

HELEN SMITH ORANGE COUNTY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Collection Number: COPH-OHP\_232



Center for Oral and Public History  
California State University, Fullerton

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## **Administrative Information**

### **Acquisition**

All items in this collection were donated to the Center for Oral and Public History by Helen Smith's daughter by way of the Anthropology Department, California State University, Fullerton

### **Access**

The collection is open for research.

### **Preferred Citation**

Citations must identify the oral history number, interviewee, interviewer, date, project, and the Center for Oral and Public History.

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## Descriptive Summary

**Title**

Helen Smith Orange County Oral History Project

**Date(s)**

2006-2008

**Creator**

Helen C. Smith

**Extent**

Thirty-one (31) oral histories

**Repository**

Center for Oral and Public History  
California State University, Fullerton

**Project Abstract**

This project is a compilation of oral histories with pioneers in Orange County, California, and the surrounding areas who had knowledge and personal experiences of living in Southern California in the first half of the twentieth century.

Mrs. Smith, a near lifelong resident of Orange County, was instrumental in establishing the State Emergency Relief Administration Anthropological Projects in 1934 that surveyed and excavated archaeological sites in Orange County. These reports (along with those of the Works Progress Administration) became the foundation of Orange County archaeology, several of which were published in the [Pacific Coast Archaeological Society] *Quarterly*.

Recognized as a major Orange County historian and an active member of PCAS, Mrs. Smith was a prime source of archaeological and historical information about Orange County with a special interest in the Channel Islands. These oral history narrators reflect those about whom she felt could offer historical and cultural information about their lives, their communities, and their environment.

## Helen Smith Orange County Oral History Project

OH3627

**Carisoza, Louie** (b.1913)

“Local Indians of Southern California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith and Charles Irwin

June 17, 1973

Language: English

Location: Recorded at his home off Santiago Road

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1913-1970s

An oral history with Louie Carisoza a native of South Orange County. He lived his entire life with his grandmother a descendent of local Indians. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about his knowledge of and experiences with the local Indians in Southern California. Discusses the local Indian migration patterns, how they would spend the summer at the ocean – coming from their winter homes as far away as San Jacinto and Pala Mountains – how each tribe had their own specific location, how they would use sea shells to make paint for their bodies and their homes, bird bones for fishing hooks, eating various seafood, making jewelry, utilizing natural items from the ocean for medicinal purposes, drinking from gourds, using clay, the Indian uses of *temescals* or hot houses, etc. Describes how his grandmother and father-in-law were able to make an unknown to him recipe with Eucalyptus leaves and other local “weeds” for medicinal purposes, his childhood experience of visiting an old Indian doctor near Pechanga, discusses Clarence Lobo and John Romero how they scammed money from the local Indians including Carisoza’s grandmother fraudulently claiming they would fight for their interests in Washington D.C., how at one time he owned 25 acres of orange trees in El Toro, and how he registered as a Mission Indian in order to collect money from the U.S. Federal Government.

OH3966

**Carisoza, Louie**

“Carisoza and Serrano Families”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 24, 1969

Language: English

Location: Recorded at his home off Santiago Road

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1900s

An oral history with Louie Carisoza a native of south Orange County. He was born in El Toro, CA and is a descendent of Jose Serrano. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to obtain information about the Carisoza and Serrano families. Describes the Carisoza family including his grandparents, Nacho and Suzanna who settled in Tustin and were originally from Arizona (then part of Mexico), his father also Louie, his many uncles, and cousins. Mentions the Serrano family including his grandparents Frank and Jenny Serrano, his mother Albertina, his many aunts, uncles, and cousins. How his grandfather divided the land for his heirs, how Jose Serrano lost his property, discusses the Moulton family walnut orchard in San Juan Capistrano, and Irvine ranch, and the nineteenth century horse race between Sarco and Black Swan. Discusses the partition and development of Coto de Caza and Santa Margarita Ranch, Governador Canyon, San Juan Hot Springs, Star/Joplin Ranch, Santiago Road construction, and Madame Modjeska. Mentions Ralph and Phillip Brown of San Juan Capistrano.

OH3630

**Carpenter, Edwin H.**

“A Talk to the Costa Mesa Historical Society”

A Speech before the Costa Mesa Historical Society

September 12, 1967

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

A speech by Edwin H. Carpenter presented to the Costa Mesa Historical Society. Mr. Carpenter was a local historian familiar with the early 19<sup>th</sup> century settlers of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. This speech was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this speech was to describe “some local landowners of the seventies (1870’s)” including:

Abel Stearns	William Wolfskill	James Irvine	the Flints
the Bixbys	McFadden Brothers	Jessie & Gabe Allen	the McHenrys
the Forbes	the Collins	Walter Tedford	William T. Tedford
the McCormicks	Issac Williams	William H. Spurgeon	Philip A. Stanton
Benjamin D. Wilson	Mr. Shorb	Mr. Patton	Andrew Glassell
Alfred B. Chapman	Phineas Banning	H.H. Wakeham	Henry C. Berry
the Tedfords	Eduardo Polloreno	Rafael Peralta	J.W. Layman
Logan G. Maxwell	Alfred T. Cole	Mr. Brush	James McFadden
Edward F. Northam	Henry E. Huntington		

Begins his story in 1866 with the partition of Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, the selling of the Stearns Ranchos, William Wolfskill and his role as “pioneer” of the modern orange industry in Southern California and his purchase of Rancho Lomas de Santiago and part of Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. Mentions Andrew Glassell, Alfred B. Chapman, James Irvine, the Flints, the Bixbys, Philip A. Stanton, and Phineas Banning and their acquisition of land. Discusses Gabe Allen as partial owner of the Estancia, J.W. Layman as a charter member of the Santa Ana Masonic Lodge, the area of Newport (Greenville), Gospel Swamp and its history. Talks about the McFadden brothers and their wharf, their business, as well as their journey to California, the story of Abel Stearns and the William T. Tedford family. Describes Stanton’s organization of the West Coast Land and Water Company and founding of Pacific City, as well as a detailed history of Henry E. Huntington and his eventual purchase of Pacific City.

OH3632

**Croddy, William F.** (b. 1903)

“His Life In Orange County, CA”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 5, 1970

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1913-1930s (bulk: 1920s)

An oral history with William F. Croddy who spent most of his life in the Tustin area of Orange County, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about the local area of Tustin and its

surroundings. Mr. Croddy moved from Mc Keen, Illinois and arrived in 1914. He discusses his father's work history, his own work history including the San Juan Fruit Company and Peerless Cafeteria, as well as his high school years. He details at length his experiences working as a fumigator for the San Juan Fruit Company, his work for the daily news as a sports reporter, his work selling real estate lots in Corona Del Mar, working for State Mutual Savings and loan, and how he went broke building houses in the years preceding the Great Depression and how he worked hard to pay off all of his debt. He mentions a typhoid epidemic in Santa Ana in the 1920s, the Los Angeles to Phoenix Road Race (Cactus Derby), and local people including Jim Irvine, Frank Musselman, the Culver family, Sherm Stevens, Mr. Utt, Sam Tustin, and Charlie Artz. Mr. Croddy was a neighbor of Helen Smith and they knew of each other during their early school years.

OH3631

**Darrough, Eleanor** (b. 1881)

“Her Life in Ramona, California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

May 21, 1969

Language: English

Location: At her home in Ramona

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880s - 1910

An oral history with Eleanor Darrough who spent her entire life on the Santa Theresa Ranch in Ramona, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History

Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about the local area and the early settlers. She discuss her mother's family, her grandparents and their trip to California around Cape Horn, her grandfathers family, the Warnocks (from Ireland), several neighbors including the Sawdays, the Warnocks, the Swicaffers, and several local landmarks including Julian, the Indian reservation at Wash Hollow, and Witch Creek. She mentions being raised by her grandparents, their life on the Santa Theresa Ranch, how they acquired food, made clothes, and their relations with the local Indians. She describes her graduation from San Diego State Normal School, her mother's birth in Old Town San Diego, and her grandparents' burial in the Old Mission Cemetery.

OH3633.1

**Dodge, Donald J. (Judge)** (b. 1887)?

“His Life In Newport/Costa Mesa”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 15, 1968

Language: English

Location: His home in Harper (Costa Mesa), California

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1911-1960s (bulk: 1920s-1930s)

An oral history with Judge Donald J. Dodge who spent most of his life in Harper (Costa Mesa) after moving from Chicago, Illinois in 1911 as a young man. This interview was conducted as

part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about Judge Dodge's life as well as the local history of the Newport/Costa Mesa area. He discusses his personal history including his marriage, property he owned in the Newport Heights tract, his attempt at orchard farming, his time as a judge, and of his fortuitous comfort during the Great Depression. He mentions several locals including Stephen Townsend, Howard Woodruff, Henry Meyer, Boyd family, Banning family, Ellis family, Norris family, Claude Huntzinger, H.H. Cotton, Dr. J.W. Wherry, Mr. Vaughn, Gavvy Cravath, Parley Smith, Carl Spencer, Fred Opp, and Charles McLaughlin of the Costa Mesa Communist Party. He also describes various locations including Tewinkle's store, Thurin loading platform, Pacific Electric Rail Line, Taylor's Cannery in Santa Ana, Opp's filling station, and the Newport real estate development of the Bryan and Branford Tract and the Newport Heights Tract by the Townsend-Vandewater Company.

OH3633.2

**Dodge, Donald J. (Judge)** (b. 1887)?

“His Life In Newport/Costa Mesa” (Part 2)

Interviewed by Helen Smith

April 25, 1968

Language: English

Location: His home in Harper (Costa Mesa), California

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1911-1960s (bulk: 1920s-1930s)

An oral history with Judge Donald J. Dodge who spent most of his life in Harper (Costa Mesa) after moving from Chicago, Illinois in 1911 as a young man. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about Judge Dodge's life as well as the local history of the Newport/Costa Mesa area. He discusses his personal history including his role as a magistrate and later as a municipal judge, he details his leadership role and formation of the Newport Mesa Irrigation District as well as Newport Harbor Union High School Board of Trustees, and he describes his apple orchard business including a cooperation that he ran on his farm. He mentions several locals including Stephen Townsend, Howard Woodruff, A.W. Rutan, Paul Bailey, John Purtteman, Charles MacAlary, Lew Wallace, R.P. Mitchell, Leroy Anderson, Sidney Davidson, and State Senator Nels Edwards. He also describes various locations and local history including the Newport real estate development of the Newport Heights tract by the Townsend-Vandewater Company, Newport Mesa tract, Bryan and Bradford tract, oil exploration and prospecting on the mesa including the discovery well in Huntington Beach, and the poor water conditions in the area due to the water access rights being owned by the Irvine Company and the poor original water pipe installation by the local land developers and how they were fixed.

OH3637

**Flaherty, Hazel Greenleaf** (b. 1893)

“Her Life in Orange County, California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 17, 1967

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Ana, California

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1865-1920s (bulk 1900-1920)

An oral history with Mrs. Hazel Greenleaf Flaherty who spent her entire life in Orange County California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to find out details about early Orange County, specifically about the area near her family home in Santa Ana. She discusses her family history from the U.S. Civil War forward, her mother's family property in Hopland, California, her father's migration to California, and her father's relationship with Mr. William Spurgeon. She mentions the Ross family, Jake Crowninshield (?), Fairhaven Cemetery, the Mendocino County Indian Reservation,

the floods of 1915 and 1918, and the orange packinghouse in Olive. She describes her experiences at the West Orange School, 3rd Street and 5th Street schools, nurse's training at Clara Barton College in Los Angeles and later at the Santa Ana Community Hospital, and camping at local Orange County beaches including, Newport, Treasure (Goff) Island, attending church, and the division of her grandmother's property.

OH3634

**Ford, Rose** (b.1876)

“Her life in Southern California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

July 22, 1971

Language: English

Location: Recorded at her home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1870s-1942 (bulk: 1880-1905)

An oral history with Rose Ford a native of Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her experiences living in Southern California. She was born in Ballena (near Ramona) and lived in or around there with her family and then her husband, Hardy Ford until prior to World War One when they moved to Santa Ana. Discusses Wash Hollow Creek, her father's 160 acre homesteaded ranch, her grandfather's (John McIntyre from Pennsylvania) adjacent adobe, and how her father passed away when she was young and her mother married Mr. Swycaffer. Mentions local residents including Sam Warnock, Tom Wood, and both the Fisher and Sawday families who lived near by. Discusses her graduation as valedictorian of the first graduating class at Cuyamaca High School, attended San Diego Normal School, passed the teachers exam, and taught at Oberland School near Julian. Married Hardy Ford (c.1904), lived in Ballena for two years on her family ranch before moving to Ramona staying there for five years before moving to Santa Ana where Mr. Ford was originally from and to be near his father and brothers. They traded their house in Ramona for a house on Baker Street where they lived until

the death of Hardy Ford in 1942. She then moved to Wellington Street in Santa Ana where she rented several rooms to boarders.

OH3636.1

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

December 5, 1969

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1840s-1906 (bulk: 1930s)

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred for which he was intimately familiar with. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides, and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but, practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 1 of 7, Dr. Gaskill vividly describes his father's journey from the east coast of the U.S. to San Francisco, landing in 1849, his father and mother's meeting in 1850, their home in Forbestown and later in Oakland, and what his father did for work. He discusses his family's

relationship with John Muir, the Sierra Club, his first trip to Alaska, a trip to Hetch Hetchy, and his graduation from Berkeley in 1901. Dr. Gaskill explains his hunting trip on Santa Cruz Island, developing a ranch in Lancaster, California, attending the Panama Fair in 1915, the Great San Francisco earthquake of 1906, and the Antelope Valley Desert Riders. He mentions James Irvine, Paul Dinsmore, Katie Brown White, Myford Irvine, Joan Smith, and some detail about their relationships with the Irvine Company.

OH3636.2

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

December 22, 1969

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1900-1930s (bulk: 1900-1915)

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred for which he was intimately familiar with. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides, and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but, practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 2 of 7, Dr. Gaskill talks about James Irvine, Paul Dinsmore, Katie Brown White, Myford Irvine, Joan Smith, and some detail about their relationships with the Irvine Company.

He mentions horse shows in Santa Ana put on by the Assistance League, Leo Carrillo, Chinese immigrants to California, and a visit to the Mt. Lassen volcano after its eruption in 1915. He vividly describes the effects of the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and his personal experiences following the quake, San Francisco attorney, MacInerny and the MacInerny Act which helped people prove their property boundaries following the earthquake, as well as Mayor Schmitz and town boss Abe Ruef and his personal experiences with him. He discusses his ranch, dentist practice, and life in Lancaster, California as well as his affiliation with the Antelope Valley Desert Riders, his social interactions with Air Force Colonel Hap Arnold and Colonel Tooley Spaatz and others at his duck club, as well as his role in the establishment of Edwards Air Force Base to the Antelope Valley.

OH3636.3

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

January 13, 1970

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1890-1910

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred for which he was intimately familiar with. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides, and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but, practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 3 of 7 Dr. Gaskill vividly describes the effects of the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906 including buildings, roads, and landmarks and how they looked as well as and his

personal experiences following the quake and discusses the poor construction of city hall. He mentions several people including Buzz White, entertainers Fred Greenway, Mrs. Saulsberry, Tetrizzini, Schumann Heink, and Helena (Madame) Modjeska, Dr. Steele, Captain Alexander, and Florence Lowe Barns. He discusses several Bay area landmarks and places including the Palace hotel, Fortnightly Club, Columbia Theatre, the Opera House, Guerneville, the Pleasanton Hotel, and the Reliance Athletic Club. He recalls a trip to Tijuana on the steamer ship, Queen with Captain Alexander, long bicycle trips as a boy, his social life in San Francisco prior to his marriage, and one of the first automobiles delivered to Oakland, a Haynes-Apperson, owned by Mr. Burnham.

OH3636.3

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

January 13, 1970

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1890-1910

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred with which he was intimately familiar. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 3 of 7 Dr. Gaskill vividly describes the effects of the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906 including buildings, roads, and landmarks and how they looked as well as and his personal experiences following the quake and discusses the poor construction of city hall and notes the different level of destruction before and after the fires started. He mentions several people including Buzz White, entertainers Fred Greenway, Mrs. Saulsberry, Tetrizzini, Schumann Heink, and Helena (Madame) Modjeska, Dr. Steele, Captain Alexander, and Florence Lowe Barns. He discusses several Bay area landmarks and places including the Palace Hotel, Fortnightly Club, Columbia Theatre, the Opera House, Guerneville, the Pleasanton Hotel, and the Reliance Athletic Club. He recalls a trip to Tijuana on the steamer ship, *Queen*, with Captain Alexander, long bicycle trips as a boy, his social life in San Francisco prior to his marriage, and one of the first automobiles delivered to Oakland, a Haynes-Apperson, owned by Mr. Burnham.

OH3636.4

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 22, 1970

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1840s-1920s (bulk 1900-1920)

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred with which he was intimately familiar. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 4 of 7 Dr. Gaskill vividly describes his father's journey from the East Coast of the U.S. to San Francisco, landing in 1849, his father's work as a carpenter and later a miner for gold at Tolles Diggings in Butte County, his father's expansion into supplying materials to the gold

miners and ultimately opening a successful store, and his father's marriage to his mother at Forbestown. He discusses his youthful adventures in and around Lake Merritt near Oakland, planting trees on Arbor Day on Goat Island (Yerba Buena Island), the visitation of the White Fleet to the bay and the Panama Fair exhibit in San Francisco, his brother and sister, his dentist practice locations in San Francisco, how he ultimately came to leave the city for Lancaster in the spring of 1916, and his marriage to his wife in Lancaster. He narrates significant details about his relationship with as well as the general history of Frank Smith (Francis Marion Smith) the "Borax King", his mother's co-founding of the YWCA with Mrs. Smith, Smith's partner Frank Haven, the Realty Syndicate and Paul Dinsmore, the Key Route, the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, Baron de Ropp, Trona, California and the British Limited company, and borax extraction at Searles Lake.

OH3636.5

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

"His life in California"

Interviewed by Helen Smith

April 8, 1970

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

Late 1800s

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred with which he was intimately familiar. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 5 of 7 Dr. Gaskill discusses Dr. Merritt of Oakland and his ship the *Casco*, engineer David Hewes and how he helped to alter the city of San Francisco by extending it into the bay for easier access by large ships. He describes his high school days and early encounter with Jack London the writer as well as several social encounters later in life, his first trip to Alaska on the

ship *George W. Elder*, and his visit to the town of Metlakatle, Alaska. He mentions several people including Ina Coolbirth, Gertrude Atherton, Mary Austin, Frank and Charlie Norris, George Sterling, and Fulton Oursler.

OH3636.6

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

June 15, 1970

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Ana

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1898-1940s (bulk: 1916-1940s)

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred with which he was intimately familiar. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 6 of 7 Dr. Gaskill describes moving to Lancaster, California, in 1916, his marriage in 1919, his establishment of an alfalfa ranch and dentistry practice in the Antelope Valley, his affiliation with the Masons, and his role a member of the military draft board during the Great War (WWI). He discusses Colonel Hap Arnold and Edwards Air Force Base, Lieutenant Bud Kelly, the first jet in the U.S. and its flight over Muroc Lake, rabbit hunting drives in the Antelope Valley, his wife's son Bill and his enlistment process in to the military during the Second World War (WW2), and growing castor beans for the U.S. government during the Second World War in order to make oil. He remembers American sentiment for and against the Spanish-American War in 1898, the dissent of the IWW or the Wobblies in opposition to the war, Moses H. Sherman and the Mulholland Dam and Hollywood Reservoir and the controversy surrounding them, the Walterson Brothers who were bankers in Inyo, and his relationship with and the story of Judy Garland and her parents Frank and Ethel Gunn and their theatre in

Lancaster. He narrates extensively on his time in dental college at Berkeley (1898-1901), his experiences as a dentist, the equipment that he used, and the trade in general.

OH3636.7

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 12, 1970

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1906

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred with which he was intimately familiar. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 6 of 7 Dr. Gaskill is giving a 15 minute speech to the Historical Society of Orange County. He discusses his experience with and observations of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, the destruction of many buildings, and how much of it was the result of poor construction as opposed to the quake itself.

OH3636.7

**Gaskill, Dr. Percy D.** (b. 1878)

“His life in California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 12, 1970

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1906

An oral history with Dr. Percy D. Gaskill who was born in Oakland, California. He spent his entire life in the state living in several areas including both Northern and Southern California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Dr. Gaskill's life as well as the people he knew and events that occurred with which he was intimately familiar. Dr. Gaskill's family was from New England on both sides and could trace their ancestry back several centuries to their Scotch-Irish roots. Dr. Gaskill was born in 1878 and died in 1971. He spent his entire life living in and traveling to many places in California. He was a dentist by trade but practiced farming and had several real estate holdings.

In this part 6 of 7 Dr. Gaskill is giving a 15 minute speech to the Historical Society of Orange County. He discusses his experience with and observations of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, the destruction of many buildings, and how much of it was the result of poor construction as opposed to the quake itself.

OH3635

**Graser, Vernie** (b. 1896)

“Her Life In Orange County, CA”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 18, 1967

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

Early 1900s

An oral history with Vernie Graser who spent her entire life in Santa Ana, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her experience in and memories about twentieth century Orange County, California, 1900-1967. Specifically, this interview details Graser's early life growing up on a farm in Santa Ana, her parents' separate resettlement west to California from Missouri, including the details of her father's journey in 1884 at age twenty-one with his brother, first to San Francisco and subsequently San Bernardino, then Orange County, and her mother's migration – at age nine months – with her family. She describes the acquisition of the family farm on Fairview Road, how the family house was built, raising cows on several acres of land, as well as managing a dairy until 1918. Includes explicit details about her maternal grandparents, brother, sisters, and extended family elsewhere in California, as well as neighbors, family friends, and acquaintances. Discusses local landmarks and street names, her childhood school – Old Newport School – local farms, specifically, the Ellis family who farmed barley, and annual trips to Balboa. Lastly she discusses her mother's family and where they settled on the *estancia*, or ranch.

OH3952

**Hammond, George Fiske**

“His Experiences as a Pilot around Santa Barbara and the Channel Islands of California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 27, 1970

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930s

An oral history with Mr. George Fiske Hammond, a longtime resident of Santa Barbara, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about his experiences as airplane pilot who flew supplies, people, and mail to people living on some of the Channel Islands, specifically the Lester family who lived on San Miguel Island (1930-1942). He describes the weather, ground

conditions, and landing his airplane on San Miguel, his delivery of the Lester's mail and other supplies. He discusses many stories about the Lester family and his interactions with them: working on projects with Herb Lester, broadcasting weather reports, and the Lester children. He mentions several other flights he made including a trans-continental flight, a trip to La Paz, Mexico, and being stranded with a flat tire on Santa Cruz Island. He describes his flying situation after Pearl Harbor was bombed and tells a story about the female pilot, Bessie Owens. Mrs. Elise Lester also participates in the conversation during the second part of this interview.

Note: See Lester OH3638 and Stevens OH3953

OH3961

**Irwin, Fay**

“Irvine Park During the Second World War”

Interviewed by Jim Sleeper

Unknown date of recording

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1940s

An oral history with Fay Irwin a long time resident of Orange County. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to discuss Irvine Park in particular during the Second World War. There are two people partaking in the discussion with Mr. Sleeper who both possess first-hand knowledge of the Irvine Lake (possibly Mr. and Mrs. Irwin). Mr. Irwin was formerly a custodian of Irvine Park, describes how a pavilion burned down, and discusses 30 inches of rain that fell on the park in February 1942. Examines in detail several animals that at one time live at the park including an ostrich, an alligator, monkeys that were brought there by a doctor, and a bear. The humane society called for the bear's removal, however he remained.

OH3638.1

**Lester, Elizabeth** (b. 1891)

“Her Life on San Miguel Island”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

June 19, 1966

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930-1942

An oral history with Elizabeth (Elise) Lester wife of Herbert S. Lester who spent 12 years with their family on San Miguel Island, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about the Lester family and their life in isolation on San Miguel Island. Herbert S. Lester met Elizabeth Sherman in New York and they married in March 1930. They abruptly moved to San Miguel Island (as the sole human inhabitants) in order to raise sheep at the invitation of Robert Brooks, Mr. Lester's wartime friend. During their years as the “King and Queen of San Miguel,” the Lesters had two children, Marianne and Betsy. The Lester's lived on San Miguel Island until the sudden death of Mr. Lester in June 1942. At which time, Mrs. Lester and her two children move to Santa Barbara.

In this part 1 of 7 Mrs. Lester describes the layout and contents of her house on the island, their furniture, and how the fireplace was built. She describes the food that she cooked, the rations that she ordered, the extent of her food supplies, as well as the types of food her family would eat. She discusses some of her island visitors and the annual sheep shearing crew who would seasonally reside with the Lesters in their home.

Note: See Hammond OH3852 and Stevens OH3953

OH3638.2

**Lester, Elizabeth** (b. 1891)

“Her Life on San Miguel Island”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 1967

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930-1942

An oral history with Elizabeth (Elise) Lester wife of Herbert S. Lester who spent 12 years with their family on San Miguel Island, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about the Lester family and their life in isolation on San Miguel Island. Herbert S. Lester met Elizabeth Sherman in New York and they married in March 1930. They abruptly moved to San Miguel Island (as the sole human inhabitants) in order to raise sheep at the invitation of Robert Brooks, Mr. Lester’s wartime friend. During their years as the “King and Queen of San Miguel,” the Lesters had two children, Marianne and Betsy. The Lester’s lived on San Miguel Island until the sudden death of Mr. Lester in June 1942. At which time, Mrs. Lester and her two children move to Santa Barbara.

In this part 2 of 7 Mrs. Lester describes her trip to the adjacent islands including Santa Rosa and San Nicholas. She describes the early assistance provide by Mrs. Agees, a resident of San Nicholas, who taught her how to handle a life of isolation and self-sufficiency on the island as well as visits by U. F. “Steve” Stevens, Mr. McWilliams, and David Banks Rogers among others. She tells the story of how Mr. Lester found elephant tusks in the ground.

Note: See Hammond OH3852 and Stevens OH3953

OH3638.3

**Lester, Elizabeth** (b. 1891)

“Her Life on San Miguel Island”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 25, 1967

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930-1942

An oral history with Elizabeth (Elise) Lester wife of Herbert S. Lester who spent 12 years with their family on San Miguel Island, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about the Lester family and their life in isolation on San Miguel Island. Herbert S. Lester met Elizabeth Sherman in New York and they married in March 1930. They abruptly moved to San Miguel Island (as the sole human inhabitants) in order to raise sheep at the invitation of Robert Brooks, Mr. Lester's wartime friend. During their years as the "King and Queen of San Miguel," the Lesters had two children, Marianne and Betsy. The Lester's lived on San Miguel Island until the sudden death of Mr. Lester in June 1942. At which time, Mrs. Lester and her two children move to Santa Barbara.

In this part 3 of 7 Mrs. Lester discusses her concerns for schooling the girls and how she ultimately decided to school them on the island. She describes how Dr. and Mrs. Cockerell, he a zoologist, visited the island and collected beetles and other specimens, how George Putnam wanted Marianne to write a book, and discusses the many animals that the Lesters came into contact with while living on the island, especially the balance between doves, cats, and mice.

Note: See Hammond OH3852 and Stevens OH3953

OH3638.4

**Lester, Elizabeth** (b. 1891)

"Her Life on San Miguel Island"

Interviewed by Helen Smith

October 29, 1967

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930-1942

An oral history with Elizabeth (Elise) Lester wife of Herbert S. Lester who spent 12 years with their family on San Miguel Island, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about the Lester family and their life in isolation on San Miguel Island. Herbert S. Lester met Elizabeth Sherman in New York and they married in March 1930. They abruptly moved to San Miguel Island (as the sole human inhabitants) in order to raise sheep at the invitation of Robert Brooks, Mr. Lester's wartime friend. During their years as the "King and Queen of San Miguel," the Lesters had two children, Marianne and Betsy. The Lester's lived on San Miguel Island until the sudden death of Mr. Lester in June 1942. At which time, Mrs. Lester and her two children move to Santa Barbara.

In this part 4 of 7 Mrs. Lester discusses how she met and eventually married Herbie Lester, how Bob Brooks met Mr. Lester and hired him to oversee sheep on San Miguel Island. She describes what they were doing the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, how no one from the U.S. government visited them until December 26th, and how eventually three young sailors were stationed on the island. She explains the details of the last day she saw Mr. Lester alive as well as the end of her family's stay on the island.

Note: See Hammond OH3852 and Stevens OH3953

OH3638.5

**Lester, Elizabeth** (b. 1891)

"Her Life on San Miguel Island"

Interviewed by Helen Smith

June 21, 1968

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930-1942

An oral history with Elizabeth (Elise) Lester wife of Herbert S. Lester who spent 12 years with their family on San Miguel Island, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about the Lester family and their life in isolation on San Miguel Island. Herbert S. Lester met Elizabeth Sherman in New York and they married in March 1930. They abruptly moved to San Miguel Island (as the sole human inhabitants) in order to raise sheep at the invitation of Robert Brooks, Mr. Lester's wartime friend. During their years as the "King and Queen of San Miguel," the Lesters had two children, Marianne and Betsy. The Lester's lived on San Miguel Island until the sudden death of Mr. Lester in June 1942. At which time, Mrs. Lester and her two children move to Santa Barbara.

In this part 5 of 7 Mrs. Lester discusses her many visitors to San Miguel Island including Mrs. Rivas, Bob Ord, and George Putnam, and her familial relations with the Cornwalls of Santa Barbara and George Hammond and family. She describes visits by John Russell and the story of how he built the ranch house (Rancho Rambouillet) in 1906 for Captain W. G. Waters. She narrates a funny story about Mr. Lester admiration for Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie.

Note: See Hammond OH3852 and Stevens OH3953

OH3638.6

**Lester, Elizabeth** (b. 1891)

"Her Life on San Miguel Island"

Interviewed by Helen Smith

December 1-3, 1969

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930-1942

An oral history with Elizabeth (Elise) Lester wife of Herbert S. Lester who spent 12 years with their family on San Miguel Island, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about the Lester family and their life in isolation on San Miguel Island. Herbert S. Lester met Elizabeth Sherman in New York and they married in March 1930. They abruptly moved to San Miguel Island (as the sole human inhabitants) in order to raise sheep at the invitation of Robert Brooks,

Mr. Lester's wartime friend. During their years as the "King and Queen of San Miguel," the Lesters had two children, Marianne and Betsy. The Lester's lived on San Miguel Island until the sudden death of Mr. Lester in June 1942. At which time, Mrs. Lester and her two children move to Santa Barbara.

In this part 6 of 7 Mrs. Lester discusses and names many of the visitors to San Miguel Island, her pregnancy with Betsy, Mr. Lester's hernia operation, and how Bob Brooks fell on a spike and how Mr. Lester sewed him up. She describes finding Indian artifacts, how she dealt with the rowdy shepherders, John Russell's first visit to the island while the Lesters were there, and how a boy named Joe Bartholeski came to stay for a while. She names many of the visitors, researchers, shepherders, and ships that visited San Miguel Island during their stay.

Note: See Hammond OH3852 and Stevens OH3953

OH3638.7

**Lester, Elizabeth** (b. 1891)

"Her Life on San Miguel Island"

Interviewed by Helen Smith

June 5, 1970

Language: English

Location: At her home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1930-1942

An oral history with Elizabeth (Elise) Lester wife of Herbert S. Lester who spent 12 years with their family on San Miguel Island, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about the Lester family and their life in isolation on San Miguel Island. Herbert S. Lester met Elizabeth Sherman in New York and they married in March 1930. They abruptly moved to San Miguel Island (as the sole human inhabitants) in order to raise sheep at the invitation of Robert Brooks, Mr. Lester's wartime friend. During their years as the "King and Queen of San Miguel," the Lesters had two children, Marianne and Betsy. The Lester's lived on San Miguel Island until the

sudden death of Mr. Lester in June 1942. At which time, Mrs. Lester and her two children move to Santa Barbara.

In this part 7 of 7 Mrs. Lester discusses many of the details of as well as how the arrangement between Bob Brooks and Mr. Lester for the operation of San Miguel Island came about, how Bob Brooks received the island from Captain Waters, and the affects of the Great Depression on the Lesters. She details the role of Arno, the sheep on the island, the first English Mass on San Miguel, the three sailors that were billeted with the Lesters following the attack on Pearl Harbor, how a U.S. navy ship went aground on a sandbar, as well as their Model A Ford and how it was both delivered to the island as well as how they used it.

Note: See Hammond OH3852 and Stevens OH3953

OH3625.1

**Meadows, Don** (b. 1897)

“A Tour of Old Orange, California and Its Surroundings” – Part 1

Interviewed by Helen Smith

Date: February 13, 1970

Language: English

Location: Orange, California

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880s – 1920s (bulk: 1900-1920)

An oral history with Don Meadows who moved to Orange, California in 1903 where he grew up. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn details about the city of Orange and the surrounding area. Meadows discusses early settlers, buildings, and local landmarks from the 1880's to 1920's focusing primarily from 1903 forward including the Jorn, Gunther, Campbell, Armor, Odd Fellows, Cuddeback, Ehlen and Grote, Dobner, and Tener buildings as well as the Masonic Temple, Brownell Store, Plaza Square, Orange Union High School, Electric Theatre, Colonial Theatre, Boring Sporting Good Store, Orange Volunteer Fire Department, Bibber's Dry Goods Store, Olive Hotel, Palmyra Hotel, and the Culver Tract. He mentions the route of the Orange Dummy, a motor road that ran from Tustin to Santa Ana by the Santa Ana, Orange, and Tustin Street Railway Company, D.F. Campbell who had one of the first orange grooves in Orange County (1870's), and the evolution of the mining that occurred in Silverado. He describes many of his

personnel experiences including picking apricots for George Shoemaker on his orchard, pitting apricots for Harvey Ritner in Tustin, he remembers seeing Buffalo Bill at the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus in Santa Ana, discusses his trips to California when was a boy, his father's partnership with Alice Armor at the Orange Post, and he remembers camping at upper Silverado and picnicking at the County Park (Irvine Park) and Sycamore Flats, and talks about having one of the first radio stations in Orange County.

OH3625.2

**Meadows, Don** (b. 1897)

“A Tour of Old Orange, California and Its Surroundings” – Part 2

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 21, 1970

Language: English

Location: In Don's car driving around Orange, California

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880s – 1920s (bulk: 1900-1920)

An oral history with Don Meadows who moved to Orange, California in 1903 where he grew up. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn details about the city of Orange and the surrounding area. Meadows discusses early settlers, buildings, and local landmarks from the 1880's to 1920's focusing primarily from 1903 forward he mentions the Odd Fellows Building (later sold to Elks Club), Whitted, Pixley, (owned by D.C. Pixley and his son Walter Pixley), and the Edwards buildings, the World Travel Bureau, Plaza Square, Watson's Drug Store, Meadows Print Shop, the First National Bank (N.T. Edwards, W.H. Burnham, J.R. Porter, D.C. Pixley), Boring Sporting Good Store, Sisters of St. Joseph Dormitory, Forsythe General Store, Woods Variety Store, Newell and Cosart Grocery Store, Thompson and Barber Livery Stable, Grouard Brickyard, Olive Brickyard, J.C. Williams and Sons Blacksmith, Shadel's Furniture Store, Enterprise Barber Shop (owned by Todhunter and Porter), Northcross Pool Hall, Bank of Orange, Lea's Millinery Shop, Gitchell's Stationary Store, Fashion Livery Stable, Orange Theatre, Colonial Theatre (now Friedmann Hall), Santa Ana Valley Irrigation Company, Red Front Variety Store, E.T. Lee's Grocery Store,

First Methodist Church, Crowder's Store, Hennigan's Repair Shop, the Masonic Temple, Orange Union High School, and goes in to some detail about the Orange Volunteer Fire Department. He describes many of his personal experiences including renting a room from B.T. Beale when first moving to Orange, his time as a choir boy at the Orange Presbyterian Church, his attendance at the Center Street Grammar School, his former school teacher Lydia E. Killefer, and a few of his old classmates.

OH3965

**Meadows, Don**

“A Narrative of A Trip To The Kewk Ceremony at San Felipe Village”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 20, 1969

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1933

An oral history with Don Meadows, a longtime resident and historian of Orange County. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to discuss his participation on August 5, 1933 in the Yuma Indian, Kewk? Ceremony at San Felipe Indian Village located three-quarters of a mile south-west of Warner's Ranch (San Diego County). Meadows recounts this story from his field notes taken in 1933. Only four whites were present including Don Meadows, Ed Davis, Doug McPherson, and Rock Bradshaw. Mentions how they brought sacks of oranges with them from McPherson's ranch, describes several old buildings near the village, and mentions a few of the locals who assisted them including, Mike Ambrosio, Jackson (who acted as their interpreter), Chino (who successfully secured their participation with the ceremony), and a Carlisle graduate named Patricio Miguel. The Indians wanted to know why they wanted to participate in the ceremony and eventually allowed them to stay if they did not take pictures, use any recording device, or take notes.

OH3955

Michelsen, Ralph C.

“Local Indians of Southern California”

A Speech Given At San Juan Capistrano High School

Date: Unknown

Language: English

Location: San Juan Capistrano High School, Orange County, CA

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1800s and 1900s

A speech given by Ralph C. Michelsen at San Juan Capistrano High School. Michelsen, an anthropologist taught at the University of Irvine and studied several local Indian groups. This recording is a speech given by Michelsen as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this speech is to discuss local Indian tribes such as, Chumash, Diegueño, Luiseño, Gabrielino, and Juaneño Indians. He focuses on social organization such as leadership, funeral practices including “bunch” or “party” celebrations, incest rules and kinship webs, residence and migration patterns, tribal integration, resource procurement, cultural diffusion from other tribes, and belief systems including creation myths and culture heroes such as *Wiyot* or *Ouit*. He talks about local plants used for dietary purpose, mentions an acorn grove on Saddleback Mountain, several books written about local Indians, and ghost stories as told by a local named Bernice. Local independent invention is discussed particularly about boat making. He mentions that the local Indians primarily utilized ceremonial leaders, practiced transhumance migration and patrilocal residence patterns.

OH3963

**Morrison, Mrs. J. W.** (b 1880s)

“Her Life In Whittier, California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

Date: Unknown

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880-1930

An oral history with Mrs. J. W. Morrison who moved to Whittier, California, when she was two years old. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her life in Southern California. Her family, who were Quakers, moved to Whittier in the 1880's from Osborne County, Kansas. Mrs. Morrison had 9 siblings, lived in Whittier, Bloomfield (Artesia), Long Beach, Anaheim Landing (Seal Beach), Norwalk, and Hawaiian Gardens. She attended Whittier College, ran the beach resort at Anaheim Landing (Seal Beach) with her first husband, and later moved to Laguna Beach with her second husband, Dr. J.W. Morrison and lived next door to a house made from a cook wagon from fields in Costa Mesa. She discusses Bixby Park in Long Beach and the Bixby Ranch, Chief Smith's Ranch, "Crazy Charlie", shooting ducks and the Bolsa Chica Gun Club.

OH3639

**Moulton, Nellie Gail** (b. 1902)

"Reflections on Judge Egan and Madame Modjeska"

Interviewed by Helen Smith

February 21, 1969

Language: English

Location: At her home in Three Arch Bay

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

Early 1900s

An oral history with Nellie Gail Moulton, wife of Mr. Louis Moulton and a longtime resident of South Orange County. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to collect Mrs. Moulton's thoughts about Judge Egan and Madame Modjeska. Judge Richard Egan (an Irishman) was a friend of her husband Louis prior to their marriage. She describes a social group which consisted of Louis Moulton, Judge

Egan, Madame Modjeska and her husband Count Karol Bozenta Chłapowski, and Marah Ellis Ryan that used to meet regularly. Judge Egan (not an official Judge) resided at Harmony Hall in San Juan Capistrano and was remembered with mixed reactions by those who knew him; Mrs. Moulton discusses his physical characteristics and mentions Father O'Sullivan the priest at Mission San Juan Capistrano and the Forster family. She discusses Madame Modjeska and visits to her home in Santiago Canyon, her correspondence and social gatherings with Mr. Moulton before he married, attending Modjeska's farewell performance in Los Angeles circa 1910, and attending a party in Santa Ana hosted by Madame Modjeska in which Mrs. Moulton remembers dancing with Mr. James Irvine. Mrs. Moulton discusses her property (approximately 90 acres) including a walnut orchard in San Juan Capistrano.

OH3954

**Pelanconi, Martina** (b. 1879)

“Growing Up in Yorba, California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

November 3, 1973

Language: English

Location: Her home in Los Angeles

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880-1920 (bulk: late 1800s)

An oral history with Martina Pelanconi who spent her entire life in Santa Ana, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about the area of Yorba, California. Mrs. Pelanconi's great-grandfather was Jose Antonio Yorba and her grandfather was Bernardo Yorba. She discusses living at the San Antonio adobe as well as many great details about its location, condition, and interior and exterior design. She mentions the Yorba Water Company, the grist mill in Yorba, the walnut tree disease epidemic, Kraemer Ranch, and Marcos Forster. She describes cooking with her mother, a trip to Mexico with her mother and husband, her brothers, going to dances in Anaheim, going to church at the Mission in San Juan Capistrano, and her annual visits to Venice Beach with her family

OH3957

**Priest, C. K.**

“A History of Newport Beach and Costa Mesa”

A Speech before the Costa Mesa Historical Society

July 22, 1970

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1800s and 1900s

A speech by C. K. Priest who is speaking before the Costa Mesa Historical Society at their annual dinner at Costa Mesa High School. This speech was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this speech was to provide a history of Newport Beach and Costa Mesa. Priest begins his speech by discussing the local Indians and some of their practices. He mentions the Estancia, the local Missions, and the early settler period, a local flood along the Santa Ana River that occurred in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, city council meetings in Newport Beach. He discusses Prohibition in Newport including rum running in Newport Harbor, transferring liquor loads on San Clemente Island, the Estancia in Costa Mesa had a revolving floor that opened unto a basement with an alcohol still. Priest describes the development of Newport, Costa Mesa, and Corona Del Mar, the Mexican Navy patrolling off the California Coast, and the road race from Los Angeles to Phoenix (Cactus Derby).

OH3959

**Ramsay, Mable**

“Early Laguna”

A Speech

March 2, 1968

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1870's-1960s (bulk: 1876-1904)

A speech by Mable Ramsay discussing early Laguna, California. This is included as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this speech was to educate people about how Laguna was founded and built. Mable Ramsay first visited Laguna in 1911 and moved there in 1936 shortly after marrying. Her and her husband wrote a book about the area utilizing over 120 interviews that they conducted. She begins with the initial land grant and the immediate history following, discussing Pio Pico, the Yorba family, the Moulton family, James Irvine, and others. She discusses homesteading, early Hispanic settlers, the Acunas and the Olivares, the first hotel in Laguna, Concord Stage, the selling of Orange Blossom Honey, the establishment of the Laguna Library, the establishment of Pomona College in Laguna, and the Niguel School. She details the early Mormon settlers who were part of a reorganized group who left Salt Lake City in 1876 at the behest of Andrew Wesley Thompson due to the allowing of polygamy by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Mentions William Brooks, the first Mormon settler in Laguna, his wife Annie Clapp, his building of the first hotel in Laguna, and how Mr. Brooks drove the Concord Stage. She lists several other early settlers including, Dr. Charles Butterfield, his brother Chauncey Butterfield, Joe Lucas, Edna Ritchie Adams, the Thompsons, and George Rogers. She tells how the original name was Lagona and did not become Laguna Beach until 1904.

OH3964

**Rawlings, Walter** (b. 1894)

“Reflections of Old Tustin”

Interviewed by Jim Sleeper

Date of Interview: Unknown

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1890-1930

An oral history with Walter Rawlings of Tustin California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about his life growing up in Tustin where he was a resident for 71 years. Born in Anaheim and raised in Tustin to a father of English descent, he worked in the water works industry. He examines Tustin and other adjacent landmarks including the Pioneer Store (later the Getty store), seeing a movie at the Grand Opera House in Santa Ana when he was 6 or 7

years old, discusses early residents, and describes some local events such as the Los Angeles to Phoenix Road Race, the Tustin String Band, and an early celebration of the Columbus Festival. Mentions the change from Tustin City to Tustin and the continual use of the “old” city seal.

OH3626.1

**Romero, John B.** (b. 1884)

“His Life and the Local Indians of Southern California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

September 25, 1967

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880s-1960s

An oral history with John B. Romero (a Chumash Indian raised by a local Spanish/Mexican Don) who spent his entire life in Southern California. This interview is one of three and was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about Mr. Romero’s life as well as local Indians in Southern California. A descendent of the Chumash, Romero’s birth name is Hosat (meaning elderberry in Chumash). He discusses Indian use of plants for food and medicine, animals for food, clothes, and perfume and artifacts such as stone fishing weights and spears. Discusses geographic areas from Santa Barbara to San Diego, describes his personal history including his parents and extended family, work history, and education, mentions many local notable figures like Tom Forester, Herman Strandt, John Collins, Frank Serrano and Jose Maria Serrano, Fathers Geiger and Engelhardt, and others including Sir Earlscliffe of Britain, David Banks Rogers, Campbell Grant, Dwight Whiting, Captain Patterson Rowe, and J.W. Winterbourne. He describes much detail about Chumash life including eating, hunting, and subsistence patterns as well as a detailed story about their worship of Polaris and their creation myth (A copy of which is included in this collection). He identifies many local landmarks including Rattlesnake, Santa Margarita, Robinson, Niguil, Laguna, Limestone, Silverado, and Sycamore canyons, Canada Las Pulgas, Trabuco Adobe, Moulton ranch, Mugu Point, Strawberry Peak, Santa Ynez Valley, San Miguel Island, Irvine Ranch, Bowers Museum.

OH3626.2

**Romero, John B.** (b. 1884)

“His Life and the Local Indians of Southern California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

December 20, 1967

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880s-1960s

An oral history with John B. Romero (a Chumash Indian raised by a local Spanish/Mexican Don) who spent his entire life in Southern California. This interview is one of three and was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about Mr. Romero's life as well as local Indians in Southern California. Discuss his archaeological work including a cache of coins he found in Death Valley belonging to Mr. Walker, stone compasses he found in Death Valley, deciphering Indian hieroglyphics on Bell Rock in Trabuco Canyon, and an encounter while hunting with Madame Modjeska. Describes the Chumash Indian Conception of the Creation World (a copy included in this file), peon songs of Cahuilla Indians, sings the Chumash “Song of the Bear” (copy include in file), Chief Pablo and the Malki Museum, details a book he wrote about California botany with assistance from Dr. Sparks and Dr. Kroeber from UC Berkeley. Narrates many personal stories about himself, his family including his father's life (a Chumash Indian) describing how he was found abandoned as a baby by the Mr. Romero (a Spanish Don) who adopted him, and recites a story told by his father about an encounter with a bandit named Bill Colts. Discusses his work on the Channel Islands, mentions Captain Waters and several Basque shepherds (Borderi, Huichtalote), his work at a Tanama Indian gem mine in San Valentin, Mexico, Magee House at Las Flores and Pueblo Libre Indian Village on Santa Margarita Ranch.

OH3626.3

**Romero, John B.** (b. 1884)

“His Life and the Local Indians of Southern California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 14, 1969

Language: English

Location: His home on Cooper Street in Santa Ana, CA

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1880s-1960s

An oral history with John B. Romero (a Chumash Indian raised by a local Spanish/Mexican Don) who spent his entire life in Southern California. This interview is one of three and was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about Mr. Romero's life as well as local Indians in Southern California. Discusses how he lived in El Toro when the Whitings lived there, Whitings restoration of the Serrano Adobe, George Osterman's store, his relationship with the Serrano family, his unearthing of a copper pot his "uncle" Frank Serrano used to feed the local Indians that lived in a cave called Niguil, and the Sepulveda Adobe on Irvine Ranch. Tells how the USA treated the Indians poorly and the work on their behalf by a lawyer named Mr. Collett. Describes his archaeology work in El Toro, Mission Viejo, and San Felipe near Warner Ranch (some in conjunction with Dr. Kroeber of UC Berkeley), his work with Indians living in Palm Springs, Yuma, Indio, Imperial Valley, and Warner Springs among others, his role as the local director of Indian Affairs, and his work on Serrano Park. Identifies several *barrios* or local Mexican villages including Colonia Independencia and Colonia Saragoza, elaborates on his trips to San Juan Capistrano including the Mission and Tom Foster's shop. He details his hilarious and ultimately successful attempt to join the US, Canadian, and British armies during the First World War.

OH3958

**Rowe, Harry M.**

“Women in California History”

A Speech before the Costa Mesa Historical Society

March 10, 1970

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1800s and 1900s

A speech by Harry M. Rowe, a native Californian, presented to the Costa Mesa Historical society. This speech is part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this speech was to describe a few of the famous women in California History. Mr. Rowe begins with Queen Califia and the story of her island of Amazons. He mentions Francisca Benicia Carrillo de Vallejo (wife of Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo), Jessie Benton Frémont (wife of John Charles Frémont), the first baptism (which was for two young girls) in California at the Los Christianitos, María Concepción Argüello (the lover of Russian explorer Nikolay Rezanov), Lola Montez, Lotta Crabtree, Helen Hunt Jackson's Ramona, Helena Modjeska, and Aimee Semple McPherson.

OH3956

**Mr. Schreiber**

“Santa Ysabel Asistencia Mission Bells”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

Date: 1975?

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1926-1960s

An oral history with Mr. Schreiber who spent his entire life in California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to tell the story of how he acquired the mission bells from the Santa Ysabel Asistencia site which were stolen in 1926 and of his concern that their whereabouts be somehow recorded. His father acquired the bells from Indians from Palm Springs who apparently had stolen them thinking they were made of gold and had cut them up to divide the booty. The Indians were acquaintances of an Indian named Fig Tree John who claimed to be a guide for John C. Fremont and was a garage customer of his father.

OH3628

**Sepulveda, Adolfo II**

“Sepulveda Adobe”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 31, 1969

Language: English

Location: Recorded at his home in Tustin

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1800s

An oral history with Adolfo Sepulveda II a native of Orange County. He lived his entire life with his grandmother a descendent of local Indians. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn facts about the old Sepulveda Adobe on the San Joaquin Ranch (Bommer Canyon). Describes how his father was born in the adobe but was forcefully removed when he was a small boy due to the acquisition of Rancho San Joaquin by James Irvine, Benjamin and Thomas Flint, and Llewellyn Bixby. Discuss the controversy of how his grandfather, Joaquin, lost or sold the land, how he used to visit the site when he was a boy, describes many details of the rancho and adobe as he remembers it, how his great grandfather, Jose, acquired the and originally from Governor Pio Pico, and mentions similarities with the Serrano family and how they lost their rancho. He

describes how after leaving the adobe his family moved to the Aguilar Adobe in San Juan Capistrano before ultimately moving in with Adolfo Manriquez on his property off Ortega Highway where he was raised.

OH3967

**Sepulveda, Joseph - Carisoza, Louie and Nellie**

“Sepulveda Family and Old Residences”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 24, 1969

Language: English

Location: Recorded at the Carisoza home off Santiago Road

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1870-1960s (bulk: early 1900s)

An oral history with Joseph Sepulveda, Louie Carisoza and his wife Nellie. Joseph is a descendent of Adolfo Sepulveda and both Louie and Nellie are descendents of Jose Serrano. All three are natives of Orange County. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn about the Sepulveda family and some of their early residences. Discuss the youth of Joseph's father (Adolfo Sepulveda I b. 1869) who was placed in an orphanage and ran away at the age of 12, Joseph's brother Adolfo II, other members of the Sepulveda family including Delphina (married to Johnny Houston). Joseph mentions the Sepulveda adobe on the San Joaquin Ranch (Irvine Golf Course area) where his father Adolfo was born, details about the ranch including a duck club, water works plant, a *cienea* (swamp) on the ranch where Retriever dog trials were held, and how the site was partially excavated with Jim Sleeper. Cites how Adolfo had a “blind pig” (illegal bar during Prohibition) in San Juan Capistrano, how Joseph's mother's uncle lost his adobe in San Juan Capistrano (now El Adobe Restaurant) because he refused to pay taxes. Louie Carisoza discusses the McGee family (brothers Billy and Victor), the several adobes they owned, and how Billy was superintendent at Santa Margarita Ranch. Louie mentions the Forster family, how his grandfather, Frank Serrano, visited an Indian doctor near Pechanga, a placer mine in Lupus Canyon near Ortega Highway run by Andy Serrano, the old O'Neill bunkhouse off Ortega Highway, and how his aunt worked for Madame Helena Modjeska.

OH3629

**Sepulveda de Carmelo, Mary**

“The Estancia House”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 24, 1970

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1900s

An oral history with Mary Sepulveda de Carmelo. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to learn details about the Estancia (Half Way House or Diego Sepulveda Adobe) in Santa Ana and her belief that it was haunted. Discusses Mrs. Frances Alcala who resided there, would smell candles burning, and hear strange noises and chanting. Mrs. Alcala would dig up artifacts from the surrounding fields and would sell them to Mr. Alcala's employer, Mr. Segerstrom. Mrs. Alcala would use to pay her doctor bills due to her illness (cancer). Discusses prevailing rumors of treasure that was buried very near to the Estancia and how visitors destroyed the house trying to find it. Mrs. Sepulveda de Carmelo's father was possibly born at El Refugio.

OH3962

**Serrano, Ray and Doris**

“Her Life In Orange County, CA”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

March 1971

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1900s

An oral history with Ray and Doris Serrano who spent their entire lives in Orange County, California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to find out information about the area around their home near Trabuco Canyon. Ray is a descendant of Don Jose Serrano. He discusses James Irvine, the Irvine ranch and the Sepulveda adobe, Hidden Canyon, Trabuco Canyon and the adobes that were there, Freemont Canyon and Mr. Freemont, Weir Canyon and the alter rock that was there, and the coal mine on the backside of Irvine Dam. He mentions Gobernador Canyon (Coto de Caza), the floods in Weir Canyon of 1916, 1938, and 1969, and the “old mission” on Ortega Highway.

OH3953

**Stevens, “Steve” U. F.**

“His Experiences on and around the Channel Islands of California”

Interviewed by Helen Smith

August 27, 1970

Language: English

Location: At his home in Santa Barbara

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

1920s-1930s

An oral history with Mr. U. F. [Urban Fuller] “Steve” Stevens who spent his entire life in and around the Santa Barbara area including the several Channel Islands of California. This interview was conducted as part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about his experiences as a seaman navigating the waters around the Channel Islands, specifically during the time period in which the Lester family lived on San Miguel Island (1930-1942). Mr. Stevens used his boat to ferry people and supplies to Herb and Elise Lester, including Ralph Hoffman and others from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. He discusses how he met the Lesters as well as narrates many stories about Herb and his interactions with him, including the time Herb was airlifted from the island after seriously injuring his hand. He describes the weather and water conditions near San Miguel Island, how the ship, *Cuba*, went aground, archaeological finds on the island, and fishing for

swordfish. He mentions Ira Eaton and his ship, the *Sea Wolf*, Pelican Bay on Santa Cruz Island, and an oil spill which occurred near the Channel Islands of California.

Note: See Lester OH3638 and Hammond OH3952

OH3960

**Van Holt, Keith**

“A Costa Mesa Historical Society Meeting Planning Fairview Park”

Meeting discussion

March 12, 1975

Language: English

Location: Unknown

Project: Helen Smith Oral History Project

A meeting by members of the Costa Mesa Historical Society discussing the planning of Fairview Park. This meeting is a part of the Helen Smith Oral History Project. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the plans for building Fairview Park including the architect, design ideas such as a lake, a stream, parking, a golf course, camping, and horses. They note how the land for the park was partially owned by both the City of Costa Mesa and Orange County. As a result they turned the land over to the county who allowed the City of Costa Mesa to administer and maintain it. The group also examines various park concepts.

