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Anne T. Kent California Room

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INTERVIEW WITH JACK GAZZOLA

by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent
January 9, 1980

INTERVIEWEE: Dr. Jack Gazzola (JG)

INTERVIEWERS: Carla Ehat (CE) and Anne Kent (AK)

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TRANSCRIBER: Marjorie Hoffman

CE: Today is Wednesday, January the 9th, 1980. And continuing the Oral History Program for the California Room at the Marin County Library at Civic Center, this is Carla Ehat and joining me today is Mrs. Thomas Kent. We have the pleasure of being at the residence of Dr. Jack Gazzola and Mrs. Gazzola, located at number 6 Skyline Way in Ross. Dr. Gazzola is an orthodontist practicing here in Marin County and has lived a great part of his life in Sausalito. His maternal and paternal family have lived in the Mother Lode in California and he's agreed to share with us today some of his reminiscences about Sausalito and his family. It's nice to be here, Jack.

JG: Well it's nice to be here too, Carla. I enjoy it very much.

CE: Well, I think if we could touch briefly on your family, let's talk about your maternal grandmother and her beginnings there in Sheep Ranch, which is a spot on the map, I understand, in the Mother Lode.

JG: Well it's a pretty small spot. My grandmother was born in 1861 and she died in 1960, and she used to tell some wonderful stories of the family and things that happened to us. And our family later hauled the gold out of the southern mines, primarily. And my father's --

CE: What was your maternal grandmother's name?

JG: Her name was Lydia Raggio and she married a man named Lewis and he was killed in a gold mine, in the Orofino mine.

CE: Did you know your maternal grandmother?

JG: Very well, very well.

CE: Very well. Did she relocate down to the bay area?

JG: Yes, well she lived with us when she got older --

CE: Oh, you had that privilege of growing up with your grandmother?

JG: Yes, I was very fortunate. But I didn't know her until after she was about sixty years-old I think. Well, no, that would not be correct, but, until she was quite old, approximately.

CE: Did she ever relate what brought her parents to California?

JG: Yes, I mean, they were very poor in Italy and there was a lot of political dissension in the '40s, in 1840, and they left for both reasons. And I remember hearing stories that she didn't come, of course, being born here, but I remember hearing stories about how the whole family would have to save to send one person to America, you know; it's quite interesting.

CE: Yes, we've heard this story from so many nationalities, you know.

JG: Oh, I'm certain.

CE: Marin is sort of a microcosm of Europe. There are places here that look like every place in -- You interview an Italian, it looks like Italy; French it looks like France.

JG: And you know, this is what makes it such a wonderful country, really, I think. I really do.

CE: Yes, yes. Did your grandmother, your great-grandmother have any recollection of how her parents came here, over the plains or around the Horn, or over the Isthmus? Did she ever relate any of that to you?

JG: No because they were about -- She wasn't the first generation. They'd been here for several generations and they were primarily ranchers and then they branched out as the children grew up into other things.

CE: Well Sheep Ranch was, was a sort of a homesteaded piece of land?

JG: It was indeed. Land was for the taking and you could have as much as you like. In my father's family, his great-grandfather didn't have water so he built a ditch for twenty miles bringing water and it later became his and he sold it to the PG&E eventually. Or, he didn't, but somebody else did.

CE: You know all along the Mother Lode when you take 49 and make these little detours to places like Juanita's, you know, and you find that all the old families, Italian families in San Francisco got their start --

JG: Well they all came from there, really.

CE: Yes. I think Giannini, one of them and -- Well that name sticks in my -- most prevalent in my mind.

JG: Well some scientists came from there, out of very tiny towns. The man that work with the interferometer that they used; I can't think of his name at the moment. He was a great scientist, and he came from one of the smallest of small towns up there. There were eight or ten people. It's amazing how they could come down, go to the university and study and learn and become different people and different --

CE: We have a member of our own Moya Library, Serena Robinson, who was raised up in Mark West Springs in Sonoma County and she went to the University of California and that was an effort, you know, to get physically down there and the -- For a woman to do it --

JG: Well, it was remarkable, it really was.

CE: Well there was a desire for learning. And they would come down for cultural events as well. Maybe if you're in the foothills in these isolated places you have a greater appreciation of these things. Your sense of values might be different.

JG: But I think it depended on your socio-economic status.

CE: True.

JG: Part of my family, my father's cousin, married James Taylor who owned the gold mine at Jackson and they traveled all over the world. But they overdid it. They --

CE: You mean they got caught without the funding?

JG: Well eventually, why, they ran out of money, I mean which was a lot of money, in the millions. They spent it. But they seem to require this cultural lack that they'd grown up in; it was a blank up there really, you know. And Sausalito was much like this. Sausalito was funny; it was structured like an old English, New England town and your socio-economic position related to your position on the hill, and the higher the position the higher you were up on the hill. It was kind of amusing.

CE: It's kind of interesting. It's like Hong Kong today.

JG: Only that's very beautiful. So, we started down at the bottom of the town and worked our way up through different houses.

CE: Well now, how did -- This is your maternal line, the Gazzolas, enter the scene? From a similar background? From Italy also?

JG: Well, not really, no, no. They were here for -- My daughter is a sixth generation Californian.

CE: Well I would certainly think, going back to 186--

JG: At least to the forties.

CE: Yes, yes. I'm fourth. And you've got me beat.

JG: No, that's really -- There aren't many of us left, Carla.

CE: No, there aren't many.

JG: My father's family was a nice family. They were well thought of in the town. And my father was a little bit rebellious and my grandfather --

CE: Now, what town are we talking about?

JG: Angel's Camp. And my grandpa, he gambled a little bit and you couldn't work in the mill and gamble because you might steal gold. So he fired --

CE: This was the days before they bonded people.

JG: Oh they didn't bond. They paid in gold coins.

CE: Paid in gold coins. It was a hand shake here.

JG: Oh yes, everything was on your word but that was a company rule and my grandfather fired him just to straighten him out and my father got mad and left and his brother taught him to be a machinist and a mechanic. And he taught him how to time boat engines and he worked for the Hick's Engines Company in San Francisco, little fishing boats. They sent him to Alaska to time fishing boats. And then he came over here looking for fishing boats; he thought there would be some here and found that they weren't available. So he went to work for the Sausalito/Mill Valley Express Company.

CE: Tell us about that. I don't think I've heard that name before.

JG: Well it was the company that delivered all -- It was sort of like the Metropolitan Package Delivery Company and it delivered all the packages from the ferry to all

over Marin County and they had quite a tremendous business and they later submerged with the Merchants and Robert Anderson became head of the Merchants Company.

CE: Well, how would they effect delivering in the earliest part of his lifetime?

JG: Oh they delivered --

CE: What means of transportation?

JG: Well at first they had horses.

CE: Then did they utilize the train?

JG: No, they didn't utilize the trains at all. They had horses and the Old Town burned. And of course, I didn't see it, but Moses Morgan told me about it. And he told me how the Express Company burned and how they couldn't save the horses. They'd run back into the fire and they burned about twelve to fifteen horses. And he was a volunteer fireman and they almost had the fire stopped on one of the lines and then it jumped the line and got away from them.

CE: What year was this?

JG: I don't know, Carla; other people could tell you this. There have been two fires in Sausalito. One was -- This was the worst one.

CE: It seems that's the history of so many early communities -- fire. Look at Virginia City, how many fires they had until they got their super volunteer fire department.

JG: Well they could cope with a small fire. They couldn't cope with a large fire.

CE: And the fires in the mines, terrible. Jack, when were your parents married?

JG: About 1915.

CE: And you were born -- What's your birth date?

JG: 1918, August 11, 1918.

CE: August the 11th, 1918. Now was the family home in San Francisco then or had the family home been in Sausalito?

JG: No. We were living in Sausalito, but I was born in a San Francisco hospital like so many others.

CE: And where was the family home?

JG: It was on Main Street.

CE: Main Street?

JG: Yes

CE: Do you recall the address?

JG: No.

CE: Is the house still standing?

JG: I think it is, yes, I think it is.

CE: What was your father's main occupation then? In this --

JG: He was a mechanic and he worked for Sausalito, Mill Valley Express Company for about two or three years and then he started his own business. The Golden Gate Ferry was developing and he started a small garage across from it. The ferry was related because gradually the garage business disappeared and it became a parking garage.

CE: Is that where the Trade Fair is today?

JG: No, not at first. Then he acquired -- Then he acquired, became a partner in a garage with the owner, Henry Meyers, right near -- It was built over the water on piles, pilings. And so then he had two garages.

CE: Did he effect repairs as well as stow cars?

JG: Yes. Then he bought -- Clint Mason had built the big cement garage and he bought that from him.

CE: Clint Mason. That's the first I've heard of that. It's nice how that turned out, don't you think?

JG: Well it really did, for my father, yes.

CE: Well I mean the way the building was evolved into it's present series of shops.

JG: Oh yes, it is, really, from a garage into a very nice set of shops.

CE: It could have been just an old ugly thing there.

JG: Yes.

CE: Now tell us, your first recollection -- Do you have brothers and sisters?

JG: No. I'm the only child.

CE: You're the only child. What are some of your earliest recollections of Sausalito? If you lived on Main Street, was that on the level? Up the hill?

JG: No, it was pretty far up the hill but not in one of the most desirable areas in town.

CE: Was this in Old Town or New?

JG: It was in Old Town. And we moved from there to Fourth Street in Old Town and there were more people around for my mother to have friends with and I remember this part quite well. I remember playing in the streets. The streets were, incidentally, they were not paved. And I remember the men coming in with horses and they didn't have tractors, or they were too expensive, and they paved the streets in cement and all the level streets were paved because they could be paved in macadam, but they couldn't pave the streetments so they had to be put in concrete and cement.

CE: Okay. So Main Street, and Richardson, and Pine, maybe.

JG: Main Street and Richardson and the streets in New Town were paved about the same time. And they were done in very, very old fashioned methods. The cement and concrete was mixed by hand.

CE: Right on the site?

JG: Right on the site, at the site. And they -- Because the streets were so steep, they would mix above where they were going to pour and let it pour down in a trough.

CE: That was smart.

JG: It was good thinking. And about that time I started to school.

CE: And where was school?

JG: Well it was South School, and the most dedicated teachers in the world; they were just absolutely wonderful.

CE: Can you locate the site for us, roughly?

JG: Well, it was at the end of, the top of Third Street, between Third and Fourth, and it took about the top block.

CE: You mentioned earlier there was distinction in socio-economic strata by a vertical plane. Was there not also not a difference in the horizontal or lateral plane?

JG: Not as much, but there was some difference.

CE: Well weren't there a lot of Portuguese fisher-people kind of north part of town, or were they all over? Do I have that incorrect?

JG: Well there were a couple of groups that were different. There was a Portuguese group that lived on Valley, Portuguese and Indian partly, and they were a very

close group. And if you knew them, they were very nice. If you didn't know them they were kind of rough if you were kids in school.

CE: Well you know, in looking at some of these early photographs, naturally before your time, but they show evidence of windmills and little reservoirs. Do you recall any of that as a boy?

JG: There were no reservoirs in Old Town. There was one in New Town. I remember that we used to go over there and swim.

CE: You did?

JG: Oh yes, in the reservoir, we'd sneak in and swim. And Billy Silverthorn, I can never forget it, drowned there, and --

CE: One of your pals? One of your school --

JG: One of my friends, classmates. I was in sixth grade then.

CE: Mable Wosser tells a story of Captain Richardson's son, and this goes back many years because of her advanced state, but that there was a cemetery very close to the end of Pine Street. Do you have any recollection of that ever being there? Because they moved --

JG: No, that was a little bit out of my territory, really, until I went to North School.

CE: High school? North School?

JG: Why, see, there was South School and North School. South School only had six grades including kindergarten, and then you went through the fifth grade.

CE: Six grades, I see. Were you in -- It was more than a one-room school, though, wasn't it?

JG: Yes. No fire escapes.

CE: Wooden?

JG: Wooden.

CE: One or two stories?

JG: Two stories. And --

CE: Mainly women teachers?

JG: The women were all teachers. In fact, if you were married it was frowned upon to hire a married teacher; you really couldn't be married and be a teacher.

CE: Principal a man?

JG: No.

CE: A Woman?

JG: We had two fine principals, a Mrs. Perry and a Mrs. Keene.

CE: Do you recall some of the other teachers' names?

JG: Oh yes, in South School there was Mrs. Beecher was the kindergarten teacher; Mrs. Cohen was a second or third grade; Mrs. Shirfey was -- I beg your pardon, Miss.

CE: Oh I thought maybe they were widows; they'd bend the rules for widows.

JG: No, they were all Miss. And --

CE: You spoke earlier of your regard for them.

JG: I just couldn't tell you how, well, nice they were, how dedicated they were.

CE: You evidently enjoyed school.

JG: And I did like school. I skipped the third grade and I may be prejudiced and maybe that they helped me along a little bit. They did. And I owe a great deal to them, I really do, to these people.

CE: I feel similar about -- I can remember my kindergarten teacher, because I'm the same age as you, with great affection and warmth.

JG: Oh I really, I thought she was wonderful.

CE: I used to love to go.

JG: Yes I liked to go to school. I'm sure you did. I can tell that.

CE: Well you lived close enough to walk and all that. Now --

JG: Well, always, what other way was there to go?

CE: As a boy, did you hang around the waterfront?

JG: Growing up in Sausalito was the most wonderful place in the world for two reasons. One is that you couldn't get into trouble because if you did your mother knew it before you got home. And the other reason is that there was so many things to do. You were a little bit limited in your younger years, but when you got to be twelve or thirteen, anything went. We all had boats, you know, and we used to sail over to Belvedere to the cod fishery ships that were anchored there and play pirate on them

CE: Cod fish, where all those expensive homes are today?

JG: I know.

CE: And there were some hulks of old, old sailing vessels.

JG: They weren't hulks, they would actually sail. They took them every year outside and would sail them up to the canneries up north.

CE: Oh, I didn't mean those particular ones but weren't there a lot of old sailing ships on the Embarcadero in Sausalito?

JG: In Sausalito, yes. There were two especially, one that a Captain Quinn lived on. It was painted like a British frigate with gun ports and everything; it really didn't have them. And another that Leo Stanley from the prison had as a research vessel or retreat or something, I don't know.

CE: Oh, I never know that about Leo Stanley.

JG: Oh yes.

CE: I knew that Dr. Leo Eloesser had a sailboat.

JG: Knew him well; he used to come into the garage all the time.

CE: He had a sloop called The Flirt.

JG: He had all kinds of boats. I don't remember The Flirt but I remember his motor boats because they were forever breaking down and my Dad liked him and he was a funny old guy. He always wore a beret and had a dachshund and a Cadillac and the combination was unusual, you know. And he just -- In fact, once or twice my father brought him home for dinner and he loved people and he loved any kind of food.

CE: He was a great pal of Dr. Leo Stanley, too.

JG: Well he was kind of an adventurer. He was willing for any -- to experience any new thing, you know. And he liked Italian food and whenever he could, why, he'd say, "Bert, when are we going to have dinner?"

CE: How'd your mother --

JG: My father would just bring him home and wouldn't tell her, so it'd be potluck but he didn't mind. He enjoyed it very much.

CE: In your father's garage?

JG: Oh yes. We knew Leo well and I'd go out with my Dad and Leo to his boat and the dog went everywhere, of course, you know, and then we'd go for a ride around the bay to see if the boat was working pretty well. My father never liked the boat. The motor, he said, was dangerous, but Leo didn't care.

CE: That was his diversion; he loved it I understand.

JG: And he always had a boat.

CE: Well he talked about the Flirt, but he was an unusual man to meet as an adult, for me, and he was 95, I think, when we interviewed him.

JG: At any age he was dynamic. I met him in 1939 at the University after I had met him as a youngster.

CE: You met him at I-House?

JG: I-House, right, and he spoke before the group and he was telling of the need not for soldiers but he wanted medical help and he was touring the country for it. But I mean, he was a very dedicated person; he really didn't care anything about money at all.

CE: You know, he had dual interest, very strong. Music was so important to him in his life.

JG: Played the violin.

CE: Played the violin and every Wednesday night with Naom Blander and three others.

JG: They picked a good group, didn't they?

CE: They played every week and that was his life. I said to him facetiously, "Well, how did you ever get into medicine?" and he said, "Well, we have a family friend, Dr. Barkan." You know the name, of course. "And he said to me one day, 'I think you ought to be a doctor.' I went over to see him and I had something wrong with my eye. And he said, 'I guess if I loved music sufficiently I would have said the heck with you but it sort of interested me.' And he said, 'If you agree,' he said, 'I'll open the door to Heidelberg for you, young man.' So he said, 'I did it.'"

JG: Well actually it was San Francisco's gain because he introduced so many techniques. He and Saxon -- He, I believe, was on the Stanford service and Saxon Pope on the California service. And --

CE: Well he was a thoracic surgeon wasn't he?

JG: He did everything at first but I mean, I think his specialty was this.

CE: Well you know I was trying to be graceful and conclude the interview with his contributions to mankind and humanity and he said, "I hate humanity."

JG: That really isn't true.

CE: And I said, "I can't believe that sir." And he was very sharp and he said, "I just like medicine," and he said, "If I tell a man not to smoke and he continues smoking, that's his problem." Remember? Then I turned it over to Mrs. Kent. I said, "Have you got something you'd like to ask the good doctor?" It was awkward. But he --

JG: He was very interested in everyone. This is the thing that --I mean, he reminds me of Mrs. Kent; she's interested in everything. And this part of living you know. But at any rate, we're back to Sausalito.

CE: Well we've got to get back to Sausalito. So you had this wonderful growing up life which I envy because I love boats too, along the waterfront, and you weren't

far from home. Your mother knew you weren't maybe but four blocks from home.

JG: Well, Carla they didn't hand feed you in those days. And in the sixth grade we used to go down to Madden and Lewis' and we all knew Herb Madden very well and he knew your father and mother and so on, and say, "Herb can we take out one of your big boats?" These were big caulking boats; they were skiffs; you couldn't tip them over. And the whole class, if they could swim or not it didn't matter, would go out on these boats and this is how you learned to swim, somebody would push you overboard.

CE: You learned in a hurry.

JG: I wouldn't let my kids do anything like this, you know, really.

CE: Well Madden and Lewis created a couple of designs, didn't they? Isn't the Mercury one of their designs?

CE: No. That's the Nunes Brothers; that's the other end of town. Madden and Lewis were down there. Madden and Lewis handled big boats.

CE: Like the Zaca?

JG: Yes.

CE: Templeton Crocker?

JG: I remember Crocker. Crocker used to come in our garage all the time.

CE: Oh he did?

JG: Oh, I knew Templeton. But --

CE: Were you interested in mechanics at all, or automobiles?

JG: It's the least thing in the world I wanted to do. All the other kids in town were dying to get into it and get their hands greasy.

CE: They would have loved to be in your spot.

JG: I know. I just couldn't, I didn't have any interest and when I --

CE: Was this a disappointment to your father?

JG: Oh no, he thought it was the greatest thing in the world.

CE: "You don't want to do this? You don't want to do this?"

JG: "Go to school," he'd say, "Learn something."

CE: Now, after you got out of the sixth grade and you went North School, was that through high school?

JG: No. The sixth grade was in North School and we went to -- no, no. High school we went to Tamalpais Union High School.

CE: All right. What was the next school after this first one that you went to?

JG: It was North School. And they just finished building it. It was brand new. And they moved the one you saw in the picture earlier down -- It became a furniture store down in Sausalito and the school now has been condemned because it isn't earthquake-proof, I believe.

CE: Oh, is that where the present Sausalito Historical Society is?

JG: Exactly.

CE: And library, I believe, is there?

JG: Ralph Peterson is the custodian. I went all through school with him.

CE: Were there town characters at that time that you were as a youngster warned to avoid or was it just innocently colorful?

JG: They weren't characters. You could go with anyone in town, providing they didn't work on the boats. And the boats were the rum runners, and they received quite a bit of money and a lot of fellows got into trouble with the --The Chase brothers, I knew them both well; they were older than I was.

CE: You're talking about Prohibition times?

JG: Prohibition times. And John Chase spent the rest of his life in Alcatraz and Paul Chase was the straight arrow type, nicest person you'd ever want to meet, and had to kind of live this down always, you know. It's too bad. But they used to get a lot of money. My father kept his garages open all the time and on Sundays he was there because he let the other people go, not work, so it became sort of a hot stove league and everybody in town used to come down, all the working people certainly, sometime during the Sunday afternoon and come into my father's garage and there'd be forty or fifty men in there. It had a big office and a wood stove and it was very interesting. I'll never will forget Rudy Peterson. You speak of characters, well, he certainly was a character and a wonderful guy to boot. But he really was a character, Captain on the ferry boats. He fought for the light heavyweight championship of the world at one time. And one time somebody challenged him down there, and said it wasn't true, and they went out in the back of the garage, they stripped to their waist and they fought bare knuckles until one fellow couldn't get up and Rudy walked away. He --

CE: I bet there were a lot of wagers on that fight too.

JG: Well we were all sort of stunned by this. I mean it happened so fast that --

CE: Were there Chinese, any Chinese in Sausalito?

JG: Well our --Willie Chee had a fine store next to us and carried everyone on credit through the depression.

AK: What was the name?

JG: Chee.

CE: Willie Chee. And what kind of a store?

JG: I believe his name was Chee. I knew him well.

CE: Was it grocery?

JG: It was a fine grocery store. They had fine produce and the best foods. There was sort of an English colony on top of the hill, or there was supposed to be. I'm not sure that there truly was but at one time there was supposed to be and he carried a lot of products from --

CE: Imported?

JG: Imported, yes.

CE: What means of -- How did you get up to the hill?

JG: We walked.

CE: Well, there weren't concrete rides up those winding ways; they were just rural roads

JG: They were paved.

CE: They were?

JG: They weren't paved at first, but they were gradually paved. Like Princess Avenue and Buckley is paved in cement. And in delivering groceries, there was another Chinese man who used to deliver with a long bamboo cane and two baskets.

AK: That's right.
CE: You remember seeing that yourself?
JG: Sure. And his store was a little tiny hole in the wall. Kee his name was.
CE: What about the Casa Madrona and the Alta Mira? Were they --
JG: The Alta Mira, I remember the day it burned down, and this is a new one.
CE: You do remember?
JG: Oh yes. And I remember the fires were coming and they called in for assistance from Mill Valley and Cushman Walker was running it at the time. And oh, it was terribly exciting, flames were coming out all over. And after that they rebuilt it. There are two little shacks there that are part of the original hotel.
CE: Well what were your fire-fighting capabilities in those days when you were a boy?
JG: They had one man and the fire truck used to go through town and back no matter where the fire was and they would pick all the merchants along the way who were volunteers.
CE: I see, volunteers. Was there a reservoir up in the hills somewhere? How did they get the pressure to go up?
JG: They had a few fire reservoirs but there were very few. I don't remember exactly where they were.
CE: In some of these early photographs they mention William Randolph Hearst's residence. Now, he must have been in there much earlier than the turn of the century.
JG: I don't remember the date. I don't remember the details. I only hear of rumor.
CE: Well what legends did you hear?
JG: The rumor was, the legend was that he built the wall, he was going to build a home and that he wanted access to the beach, either to go to a boat or something or to have a private beach there and they wouldn't give it to him, so he went somewhere else. And later this became the property of the Marin Land and Cattle Company. How they got it I don't know. And then I believe Tom Wiper, Doctor Wiper, from San Francisco, I think, built a home on top of the --
AK: That's right he did. I heard that after he built the wall, thinking he was going to be a big fellow in the club --

End, Side A

JG: The Yacht Club split off from the St. Francis. They both.
CE: Yes we want to talk about that in just a moment.
JG: Alright, alright.
CE: Can we finish your thought just a moment. What did you say? Would you mind repeating?
AK: Yes, talking about Hearst and the early, early Sausalito. I heard the story that he built the wall and meant to build a big home but he was turned down at the Club.
CE: I heard that story too.
JG: And so he would not build the house. He would not finish it; just left it that way.

CE: Now you probably know the story, Jack, about the split-up of the Yacht Club. The San Francisco Yacht Club, did it have its original home in Sausalito where Ondine's is today or was it in San Francisco?

JG: No. The San Francisco Yacht Club and the St. Francis Yacht Club were one and the same and it's one of the oldest yacht clubs in the United States. And they split apart and came over here over some disagreement amongst the members.

CE: Amongst the memberships. But the San Francisco Yacht Club today is the one in Belvedere?

JG: Yes. And it was in Sausalito and they moved it because of the swells from the ferry boats that came in. When the Golden Gate ferries were built, the surge, the surge was damaging to the boats. And I remember when they were getting a star boat ready for one of the world championships and old Joe McAleese was a great sailor on the bay. He was really one of the great sailors.

CE: Joe McAleese?

JG: Yes. And my father had a lot of time and he helped him paint. In those days it was legal to spray them. They sprayed it and it was fascinating to watch. But the San Francisco then moved to Belvedere, where it is now, and I know a lot of people in San Francisco --

CE: I know they always -- I think they say, it's the oldest yacht club in the Pacific Coast.

JG: It's an equal honor that goes to both clubs; it really isn't --

CE: Both clubs. And Corinthian is --

JG: Corinthian is a newer club, and The Marin, of course is much newer, and we belong to the Marin.

CE: Are you interested in sailing today?

JG: I sailed as a youth, you know. We sailed everything: moon boats, star boats.

CE: Did you? I had a moon boat.

JG: Did you really?

CE: Yes.

JG: They were wonderful.

CE: And that was designed by the Corinthian, it seems to me. I had one up in the slough area in Corte Madera.

JG: You learned to sail in a small boat. But I built a Mercury. You mentioned Mercurys.

CE: That's the Nunes Brothers.

JG: Nunes Brothers. They had them in sets.

CE: Is this one of your sailboats on the wall?

JG: No that's the world championship Star that we bought from the Burham brothers and we raced on the bay for about -- after I became a dentist. And we raced for about five years. You had to sail every weekend or you'd get stale. It was really awful. I was getting to be an old man at twenty five, you know. It was fun.

CE: You probably knew Myron Spaulding somewhere in your travels?

JG: Very well. Myron built the Clippers. Before I built the Mercury I sailed a Clipper; you name it I've sailed it.

CE: He taught me how to sail.

JG: Well you had the best.

CE: He was building the Buoyant Girl for Dr. Rosenblum.

JG: I went out there at McNear's Point and he took me through it and then after she was built, Buoyant Girl -- Dr. Rosenblum was a member of the St. Francis and he said, "How would you like to see it sail?" He was very proud of it, you know, this new toy that he had and I said, "You mean you'll take me out in the boat?" and he said, "Sure, let's go." And we went for a sail. And he said, "Here take the tiller." I was panicked, this beautiful, big boat.

CE: Well Myron is a legend in himself. He's probably the greatest -- Well he has a dual talent. When I knew him he was still playing for the symphony and he finally gave it up because --

JG: He's a violinist in the San Francisco Symphony.

CE: And he finally gave it up because, well, using his hands and building and steaming wood and then he'd have to put that tuxedo on and saw away there in the violin section and he wouldn't play politics and he didn't like the social life and said, "I guess I'd better stick to boat design."

JG: Well, you know, he won the Honolulu race.

CE: Oh yes, he's won the Bermuda Race; everybody wanted him for a skipper. That reminds me, we should interview him, because he's a legend.

JG: Really, he truly is.

CE: When you got out in the races people, yachtsmen look, "What's Myron doing over there? What's he got on that tacking?" He knew the currents; he knew everything.

JG: Well Wosser took over his place, Jake Wosser.

CE: What other place can a boy be raised with such an environment?

JG: There were so many things to do. Then we used to hunt.

CE: Hunt? In Sausalito?

JG: The funny thing is that everybody had a gun after about twelve years old, if you can believe it that twelve years of age you had a shotgun. And there were a good dozen of us that hunted from Sausalito to Coyote Ridge which is above Muir Beach. We hunted all across there and in the preserve. It was really wonderful. We didn't shoot much and I think that's why I'm a conservationist. I think I learned that early, really. But it still was a great life.

CE: Did you wander around Fort Baker?

JG: All over.

CE: And talk to the soldiers and just --

JG: No, no. They were off limits kind of.

CE: Off limits.

JG: Well for one thing, it was a restricted area and --

CE: Oh that's true. Now it's open because it's GGNRA property.

JG: Well, Walter Sellmer caught us hunting down there one time.

CE: The sheriff?

JG: The sheriff. And we had a head start of about a mile and he chased us all the way home and we kept the lead on him and I was panicked. I wasn't going to let him catch me, you know, because I was afraid he'd take the gun. I had heard that was what they did. I don't know what he would have done.

CE: Lots of legends around Walter Sellmer.

JG: Oh he was a nice guy, he really was.

CE: We interviewed him out in his little house at Stinson, and interesting gentleman.

JG: In his prime he did a fine job. This was before he was sheriff and he was the Game Warden and he was extremely conscientious, as you can tell by the fact that he chased us up these hills for miles. He was going to catch us, bound and determined. But it was a nice place to grow up.

CE: Did you ever dream of sailing out the Golden Gate?

JG: Not at the time; my dream was to get on a bigger boat always. And I knew the captains of -- Well the Schwabachers had a boat in there and the Janidor and one of the Senators had a boat in there, big boats these were. And one night on Christmas Eve they had a party on board, unknown to the owners, and the tender tipped over and about twelve were drowned. And it took a big dent out of the town. Someone knew somebody who was drowned. Two fellows swam in I knew one of them quite well, worked for my Dad, Jimmy Martinoni, and he made it in all the way. It was cold water and late at night.

CE: You know one day we interviewed a man whose name escapes me at the moment, but he had been mayor of Sausalito and grown up there, Robert Gunn.

JG: Knew him well.

CE: Ok. He would be a contemporary of yours.

JG: Little older.

CE: Little older. Nice fellow. He was talking about the change in Sausalito and he hated to see it come to what it is today. He said you can't go downtown and buy your youngster a pair of socks to go to school in. Does this disturb you?

JG: It disturbs me very much. I mean, it was a very nice quiet little town and when you went downtown you knew everyone, you'd been in their house, you know every single person that you met, and --

CE: Yes. Isn't it smaller than Ross?

JG: Oh yes, it was a very small town. No, I think it was bigger, around 1200, but I'm guessing. I don't know.

CE: Well Ross was 2700.

JG: Well in the old days --

CE: But that lovely spirit of everybody knew everybody, and you had these merchants who knew you and you as a youngster could go in and if you didn't have a dime -

JG: It just really didn't matter. It didn't matter.

CE: It didn't matter. And there were hardware stores and there were places you could get things fixed and none of that exists anymore.

JG: Well it's just the wrong kind of town now. It's a --

CE: Well how did this come about?

JG: Well Herb Madden with great foresight built these docks down there that Herbie's running now, Herb Madden Jr. runs them now, and it brought in a lot of sailboats and then the Trade Fair was built. After the war the garage was taken over by the shipyard people and sold to them and then the Stewart Rose, I'm not sure, but I think he was the one that came in and developed the Trade Fair in there first and then moved it to a ferry boat in later on, in later years. But now it's really changed and it's not for the better and it's become such a popular place in novels and in movie pictures that it spoils the whole town. It just ruined it.

CE: Well I remember it's period when it was so open and there were so many gay, so-called gay people there, and all of these things going on and that seemed healthier to me than what is sort of there now, all these series of little boutiques and they're all selling more or less the same thing.

JG: Well, in my day it was a very strict town. I mean there was --

CE: Do you think it will ever turn back?

JG: No. I don't think so. I think it's ruined. I really do. I think that the financial interests are more important than the people's interest.

CE: Well Bob Gunn said that they raised, the owners of these stores, these properties along Bridgeway were so tempted to rent to people and they did it. You know they did it for money.

JG: I can't blame them. I mean, you know, I would have done the same thing, I'm afraid, we all would have I think. But it was a shame and they didn't perceive it would be such a rickytick place. If you ever go down there now, you can't believe the people that you see. You know, you really can't. I mean you wonder what they're doing there, where they come from.

CE: They're always eating; they've got something in their mouth and they're all in shorts in the summer and Swinus Americanas you know, sort of tourist --

JG: Well if we had an ugly American anywhere around they would end up in Sausalito, I think. It seems to be --

CE: But you know even the restaurants. Do you remember the Tin Angel? That was -

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JG: What was her name?

CE: I forget. But where Scoma's is today and the Glad Hand even as recent as twenty or thirty years ago they weren't bad, you know, they served good food and they were interesting.

JG: They were the beginning of the street artist. They were artistic people who lived there. And they were --

CE: Yes. You don't object to that.

JG: No, no. What I object to is what this had brought in.

CE: This crass commercialism and mediocrity of merchandise and sort of what happened to the wharf I guess, Fisherman's Wharf.

JG: Well it reminds me of Fisherman's Wharf or Playland at the Beach. It was doomed when it began to change, you know, and I'm afraid that Fisherman's Wharf is the same way. They've over-expanded --

CE: Well, look at Pier 39. They had the --

JG: Well, Pier 39 has ruined it.

CE: Why did they need something like that? That is so un-San Franciscan, that whole setup of shops.

JG: A friend of mine is Warren Simmons, a friend of mine's brother-in-law, and I don't really know him but he owns the Tia Maria chain and --

CE: He did it.

JG: Yes, he really did this and he did it illegally.

CE: Certainly. There's a suit pending, still, isn't there, on the whole operation?

JG: I think so. Too bad.

CE: Those of us who have lived here all our lives look at the changes in San Francisco and --

JG: Oh I have to tell you one thing. When I was in grammar school we all went to a May Day festival and -- We didn't go to Kentfield; we went to the Kent's Field and we came from all over the county. Came from Ross --

CE: All the schools participated.

JG: Sausalito, they all participated and you went up --

CE: Tamalpais Center.

JG: Oh, I thought it was great. And they had little things to sell and there were hawkers around, and we had --

AK: I almost brought a few pictures to show you.

JG: Oh, I'd love to see them, I really would.

AK: You know, excuse me, the County Library, the same place where you're going to put your things, has a wonderful, wonderful group of pictures from the May Days, from way back. And when Jessie Hanna died, she had no children, and she had saved pictures from the time when you were little, I suppose, she had saved all kinds of pictures in little sort of homemade little books and her niece had the good sense to bring it all to the County Library, so it's all there.

CE: Isn't that's wonderful?

JG: You know we each had a picture of ourselves doing the May Pole Dance. It kind of embarrasses me now, but at the time I thought it was terrific. And we went -- We didn't go on the yellow trains, you know the steel trains. We went up on these old green wooden trains with the wicker seats. And that was a long time ago, it really was.

AK: Saw a picture the other day where the grandmother was taking the first shovel of dirt out and a little boy in a sailor suit is standing beside her and we figure from the date it was that little boy was Sherman who is not an old grandfather; that's Dr. Sherman Kent. And we'll have to get a copy of it and give it to him I guess.

JG: You know, we used to have wonderful times up there. They not only let any of the kids come, apparently, and we used to go up for Scout Jamborees there, too. But the striking thing there is, that nobody referred to it as Kentfield, they always called it the Kent's Field. I remember going up to the Kent's Field.

CE: I understand that you had a dog that was kind of special?

JG: Well he wasn't special to me; he was special to my father, and his name --

CE: What was his name?

JG: His name was Booze.

CE: Booze?

JG: Booze. He was a wonderful dog and he won a lot of field trials. Oh my father thought the world of him, but he got older and he had arthritis and he could walk downtown but he had a lot of trouble getting back up the hill. So he'd go downtown and he'd wait in front of the candy shop until a youngster would come out of the candy store and then he'd steal their ice cream cone. So my father said, "Look, let's avoid this. You just give him an ice cream cone and send me the bill every month." So he would go out and bark at the front door and they would bring him an ice cream cone and then he would go down to the taxi stand, near one of my father's garages, and he'd eat the ice cream cone. And pretty soon why

my father didn't want to bother to take him home and he told Tommy Thomas to give him a ride home and put that on the bill. So every day the dog would go down, get in the taxi, I mean get his ice cream cone, go down, eat it, get in a taxi and he'd go home. And I was getting out of school about the same time and the taxi drivers thought it was the most funniest thing, the most hilarious thing in the world. I'd be walking up the hill with my books going home and the dog would come by in the back seat and they'd toot the horn at me and the taxi driver would wave and take the dog on home but he'd never stop for me. And my father would -- I taking a taxi was sort of equated with being sinful, you know, it was a waste of money.

CE: He loved that dog.

JG: Oh he loved the dog.

CE: Oh, that's great, that's a great story.

JG: But it truly did happen that way. And if they didn't give him one he would steal one from some youngster, so they had to buy him an ice cream .

CE: Tell me, in Old Town, Jack, where the Valhalla is operating today, do you remember that building as a youngster? Was it next to Madden & Lewis, or near?

JG: No it was at the other end of town. It was right next to Nunes Brothers.

CE: Oh Nunes. I get them mixed up.

JG: The Nunes brothers build fine boats, they really did.

CE: Did you hang around there quite often?

JG: Oh yes we did. We used to go down and crawl in and out and they never said anything. I don't understand how they let us do this. When the Zacca was being built we would crawl in and around and they never bothered us as long as -- Every once in a while somebody would say, "Hey kids don't go play over there," but they never bothered us at all. So we watched it really being built and launched in the street there. The Valhalla was a bar. Bars were sort of off limits to me. I didn't know they existed until I went to college. And as I say everybody in town knew my father and they wouldn't serve me a drink, I think, anyway. But I never tried; I knew better than to try.

CE: Well now we've got to get you to Tam.

JG: Oh, then I went to Tam, of course.

CE: Who were some of your classmates then?

JG: Oh, Jack Willcutt down here, was in my class. Harold Allison who later became Principal of Drake. And I'm trying to think now. Bruce Selfridge and -- Bruce died of course. John Ganau. Jack Elliott was from Sausalito. Jack is quite ill now, and he became a doctor later on.

CE: Tell me, what got you interested in your life's work?

JG: Well it's interesting. I went to college at fifteen.

CE: At Fifteen? Just because you skipped the third grade?

JG: Well, if you do one thing well, you can't do the next thing. I couldn't play baseball, so I did well in books. Do you follow what I'm saying?

CE: And you enjoyed studying?

JG: I enjoyed it, right. I didn't enjoy it but I did well in it.

CE: Was this a delight to your family?

JG: I think my mother, really. And the teachers at South School were the ones who sort of pushed me. When I said that they were dedicated teachers I honestly mean this. And the two women who were principals were on the lookout for anybody with any spark of intelligence which wasn't so great in those days. I mean, it really wasn't. I mean there was a great difference in potential. So it was really rather easy to go through high school in three years, you know, and skip a grade before that. But when you did something well it was easier to continue in that line than it was to become a baseball player. I was tall and skinny and couldn't play baseball very well. So I excelled in grades and so on.

CE: And what school did you select?

JG: I went to Cal. And my mother and father never went with me. They just thought it was the natural thing, that I was grownup.

CE: Did you live over there at I-House?

JG: No. I lived in Bowles Hall first and then I became interested in I-House and it was a beautiful place and I just cry when I go over there now and see it. And it was lovely. You know, Rockefellers had done it and they had done a magnificent job. They had record libraries that were fantastic and they had tailors and we had maid service and the whole bit.

CE: He had built several of those throughout, hadn't he?

JG: Yes. There was one in France and one in New York.

CE: This was the one on the west coast.

JG: Yes. And there were seventy-percent foreign students so really it was an education to live there. And I met people from all over the world. And there was a little clique of people there, Americans, that were sort of avant-garde in those days. At the same time I met Oral Roberts and Jeffers the poet; and his sons were there. And Eugene O'Neill lived in Danville then and we used to go out there.

CE: How interesting.

JG: He was kind of a strange person, I mean O'Neill was. He was -- He didn't work for fun; he worked under tremendous pressure, I think. And I think he drank to manage to survive; he was an unhappy person. And the kids married anyone to get out. If you remember Una married Charlie Chaplin and he was quite -- He was an older man.

CE: Lord yes.

JG: He was almost my age, I think, then. Well, he was forty; that was pretty old when I was nineteen. It's not so old now!

CE: When you were at Cal is that when you made your decision?

JG: No. I had a number of majors. I was really a microscopic biologist and I took a course in Letters and Science and I was sort of formed at the University. I have great appreciation for public education. I really honestly do, because I was just a little pebble out of Sausalito without any great cultural background, you know.

CE: There was an interesting book that was published two years ago about the University of California and people who have been successful wrote short essays on what their years at UC Berkeley meant to them.

JG: Well I was formed there, I think.

CE: And John Kenneth Galbraith from that extreme to the man who later became Chancellor -- Clark Kerr.

JG: Kerr, whichever; English Kerr.

CE: That book would be of interest to you.

JG: It would be. He was a fine man. I'm sorry I -- And Strong, you know, Ray Strong's brother taught philosophy over there, Ed Strong.

CE: The painter?

JG: Yes, his brother. And I took philosophy from him, didn't know that they were -- Never heard of Ray Strong at the time, and he was a remarkable man and he became Chancellor at the wrong time. He became Chancellor in the sixties and it was a bad time.

CE: The dispiriting sixties. That was a terrible decade of dissent. I think those of us who are our age are fortunate to have lived when we did. We had some wonderful years, wonderful years of, where you respected your teachers, you didn't fight with your professors.

JG: The finest teachers in the world were there.

CE: Look who was at UC Berkeley: Chaney and Hildebrand.

JG: Dr. Chaney, Chuck Chaney was -- I used to play tennis with Chip, his son. And Hildebrand was there, and the man who discovered photosynthesis, Calvin, and actually Doudoroff, who was a young man, then is still head of the Department of Bacteriology, but he was brilliant. They formed the Naval Research Unit Number One out of the UC people and I think they were involved in germ warfare at the time. Whatever happened, it was classified until 1973, and then --

CE: Well don't you feel it is one of the great land grant colleges of the United States?

JG: I think it still is probably one of the finest universities in the country. I think that -- I heard here that the Regents are trying to bring it back to the number one again and I'm delighted because I feel very strong about it. I just thought they were wonderful people and they really were. You know, they were not affected in any way. They were simple, intelligent geniuses teaching us. I took freshman physics from Ralph Lawrence who discovered the cyclotron, you know, and I mean this was -- Palm was there and Kerner, he signed the Versailles Treaty, and he had a wonderful sense of humor and when you could see it. He didn't always show it but when he showed it, it was hilarious. But it was a wonderful life and I had many majors but I worked. I was attached to the Navy; I wasn't in it.

CE: Well what was your association with the Navy?

JG: I was a research physiologist. I was a small organism. I was interested in bacteria.

CE: And you did this during World War II?

JG: Yes.

CE: Had the Naval Reserve, NROTC, been in existence then?

JG: Oh, it was there but this was entirely separate.

CE: But did you have it in your undergraduate?

JG: No. I was in the Army and I got into this by accident, really. I happened to be in the right place at the right time and they needed people who had worked with single-celled organisms and I had worked with protozoan. And as I graduated, why, I -- After I graduated at 19, why, I was teaching people -- The war started in '41. I waited a year, did some graduate research and then the war began and they asked me to go down there and lecture the incoming men who were going into

this other program. And being only 19 it didn't bother me at all; now I'd be distraught.

CE: Admiral Nimitz was there at the University of California.

JG: I've never met him. I met his daughter.

CE: The one who is now a Sister?

JG: The Sister, right, yes, right.

CE: Now she's supposed to be the foremost authority on shells.

JG: Sea shells.

CE: How do you say that word? Conchology?

JG: Conchology.

CE: Sister Aquinas.

JG: It's a beautiful book. You know I could get hung on anything. I'm interested in so many things.

CE: You have a curious, open, wonderful mind.

JG: Well I don't know about that.

CE: How did you finally decide? Of all these things that fascinated you, how did you decide upon --

JG: Well, I was learning -- Prior to the war I'd been learning to speak Japanese. And I had many Japanese friends at International House and we conversed, via letter, and when I was interviewed they asked me if I had any friends in the old country. I thought of Italy, you know. I didn't think of Japan; we were at war with Japan. And after about two years they discovered that I was a security risk. See, the Navy takes care of its own, so they were very nice. They said, "What would you like to do?" Also, they didn't know what I knew and what I didn't know and I didn't know what I knew and what I didn't know. And I couldn't go overseas as an infantryman or soldier. They didn't want me out of the country. And so they said, "What would you like to do?" I said, "Well, you know, I'd like to go into a field that I wouldn't waste my background in bone and this type of thing, physiology. I think I'd like to become an orthodontist." They said, "Fine." They called up, made arrangements for me. They said the semester had started, all you have to do is go over there and start. So I did.

CE: Where did you go, UC? In San Francisco?

JG: UC, of course. Two of us were in this program, in the orthodontic program; one boy had heart trouble. They had twelve instructors and two students.

CE: And how long have you been practicing this profession?

JG: I've been practicing since 1945. I'm the senior orthodontist here. I was the first one and now there are --

CE: First one?

JG: First full time one.

CE: My neighbor Jim Dawson I guess is a --

JG: Good friend. I taught before Jim went through school. I taught for six years.

CE: His mother was an orthodontist.

JG: His mother was an orthodontist, but part-time. I knew her well. I introduced her into the Pacific Coast Society. And she was a lovely person; she really was. She's still alive and in Carmel. His father died.

CE: Yes. In fact we go down there often to interview people and he says, "You ought to go down and talk to Mother." And I should because she has a rather unique background. Don't you think?

JG: Yes she does. Also she was sort of a pioneer in her day. The Martins were over here but these were part-time orthodontists, and I was the first full-time orthodontist.

CE: There was a man in Berkeley, an orthodontist, that I went to Hahn -

JG: George?

CE: George Hahn took care of me when I was six years old.

JG: How well I know George Hahn!

CE: He used to scare me to death.

JG: He used to scare me to death.

CE: No nonsense. When they'd put those impressions in your mouth and I'd -- We're coming to the end of the story and --You have a family, you have your lovely wife Maureen sitting here.

JG: We have two girls. One graduated from Davis and University of California Medical Center at San Francisco is a nurse; she's an RN and practices in the city in ICU, Intensive Care Units. The other girl is a senior at Berkeley. And I must say that when I compare Berkeley to the other campuses, I love Berkeley, you know. And I think that growing up in Sausalito when I did was a great privilege and growing up in Marin County was a privilege. I really believe this. Because you are able to -- Marin County is very mobile. You're able to go up or down of sideways in Marin County which is a very fortunate thing and a way it should be, I think. And --

CE: Well it's been a pleasure chatting with you this afternoon.

JG: It's been my pleasure, really.

CE: And thank you so much for letting us come into your home.