

## RANCHO CUCAMONGA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewees: Patricia Riley Ledig

Harry Ledig, Jr.

Interviewers: Margo McBane

Margaret Finnegan

Location: Upland, CA.

Date: June 5, 2001

MM Let's start at the beginning, Harry, why don't you tell us when your parents came to this area and where did they come from?

HL Okay. My great grandfather had 5 sons and 2 daughters. Came in 1891 from St. Louis, Missouri. He and his brother came from Alsace-Lorraine to the Mississippi River, and they came up the Mississippi to St. Louis, lived there for many years and reared a family, this family. He moved from there to Davenport, Iowa and Springfield, Iowa and then came to Alta Loma.

MM What brought them to Alta Loma?

HL Citrus growing.

MM Oh, they heard about it?

HL Oh yes. You see, he had an interesting story about him, which I should fill in. He said that when he was 16, in Missouri, he pruned an apple orchard for some real mean guys who called themselves the Younger Brothers [Jessie and Will James]. He thought it was really, really funny but they were just mean guys. He didn't like them but he liked their money. His activity back there was in the meat business. What I'm thinking is I have shaving mug emblazon with the butcher's

symbols and so forth.

MM So he learned something about fruit growing from the Younger Brothers.

HL Perhaps, I don't know.

MM So he knew something about agriculture.

HL Oh, yes, definitely.

MM So when he came out here he was...

HL Oh yes, very definitely. It was his strong suit. Growers have instincts, some better than other. He had very good judgment in a sense.

MM How did he pick this region? I mean why didn't he go up someplace else?

PL I know. They were of the Mennonite religion and there was a Mennonite settlement here....

HL Oh Lord, yes.

PL I think that they all came because they heard about it.

HL You know, we ought to mark this, Mennonite, Mennonite, Mennonite.

MM How long had the Mennonites been settled here?

HL About that time.

PL They came close to that time, 18...

MM So about the same time as the Brethren of La Verne.

PL Yes, I think so.

HL See, my mother's family came in 1906, they lived in Upland and they were also Mennonites, but that's a different story.

MM Okay. So in terms of, this is your great grandfather that is coming from St. Louis. So now he is settled in this Mennonite community. Were all Mennonites engaged

- in citrus production? Is that what they did here?
- PL I think in the Alta Loma area they were.
- HL Yes, I was going to say I recall one man who was a harness maker, he was great. You had blacksmiths, harness makers in those days and he was a harness maker in Upland. Others I can't really recall.
- PL Some were merchants too.
- HL Oh yes.
- MM Now, did they dominate the Alta Loma community? I mean they were the Alta Loma community?
- PL No, not entirely. There were lots of Russians.
- MM Russians. Were they new immigrants?
- PL New.
- MM Were they engaged in citrus or viticulture?
- HL Citrus. Captain Demens was very prominent. He was one of the, well he was the leading family in Alta Loma. He was on the north end of Archibald Ave., by Hillside Drive. He was very very active. In 1912 Pacific Electric was coming through Upland heading for San Bernadino. He felt, properly, that it should come northward where we wouldn't have to haul our fruit all the way to Upland. He formed a committee...
- HL L.M. Ledig, my grandfather. Mr. Wagner, Mr. Roth, other gentlemen formed a committee. They solicited funds, formed a district actually, if you had bare land you were assessed a dollar an acre, if you had vineyard you were assessed five dollars an acre and if you had citrus you were assessed fifteen dollars an acre.

Cost you thirty bucks if you had twenty acres. That provided a fund to buy the right away right through there.

MM And the Pacific Electric was for, this was for trains?

HL Yes, yes.

MM For marketing?

HL Yes, it was for marketing, that was their point of view. It was [also] for transportation. We had the so-called "big red cars".

MM Exactly, that's what I was thinking of Pacific Electric. They were both, I didn't realize they also did citrus transport.

HL Oh yes, very definitely. So that it was very, very necessary, vital. It was just great, you know, for those...

MM So that is how you got a stop up here, they built a station here.

HL Oh yes.

MM So you paid into it.

HL I have a picture of the station in Alta Loma. It was part of our lives. But actually the citrus industry was based on water, everything revolved around water. Well [there were some] other things too. Citrus you had winds, you had floods, you had earthquakes, and these things happened periodically. For example - there were freezes in 1898, 1892 actually, 1898, 1913, 1937, 1949-50, then 1968. In 1968, I was still a grower...

MM Oh you were?

HL Yes. We lived on Beryl Ave. Patricia picked up our daughter, she was in school, there was about 4 inches of snow on the street and she just spun out. It was a

concrete street.

MM At that time of the time of your grandfather and great grandfather, they would use smudging?

HL Oh yes.

PL We did too.

MM You did too?

HL You see, for orchard heating, to be proper, you didn't do much heating before 1922, 1926, or 1928. Mostly you had to have one heater to a tree, a nine gallon pot heater.

MM Were they oil-based or coal-based?

HL No, they were burning crude oil, very stinky, very black smudge.

MM How did that effect the air you were breathing?

PL Terrible.

HL It was so black, it just soiled everything. In our homes...

MM What was it like inside the house?

PL It was bad. Oh, we had paper bags over the draperies.

MM Because it was get so black.

PL Oh it would just get black inside, you would have to repaint.

MM And what about for your own self?

PL Terrible, you would see children at school with little black noses and, you know, it was awful.

HL It was a vital part of the business...

PL People didn't complain because most of the children in the schools were from

parents who were either growers of their families worked for the packinghouses or you know something like that. So they didn't complain until recent years.

MM Who would stay up all night to make sure the smudges were...

HL We did it, it was just part of your life. Very commonly, for example, I had a standard crew of 5 fellows,

MM That was a year-round crew that you kept?

HL No, they were mainly school boys. They were very good friends of mine, they grew up...

MM Were they white or Mexican?

HL Oh no, they were all natives. Well, the McKee family is native to Alta Loma. The George Allen family was packinghouse manager. So they were native boys, who went to high school down here...

MM At Chaffey?

HL At Chaffey. When it was really bad I had about 21 people in the field but always had 5.

MM Did the packinghouse, if you were a member of Sunkist, would Sunkist send out people to help or that was your responsibility?

HL That was our responsibility. It was really self-designated, my choice. But you see, in Alta Loma, we had a huge [oil] tank farm on the corner of Baseline, west of Amethyst, about 200,000 gallons of [oil in] storage. We were, from our place, one 20-acres had 20,000 [gallons of oil], another had 18 acres and we had one with 40,000 gallons of [oil] storage. Periodically we filled those; we had pipelines running up the street where you bring a truck and trailer. Heck, in '48 and '49,

we were burning a truck and trailer load every night. Between 7 and 8,000 gallons [of oil] a night.

MM So when you are talking gallons you're talking gallons of oil.

HL Yes. We consumed a great deal of oil. Can I just sidetrack for a minute? Carnelian was concrete curbed. I had a four-inch line going out to Carnelian. The tanker was a fellow I knew very well, I saw him all the time. He came in and he didn't know that that line was also pressurized because I was pumping heater oil for underground heaters. It had a four-inch line. He took a plug out and he got white washed with oil, it just squirted all over him, but he was able to get this plug back into this four inch pipe. Oh, he was a mess. He came in and we washed him down, I loaned him some of my clothes, he was larger than I was, redressed him. He emptied his load while he was changing. Then he left the area. A boy by the name of Smutz, a very logical fellow. He drove out in the pickup hit the oil by the curb, and then said, oops that's unsafe. Without thinking he took his smudge torch and lit the oil. It burned all the way up the street. The truck was gone. It just scorched the side the trees up the street. You know, these things happen.

MM Just in terms of the citrus orchard, how large was your great grandfather's orchard and how large was you father's and then how large was yours?

HL Well...

PL We had about 150 acres all together, well, the family.

MM That was a constant from the 1890's?

HL No, no. L.M. had the northwest corner of Hellman and Banyon, the northwest

property. That was 20 acres, he planted it in 1891, 1892..

MM Did he plant Lisbons or...

HL Well, he planted Navels, Valencias, and Lemans fruit trees.

MM What kind of root stock did he use? Sour or sweet?

HL He used, it was always sweet stock, so we were fortunate, we didn't have quick decline disease. It really came from a nurseryman...

MM It came up from the Moorpark area?

HL No, actually in the 1890's there was a nurseryman in San Dimas.

MM Oh, Teague Nursery?

HL No, long before Teague Nursery. Do you know where the golf course is on the north side of San Dimas? His name was Hansen. He had a nursery. He first came and planted the Huber Ranch in 1878, and lived in Thorpe house on the SE corner of Banyon and Hellman, while he planted that. When my grandfather came, he liked the stock over on Huber's and arranged to buy the stock. So then went with horse and wagon.

MM Did your great grandfather have much contact with the other growers? You know, in Claremont or in Upland or La Verne?

HL Oh definitely. He knew them all, they were pals.

PL Harry, excuse me. You're a little bit wrong on that - your great grandfather did not plant anything, your grandfather did.

HL Oh, you're right.

MM What year did they start planting?

HL 1891.

MM 1891, so that was the grandfather.

HL Yes, that was all bare land. There was a period [when] where everyone had to build a home so they lived in a tent.

MM They lived in a tent until they built their homes?

HL That's right.

MM They lived on their properties?

HL That's right. They had a severe wind, it blew the tent down, and they moved onto the Thorpe's ranch until they could rebuild. Previously Dr. Reed, about 40 acres south, had the same situation. He moved into the Wittfields until he could reconstruct and it was kind of a habit. The wind blew, that's all there was to it.

MM And what kind of houses? Were they craftsman style houses or....were they big houses or small houses?

PL Don't we have a picture here? Yes, I would say it was more like Victorian. They were just two-story.

MM So they weren't big mansions necessarily?

PL No, I don't think so.

MM Some of them that you see up in.....

HL Oh yes, they're huge.

MM Up in Riverside and...

HL Yes.

MM They're mansions. Because these are small acreages, only 20 acres...

HL Most owners had 20 acres and I'm thinking they...

MM But at that time some of the ranchers around here had larger acreage, like in La

Verne there was a lot of 100-acreage in the 1890's...

HL Oh yes.

MM They tended to get smaller later. Now yours were smaller from the beginning.

Was that a Mennonite, that people kind of...

PL Oh, I don't think it really was.

HL No.

PL I think it was just what was available to buy probably.

MM And then, and he maintained that 20 acres, and when did it start getting larger?

HL In 1913 there was a new 20....

MM You bought more?

HL Yes, we planted that in 1926.

MM How many acres are you at now?

HL 20 acres on Beryl Ave.

PL Plus the 20 acres on Hellman. Plus the 20 acres north, that was bare, we never did plant.

MM So we are up to 5 20-acre plots.

HL Yes. We had 20-acres down on San Bernardino Road.

MM So that's 6...

HL Yeah, so..

MM We are up to 120...

PL And with the Grasses and B.W.H. (Bob Nesbit, Wally Grass, and Henry Ledig), we had more land.

HL We bought that foreclosure property. In fact that was a successful venture....

MM When did you do this?

HL About 1943.

MM Can you explain the venture?

HL Oh yeah, well, what happened was, Bob Nesbit, Wally Grass and my father were father and I were friends for any years. It was just an opportunity so we said let's buy the darn thing and see what we can do. Well we were lucky, we bought the thing and sold it to MOD (Mutual Orange Distributors Producers Cooperative) for enough to pay for the 20-acres of citrus, on the SW corner of Church Street and Archibald in Cucamonga, that they got free.....

MM That was a good venture...

HL We were in other businesses together. They just had fun. Really enjoyed it and....

MM When your grandfather started planting these citrus groves, when did they join Sunkist to do the packing?

HL In the 1920's. 1922, in that range. Uh..

MM Up until then who did the packing?

HL I think they did there own shipping directly, on the Santa Fe. Something that was awfully important to me, this Lisbon lemon came from Hansen's Ranch. It was a random selection through the original planting on the Elizabeth's place. Here, there about three trees, four trees, were superior, outstanding, immense, 30 feet across and very, very productive. We used those buds, from those trees, to plant my father's lemons. In 1913 on Carnelian Avenue, he was producing between a thousand or eleven hundred boxes a per acre, when it was typically 5 or 600. It was the money machine.

MM All in the choice of your cuttings.

HL We had a terrible dispute because the Russians wanted to buy the bud stock and we didn't think much of the Russians, we didn't want a thing to do with them and...

MF You're talking about the Russian immigrants?

HL No, no, the Russians in Russia...

MF Oh, the real Russians!

HL We were violently opposed and yet the state department said...

MM What year is this?

HL Oh, in my memory it has to be, lets say, 1929 or 1930, somewhere in there. Down on the Coxes, the Russians had very much the same thing, and I had an engineer who worked for me who was a Polish refugee. He was captured by the Russians. He compared notes with me about cranking Fordson, because they had Fordson, and they were mean things. Before they had impulse magnetos, you could crank for half an hour. If you crank too much, it would flood, if you crank it would dry. Frank and I had something very much in common, we hated tractors.

MM Did you end up sending them any cuttings?

HL Oh yes, we sent them about a thousand bud sticks. A bud stick is about this long, it might have 8 or 12 buds. We sent them a thousand.

MM Now how did you create the Ledig Lemon?

HL It was propagated from L.M.'s first cuttings from Hansen's. From there it was chosen to grow in the nursery for my father's lemons. It was propagated in there

and they varied, they weren't all perfect. Among those, we chose. We did another job in 1930 for this fourth parcel. They were propagated over and over, we used to sell...

MM But was it a combination of a Lisbon with another kind?

HL We can't tell, they called it a short thorn Lisbon.

MM Oh, but you don't exactly know how it came about?

HL Oh yes, it came from Hansen Ranch. The origin was there. More than that I don't know.

MM But you got the name. They called it the Ledig Lemon.

HL Yes, exactly.

MM They don't call it the Hansen Lemon.

HL Oh no, absolutely not. It wasn't even thought of that way.

MM But it came from Hansen.

HL To my knowledge.

PL The original.

HL So many things have to be reported as surmise and I don't like to say anything that is incorrect so the best I can do is give you my estimates. I don't know of any citrus growers, it was very important that that was the business. Thinking in terms of economics in Alta Loma, let's talk about the '20s. When I think of the economy of Alta Loma, after all Rancho Cucamonga is what we are talking about. Alta Loma had a barber, 2 chairs and a pool table, Billings Grocery store, Sevrin Johansen the blacksmith, in Cucamonga we had Walt Buehler the blacksmith. Incidentally, along with Walt Buehler there is kind of an aside story. My father

lent some money to Walt to expand his factory. He was a blacksmith. He wanted a build a plant to manufacture gas and storage tanks for service stations, a thousand gallons, five fifties, things for trucks. What happened was he lent the money to Walt. Walt wasn't quite able to pay. Walt said, "Why don't you take over half interest?" My dad said, "If I can handle marketing of my own product line do you want to build it here and we'll build it together." He said, "I want to build huge storage tanks, hundred thousand gallon tanks. Propane in rural communities, is a wonderful product for home heater use." He opened a sales territory in five states: Arizona, New Mexico, West Texas, Colorado, Idaho, and back, for propane.

MM What was the name of that company?

HL Buehler Tank and Welding Works, because that is what he had. He was a blacksmith but he came to welding works for his tank business. We came along and said, "Let's change the product line and do something else." So that is the way that that went.

MM What year were you born?

HL 1922.

MM Where did you go to school?

HL Alta Loma Grammar School.

MM Was it a K-8th school?

HL Oh yes, it was 2 classes per classroom, corner of Amethyst and 19th Street.

MM Did it only service Alta Loma or other areas?

HL Just Alta Loma.

MM Were there at that time Mexican citrus workers?

HL Oh yes.

MM Did they go to Alta Loma as well?

HL Oh yes.

MM They went to the same school?

HL Yes, in fact, it sounds derogatory but we didn't think so, there was a street called Monte Vista, also called Shack Alley, when the high school bus would go by, the drivers would say "everybody out for shack alley".

MM Because that is where the Mexican "colony" was?

PL Not necessarily.....

HL That still goes on, every September they have a picnic in the Alta Loma Park...

MM Oh, they do?

HL The shack alley people,

MM What time of year is the picnic?

HL September.

PL The day after Labor Day. Or the first Saturday after Labor Day it is. But you know, you couldn't say that today.

HL Oh no!

MM Oh no, but you know, they had nicknames, because I worked for the city of Pico Rivera and they called it there Jimtown, the Mexican colonies.

HL That's interesting.

PL Our's was Northtown.

HL You worked in Pico Rivera?

MM Yes, I used to work for them, well, just doing the same kinds of projects, of interviewing people....

HL I had an aunt, Ruth Ledig, who was the biology teacher at Pico Rivera.

MM Oh, at the high school?

HL Yes and her husband was also a biology teacher there....

MM You have family all over southern California!

HL Her father was G.P. Ledig. She was born on Amethyst in Alta Loma with her brother, Paul Ledig. That family was kind of interesting...

MM But we gotta go back to Rancho Cucamonga....so, you went to the school there and it was K-8th grade and then where do you go to high school?

HL Chaffey.

MM Chaffey. So you come down here.

HL Class of '40.

MM You graduated in the class of '40?

HL Oh yeah, wonderful time.

MF Did you meet at Chaffey?

PL Yes.

HL Oh yes.

MF Can we ask when you were born?

PL '22.

MF Where were you born?

PL In Los Angeles.

MF When did your family move to this area?

PL In about 1930 as I remember.

MF Is there a story to that?

PL Well, I had a great grandmother, who I think was very Victorian, when I look back on it now. She thought we were being, I had 4 sisters, and this great grandmother thought that we were too close to Hollywood, which wasn't highly respected in those years you know...

MF You mean the movie industry?

PL The movie industry, yes. She thought that was a terrible place for little girls to grow up. So she suggested that we look for a ranch or something out in the country. My parents did and found a home in Etiwanda, just 10 acres, but that is where I grew up.

MM Are you also a Mennonite?

PL No. No, no. In fact, I had never known a Mennonite or the Brethern people at all. It was quite different for me, the whole thing was a cultural change for me when I moved out here.

MM In what way? How was it different?

PL Well, I had playmates in Los Angeles, here...

MF How old were you when you moved?

PL About 8. So out here everybody was at least 10 acres away from you, so the children were spread out you see.

MM Who did you play with?

PL Well, I went to grammar school one year in Etiwanda and after that my parents drove us to Saint Georges in Ontario. Well I went to 5 grammar schools, 2 in Los

Angeles, and Etiwanda Grammar School, St. Georges, and then to Girls School in San Bernadino.

MM So were you from a Catholic background?

PL Yes.

MM So your parents actually transported you.

PL Oh yes.

MM Was that a common thing, to be driven to school at that time?

PL Oh, I don't know, no, everybody thought it was rather strange I think.

MM It just seems unusual.

PL Yes, they called it the Riley school bus when we would arrive, it was 5 girls.

MM Oh, there were 5 siblings?

PL 4.

MF Your family, did they grow lemons?

PL Oranges, but we just had 10 acres of oranges.

MM Was that enough to live on?

PL On no, not in those times it wasn't really.

MM Did your father or mother do something else?

PL No, my mother was always a housewife, my father was for a time in the Assessors Office in San Bernardino as an assistant assessor.

MM How did you find the Mennonite community different, I mean it was isolated, you mentioned that, but culturally how was it different?

PL I didn't feel it was any different at all. I did feel that the Brethern people were different because the girls dressed different.

MM Oh, so you knew Brethern...

PL They were here, they had a college.

MM Oh yeah, at La Verne.

PL There was a small college here.

MM Oh really?

PL Yes.

HL Without being derogatory, we used to talk about the “bonnet babes.” They were wild drivers! They were really pushy.

PL They wore the little bonnets, you know.

HL I have many friends who are Brethern. One of my real estate appraiser friends, is a Brethern, who I have known for thirty years

MM So there was contact between the Mennonites and the Bretherns?

PL I think they were rather close.

HL The fact that you are in the same business, but you are a Brethern and you are a Mennonite. There were no descriptions and no separations.

MF How did you two meet?

PL In high school.

MM What year was that?

PL Well, we graduated in ‘40 and we were freshman I guess in ‘36.

HL Our social life then was really interesting when you think about it. Our activities were sports, dating, and dancing. There was an E-Bell Club...

MM Why don’t you explain what the E-Bell Club was.

HL It was a woman’s club and they had an excellent dance floor well waxed and

local...

MM So that's where everybody would go dancing?

HL Oh, every Friday night.

MM Is it like a cotillion or something?

PL Not really, no.

HL It was more...

MM It was a social dance.

PL Yes, I think they did that to keep the children off the streets, the teenagers.

HL As you remember, we had the palladium on weekends. There was the Ambassador Hotel and...

PL Yes, we did that on Sunday afternoon, tea dancing.

HL Right.

MF Would you drive all the way to Los Angeles for these things?

PL Oh yes!

MF Did you have your own car in high school?

PL In our senior year.

HL Oh, an interesting thing about this, she lived in Etiwanda which wasn't as bad. I lived in Alta Loma and would drive to Etiwanda, pick her up and drive to Hollywood, then drive home.

MM This was in the 1930's?

HL Oh yes.

MM That's a lot of driving.

PL We didn't have any freeways...

MM You didn't take the red cars?

PL Well, I used to, to go to downtown Los Angeles to shop with my mother or something like that because it was easier.

MM But it's not very exciting.

PL No.

HL Well you know, something kind of routine in those days, my father had a medical problem. He had to see a physician every Friday on Wiltshire Blvd. out around Alvarado. He would drive in and he smoked a pipe at that time, and John's Pipe Shop, on the corner of 17th and south Spring. John packaged good blended tobacco. The shop was called the That John Keeps, Keeps John. We would buy tobacco there, go out to Elmer's, and drive back home. Some of the time we would take the P.E., some of the time we would drive. That was just every Friday.

MM In terms of sports, you mentioned that you do sports, what kind of sports was that?

PL Tennis, skiing,

HL Oh my yes!

PL We did a lot of skiing.

MM In the local mountains here?

PL In Big Bear, his family had a home up there.

MM Up at Big Bear?

HL Big Bear, north shore up around Fawn Skin.

MM Oh, Big Bear.

HL Those were the good old days, flat top skiing, leather bindings, no steel edges, leather boots, leather bindings, bamboo polls, no lifts....

MM Now when did your parents buy that house?

HL 1926. We used to go up City Creek Road in the old 1916 Model-T, that had a two-speed axle so you could go up the hill in low gear. We bought a '28 Hudson with a big 6 cylinder engine. It could go up there in 2<sup>nd</sup> gear on City Creek. That was really a trip.

MF Now I wanted to move us back forward to when you were in high school. You graduated in 1940, and that was during, well I guess that was right before WWII. But I wonder as a Mennonite, your response and the Mennonite community's response to that war?

HL Oh, it was outrageous in this sense: Mennonites were theoretically pacifists, to me it was just stupid. You know, our nation was challenged, it was a deadly situation, hateful situation, I had Japanese friends here, very close friends. Because we hated them, I was in college, I was in an ROTC unit, University of Arizona, Tucson.

MM What year did you go there?

HL 1943. It was a Mounted Cavalry unit. You should have seen me riding breech's boots and a Smokey the Bear hat! It was ROTC. You had class every Tuesday, drill every Thursday, prepare to mount! Squirmers to the left, squirmers to the right. It was a great thing.

MM So did you not participate in the war because of your religious background?

HL No, not at all. Oh eventually but what happened was I was in the ROTC. I came

home. My father had tuberculosis, we had put him in the sanitarium in La Crescenta. My mother was trying to manage a ranch and with 100 acres it was kind of hard for a women and so I was there to help. We had one ranch hand...

MM How many brothers and sisters did you have?

HL One sister. What happened was, I finished the summer session there, and sometime in the fall I had a call to active duty, see I was a reservist. So I boarded the train and went off on the Santa Fe. I got off at Daggett. They put us all on one little car, that had a wood-burning stove on the back end of it, to go on down to Tucson. They picked up a wire, just before I got to the river, saying, "Emergency Discharge."

MM All because of you mother needing your help?

HL So I was discharged from the Mounted Cavalry!

MM Were your parents upset with that?

HL Oh, not at all!

MM I know a lot of the Brethren did not participate at all. So you didn't feel like you were being judged by the community, the Mennonite community?

HL I really didn't care. My friends, imagine the awkwardness of the time. I was in Alta Loma on discharge, subject to draft. Ranching, RFD, go to the post office every day and who do I see, Fritz's Eckinroh's parents. Fritz was a classmate of mine and I knew him well, he was the first Alta Loma casualty. I would see the parents of my classmate who fought for the country and... (starts crying)

PL It was hard for him....

MM It was hard.

PL So he enlisted.

MM Yes. And then...

PL He enlisted and I was really proud of him.

MM Yes, because that would take a lot of gumption...

PL It did, it did.

MM It would take a lot to confront your whole community...

PL Right, and the parents of those boys who were his friends.

HL I had to laugh, RFD was funny. You would go to the post office you would see your friends every day. They would exchange things. I had a friend named H.O. White, and my name was H.L. Ledig. We found out that the bookkeeper, structured his accounting ledge phonically. He was Ho White and I was Ha Ledig. When we found this out, we would go to the post office and say Hi! Ho! And he would say Hi! Ha! People would say, "What is going on." The Cherbaks were well known people. Pete Czerbach was a buddy of mine, a fun guy. He would say, "Hi ya, Dutch!" and I would say, "Hi ya, Rusky." People was fun.

MM Now you're back helping you mom. She called you back and you started running the ranch. Now you know we have met several people who had TB out in this area, was this a common problem?

HL No. Not really.

PL The Mennonites had a sanitarium...

HL Oh yes, they did!

MM He wasn't at the County of San Bernardino Hospital?

HL No.

PL No, this was a separate small sanitarium.

MM Well, so they had one because there was a problem with TB?

PL Apparently.

MM That's interesting.

HL Now when I think about the RFD. It was so much fun. It was your interchange every day. You kept with the local business. If you were a rancher, you talked business.

MM Could you say what RFD stands for?

HL Rural Federal Delivery.

MM It's a post office.

HL We built a first house on Carnelian, above Banyon, on the west side of the street. It was the only house on Carnelian, except for the King Ranch clear up to the foothills.

MM What year was that?

HL 1948 or '49 really, because we were married in 1948 and started building in 1948.

MF So you built the house?

HL Basically, yes.

MF Did both of you build the house?

PL No, I didn't. We had a contractor.

HL It was an interesting house. A little story and a half. You know redwood, board and batten houses?

MM Right.

HL We liked Japanese birch for the reddish colors. We had to have paneling in the living room, upstairs, stairwell, upstairs and so forth. It was about 1,500 sq. ft., a nice little place.

MM Now you were farming your mom's farm at this time?

HL Yes. You didn't buy a separate farm?

PL Oh no, no, no.

MF What were you doing Pat?

PL Housekeeping.

MF Since your house is on the ranch, how involved were you with the daily life of the ranch?

PL Not very. The only thing I did really was during the smudge time. Many times Harry's mother and I would fix breakfast for all these boys, you know who were smudging for us...

MM There were 21 of them.

HL Normally there was only 5.

PL Oh well, there were always 5, but up to 21.

MM And they're up all night.

PL Oh yes, up all night is right! And then they would stay to fill [the pots with new oil].

MF So what time would you get up in the morning to do that?

PL Oh it would be very early because they would be changing shifts you know, we would have another group to come in then to fill the pots during the day.

MM Well and the smudging season is from Jan. until April or March?

PL Well, we were on our honeymoon in April and they had snow here.

MM Oh wow.

HL Major freeze, 1930, November. It wiped out the whole citrus nursery. The reason was my father and his buddy cousin went to the Cal Stanford football game and they could not get back in time. My grandfather did the best he could.

(End of Side A; Begin Side B)

MF Right at the beginning of this transition in the area away from citrus towards suburbanization...

PL Oh, not in '48.

MF Not in '48?

PL On no.

HL Let's talk about Alta Loma. Water was the key to everything. You had to have 5 shares of water to get one domestic outlet. Five shares of water, served to the acre, five acres. So there were very few domestic connections. So there just were no residents.

MM So all the farmers were buying in the shares, they owned the shares?

HL 5 shares. With that...

MM Was that a municipally run water district or was it a private?

HL It was a co-op.

MM Can you explain how it was run?

HL Oh yes, I was a board member and president for years.

MM What is the name of the co-op.

HL Lets go back a little bit. This was canyon water from Cucamonga Canyon. That

was developed by Dr. Reed, L.M., my grandfather, and the other people. But it was a main stream of water. The Cucamonga Development Company was really a product of, there was a man by the name of Sontag, Hugo Sontag was a native. They had 5 acres up the canyon. They had bees, and they owned land, and the water. Dr. Reed, particularly, led a litigation wherein they forfeited 90% of the water rights, they retained 10%. So at that point Cucamonga Development Company had 90% of the water flow. That was the stream flow. Citrus growers on Hellman, Beryl, and Carnelian had well water from a well on Hellman Avenue. It was a 1,000 foot well. The water table was 300 when wet and 500 feet when dry. That was pumped up Hellman Avenue, it merged with the stream flow coming down. It was decided to merge the two, Cucamonga Development Corporation and Ioamosa into a cooperative and consolidate them financially and management-wise. They had a meeting and had a vote and the contract was written and all the growers signed up to join the cooperative. Among the growers joining, George Hamilton was a grower in Alta Loma, George was significant. He had about 100 acres of land here at the time, he was a significant guy. He regretted signing that agreement...

MM Why?

PL He was an attorney to...

HL He disapproved of what he had done, wished he hadn't, sneaked into the.....home of Judge Belden, who was secretary. Hamilton stole into Judge Belden's house tore the signed contract to negate the activity.....

MM Why was he so upset with it?

HL Because they couldn't merge the two things electively and he had an interest, no interest in the well because he didn't merge. So what happened? He was out of it. His share was 1/9th of the canyon flow, which he was entitled to. So, with that he was disliked but to make things happen properly he built a huge reservoir on Carnelian Ave., 100,000 gallons, about 100 feet in diameter, about 30 feet deep. He had his own pipeline going down to that, with his 1/9<sup>th</sup> flow. That was his activity, he had no well water. Because of that he was of course obviously disliked because he was just not part of the business deal.

PL Well it wasn't a nice thing to do anyway.

MM Yes. Go steal a contract and rip it up!

PL Terrible!

HL Gee, I've known him well. In a small town you have animosities. You live in a small town, you do what you do and what the heck. Well gee, he was 94 in 1950, when Art Bridge's grandson, who was a friend of mine, more or less, was in Korea. Living on Carnelian, on 19<sup>th</sup> Street, on Hamilton Ranch Headquarters, north of Banyon. He would walk up at noontime to talk to ranch hands and lay out work and come back. One day I was driving down and here was George sitting on the curb just looking studied. I said, "George, you got a problem?" He said, "Yeah, I can't remember if I was coming or going." I said, "Did you see Juan?" He said, "Oh yeah, I saw Juan." Then I said, "Oh, you are going." We knew these people. We had our animosities, but they didn't interfere with our interchange.

MM So you bought shares into it and did they pass down with family?

PL It was passed down if you sold a piece of property. Wouldn't that be it Harry?

MM They came with whatever you bought.

HL Exactly.

PL After we built the house in 1948...

MM Now was the house built on your farm?

PL Oh yes, but after we moved in there wasn't anybody except the King Ranch above us on that street. We would have site seers going by, just out for a Sunday drive....

MM Did a lot of people do that? That was a question I had about this area, these from Los Angeles, people coming out?

HL Oh yes.

PL Yes.

MM Just to come see citrus...

PL Yes, or to just take a ride in the country.

MM And this is in the '40's?

PL The '40's and the early '50's.

HL Remember the shoe store people..

PL I was going to tell something else.

HL OK, fine.

PL People would stop, you know, and come to the door or drive in the driveway and they would say, "Do you have any land for sale?" We would say, "No, we don't." They would say, "We are trying to buy a piece of land to build a house." I would tell them they would have to buy at least an acre or so to get water, they

didn't understand that.

MM How did it work once subdivisions started coming? Because people are not buying acres to subdivide.

PL Oh, the builders were.

MM They would buy an acre and then they would control...

PL Builders would buy maybe 20 acres to build all these...

HL Well, you know, that was something that was really hateful because...

MM When did that start happening?

HL 1970. In '77, the city was incorporated...

MM Right. Why did that happen?

HL Because there was an activity that...I recall a committee in '56 at the Cucamonga Lions Club, to incorporate the cities of Alta Loma, Cucamonga and Etiwanda. We went down to Lakewood because they had formed a city...

MM Oh you went down to see how they did it?

HL Yes, but we had a meeting with the city council to determine how they did it. See they hired other agencies for the facilities. They really just had a city clerk and mayor but anyhow, there was a very strong activity, desire that time, to incorporate...

MM In the '50's?

HL Oh yes. You see, aside from that, Baseline was the Mason-Dixon line. Those were the hateful Cucamonga people, we are Alta Loma. We didn't like them. This was the kind of the background.

MM Was there any animosity, I mean was the animosity based on cultural differences?

PL No....

MM Like it was Mennonites in Alta Loma and...or was it more Mexicans? Or it wasn't a racial thing?

PL Oh no.

HL Not at all.

MM Was it just citrus versus viticulture?

PL A little bit that way, I would say.

HL Baseball teams, you know. There was our baseball team in the summertime for one thing and the district of the schools and sports.

MM So they were the rivals? Cross town rivals?

HL Exactly.

MF But they still went to the same high school.

PL Oh yes. There was just a definite line there..

MM But you know, sometimes it's, like up on Ventura, the citrus growers tended to be more from Northern Europe and then down by Oxnard they were more like French and they weren't from England, they had different religions, did it go that way here?

PL Somewhat, somewhat I think.

MM Were they Italian?

PL More the Italian influence.

MM Were there more Protestants or Mennonites?

PL More Protestants, I would say than Mennonites.

HL Oh yes.

MM Up in the citrus district?

PL Oh yes.

HL That was essentially the Protestants.

MM Was there a business district in Alta Loma?

HL Oh yes, downtown. Quite drastic, the economics of what made, where was business.

MM Well, you had these ranches but they all have to go and buy their supplies and there was a business district.

HL There was Billings Grocery store. Mr. Blake has a dry goods store. You could buy needles, threads and clothing and materials. There was a place called Ernie's Place, which was the local place where you have beer after work.

MM You had a beer?

PL A beer parlor, that's what it was!

MM In La Verne, they had temperance!

PL Oh I know, so did Claremont.

HL There were 2 mechanics in town.

PL Mr. Ralph and Ron Claytons for another, so there were 2 garages, 2 service stations. One was Union and the other was Standard. They had the old hand pump. The employment really was citrus, the citrus packinghouse, the Sunkist house, I can't speak for MOD because I don't know, but the orange house you probably had

MM They didn't have an MOD packinghouse here, did they?

PL No.

HL So, we probably had 20-30 packers. This was when you had wrap and wood.

MM You had one packing house?

HL Yes.

MM The packers are the people giving the citrus over. They are the members. Is that what you are saying?

HL No I am saying they were laborers whose chore it was to hand wraps each one.

MM Now are these mostly Mexicans? Are they Japanese? White?

HL No. They were white.

MM They were white.

HL Some Mexicans but mainly the wives of many of the men laborers around...

MM White wives?

HL Yes. Let's say maybe 15% Mexican.

MM Were there more Mexicans out in the orchards doing the picking?

HL Oh yes, the picking, in the field we would have 3 orange crews, 20 apiece and 2 to 3 lemon crews , 20-22 people.

MM What percentage of Mexican would those be?

HL All Mexican.

MM 100%.

HL You see, there were limitations. The grower had to haul the fruit to the packing house....

MM How did they do that? By truck or by wagon?

PL By wagon first, then trucks.

MM When did that transfer over from wagon to truck?

HL 1919. We had the 1919 T-truck.

MM You had a truck.

HL Yes, in 1919.

MM You guys are much more advanced than the Limoneira Company.

HL Heck, we could haul 60 fruit boxes, field boxes, to a load with a wagon. Later I had a 1930 Chevy and I could haul 90 boxes. On a good day, with a crew of 20, you would get about 1000 boxes, maybe 10 or 11 trips, to and from the ranch to the packing house to bring and unload and bring back empties. It was heavy duty activity.

MM Yeah. Now, in this downtown district, were the Mexicans living in Alta Loma or were they in Northtown?

PL Northtown.

MM That's not Alta Loma though?

PL No, no.

MM No, okay. So the business district was mostly a white district, it wasn't a Mexican business district.

PL Right.

MM You mentioned a Japanese community. Was there a Japanese community around here?

HL No really.

PL No.

MM But you knew Japanese. Where were they living?

HL We had two Japanese families, we had fun with them, they were very nice

people...

MM Did they work for you?

HL Oh no, they were there.

MM They had their own orchards?

HL They couldn't own land.

MM Right. So they put it in their children's names.

HL S. Yamaguchi and Y. Yamaguchi, we called pint and half-pint.

MM Do you know what their first names were?

HL No, Santos.

MM Those were the two brothers that owned land?

HL One lives on Hellman Ave. down by Church St. They had two children, Iwawa and Itsuko. Iwawa was several years behind me in high school. I used to drive down to JC and stop and give him a ride down.

MM What is JC?

HL Junior College.

MM Oh, Chaffey.

HL Down on 5<sup>th</sup> Street. While I was driving down I would pick up Iwawa. We knew each other pretty well. It just happened, and it went on for quite a while. While I was in Tucson College, just after the war. See it all happened at the same time.

MM They got sent away.

HL Oh, they got shipped out to Portland.

MM Did you visit them?

HL No, more than that, more than that, my father felt sorry for them, and he was

trustee for the children and managed the S.M.Yamaguchi property over on Hellman. They had 60 acres on Hellman, 27 acres on Red Hill, and 17 acres of avocados on Vineyard. So what really happened was, we were trustees for them. We were interested in them. Here I was avoiding the war, came home, and my dad was in a sanitarium with TB, so I had to go home. It was embarrassing. My friends were at war.

MM You had to be the conservator.

HL I was the trustee.

MM So you maintained those ranches until they returned.

PL They had money in the bank when they returned.

MM Did they return?

HL Oh yes, they came back.

MM Did they maintain them or did they sell out?

HL They sold out. Iwawa joined the military.

MM They were part of that Japanese unit in Europe?

HL I don't know. They were loyal people. People hated them and somehow we had a sympathy for them. They were physically small people, but very nice and refined.

(end of interview)