

## Oral History Interview Cover Sheet

INTERVIEWEE: Martha Gaines Stoebe

INTERVIEWER: Margo McBane and Margaret Finnegan

PROJECT: City of Rancho Cucamonga Oral History Project

DATE OF INTERVIEW: June 6, 2001

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AUDIO EDITOR: Margo McBane

TRANSCRIBER: Monica Allen

### BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Martha Stoebe was born to the Gaines family in Pasadena in 1915. She attended Polytechnic Elementary School, South Pasadena High School, and then Pomona College, where she met her husband, Wallace Stoebe. She graduated in 1936, Wallace in 34. They married and moved to Alta Loma to purchase a 10 acre citrus ranch. They lived in a Sears catalogue house that had been built at a prior location and then moved to Beryl and 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Her husband's family, the Stoebes, had a long legacy in Alta Loma. Her relatives brought the rocks to help build the Methodist Church. His uncle and father came to Alta Loma in 1914. They were friends of the Ledig's and attended their annual Christmas Party. Her husband tried to work odd job and farm. These jobs included delivering groceries for his sister's Billings Market in Alta Loma, and delivering newspapers. He decided to go back to the Claremont Graduate School to initially get an elementary teaching certificate, and then an administrative credential. They had 2 sons and one daughter. She remembers The Big Freeze of 1937 and all the smudging, which occurred a few months after they were married. Trash-can smudging was outlawed after that freeze. The Alta Loma citrus industry changed after than, and people were no longer able to make a living from only 10 acres. Everyone had to hold down outside jobs. They needed more money, so Martha began taking teaching classes while her husband taught education classes at the University of Redlands. He later became a principal of several elementary schools in the area. She took her first elementary school teaching job in Rialto. She initially did not like to teach, but later came to love it, after putting in 24 years. Her true love was writing and history. She wrote: The History of Alta Loma and The History of the Methodist Church. People began selling their ranches in the 1950s. After they sold their citrus acres in 1957, they moved to San Bernadino and only returned to Alta Loma for births, deaths, and weddings. Her husband loved to dance, so that was their main form of recreation. She enjoyed tennis and taught it at the schools as well. She also played organ.

Length of Interview: app. 1.5 hours Length of Transcript: 36 pages

## RANCHO CUCAMONGA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Martha Gaines Stoebe

Interviewers: Margo McBane

Margaret Finnegan

Date: June 6, 2001 Redlands, California

MF Martha, lets start by talking a little about the Gaines family. Can you tell us when the Gaines family came to the Rancho Cucamonga area?

MGS Well, I'm sure they had never been there before, just when I married my husband, they knew where it was at least.

MF Well, where is your family from?

MGS Pasadena.

MF And what brought them to Pasadena?

MGS Well, my father worked for the telephone company in Los Angeles, he had been in San Francisco and then he had been in New York so finally they sent him to Los Angeles.

MF What year did they move to Pasadena? Around when? Just a ball-park.

MGS Well...maybe about 1915.

MF Do you mind us asking what year you were born?

MGS 1915.

MF So you were born in Pasadena?

MGS Yes.

MF How did you meet your husband?

MGS We both went to Pomona College, he had graduated before I even knew him, he came back one night for a a fraternity party but they were having a dance that night, a get

acquainted dance, in the old gym and I went and there he was.

MF And what was your husband's name?

MGS Wallace Stoebe.

MF What did you study at Pomona?

MGS I didn't have any major. In those days you didn't have to have a major. So I just took what I felt like taking,

MF And what kind of things did you feel like taking?

MGS Well, history mostly.

MM And when did you graduate?

MGS '36.

MF And when did Wallace graduate?

MGS '33 or '34, I'm not sure.

MF What year did you get married?

MGS '36.

MF Then did you move to Alta Loma when you got married?

MGS Yes indeed. Our house is still there.

MF Can you tell us where your house in Alta Loma is?

MGS Certainly, it's on the corner of Beryl and 19th street. It's still there.

MF Was it an old house when you moved into it?

MF Well, in the book it tells exactly how it old it was, it wasn't new, it was one of those houses that you can order them from Sears, houses put together. I mean you put it together but you get it from Sears all ready to put together.

MF Pre-fabricated.

MGS Yes.

MF Did you and your husband put it together?

MGS No, it had already been put together.

MF What did the neighborhood look like when you moved into that house? Can you paint us a picture of what a new bride would have seen looking out her kitchen window?

MGS Well, it was out in the country and I was a city girl and so it didn't mean much to me, but it was just mostly citrus all over, everyplace.

MF Mostly oranges? Or lemons?

MGS Oranges and lemons.

MF Did you have a ranch there?

MGS Oh yes, that is what we were there for.

MF And how big was your ranch?

MGS 10 acres.

MF And was it right on the site of the home?

MGS Yes.

MF Now the Stoebe's, they have a longer history with the Alta Loma area, right?

MGS Well, my husband's uncle came first and his father, I believe, came because his uncle had recommended it.

MF Do you have a sense about what time that would have been?

MGS 1914.

MF Okay, and so there were 2 Stoebe's, the uncle and his brother there? Or his uncle?

MGS My husbands uncle and his father.

MM Where did they come from?

MF And they were brothers.

MGS They were brothers and they came from Iowa.

MF Okay, and did they, how big, where were their ranches?

MGS You mean the uncle's ranch? It was on Hermosa Avenue, you know.

MF About how many acres did he have?

MGS I don't know whether he had a larger ranch or not.

MF What about Wallace's father. How large was his ranch and where was it?

MGS 10 acres. [My husband and I lived with Wallac's father, so it was also our ranch.]

MM Was that an average, most people had about 10 acres?

MGS I suppose so. People that had more money had 20 acres...

MM But they didn't exceed much more than 20 acres?

MGS I don't think so.

MF Could you make a living on 10 acres?

MGS Oh yes, that's what they did, I don't know how they did it, brought up families, you know, of course they didn't get rich that way but they did. Hard work.

MF What kind of work would you do when you were married and the city girl moves to the country, I mean what was your daily life like?

MGS I was supposed to be, running the house and cooking the meals and so forth, which I did but I didn't know how but I learned.

MF How did you learn?

MGS Well...

MF Trial and error?

MGS I suppose so.

MM Did you make friends with the other wives in the neighborhood?

MF Were there other wives in the neighborhood?

MGS Well, I would say not in the neighborhood, no, it was just, what it was was ranches and they would all sit on their grove.

MM So you were pretty isolated? Was that a hard transition for you? I mean you had lived in Pasadena where you had neighbors....

MGS Some of the ladies that lived up Helman Avenue and probably like the Ledig's you spoke to, those people were very hospitable and they would ask me to parties and things and I got to know them that way.

MF Would people entertain a lot? Were there a lot of parties? What kind of events would people celebrate?

MGS Well, I remember the Ledig's Christmas parties.

MF Did they always have a Christmas party?

MGS Oh, I would say so.

MF Could you tell us a little bit about what their parties were like?

MGS Well, just like a buffet, wonderful food and so forth, I don't remember whether there was music or what.

MF Lot's of people?

MGS Well, everybody was invited I think probably. I remember that party. Now the other parties, many of them were Stoebe family parties. We had lots of Stoebe's.

MF Who were all the Stoebe's?

MGS Who were they?

MF Yeah.

MGS Well, Wallace had three or four brothers or sisters, I mean one sister and the rest of them were boys. As we got older and we all had families, there were lots of parties for the children and we had a nice time, we had a nice relationship with the people, like the Quaschnicks, I remember them, and of course Lucille and Eunice Stoebe, that was uncle John's kids.

MF Was uncle John Wallace's uncle, the one that came first from Iowa?

MGS Yes.

MF Did you have children?

MGS I had three children, yes.

MF Boys? Girls?

MGS I have 2 boys and 1 girl.

MF When were they born?

MGS Well, let's see....this one over here, he was born in '39.

MF What is his name?

MGS Tom, and Emily was born in '43 and Chuck was born in '47.

MF Now in 1936, when you got married, the country was in a very serious Depression. As ranchers did you feel that depression?

MGS No, not especially.

MF Why was that?

MGS Well, we had plenty to eat.

MM Were you able to sell all your fruit?

MGS Oh yes, we did it through the packinghouse, you see, that's always the way you do it with citrus.

MM But in the Depression, there were stories that, sometimes you see pictures of fruit being destroyed just to keep the market up. Did that happen?

MGS Not that I know of.

MF What packinghouse did you use? Do you know? Was it Sunkist?

MGS Yes.

MM Were you a member of the district exchange then?

MGS Oh I guess so.

MM Or your husband was.

MGS I have forgotten all that sort of thing.

MM But you weren't a member of the MOD?

MGS No.

MM Sounds like most of, you were in the same district exchange as the Ledig's and..

MGS Oh yes, I'm sure.

MM Did your husband or you participate in any of the, like the water board or any of the boards that were related to the citrus industry?

MGS Well, I'm sure my husband was, yes. I don't remember what ones exactly.

MM When your kids went to school, which school did they go to?

MGS Alta Loma.

MM Was it a K-8th school?

MGS Yes.

MM It was. Do you remember how many classrooms were per grade?

MGS Per grade?

MM I mean, was it a large school, was there only one class per grade?

MGS I would say so, it was not large.

MM Was it a mixture of both the growers children and Mexican kids?

MGS Yes.

MM Do you remember were there Japanese growers or Russian growers?

MGS Well yes there were, let's see, there were Japanese, I don't remember. I remember one Japanese boy that went to school there was a very good tennis player for instance, things like that you know, I just remember those things.

MF Did your kids play tennis? Is that how you know that?

MGS Well I taught tennis!

MF Oh, you taught tennis!

MGS That's one thing I did.

MF Can you tell us a little bit about your teaching, your tennis teaching? When you did that?

MGS Well, my husband was principal of the school, of different schools, so I just did it. I enjoyed it.

MM You did that through the school though? It wasn't at a tennis club.

MGS Oh no, oh no.

MM And there was a tennis court at the school?

MGS Yes.

MF How old were your children when you were doing that?

MGS Goodness, well, Tom was probably 15 or so and Chuck was good but my daughter was never much of an athlete.

MM Did you learn tennis at Pomona?

MGS No, I learned it in, well actually I learned it in Pasadena.

MM Where did you learn it in Pasadena? At school?

MGS Yes, I went to Polytechnic Elementary School. They had the, I can't remember the name of those very famous tennis players, would come around and teach tennis.

MM Where did you go to high school in Pasadena?

MGS South Pasadena High School.

MM Margaret lives in South Pasadena and I used to live in South Pasadena.

MGS Did you? Yes, well we actually moved to South Pasadena so that I could go to South Pasadena High School, my parents did not approve of the 6/4/4 system or whatever it was that Pasadena was having at that time. They didn't approve of that so we rented our house and moved down there.

MF So your husband, in addition to being a rancher, he was principal and a teacher?

MGS Yes.

MF What did he teach?

MGS Well he just taught elementary school so you know, everything.

MF Now I'm curious, did this have to do with changes in the citrus market? Was it more difficult to live off of 10 acres or did he just love teaching and so he wanted to be....

MGS Oh I would say both. But as time went on we certainly could not afford the ranch. The ranch cost a lot of money to and by the end we couldn't possibly afford it.

MM So it was more of a hobby than an income?

MGS Well yes, but you see his father, for his father it was income.

MM So when would you say that change happened? In the '50's?

MGS Well, it certainly happened in the '50's but I would say it happened before that. I would have said that really at the end of the Big Freeze in '37, I don't think it every got back

like it was.

MF Can you tell us a little bit about the Big Freeze of '37?

MGS Oh, I certainly can, I was only married a few months before the Big Freeze. It was the whole month of January. We never could sleep a night because all of us would have to go down and smudge and I would have to stay up and feed all the people coffee and soup and whatever.

MM How many workers did you have helping you with the smudging?

MGS Well, Wallace was taking care of 2 groves, I remember that. I think he had about four helpers.

MM Two groves was 10 acres?

MGS No, he had another one he was doing.

MM It was his grove? Or he was managing it?

MGS Well, we had our own grove but then there was another grove that he was taking care of.

MM Oh, so he was kind of managing the second grove. You had 4 workers for all that.

Where did the workers stay overnight if they were smudging all night?

MGS Well, we had newspapers over the rug in the dining room and they slept on the newspapers under the dining room table!

MM Were these mostly white workers or Mexican workers?

MGS Well a lot of them were boys that Wallace knew through, no, he wasn't in school, that was a long time ago...

MM They were kind of the sons of other growers?

MGS Yes, well one of them was his brother. His father then his father slept all night and the next day he got off the wagon or whatever it was, I think it was with a mule and went

down and got more oil and re-filled all the pots during the daytime and what I know is that one of his brothers did that with him, I can't remember.

MM How often did you have to change those smudge pots?

MGS You didn't change the smudge pots, just the fuel.

MM I mean how much did you have to put more oil in?

MGS Oh yes.

MM How often?

MGS Well I suppose every night.

MM Oh, it would last the whole night?

MGS Oh yes, you see, you know how big they were.

MF Can you use words, because for the tape, to tell us what the smudge pot would have looked like? And how big it was?

MM They're about 3 feet tall, or 4 feet tall?

MGS You've seen them haven't you?

MM Yes.

MGS Look out in those pictures out there and you can see them but the ones that we used then were what you call garbage pail smudge pots. The whole garbage pail would be full of oil, if you had to burn that all night it would be pretty much gone.

MF Now, what did you think - a new bride, just married a few months in your nice new home and there was newspaper on your dining room floor, there's like four men on your dining room floor, sleeping under the table! I mean you're getting up early in the morning, I mean how's.....

MGS I would never go to bed, how can I possible get up early in the morning?

MF Okay, so you really wouldn't go to bed? You would have to stay up all night?

MGS Well, I would sleep in the daytime.

MF Okay, and what time would your work begin, in regards to the smudging?

MGS Oh, 5:00 I suppose.

MF In the morning?

MM Oh no, at night.

MGS At night.

MF What would you do?

MGS Oh I would just be sure I had some hot things, soup.

MF What kind of soup? Would you make the soup?

MGS I don't remember actually. You see, Wallace's sister and her husband had the grocery store in town and so I could go down there and get food. I mean it wasn't too hard.

MM What was the name of their grocery store? Do you remember?

MGS Billings Market.

MF Where was that?

MGS Downtown in Alta Loma, you know where that was?

MF What did the store look like?

MGS It looked like a grocery store to me.

MF I mean how big was it?

MM Compared to super markets today?

MGS Oh heavens, it was a small place but it was, it looked like a grocery store to me, I had never been in much of a grocery store anyway, in Pasadena I didn't go there.

MF And would you drive there?

MGS Yes.

MM Did people drive a lot at that time? Or were they biking or were they taking the red cars?

MGS Oh it depends on where you're talking about. See we lived, what, a couple of miles from the store so you wouldn't want to have to carry your things home so we drove down there.

MM How often did you come back to Pasadena or Los Angeles?

MGS I came, we used to come for holidays, celebrations and so forth but almost every time we got in there, then we would hear the smudge report and we almost always had to turn around and come back.

MM So did you drive or take the red car?

MGS Oh, we drove.

MM You always drove.

MGS Yes.

MF What was the smudge report?

MGS What was it? Well it said Alta Loma 29, Cucamonga...

MM It was on the radio?

MGS Radio. It was the 8:00 message every night anybody, if you ever went anyplace where anybody was connected with citrus were, everything would stop and every body would stop and turn on the weather report and. The frost report.

MM Yes, this is very famous in Pomona.

MGS Oh yes.

MM It was the same person, wasn't it?

MGS Yes.

MM What was his name? I remember hearing about him.

MF Now, how did your farm do in that frost?

MGS The oranges did very well. The lemons, at least the trees didn't freeze, the lemons mostly froze.

MF That was really a turning point you said in...

MGS Well, I think it was because of the smudge pots, you see, after that garbage pail smudge pots were no longer allowed...

MM Why?

MGS Well, it smudged everything up you know, the inside of the houses, the stores and everything, it was just a mess.

MF How would you try to keep your house clean?

MGS Well, you closed any doors that you possibly could. What we did is we slept in the daytime. We closed the doors all the time, they didn't want to get that smudge in there.

MM Was it greasy?

MGS Oh yes.

MM So it was hard to get off.

MGS Yes. Your nose was all black all the time and it was a mess.

MM It got all over your furniture and your sheets?

MGS Yes.

MF Did you have to do anything special to clean it out?

MGS Well, there was nothing special you could do, you did the best you could.

MM But they outlawed those in 1937.

MGS I think so.

MM So they had to use the smaller smudge pots?

MGS They had the ones with a chimney on it.

MM So the garbage pail smudge pots didn't have a chimney?

MGS No. Just a plain old garbage pail. [My Alta Loma book has a picture of one.]

MM That's pretty interesting, I have never seen that!

MF Why did you think the transition to smudge pots really made it more difficult for your work to be done on the farm? Or for the farm to be successful?

MM Were the other smudge pots not as effective?

MF The smaller ones?

MGS Oh I don't know if they were smaller. I think they were perfectly all right but he didn't have them. We had to fix them.

MM Oh, you had to make them, and buy them so it was very costly.

MGS Oh of course! Everything was costly, running a ranch is not cheap.

MM How did your husband get training to become a principal? He was an elementary school principal?

MGS Yes.

MM Did he go for extra education for that?

MGS He went to Claremont Graduate School.

Mm So he could go over, commute over and do that. Would he do that in the evenings?

MGS Yes, he would. He did it for quite a while, he got quite a few different credentials that way but I don't remember just what.

MM Is that how he got his teaching credential? Or did you even need a teaching credential?

MGS Oh yes, you needed one, he got that first.

MF Was he always a teacher when you were on the ranch? Or was there a while where you guys just did ranching?

MGS Let's see, to begin with, he wasn't a teacher at first I'm sure. He was always interested in it, I think the main this was he had a brother who needed help with his education and so forth. He was always interested, he was on the school board, that's the thing that I remember. He was on the school board and that's how he got interested in teaching because he discovered that, in spite of the fact that he did a whole bunch of different jobs like newspapers and stuff, in spite of that a teacher made more money than he did, than he could, so he thought ah-hah, that is something that I can do.

MM What did he do with newspapers?

MGS Delivered them.

MM He did other work in addition to ranching?

MGS Oh yes.

MM What were some of his other jobs that he tried?

MGS Well, one of the reasons that I was able to write that book on the history of Alta Loma is because he delivered groceries for his sister's store all over and so he would go in and get some groceries and some of the people were so nice. They would have a good time and they would ask him to sit down and have a cup of coffee and so forth. He got to know these people. So while we were writing the book, we could go and see them and we knew them, he knew them you see. So we went all over the country seeing people that used to live in Alta Loma.

MM He helped you write the book?

MGS Oh of course he did. He didn't actually write it but he told me a lot of things of course.

MF What inspired you to write the book?

MGS Well, I'm just interested in local history. I started out, I was teaching the school in Rialto and so I got interested in that and so I wrote that first. Then after I retired decided that there were a lot of other places that I would like to write histories on, it's just something that I am interested in.

MM When did you start teaching?

MGS Well, let me see, I think I can almost say when it was exactly. I don't know, it's in the book.

MF What did you teach?

MGS I taught 4th grade to begin with.

MF Were your children older and did you go back to get a teaching credential?

MGS The way I got a teaching credential is I went, my husband was teaching at the University of Redland, he was teaching a course in the teaching of science in the elementary school and so he would go over there and I would go with him and got my teaching credential that way. That was when my children were young enough so that they could be involved in the, whatever you call it, when the kids can go to school while I was going to class. So that's how that happened, so that was when Chuck was about 3 and so that would be about 1950.

MF How long did you teach?

MGS 24 years.

MM Did your kids participate in any groups, like Indian Guides, or Boy Scouts or....

MGS Oh I'm sure they must have. Like Girl Scouts and...

[End of Side A; Begin Side B]

MF I thought maybe we could talk a little bit about the United Methodist Church of Cucamonga. It seems like the Stoebe's have a long relationship with that church.

MGS Oh yes.

MF Could you tell us a little bit about how that relationship developed?

MGS Well, Uncle John collected rocks to take them down there, course they built them out of the rocks. He even helped build it. I believe one of the buildings there is named the Stoebe Building. Also his daughter, Lucille, directed the music most of the time. I played the organ there for quite a while, for some time, I don't know when it was. It was before we left, before we moved away.

MF When did you move away?

MGS '57, I think.

MF Did you move to Redland?

MGS No, we moved to San Bernardino.

MM Where did he collect the rocks from?

MGS Well, if you want to look up, the whole place up there was full of rocks.

MM So it was anywhere in that Alta Loma area, there were rocks?

MGS Anywhere.

MM There wasn't a particular river bed?

MGS Well, there may have been but I don't know, I just know that everybody collected rocks.

MM They would make fences out of them?

MGS They could make anything they want.

MM Some people used them in housing architecture and...

MF Can you tell us how the rocks were incorporated into the church structure?

MGS Well, they were built with the rocks.

MF Okay, the whole church.

MGS Yes.

MF Is it still the church, the same church today?

MGS Well yes it is but I believe they are having it, they're trying to raise money to have it retrofitted, which I don't know if they ever will.

MM Did you continue to participate even after you moved? Or did you change churches?

MGS In that church, we couldn't, it was too far away, I would have liked to.

MF Were you married there? In that church?

MGS Married in that church? No I was married in the Pasadena Presbyterian Church.

MF I'm wondering how someplace like the Community Church, what kind of community that would provide for the women of the area? Especially since the women are a little isolated on those ranches.

MGS Well, yes it did, it did have some effect on that I think. But I never took part in it, they did I think they had Wednesday night potlucks and things like that. It was a nice church.

MF You didn't take part in that because you were busy with other things?

MGS Well, I was teaching school and had a family and so forth, you can't do everything.

MM So did you and your husband participate in any kind of, I know that in some communities there were like card clubs or the Tuesday night club or...did you participate in any of those?

MGS No, I don't think we did. You know, they built that building in Alta Loma, oh dear....

MM Was it like a community center?

MGS Well, the whole, everybody took part in that, you have to bring me over my book to tell you what it was.

MF I read a lot about sort of the volunteer firehouse and that on the top floor there was room for dancing and activities like that.

MGS Yes, that was a big thing.

MF Okay. Where was that?

MGS It was right across from the grocery store.

MF Which grocery store?

MGS Billings one.

MM When was it built?

MGS I would have to get my book out.

MM Oh, okay.

MF But it was a nice community center where people would gather...

MGS Oh yes.

MF Did you ever participate in that?

MGS Oh yes, you couldn't hardly not!

MM In what way did you participate?

MGS We would just go to the things that they had there.

MM Would they happen weekly or monthly or once a year?

MGS I don't....

MM You don't remember.

MF Were there dances?

MGS There were dances and there were all kinds of things.

MF Was it live music?

MGS I'm sure it was.

MF Did you dance?

MGS Oh sure.

MF What kind of dances?

MGS What kind of dances?

MF Yeah! What were you dancing to?

MGS What were you dancing to?

MM What was your favorite song that they would play or....

MF Were you jitter-bugging or....

MGS No, no, this was before then, it was just regular...

MM Ballroom dancing.

MGS Ballroom dancing, yes that's what it was. My husband liked nothing better than to dance so we danced and danced and danced.

MF What would you do with the kids when you went dancing? Or was this before the kids?

MGS Well, no, we went to all kinds of dances, all the dances, sometimes in Upland, sometimes in other places, I don't know. [My father-in-law, Charles A. Stoebe, was a wonderful babysitter.]

MM You would travel around to dance.

MGS Oh yes.

MM What other kind of things did you do with your husband for recreation? Did you guys go to the movies?

MGS Once in a while, mostly we danced.

MM Dancing was your interest.

MGS That was his interest.

MF Did you play tennis?

MGS Oh yes, I played, he didn't though. I played with other people, there were others around.

MM Other ranch wives?

MGS Yes.

MM What did you do for fun? If his fun was dancing, did you have something you liked to do? Were you a sewer?

MGS No, I wasn't that.

MM Or a .....cooker?

MGS I had to cook, I liked to cook.

MM Were you a gardener?

MGS No, but my husband was.

MM Sounds like you were a writer.

MGS Yes, I have written lots of books.

MM So that was kind of your interest.

MGS Yes.

MF How did you get training to do local history?

MGS I didn't get any training, I just did it.

MF How did you figure it out? How did you find the archives and....

MGS Oh yes, San Bernardino Library sure started you.

MM Did you have a mentor, somebody that you looked up to, that kind of taught you how to do this?

MGS No.

MM You just figured it out on your own?

MGS Well, I don't know, I just wrote it down, I didn't know you had to figure it out!

MM So, one thing I was wondering is, with the citrus industry you said after '37 the farms started being less productive and you started not being able to make as much money on them.

MGS Well I would say so, that is what I have always thought. I thought it was a problem with the smudge pots and so forth, you had to spend more money for everything...

MM It just got more expensive to maintain.

MGS Yes.

MM So when did you start noticing suburbanization happening? Like people starting to sell off their..

MGS Oh my, that was a shock.

MM Was that in the '60's or '70's?

MGS Oh it was before that, it was the '50's. The '50's is when it started. Yes, we could, see I noticed it even more in Rialto because I was teaching school there and I could come back and it would be a whole ranch gone.

MM Whole ranch.

MGS Yes.

MM Why were people doing that?

MGS You couldn't make money on the citrus but they could sure make money on selling the land if they did.

MM Were there other reasons why they couldn't make money? I mean we've heard about

quick decline as a disease, do you know about that?

MGS No, I don't know about that.

MM That was a citrus disease. What about issues of smog? Was that effecting the fruit?

MGS I didn't know it was, it may have been.

MM What about the water issues?

MGS Well, we had plenty, of course, everything was expensive, yes. You had to pay for the water, had to pay for smudging.

MM Was the labor expensive for harvesting?

MGS Well, of course we would do this all through the packinghouse.

MM Oh, the packinghouse contracts its workers to do the harvesting.

MGS Right, they did it all.

MM But your expense it sounds like is smudging. You're really thinking the smudging is expensive.

MGS Well, no, I wouldn't say that. Well, I mean the smudge pots of course. But not only the smudge pots but we had pay for to pest control, we had to pay for all that and it's all expensive. We found we could not afford to have a ranch and raise children and so on. Wallace and I were both teaching school and even so we couldn't.

MM Hardly make it. Did most people also do second jobs or were they just doing ranching? Were you kind of unique to do a second job?

MGS Oh no, I think most everybody was.

MM So the ranching was just extra.

MGS Yes, after this time you see. Before I would have said it was '37 but probably after that, it just got so that you couldn't take it.

MM How did the war effect your life? Did Wallace go off to war?

MGS No, he didn't, we had a child at that time and he didn't have to.

MM He was exempted.

MGS Yes, of course it was a shock to everybody and when Wallace's nephew, Uncle John's son, was killed in the war that really shook everybody up.

MM So it had a personal impact.

MGS Yes.

MM It sounds like there was a large Mennonite community...

MGS Oh yes indeed there was. Interesting.

MM What do you remember about that community?

MGS Well they were such nice people, they were great.

MM They were open to outsiders? They weren't very closed?

MGS Well I don't know about that. I didn't at the time even realize that they were different.

MM Like the Ledig's were Mennonites.

MGS Yes.

MM But you were invited to their parties? So they were very open.

MGS Oh yes.

MM That is a pacifist community. Do you remember any tension in the town?

MGS No, I don't know about that at all.

MM In terms of the war.

MGS No, I don't know about that, I didn't even know it.

MF You know, one of the stories that I liked in your book, History of Alta Loma, is, or maybe this is actually in your History of the Methodist Church, is how after WWII the

schools started to get so crowded, this is like in '46 or '47, but they had to move the kindergarten into the Methodist church! Do you remember? Do you want to tell us a little bit about that?

MGS Well I don't remember them doing that and I know they did it, yes.

MF Where were, was this more a baby-boom phenomenon do you think? Or was it already a time where people were really moving into the community and that church was being revitalized by new people?

MGS It could be, the church was well attended for sure. I don't know about the kindergarten.

MM But this is before the orchards are starting to be subdivided because this is...

MGS Oh yes, yes.

MM So this is still the children of the people living there, it's not new people coming in...

MGS Right.

MM In terms of the subdivisions and people selling out, how did it change the community? I mean it's going to be a huge change because you're losing the rural character.

MGS Yes, I didn't actually live there at that time. You see, we sold the ranch in 1957.

MF Yes, I read in your book that when the lemons froze in the 1950's, that was it.

MGS Yes, that was it, we just couldn't, well that whole thing was that we just could not afford it.

MM So you were part of those people that just that you needed to get out, it was just too expensive.

MGS Yes. Ranching was too expensive.

MF Do you remember the season and then that last season when the lemons froze?

MGS Yes I remember it, but I don't remember anything special about it except that that was...

MM Well, was it sad, I mean did his other relatives feel like you were abandoning them?

MGS Oh, they had all gone long since.

MM Oh, they had left. They had sold their places?

MGS Well, Uncle John, well he had died and there were a lot of Stoebe's left around but most of them....

MM They didn't stay ranching?

MGS No.

MM What happened to Uncle John's children? One of them died in the war, is that right?

MGS Yes, well the two girls they married and they lived around and but they didn't have anything special to do with the groves.

MF When ranching ceased to be a real opportunity to make a living for the different Stoebe members, what kind of employment opportunities were they able to pursue? Could they stay in the region and work? Or did they have to leave?

MGS Some of them stayed but they didn't stay in citrus ranching for sure.

MF Were there new industries opening up in that area? Or did they go into more traditional fields like teaching, like you and Wallace did?

MGS No, they didn't do that, I don't know, some live in Redlands now. The Quashicks live in Redlands now, they bought an old house and enjoyed fixing it up.

MM A lot of the people then it sounds like your relatives moved out here to Redlands from Rancho Cucamonga. Oh you moved to San Bernardino, that's right.

MGS Yes.

MM So you stayed in the area, in the region.

MGS Well, I've never lived anywhere but southern California! I'm here!

MM So, did you go back after you moved to San Bernardino did you go back to Alta Loma?

MGS Very seldom. The only times we went back usually was a funeral or a wedding in the church.

MM If you had to list your best friends from Alta Loma, who would they be?

MGS Well, our best friends were the Stoefens who are long gone.

MM They owned a ranch?

MGS Yes, they did.

MM It was 10 acres? About that?

MGS I guess so.

MM Who else would you consider your close circle of friends?

MGS Well, Margaret McLennan and her husband, he died pretty soon then and Ralph Mitchell.....

MM They were farmers also?

MGS Yes.

MF I wonder if we can also talk maybe a little bit more about your teaching? In the 1950's it's really when women are starting to enter the work force, married women are starting to enter the work force, and you really at the forefront of a really important development in American history. I wonder if you could talk a little bit , reflect a little bit about what that experience meant to you and whether you felt it was more for pin money. A lot of people talked a lot about how women would do these things for the extras in life or if this is just something that you really pursued because it was important to you or just a combination?

MGS Well, mainly we needed the money! That was the reason.

MF Okay, okay.

MGS I got so that I enjoyed it, at first I didn't particularly, but we really needed the money and I got so that I understood what I was doing, so it was fine.

MM How did it work with your kids? I mean, here you are teaching, how did you take care of them after school, didn't you have to do preparation and things like that?

MGS Yes, I went home as soon as I could but I did have a woman that came in quite early when Chuck was little she came in quite early and she also took him to school and she brought him home and things like that.

MM Did she help with cooking and cleaning?

MGS No.

MM You did that all yourself.

MGS Yes.

MF How did you find her?

MGS She lived there in the community, I don't know how we found her but we were lucky to find her.

MM It sounds like your husband was doing a lot of training, you know, he was going back for several degrees. Did he help around the house or was that kind of your area?

MGS Oh no, he helped. He was very good at that.

Mm So he helped with the cleaning and the cooking and the...

MGS Whatever was needed.

MF You were a team.

MGS Yes.

MM It sounds like he was gone a lot to do all this training.

MGS Well, you mean the teaching at the University of Redlands.

MM Well, or also to go back and get the credentials because you said he was gone a lot at night to get all the credentials.

MGS Yes, I had to go back to get all kinds of stuff too and that's hard. You worked all day and you have to go to class at night, but that is what we did.

MM You did it because you needed the money.

MGS Yes.

MM I just wanted to get a little bit about your house. Did it have a play area for the kids? Did you have like a jungle-gym or a swing-set? Did they have a play area around there or did they play in the groves or what was their area of...

MF How did they entertain themselves?

MGS Oh they didn't have any trouble I'm sure but I don't know.

MM It's not something that you remember. Did they play by themselves or did they have friends over? Do you remember?

MGS Oh they had friends over when they could, yes.

MM Yes.

MGS See, we didn't live close to anybody.

MM Right and that is a problem. Do you remember, like with my own mother, I remember her driving me everywhere to go to play dates. Did other parents drive them over to you or did you have to pick them up? Or do you remember all that chauffeuring ?

MGS Well, it was a connecting thing, some one said they would, and then other said something. You just had to figure out something.

MF How would they get to school?

MM Well, she had the women take them.

MF Oh, okay.

MGS Well that was just when my youngest was very young. Well they had a school bus.

MM Oh they had a school bus?

MGS Oh yeah.

MM They didn't bike to school?

MGS I don't remember they ever did that.

MM You mentioned being, playing, is it organ? At that church, it sounds like you also had a musical education, that you knew how to play tennis, you were also a musician...did you train your kids in music?

MGS Well, my oldest son is very good, the others have no interest.

MM Did you teach them yourself? Or have someone else teach them?

MGS Oh, Lucille Stoebe taught them. She was Uncle John's daughter, she was a music teacher.

MM So that was something important in the Stoebe family.

MGS Yes.

MF Yesterday we were talking to the Ledig's and we talked a little bit about downtown Alta Loma. Harry would say he would have to go to the RFP, or he would have to go pick up his mail and he would see everyone. You mentioned the firehouse and the Billings Grocery Store. Can you kind of paint us a picture of when you first moved to Alta Loma, what downtown Alta Loma was like?

MGS Well you know what it was like, don't you?

MF No.

MGS You don't. Well, everybody, you would go down there and you would see all your friends and you would go into all the stores and have just a nice time.

MF What kind of stores were there in the downtown? Did you do all your shopping there?

MGS Ha, ha. It depends upon what kind of shopping you wanted to do. There wasn't much. There was the Billing grocery, and then there was the, oh what do you call it, the bar thing...

MM So it wasn't a dry town?

MGS Oh no.

MF Besides the grocery store, was there a place where you could get, was there a tailor or a dry goods store?

MGS Yes, that is what I'm thinking about, dry goods store and there was a drug store.

MM Was there a hardware store?

MGS I don't remember, there was the, oh the big one, where ranchers would pick up all their stuff...

MM Was it a Sunkist that sponsored the store?

MGS No.

MF Were there mechanics or was there a mechanic?

MGS Well there was a...

MF Or a barber?

MGS Yes, there was a barber and there was a filling station.

MM Was there a theatre?

MGS Oh no.

MM Where did you have to go if you wanted to go to the movies?

MGS Well, San Bernardino or...

MM That was the closest? How many miles away was that?

MGS 18.

MM Were they mostly dirt roads or cement roads?

MGS They were, what do you call them? They weren't cement but...

MM Gravel. Gravel roads? Oh, I know what you mean.

MGS I would say they were tar.

MF Was there a coffee shop?

MGS Yes, like in the drugstore, you can get anything you want.

MM That was the restaurant.

MF You mentioned that you would go into Alta Loma and you would see all your friends and that that was fun. So how often would you make it into Alta Loma?

MGS Maybe once a week.

MF Would you arrange to meet people there?

MGS No, you would just see people.

MM If you wanted to do shopping, like for dresses and things like that, where would you go?

MGS You would go to Upland.

MM Upland, that was the big shopping area.

MF Do you remember the name of the store in Upland?

MGS Atwoods.

MM How often would you make it out there?

MGS I don't know.

MM It wasn't something you did regularly?

MGS Oh no.

MM Did you mostly go to Alta Loma or did you go to Etiwanda on a regular basis?

MGS No.

MM You stayed in Alta Loma.

MGS Etiwanda is pretty small, it was.

MM Okay, so you didn't travel around that much, it was pretty much work and once a week downtown. The Ledig's were talking about a 4th of July parade, do you remember what happened in town, what were some big events? Was there an annual parade?

MGS Well there was something annual, 4th of July, I don't think it was always a parade, maybe it was. They would have speeches and all that kind of thing.

MM And it was something everybody would go to?

MGS Oh yes.

MF Do you remember other civic celebrations that everybody would turn out for?

MM Was there an Alta Loma Christmas party or....

MGS No, not for the whole town.

MM That was just individuals, inviting you over.

MF How about when the war ended?

MGS Oh, that...what war?

MM WWII.

MGS Well, of course everybody was excited about that.

MM Do you remember the Korean War, I mean did that have any impact on your..

MGS No, I remember it but I don't...

MM It wasn't something that effected the town?

MGS No, probably not.

MM Well, I think we're near to being done.

[end of interview]