it to where it is.

C: And lived in that one. Did he live out there? Or did he always live in here?

H: He lived there till they moved it in.

C: And took his house with him.

D: They had to have moved them before the sixties.

H: Oh, yeah.

D: Cause as a little boy, I never remember houses out there.

H: It was the '40s I guess, sometime, even earlier than that.

C: I think we decided they were built in about 1908.

H: Yeah, the oil company built them.

C: And the three people, there were three houses, so the families . . . there was a chief engineer?

H: And then they had, what we called later the madhouse. That was for single guys. Three houses and the madhouse.

Cr: Where did you live when you were working there? Here in town?

H: Yeah.

Cr: Cheri had a note here about the pumping station and something about a fire.

H: Oh, yes. That happened in '36. I think it was July, lightning struck . . .

Cr: The pumping station?

H: No. The tanks, one of the tanks.

C: Blew it up.

H: The tank, I think it was 420, it was pretty close to the tracks. At 3:30 in the morning they had to stop the Larks because the superintendent says they always have water in the bottom, and it's going to boil over. So they stopped the Larks, this way and this way. Till that happened, and then they were able to go.

Cr: Because the fire was near the tracks.

H: That's right. Yeah.

Cr: Were you there?

H: I wasn't working with them. I was with another guy way over in the Valley, and we could see the smoke.

Cr: In what valley?

H: San Joaquin. We were coming back. He was driving truck. I was with him.

Cr: So you were not working at the station at the the time?

H: I really started with the company '34, but it was broken up to work a few months and they'd lay you off.

Cr: And you saw the smoke, or you saw the fire as you were driving back, you said?

H: Yeah. As we got closer, we could see, cause it happened after in afternoon some time. Lighting hit it.

Cr: What did you think when you saw it, what did you . . . ?

H: We really didn't know.

C: And nobody got killed?

H: No, no. Nobody.

C: For such a big fire.

H: I think it had San Joaquin crude in there.

[39:14]

D: But they did have wildfires out here, didn't they? Out in the hills out here from time to time. Right?

H: You mean forest fires?

D: Forest fires.

H: Yeah. They had big ones.

D: Would they come to town and draft people onto the bus?

H: Yes. One time they closed, they had a ball game going on out there. They took part of the players. The fire warden, he could take you.

Cr: Were you ever taken on one of these?
H: [a few seconds unclear] The only thing that happened to me, I got a case of poison oak from the smoke. Boy, I was laid up for a week with the poison oak.
D: Tell them about the gentleman that ran the gaming parlor. He got a little too close to the bus.
H: He was building, Remix building, and he was sort of, in those days he was sort of a bartender. He was always dressed up, nice white shirt.
Cr: And a tie?
H: And a tie. Well, they took him, and he was out there. When he came back he didn't even have his shirt.
Cr: What were you doing when they took you on the fire? Was it shovels or an axe or . . . ?
H: No. They had the old pump on your back.
Cr: You were actually fighting the fire?
H: That's what I say.
C: I thought you were cutting trails or something.
H: They didn't have anything, nothing, not like they are now.
C: There was a fire warden?
H: There was a fire warden.
C: He had a truck?
H: He had a truck with the stuff on it, hoes and stuff.
Cr: Was there a fire department here in town?
H: Not that early. Later . . .
Cr: A volunteer fire department?
H: Volunteer, yeah.
Cr: And were you ever on the volunteer fire department?
H: I was for a while, but I never did get to a fire.
C: They were notorious for being a bunch of drunks, weren't they, our firemen.
D: You did have one volunteer fireman died in a fire right in this place next door.
H: Yeah. That was in sixty-three.
D: That was . . . who was it?
H Valerio Rizzoli.
C: Really?
D: The fire was in this next house right here, Christmas Eve of '63.
H: That's right, yeah, '63.
C: I'm going to go find that.
Cr: Cheri, were there questions you wanted, that we ought to ask now, or should I look at the list?
C: Do you remember the hotel? The hotel was still running, right?
H: Ramona hotel?
C: No. Our hotel here, Margarita Hotel. The Bean Brothers had it. The Robertsons had it, the big hotel. Yeah, because that's when Mary Margaret was killed. Pennington.
H: Walker's, Walker's Hotel.
C: It was the Walker's then? Did half of it burn down before it was knocked down?
H: Oh, yes. Some of it stood for years.
C: You know, I've seen pictures when it was finally knocked down, and it looked like it was cinder block, but in the pictures it looks like it was wood.
H: Yeah, it was wood, the second story to it. There's where that kid shot Mary Margaret. She was in the store,

C: Yeah, actually she was at a dinner table doing her homework.
H: Doing her homework from school.
C: But the hotel, do you remember when the hotel was running? Did you ever go inside there?
H: Probably a few times, but not much.
C: Did it seem like anything? Not a big room down xxxx?
H: I never did to inside. [contradiction?]
C: What did the depot look like?
H: The depot was . . . have you seen the pictures of it?
C: Oh, yeah.
H: It was about a hundred foot long, wasn't it?
Cr: This was the railroad depot here in town?

H: The S.P. then. Yeah, it was . . . it had an upstairs for the family to live upstairs, but he had to be the agent.
Cr: So the agent's family lived upstairs?
H: [a second or two unclear] There is is right there.
C: So was it big wooden when you walked in, like a big room?
H: It had a nice waiting room for people who were going to get on the train. It had a nice waiting room.
C: Do you remember when they tore it down? That would have been the mid-sixties.
H: It was the sixties. No, I don't.
C: It doesn't really register with anybody. Do you remember when the big fire was at the S.P. Milling, and they shoveled all the grain into the street to let it burn?
Cr: Where, what was this? What happened?
C: So we had a grain storage that the Southern Pacific ran. It caught on fire. It was a big deal for a couple of days.
H: Oh, yeah.
Cr: Grain just smolders. It doesn't, it just rots and smolders, and you can't put it out.
C: So they swept it into the street, right?
H: That was important. What caused that?
D: The grain can smolder when it decomposes, like fertilizer, like manure. Manure can spontaneously combust.

[45:03]

Cr: I know of people in the Carrisa Plains who had cattle shipped in here and drove them to the Plains. Were there corrals or facilities . . .
H: Right there where the Budweiser is now, there was a big coral there. They shipped, and also cattle came in in those days.
Cr: Was this every week, or all the time, or just once in a while?
H: Once in a while. It wasn't every other day or nothing.
C: It was seasons, wasn't it.
H: Yeah. Seasons.
Cr: Were there cattle all over the street here and pooping in the streets or . . . ?
H: In the back field there was a lot of cattle, and in different areas around the ranches [??] they had a lot of cattle here.
C: I've seen pictures where they've off-loaded them here, corrals, taking them down El Camino and up Yerba Buena to the ranch.
H: A lot of them they came in and unloaded them just for overnight, to feed them and take care of them. They'd load them back on and take them back, take them away. But there's a lot of cattle in here, in this ranch.
D: With your . . . with the railroad depot, okay, you told me it was so busy they even had living quarters upstairs.
H: For the daylight agent. He was the one the head of this, you know.
D: And your father's cousin was a signalman there.
H: He signaled, but he traveled the tracks. In those days the lights had to be coal oil, not like now.
D: He used to have to fill them.
H: He had to fill them.
D: Fred Miller.
H: He had to climb up on those signal . . .
D: Those old, coal-fired signal . . . now New Year's Eve what would the old engines do?
H: They had to change engines. They had to put on engines, and they had to take off engines for the grade. Sometimes there was several engines here on a New Year's Eve waiting to go out, and at New Year's they'd blow their whistle several times. If I happened to be on down there at midnight on that day . . .
Cr: You could hear it.
H: I'd go out and blow mine too.
Cr: You had a whistle at the pumping station?
H: That's right.
Cr: What was the whistle for there? To signal shift change or something else.
H: In case something happened, or at one time we used to do it for the time, the time of day.
Cr: You say, you would signal if something happened. What might happen.
H: Well, you never know, you never did know.
Cr: But did things ever happen? Did things ever happen that you had to?
H: It didn't happen so . . .

Cr: You didn't have to do it then.
H: That's right.
Cr: But you were ready?
H: We're ready for it, yeah.
C: At the depot, do you remember any of the stationmaster's names?
H: The head man Doc Dorr.
C: That was D-O-R-R.
H: I think so, yeah.
C: Doc Dorr. Is that a correct name. Kind of a roundy guy wasn't he?
H: He used to buy a lot of these English stable races. He'd buy those tickets
C: I don't know what that is.
Cr: Horse race tickets?
H: In England. They would send him tickets, and I guess, and he would sell them here too.
C: Betting tickets?
H: No, they were for horses, I guess. I had one, and I threw it away, I guess. But I had one.
C: Like horse races?
H: Yeah.

[48:58]

C: Do you remember any of the rodeos in town?
H: The Days of the Dons they had a small one here.
Cr: What was Days of the Dons? I've heard of it, but I don't know.
H: Well, that really started the very first, late 1800s. But then they started again in nineteen . . .
Cr: Was it a parade, or . . . ?
C: Yeah, it was. It was our celebration like . . .
Cr: Santa Margarita?
C: Yeah. Like Pioneer Days or Colony Days, so . . .
Cr: I know of Pioneer Days.
C: And it was to celebrate Mexican independence, because the first person that started it was Joaquin Estrada.
H: That's right.
C: And he was Mexican, and that was his celebration. Dons are the higher-uppers.
Cr: The aristocracy.
C: And so it was the days of theirs, big barbecue, big party. It went on for a month, and then it just kind of continued as a town celebration.
D: It would start on a Friday, right Gramp?
H: Then Saturday and Sunday, but Friday . . . Saturday they had a big enchilada chicken barbecue up at the school.
D: With a dance.
H: With a dance, with a dance too. Then Sunday was when they had the parade, not Saturday, but Sunday. Sometimes it was . . . it was loaded with people in here.
Cr: So who was in the parade?
H: A lot of old timers, long gone.
Cr: On horses, I mean, on horses or walking or bands or . . . ? Were there floats or 4H?
H: My wife's father was a king one year.
D: The first official one, he was the king.
H: 1970.
C: Grover Hampton.
D: No. He was the King in '70, but her grandfather was the first king in '33, wasn't he? '31?
C: Jessie's grandfather?
D: That was her grandfather.
C: Hampton also?
D: Hampton.
C: Then you were royalty in . . .
H: 1994 we were royalty, yeah. Days of the Dons.
Cr: Were you in the parade at other times?
H: No, no.

C: For the July parade this year.
H: Oh, recently, yeah.
D: And I was in it in '70.
H: And I'm supposed to be in the parade in Atascadero on the 19th.
C: The morning of your birthday.

[51:32]

END DISK ONE

START DISK TWO

[0:00]

Cr: I'm a Los Angeles Dodgers fan, and Cheri said that you had been a Dodgers fan for most of your life. But the Dodgers don't play in Santa Margarita, so how did this happen?
H: Oh, I used to listen to them on the radio.
Cr: Okay, so for how long have you been a Dodgers fan?
H: Well, I've been a Dodgers, since they were in Brooklyn. And later years radio, then later on TV came in.
Cr: Do you remember the year the Giants and Dodgers had a playoff to get into the World Series? Did you listen in those years?
H: Yeah. I was listening to them then.
Cr: I listened to the game when Bobby Thompson hit the home run.
H: Oh, yeah. Sixty-one, wasn't it?
Cr: I think so, and I was a Giant fan, I confess, in those years
H: Yeah, sixty-one, I think, it happened.
Cr: That must have broken your heart.
H: Oh, well, what are you going to do. They got peanuts compared to what they're getting now.
Cr: That, certainly.
C: So how did you pick the Dodgers when you were listening on the radio?
Cr: Why the Dodgers?
H: Why did I what?
C: Why did you pick the Dodgers?
H: I just liked them.
C: You knew the team members?
H: I just liked them, so I . . .
Cr: Who were your favorite players when they played in Brooklyn? What players do you remember from Brooklyn?
H: Hodges for one, Reese.
Cr: These are the famous players.
H: Snyder, all those, all gone now.
Cr: In Los Angeles, you must have been excited when Sandy Koufax was pitching.
H: He came later, yeah.
C: Sandy Koufax was here in Santa Margarita too. He came up here to . . .
D: We met him several times.
Cr: And at the same time, oh . . . who was the other . . . Don Drysdale was pitching at the same time and Claude Osteen was a pitcher also.
H: Osteen, yeah.
Cr: I was a Minnesota Twins fan when the Twins and Dodgers played [World Series], and it broke my heart when the Dodgers beat the Twins those years. But those were good years for you.

[break in recording]

Cr: I've got, that's okay.
C: Henry had his Christmas picture taken this year with a Dodgers jacket on.
D: Yeah. Yeah, he's got a lot of Dodgers' stuff.
C: We're having a Dodgers themed birthday party for his birthday October 19.

Cr: You must have gone to games in Los Angeles. Have you seen, you've played, watched the Dodgers play there?

H: I even went when they were at the Coliseum.

Cr: That's before me.

C: Did you go, Danny?

D: I've been with Gramp a lot. The San Luis Rec Department used to charter buses, and we'd go, we'd do that. He had a nephew or a distant relative in LA that had season tickets right behind home plate, and we would go and sit there.

H: That's when the new Dodger stadium.

D: In Chavez Ravine.

H: They opened up in 1962.

Cr: I came to California in '67, so I was in Minnesota those first years the Dodgers were here. Are you still a Dodgers fan?

H: Yes.

Cr: Then you must be happy because they . . .

D: They clinched it.

Cr: They clinched it last night.

H: So far. I hope they can go . . . they haven't been since '88. Eighty-eight was when they were in the World Series. It would be nice if they could . . .

Cr: Should we take a break now and stop for a minute, or should we continue talking? Let's ask Henry.

[4:02]

D: You have to go bathroom or anything?

C: Any more questions?

D: The only, whatever I have is kind of skipping around. There was a big scare here back in the middle twenties, wasn't there, that the town was going to get wiped off the map. What happened there?

H: There was a cloud coming from Mexico and one from Japan, and they were going to meet right over Margarita.

C: Cloud?

H: Clouds, yeah, two clouds.

Cr: Rain, you mean?

H: Yeah. And they were going to meet right over Margarita. Well, my mother was scared to death of the creek, so we went and spent the night with our neighbor.

C: When those creeks flooded, the town did.

D: Where did the rest of the town go?

H: Well, where could they go?

D: Didn't they go up Miller hill?

H: Some of them did, but not too many. But it never did happen.

C: Never happened.

H: My father didn't go. He stayed home.

[5:05]

Cr: Cheri has a note here about floods in 1958 and 1969. Were there years with bad, bad rains?

H: The one in '69 was known as the one hundred year, one hundred year rain.

Cr: And what happened in Santa Margarita then?

H: Well, we were living here. The only thing . . .

Cr: Did the house fill up?

H: The only thing that ever happened, our heater was down underneath the floor. It put it out, but . . .

C: What street were you living on then? "K"?

H: No, no. "I" Street. Two blocks up.

C: "I" Street is the flooding.

D: You know the three houses, the Perry's owned them, that the rented. The one right next door to the Whitaker that they just remodeled. They lived in that one for thirty some years, and it had a floor heater. Even just heavy rain, I remember as a kid looking down there and seeing the water. And the water would come up and put out the pilot light.

C: I was looking at newspaper articles, and they were talking about the '58 and '69 rains as being something had to be done.

D: Yeah, but don't you think didn't it rain harder in '40?

H: Well, in the service. When I went in the service it rained every day. We were training and marching and everything right in the rain.

Cr: This is up near Monterey?

H: All over. We practiced, training in the rain, and we had to come back, clean our boots, make them shiny to stand for roll call. I tell you. The year '41, it really rained.

C: Do you remember when the war ended? I mean, I know you were home, but what was it like in town when the war ended? Pretty happy?

H: Oh, yeah. Everybody was.

Cr: I remember when it ended in Minneapolis, everybody running out in front of the houses and celebrating. Did that happen here? I mean, there were whistles all over Minneapolis.

H: I always get that picture of that sailor kissing that girl.

C: You were living in San Luis when the war ended.

H: Yeah. I was in San Luis, yeah.

D: Now, you were . . . jumping around again though, did someone famous have an accident here?

H: Oh, yes.

D: You were here when it happened.

H: In 1926 . . . you ever hear of the actor Rudolph Valentino?

Cr: The name is famous.

H: He had a wreck right here in the bend.

Cr: An automobile wreck?

H: Yes. He was driving an Italian IF. I missed it. [a sentence unclear] I missed the whole thing.

Cr: And you could have gotten his autograph.

H: Probably could have.

D: He died four months later, four or five months later.

C: He was going out to the valley.

D: In fact, according . . . I found the New York Times newspaper article on line that covered it.

C: I have a copy of the local article.

D: And the New York Times says that there were a few people in the car that got ejected. And all he did was get on a bus here and head back to Hollywood.

H: I missed it all cause I was shucking hay.

C: Everybody crashes at that corner.

D: Back then, it was like that, wasn't it? Pretty sharp.

C: It's not much better now.

Cr: Is this the corner on highway 58?

D: Right at the intersection.

Cr: Yeah. I hit the brakes now every time I come by.

H: He was going pretty fast, I guess.

[9:14]

D: Those were the Ferraris of their day. And to this day, if you've got one, they're worth millions. [can't make the name out] Their radiators had I-F, big white letters on the radiators.

C: When you worked at the Santa Margarita Ranch, did you know Mr. Reis?

H: I didn't know him personally. I've seen him come in.

C: Was it Bill Reis? Billy Reis when you were working there? It was Frank Reis that bought it, and then he gave it for his nephew, Billy Reis took it over.

H: Billy Junior ended up with it, I think.

C: Yeah.

H: Then he gave it to Stanford.

C: Stanford University.

H: Yeah. He's buried right out here.

C: Yes, he is.

D: In talking to you today I learned one story that I'd never heard before, but another separate one that I'd like you to tell. Going back on your earliest recollections on some of the old timers here, there was a lady who was here who told you about the Indians traveling from the mission to the San Luis to Asistencia and then up to San Miguel. What would they do, and what would they carry for the Padres?

H: She lived up the Tassajara Canyon. Her name was Connie. I forget. As a young girl she remembers the Indians coming over, walking in a line, singing. And they would come to the Asistencia here, and then from there they'd go to the San Miguel Mission.

C: And were they coming from San Luis, or were they coming from the east?

H: Going across. And she tells about the silver bars that the priest in a mine up on the Tassajara side. I don't know about that, but Mrs. Reichart was living in the last house up in Tassajara, and they said that she looked for that mine all her life till she died. Never did find it.

C: Tassajara was a big moonshining area too.

H: That's right. It wasn't, it wasn't . . .

C: It's on the Grade.

H: It was a big cave, like. They put the bars on and covered it up.

D: Now, your folks one day were coming back from San Luis Obispo in a horse and buggy, right out here near where the water pumping station is now, what happened to them?

H: They were coming from San Luis in a horse and buggy, and it was getting almost dark. There was a big oak tree. I think it's still there yet, and she said as they were coming along there was a lady all dressed in white sitting by that tree. And she said the horse even put his its ears back cause he seen it. My father didn't see it. And later there was a man that lived, Mr. DeAlva.

D: What happened to the lady? She disappeared in front of your mom, didn't she?

H: She disappeared, but she was sitting there all dressed in white.

Cr: This was a ghost that your mother . . .

H: Well, that's probably what it was, if it was anything.

Cr: What did your father, what was your father's business?

H: He was just a laborer.

Cr: For the railroad or . . . ?

H: No. He worked on ranches. He worked sheep shearing or whatever there was to do. But he didn't have any . . .

Cr: And did your mother work, or did she take care of the house?

H: She worked a little bit when we were in Los Angeles, but she had poor eyesight. She . . .

Cr: You lived in Los Angeles at one time?

H: Three years.

D: Well, your parents must have told somebody about this ghost. What happened?

H: Mr. DeAlva, he was blind, and he used to like to go out looking for . . .

D: Divining rods.

H: So he was up in that area, and they found something, and they dug down, and there was box. But the guy with him says, "There's noting here." He'd go out at night and do it. They covered it up, and later on the guy came back, and they say he took the box, had money in it. I guess it was gold or whatever.

C: Was that in Tassajara.

D: It was the spot where the lady was standing.

C: Oh, where the ghost was.

H: And he left, and he never come back, so I don't know if the story's true or not.

Cr: So your parents could have been rich if they'd only spoken with her.

H: You don't know how much was there, but . . .

[14:31]

C: Mike Cordova., do you remember Mike Cordova?

H: Yes.

C: Tell me some stories about him. He was our oldest cowboy.

H: My father said he was about a hundred and fourteen.

C: He wasn't.

H: No way.

C: He was ninety-six, but that's okay. It's a good story.

H: He and Mr. Scott was judge here. They took him to San Luis to the records, and my father says he was not a hundred . . . , he wasn't.

C: Actually, I know where that problem came from.

H: He worked at the ranch for years too.

C: Do you remember his house?

H: It was just a little shack [some more not clear].

D: I remember playing in it. And I remember him in the Days of the Dons when they read the president's letter. It was like '73, '74, somewhere in there.

Cr: What was the president's letter?

C: You get a letter from the president . . .

D: On your supposed hundredth birthday.

H: It was Nixon, wasn't it?

C: He was . . . he didn't speak English, right?

H: Oh, yeah. Very broken, but he could do it.

C: And he didn't have an ear.

H: They say Joaquin Murietta cut it off.

C: Cut his ear off, he said.

H: And sewed it on his saddle.

C: Is that what he did with his ear?

Cr: Were there bandits here in Santa Margarita when you were growing up or stories?

H: If there was I don't remember, no.

D: Mr. Weeks got held up, didn't he, up the street?

H: The Republican down the street. Yeah, he was held up. They stole a lot of stuff. They stole bottles. The stole ammunition. As a kid we played up on the hill, and we found all that. We knew where it came from, so we took it to Mr. Weeks. He gave us candy. He had jars of candy all over that place.

C: Do you remember if his wife's name was Amanda?

H: I think it was, yeah.

C: She shows up from time to time a being big in the women's suffrage movement which seems unusual, him being such a Republican and her being such a "right to vote." She was the point person for town, for women's suffrage. And I wouldn't have thought that Mr. Weeks was such a hard Republican. But opposites attract, huh?

H: He was a good man for Call Bulletin Newspaper. [name and spelling unsure] He always got the Call Bulletin from San Francisco. He would walk over to the depot. The train would come in. It always had Call Bulletin on it for him. He'd go back . . . [The Call Bulletin was a newspaper published in SF from 1915-1965]

D: Newspaper

H: Newspaper, yeah. Call Bulletin newspaper, San Francisco.

Cr: There must be stories from prohibition here in town. Do you . . . were there moonshiners here or . . . ?

H: Yeah, a lot of people that made xxxx . . . whisky

Cr: Did you know any of them, or . . . ?

H: I knew one or two of them, yeah.

Cr: And they made a good living?

H: Well, I don't know. You would see them at the dance [?]. You could hear those dollar bills.

D: What was going rate?

H: What's that?

D: What was the going rate for a quart or a pint, a shot?

H: A pint you'd get for two dollars.

Cr: That's quite a bit when you're making fifty cents an hour.

H: Yeah, it's quite a bit.

C: I remember asking Henry, I was looking for somebody who might have spent the night in jail. We have a jail in town. And Henry said, "No, no." The closest he ever got to the jail was mom would take you there and threaten you with it. Right?

H: That's right.

C: You lived too good, clean living, to know anybody in the jail?

H: [several seconds of hemming and hawing] [the depression] we really came out, as far as I'm concerned, the beginning of World War II.

C: Did you know Dolly Dunning?

H: Yes, I knew Dolly and her husband Walter. The were superintendents of Avenales, I mean La Panza Ranch.

Cr: Had you been out at the La Panza Ranch?
H: Yeah, I've been there.
Cr: Did you work out there at all?
H: Fred Cavanagh did some cutting there, and I was working for Fred Cavanagh. That's how we were there.
Cr: What do you remember about Dolly? I have heard of her from other people.
H: She was quite a girl. She was a good horsewoman too. She really . . . be on parades too.
Cr: Did you live out there at all?
H: No, no.
Cr: Did you work out there?
H: When I was working, we always took our own bedding and . . .
Cr: And slept out on the field or at the house?
H: Right on the ground somewhere.
Cr: For how long did you work there? At the LaPanza Ranch, how long. Were you there several days or several weeks
H: Just there a day and a half, I think. Usually got what they wanted done, then we went back to the Plains.
Cr: Did you ride horses? Were you a cowboy at all?
H: I never was a cowboy. We rode horses a little bit poisoning squirrels for the ranch.
Cr: How was that done? This was the Avenales, you're speaking of? Or what ranch, the Margarita?
H: Margarita.
Cr: So what do you do when you're poisoning horses, oops, poisoning squirrels?
H: They had, County had a man that come to, he was head man. The ranch would furnish maybe four, five, six guys, and we'd go out, we'd be all in a line. And we had a sack with the stuff on each side, and we'd put this in each gopher hole.
C: There was a government agency because they were worried about the Plague.
Cr: Oh, that was the reason.
H: They cut that out, so that's why there's so many squirrels in the cemetery.
C: They were doing . . .

[21:04]

H: In those days, I was a crooner, like.
C: Crooner?
D: You're going to flip over this.
H: I . . . we worked at, and we'd be in line . . . My cousin and another boy, I said, "I don't want you guys to talk to me during the day unless you call me Bing."
C: Bing?
H: Yeah, they kept their word. Finally, they xxx finally Bing, I said, "Oh, yeah, what do you want?" Well anyway, Jessie, in 1938, bought this for me.
C: What's that.
H: With "Bing" on it.
D: It's a Ronson lighter.
C: Now I had heard from somebody who's coming to your birthday party, you sang at her wedding.
H: The girl that's coming to . . .
C: LaVerne.
H: LaVerne, yeah.
C: It was because you were such a singer, huh?
H: I just, you know.
D: I have your 1934 yearbook from Atascadero High School, and next to your picture it talks about how you used to sing the hours away at dances and stuff.
H: There were dances . . . Pozo.
C: And you sang at church.
H: And I sang at church . . . Creston, Atascadero.
D: But your career ended because of your tonsils, didn't it?
H: I quit in forty-something, because they took tonsils embedded. I mean, they were embedded and enlarged.
C: Ruined your career.
H: I couldn't and still can't do it anymore.

D: The voice was silenced.
Cr: You could have been a rock star.
H: As far as music . . .
D: Move over, Sinatra.
C: Do you remember when they put the bell back up on your church?
H: Yeah.
C: It was a big deal, wasn't it?
H: Yeah . . .
Cr: I thought of some things I wanted . . . Did you ever go hunting. Did you hunt at all?
H: No. I did not. I didn't go horseback riding or nothing.
Cr: You went to Atascadero High School?
H: And graduated in '34.
Cr: You must have known some people who came from the Plains that went to Atascadero High School.
H: That's right.
Cr: Do you remember names of people from out there?
H: Some of the Cavanagh kids.
Cr: That would have been Guy [should be Howard] and Gene Cavanagh?
H: Yeah. They used to stay there, stay right there at . . .
Cr: At the dormitory.
H: At the dormitory.
C: But you didn't. You came home.
H: No, no. no. It was just the kids from . . .
C: Far out.
D: Was the Guy family? Did they live out on the Plains?
H: Guys lived here. Una Todd used to come. She lived on the Plains, and quite a few. In those days they had to come to high school, they had to stay there.
Cr: I was wondering if you remember other names of people who came from the Plains besides the Cavanaghs. I'm trying to think who it might be.
H: Werling?
Cr: Very likely.
H: [can' make it out] Werling.
Cr: Yes . . . Okay, thank you, yeah.

[25:00]

Cr: Cheri wrote down a question about building the park here, or . . . about building a park here. I don't know what . . .
C: When they made the park, when the Civic Association made the park, were you involved in that?
H: No. I wasn't.
C: You were always working, weren't you?
H: Yeah. That's right.
Cr: How did you meet your wife?
H: We just . . . she lived across the creek from where I lived, and we used to meet there at the bridge and talk. And I used to tell my brother, no, I used to tell Larry Rizzoli, RIZZOLI "Someday I'm going to marry that gal."
C: She was a cutie.
Cr: You knew that long before it happened.
H: Yeah, long before. So we were married, like I said, Christmas Eve, nineteen . . .
Cr: Forty or forty-one.
H: Forty.
C: You got married in a church or at home?
H: No. At the . . . Judge Mellon in San Luis in the courthouse, three o'clock in the afternoon.
C: How come you didn't get married in the church?
H: Well, I don't know. She wasn't Catholic.
C: Oh, that's why.

[break in recording]

[

Cr: Are there things that . . . do you have memories about living here in Santa Margarita that we should have asked about? We've asked the things we can think about, but maybe there's something about growing up in Santa Margarita or working here in Santa Margarita that we haven't asked that you should tell us about? . . . Were there big events here in Santa Margarita that you remember?

H: They used to have what they called a Chitaqua.

Cr: What was that?

H: Did you ever hear of that?

Cr: I know the word, but I don't know what it was here.

H: A company that came out from Chicago, and they put on programs up here at the school. And they were all men. In those days they painted their faces . . .

C: Like plays?

H: And now you don't do that. They were all white guys, and they put on, good program. The called it Chitaqua. And they'd come here once a year, at school. I used to like that.

D: What time of year?

H: Oh, in the fall. It was good.

C: But it was at the school, not at the Community Hall?

H: No, no. Up at the school.

C: Cause that hall got built in the 40s.

H: No, it was at the school.

D: And then you had a big pavilion out at the Santa Margarita Ranch by the entrance gate that you had dances and stuff at.

H: That was a big . . . that was 1933, they had, they had the barbecue. In the evening they'd dance under, under the trees, and then at midnight they had a barbecue. The Estrada brothers was in the pit. In those days the meat they put on . . . and then they'd barbecue . . .

Cr: How many people came to the dances?

H: Oh, a lot of people came for it.

Cr: I suspect that in the parking lot there were some people drinking.

H: Oooh, yesss.

Cr: Was there trouble with that ever?

H: Didn't seem to be. But the next day was usually on . . . the parade, the big parade. And the day when they had the big barbecue, the fog rolled in from San Luis, and it was miserable, the wind blowing. They were supposed to have a rodeo up there, and it was miserable. A lot of people came in for nothing. They came along the creek. They didn't pay nothing.

D: You said that the meat down in the pit, that the Estrada brothers did was on big, long iron spikes

H: Yeah, they kept turning them.

D: There's one that looks . . .

H: I have one out there.

D: We have one.

Cr: This was at the Margarita Ranch?

D: The Margarita Ranch, and it's very old.

C: Where is it? [the spike]

D: It's out here in the back. I just happened to think of it.

[Danny going to get the spike]

C: That's okay. We'll keep talking here.

D: I'll get it, Gramp. I'll get it.

H: It's in the garage, I think. No, in the shack out there.

C: I've seen one. So they did the big barbecues, and men and women came together, and they danced. What kind of music? Guitars and accordions?

H: I think they danced over here at the hall too. I never did go to the dance.

C: You didn't have any fun. You were always working.

Cr: Was this a barbecue that the ranch put on, or was this a town event?

H: It was a town affair.

C: Days of the Dons.

[30:21]

C: I know you have always gone to your Catholic Church, but do you remember the Protestant Church when they moved that?

H: That was . . . it's still standing.

C: [can't make out sentence]

H: A lot of additions.

C: Do you remember when they picked that church up and moved it?

H: No. I don't.

C: We didn't have enough participation to support two churches.

Cr: If I lived here in 1935 and was . . . what did I do besides work? Were there card games or card tournaments, dances or barbecues? What was the social life?

H: Well, probably a lot of them, but I never did participate. The only thing I got pleasure . . . yeah, that's what it was.

D: Now there was, Grandpa . . . one family here was fixing to make a big batch of pickled pig's feet back in '31 for a big celebration here. Who were they, and what happened?

H: That was the Guys. That was . . .

C: John Guy?

H: Yeah. John Guy and his wife.

D: What happened.

H: Well, they cancelled cause they made a lot of tamales and everything so they cancelled. I never, I didn't know what happened.

D: Didn't the pig's feet turn out to be poisoned?

C: Actually, I know this.

H: I heard it was pig's feet, but Kenny said it wasn't.

C: It's green beans.

H: Green beans.

D: Green beans.

C: Yeah. Mom put up green beans, as you do, and they sat down for lunch and ate whatever they were eating and green beans. And everybody in the family died except for Kenny who was playing at the neighbor's house and Helen Jane who was too little. And they're all out there with the same date of death in the Guy's . . .

Cr: It would be botulism in canned vegetables.

C: Took them all, and that's when Ken Guy, Kenny, went to go live with Marvel Haberkern. Did you know Marvel Haberkern?

H: Yeah.

C: She was a pretty amazing person, wasn't she? She took in a lot of people.

H: I went with her daughter.

C: Who?

H: Dolly.

C: Dolly Guy. Dolly Haberkern? She shows up on our quilt from the '30s.

H: She's gone now. She passed away in '72.

C: The only person left on that quilt is Bonnie Simpson who was a little girl then.

H: She was a kin to the Guys. She was a Guy, I think, before Simpson. Yeah. She is buried out here.

C: Do you remember when John Guy was running the meat market?

H: Yeah.

C: What was that like when you walked in there?

H: In those days you had a lot of sawdust on the floor.

C: Did he do butchering behind there, didn't he?

H: That's right.

C: They said when he was making lard, boy it was stinky.

H: Yeah, there's been several Guys running that corner butcher shop.

C: You know even though Kenny says not, they never owned that. It was always VELASCO.

H: It was Velasco yeah.

C: The Guys never owned that property. Do you remember when the candy store went in next door?

H: Mr. Velasco's daughter ran that . . . no, no, he was a kin . . . inside there they had chocolates.

C: Confectionary.
H: That's right. Boy, that candy was good.
C: What kind of candies?
H: All kinds of chocolate candy.
C: Chocolates, did they make the chocolates?
H: I don't know where . . . He sent for it. Then they put it in their cases and stuff. I don't think they made it there.
C: I think about hard candies that kids would get and put in their pockets.

[34:21]

H: Creams and nuts in the, different bars.
C: So the Velasco daughter ran that shop.
H: No. It was . . . she ran the ice cream parlor.
C: Next door to that.
H: A little short place, and she . . .
C: In the alley, between the butcher shop. And then there was like a little tiny, maybe five foot wide, you think, kind of separation between the two buildings. And they put a door up and a roof on it, and it became it's own little building, didn't it?
H: Mr. . . . Judge Price had his office there when he was Justice of the Peace.
C: I didn't know that. But you remember when Lee Knight was the constable and the courthouse was over there where the library is, right? That was Judge Estrada.
H: Lee Knight was constable, '34 I think it was.
C: When he was constable.
H: They lived over at the corner there.
C: Did you ever know Lee's daughter, Ione?
H: Yes, I do.
C: Tell me about her. Was she as wild as everybody says?
H: She was wild. She was a good girl, though.
C: She was a good girl. Somebody thought so.
H: I felt sorry, and I think about her several times. Her mother's name was Leola. Leola said to me, "Hank, why don't you go out with Ione." I said, "I'm not crazy yet." I'm sorry for her, cause I liked Ione. She was a good girl.
C: She, we have her diary that Shirley gave us. She seemed like a sweet girl. She was very loving, wasn't she? She was married five times, and I said to Shirley . . .
Cr: Are these things you want to be recording, or . . . I don't know.
C: No. We don't care.
Cr: The conversation can go on whether . . .
C: Shirley says . . . Are there Hamptons left? Jessie's . . .
H: Well, they're really not. No, they're all, the Hampton name . . . several kids that were Hamptons are married,
Cr: This is your wife's family?
D: Yes
C: And he had the garage there on the corner.
H: That's right. His dad, Grover had the garage right at the corner there.
C: And next to that garage, inside that building, he told me was a . . .
D: Pit.
C: A restaurant?
H: Oh, that was a . . . it weren't the one that's there now, is it?
C: No. Wasn't there a restaurant inside Hampton's garage? Off to the left?
H: Across the street was a big hotel. That's right across the street where all the cars park now.
C: Oh, yeah?
H: That's where the Ramona Hotel was, or the Beans Hotel.
C: See, I always thought the hotel was where the liquor store is, Margarita Hotel.
H: Walker Brothers, they were down close by the post office, where the kid shot the . . .
C: Yeah. So there was two hotels?
H: Yeah, That one . . . and then there was one across from where all the cars park that's working . . . [for the solar project construction]
C: Was that also the Eureka Hotel? No, it's too early.

H: I think the Beans, the early years the Beans ran it. People by the name of Bean.

C: Yep. I usually had that someplace else.

[38:26]

D: In the Hampton garage . . . Grover told my great grandfather, told me, if you go in there, to this day there's a pit. It's boarded up. They had dug a pit. And so my great grandfather and great, great grandfather could get in there and work on the old cars. And as a hobby, Grover Hampton, my great grandfather, had a race car at the old South Street track in San Luis Obispo. And his car never lost out there when it raced. And oddly enough he dug a pit at the San Luis racetrack, okay, and with the advent of racing everybody, as the racing caught on, would copy that pit. There were race people from all over that would come to this, and the pit caught on. And that's where you get the term "the pits" today. In modern day racing . . .

Cr: The pit stop.

D: The pit stop. And so your original pit is here in Margarita. It's still there, boarded up. It's the original pit, and I've had hot-rodders, he has a little article that comes out in the photo add, you know, Sherm Porter. I grew up with his boy. His boy even told me that story, not knowing that I knew it already. They're big into hot rods and cars. That's your first pit right there.

[40:05]

C: What did you drive? I know you love your car now. What was your first car?

H: I had several ones.

C: What was your favorite?

H: I liked my Oldsmobile.

D: What was your first car? Do you remember?

H: It was a Chevy, I think

D: Really. You didn't have a '28 Model-A?

H: Oh, that. '30s, I had a '30, 1930.

Cr: Model-A.

H: Model-A.

Cr: With a rumble seat?

H: Rumble seat.

C: Did you take it down the Grade?

H: Yeah. To Los Angeles.

C: And that was when the Grade still had the concrete . . . and went this way past the waterfall.

H: That's right.

C: Was that hairy? How was that? Just another way to go? It looked pretty steep to me.

H: You're not talking about the old grade?

D: Yes.

H: The old, old grade?

C: The one that kind of went closer to . . .

D: With the switchbacks.

C: Closer to the, on the, what would be the west side of the freeway now.

H: Then you went way in there and out.

D: If you drove your Model-T into town and you want to come home, okay . . .

H: You'd better be sure you had a lot of gas because if you didn't have enough gas you couldn't make it cause the didn't have . . .

D: They didn't have fuel pumps.

H: Fuel pumps.

D: A lot of people would have to back up the grade.

C: Because of the gravity.

H: It didn't happen too often, but it did happen.

D: But you had to worry in the Model-Ts because anything more than a seven to fourteen percent incline in the front, the front bearing would spin. You had oil. It was just xxxx. The oil would spin the front bearing of the crank.

So you had to worry about killing your engine and then also about losing the gas.

C: So would you buy your gas at Grover Hampton's? Cause he had gas there, didn't he?

H: Oh, I was buying gas there long.
C: Where did you buy gas in town?
H: Oh, I bought it there, D.H. xxx. . I bought it down here to Proud's down here. Proud, when he was up there . . . and I bought from Lauritson over here by . . .
C: Lauritson's had gas?
H: Yeah, that's when the gas was white. It didn't have any coloring. They called it White Magic.
C: And then there was Jim Green's.
H: Well, that was Texaco.
D: I remember Jim Green's
C: Early on it was Proud's which was Grover Hampton's, and then it was Proud's. And how about over here where gasoline . . . oh, you know, the Associated Gas which was at the post office. Do you remember that one?
H: Yeah. Forgot the name . . . the Red Horse, was it.
C: Oh, that was, wasn't it Texaco, it was the jumping horse.
H: Yeah. It was the last one.
C: And it was over where Gasoline Alley was, right?
D: Mobil.
C: They had like six places to get gas in town.
H: You could have several places. Now it's just this one.
C: A lot of garages, still? A lot of places to get your car fixed here?
H: Well, there was . . .
C: Proud's.
H: Proud's.
C: [something about Keffury
H: Harry Williams, he had a place here for a while.
C: Virginia Williams.
H: He fixed cars, yeah.
C: Was he over like where Gasoline Alley was? Where the brewery is now.
H: You mean that new one? [can't make it out]
C: That was Williams?
H: He had, there was a garage there. In later years he had a garage.
D: Didn't Uncle Cecil get hard up for money, your brother, and he sold his Model-T to Mr. Proud for three dollars, right?
C: Mr. Proud gave him three dollars.
D: Three dollars for his Model-T.

[44:55]

C: Let's see . . . When you went to high school, was it Margarita Black High School?
H: Margarita Black, and they say that school was supposed to have been built here, but at that time I think Doc Black named it after his daughter. Her name was Margarita Black, and their xxxx name was Black.
C: I thought you said you went to Atascadero High School.
C: Um, hmm. It was called Margarita Black. So Atascadero High School was called Margarita Black. From what I remember was Mr. Black was a Supervisor at the time, and his daughter was killed in an accident.
H: She was killed.
C: So the high school was named after her, and then when it became unified, then it went back to Atascadero High School.
H: That's right.
C: Did you, was your son in school when we went from our own school system to Atascadero Unified?
H: He graduated from Atascadero in 1959. He left here in '55.
C: Okay. And we didn't get Unified till 60s, did we?
D: He went all through the grade school.
C: Do you remember when the city fathers decided that we weren't going to be able to have our own wells anymore? That we were going to have to get hooked up to city water? That was quite a controversy. You managed to stay out of that, huh?
D: The house the lived in next to the Whitikers had a well on it, and they stopped using it, from what I can remember him saying, back before my dad graduated from high school, so in the middle 50s. And as a boy I can

remember taking the cover off and looking down in there. I could see it. It's now covered over by that addition they did over there, but it's a nice well right there.

C: They took all the wells out of town.

D: Didn't Mr. Arnold, the County Supervisor, drain one well here watering his sugar beets?

H: That happened in the middle 50s.

Cr: That would have been Claude Arnold.

D: Yes.

Cr: He raised sugar beets here?

D: Yes. Where were the beets?

H: They were down here across from the Union pump station over there. He irrigated twenty-four hours a day.

C: Still didn't get a good crop, did he?

D: And it was the sweetest water, supposedly, around.

C: And he ruined the well?

H: He ruined the S.P. mill, err, well.

Cr: He leased the Margarita Ranch for a number of years, I think.

C: Yeah. He was when Mr. Reese owned the ranch. He oversaw it. Do you remember the early fire station that was over on F Street? Perrys lived there. Sage Baro talks about it.

D: You don't remember the early fire station?

H: No. I don't.

C: He stayed away from the fire station. He managed to stay away from all that. I think that's good. Did we miss anything?

D: Wow. This is more than I thought we'd do.

Cr: Then we'll say, "Thank you." Thank you, Henry, for your time and your memories.

D: Thank you. This is actually something I've really fantasized about doing for so many years.

Cr: Maybe again, if other thoughts come up. Thank you.

[break in recording]

[48:47]

C: We were talking about you and Ione.

Cr: Okay, you were going to talk, say something.

H: This happened in 1949. Ray Pecheco met me up, before you went to the gate to go up . . .

C: At the end of Encina.

H: Yeah. And he had a pick and a shovel with him. I said, "What you going to do?" He said, "I'm going to dig up a girl, a little baby that died here years ago." Her folks live up north, and they want her remains to be sent up there.

D: She died in 1908.

H: So we went up there. We dug down. We took up the box that Mr. Weeks had made, and it had a little window, you know, and the only thing that was in there was a few little bones and a ribbon.

Cr: And this was then sent to the parents or grandparents?

H: They were up . . . but the undertaker up there said to them, "Just take a shovel cause, this many years, you're not going to find nothing. Put it in a box, and seal it up." But anyway, we found it, and the only reason we found it, because they had installed an iron gate around it. Because in those years, like I told you, there was a lot of cattle run back there. But that's the only reason we found it.

C: You don't know the little girl's name, huh?

H: No. I forgot the name, but we brought it back to the tree, and transferred the stuff into a box that Harry Williams had made for it, took it back, buried it. It's still there.

C: Oh, you put it back here.

D: The box, you buried the box.

H: There was a cemetery out there.

C: Right, right. You didn't send anything up north, then?

H: Yeah, we sent the little stuff that was left and sent it back up . . . I think they were in Oakland.

C: And then what did you rebury? Just a box that Mr. Williams made? Yeah, how many people do you think are in that, was in that cemetery?

H: Quite a few, I think.

C: More than twelve?

D: Oh, absolutely. I remember running around out there myself as a kid, seeing way more than that on the headstones of different kinds, flat things, and regular headstones. I remember much more than that.

C: Twenty?

D: Easily, easily, and that was in the 70s and 80s. Easily . . .

Cr: When you were there.

D: When I was a kid. Maybe in the 70s, the earlier 70s.

C: They quit burying people there at about nineteen . . . turn of the century. I'm going to say when Mr. Reese bought the ranch in 1901, he said no more burying people on the ranch. Mr. Murphy didn't care. Mr. Reese did, cause he wanted to develop behind there. And that's why he gave the money to the cemetery to put the cemetery where it is now.

D: Really?

C: Cause he didn't want them buried on his property any more, cause he didn't want the responsibility of it. So it was, they quit burying people, I'm going to say, about 1908, 1910.

H: Well, I think that baby had been buried there forty years, been buried forty years.

C: You know, I've been trying to get back there forever to get . . . the ranch just won't let anybody.

D: Really.

C: They don't, they say there's nobody back there cause they don't want to have the responsibility.

D: We used to . . . we never asked as kids. We snuck back there. I can almost find it still.

C: I might have to go some night.

Cr: At the full moon.

C: So you grew up with a bunch of Estradas, right?

H: Yeah, a lot of them. They're all gone from here.

C: You know Gary Estrada working out at the pumping station, and he was . . . I don't know his dad is, the chief is . . . Well, that was a good one about that cemetery.

[53:45]

END DISK TWO