

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Community History Project

Personal Recollections of Early Orange County
O. H. 154b

ARTHUR J. McFADDEN

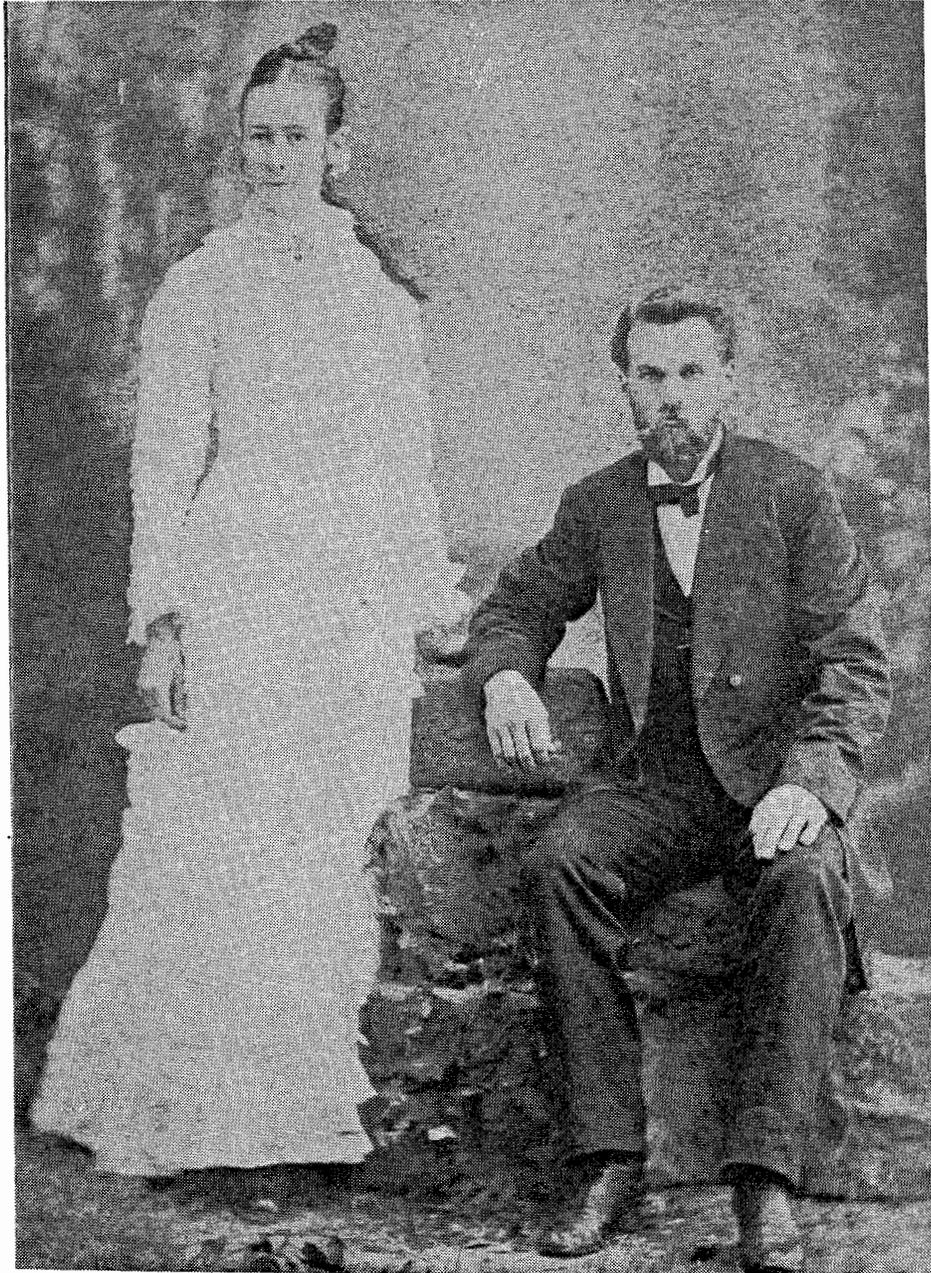
Interviewed

by

Stephen Gould

on

May 6,14,29, 1970 and June 4,6,17, 1970



Wedding picture of Flora Babcock and Robert McFadden
ca. 1880



Robert McFadden
ca. 1920



Aunts of Arthur J. McFadden
(l-r) Anna McFadden, Janet Adams (Aunt Nett),
Belle Sneallie, Agnes McFadden, Effie Raitt

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SUBJECT: Personal Recollections of Early Orange County

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G: This is an interview with Arthur J. McFadden by Stephen Gould on May 6, 1970, in Santa Ana, California, for the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton.

Mr. McFadden, could you tell me something about yourself, about your life?

M: Well, my father [Robert McFadden] came to Santa Ana the year it was founded, in 1870. In 1872, or thereabouts, he and my uncle [James] Jim [McFadden] bought the old landing at Newport and they lived down there. I was born in Santa Ana at my great-grandparents' house on the corner of First and Flower [streets], but they just came up here for the event. We went back to the old landing at Newport and I lived down there the first five years of my life. Then we moved back up to Santa Ana and I've lived in Santa Ana ever since. We lived on north Main Street for a few years and then bought an eleven acre ranch on the north side of Fifth Street about a quarter of a mile west of Bristol [Street]. In those days, there was only one house on Fifth Street between our house and the river, a mile and a quarter. After they sold that ranch, which they did while I was in college, they built a house on north Main Street and we lived there until I sold it about ten years ago.

G: Is that picture on the wall a picture of the home where you lived in Newport Beach?

M: Yes, that is the house. There were eleven people who lived in this little cove where the old landing was, right around the west end of the bridge that goes from Corona del Mar to Costa Mesa. It's on the [Pacific] Coast

Highway now. There wasn't anybody else within eight miles in any direction. You can see the water from the warehouse right there. They had another warehouse up on top of the bluff and a chute that ran out so that they could anchor the ship under the mouth of it and shoot the wool sacks down the chute and into the ship. Wool was the main export of Orange County in those days.

G: Do you recall some of the ships that came and docked there at Newport?

M: (Laughter) Well, if I weren't such an old man I'd be able to name them. There was just one ship that came regularly every two weeks. Most of the ships couldn't get into Newport Bay on account of the harbor being shallow. This steamer was named the Newport and it was built by my father and Uncle Jim and then sold to the Pacific Steamship Company. It called there regularly as long as they kept that place. Many people got drowned making soundings on the bar, which was necessary every two weeks because it changed all the time. Finally, Tom Rule who was a pilot at that time, drowned, and that was the last straw that broke the camel's back because he was a close friend of both my father and uncle. They moved over to where the Newport wharf is on the ocean in 1888 or 1898, and it's been there ever since, of course.

G: Do you remember how many people were drowned?

M: No, I don't know how many there were all together, but there were six or seven and I believe there were five people drowned at one time.

G: Did they have more trouble during floods than at the regular times down at Newport Harbor?

M: Floods never bothered Newport at all because in those days the lowland between Huntington Beach mesa and Costa Mesa mesa was all covered with willow trees. The flood came down the Santa Ana River and spread all over it and all the silt washed out or settled amongst those willow trees. The water that went out into the bay didn't make any difference in the depth of the bay, but after they cut those willow trees down, the next flood they had filled up some of the upper part of the river for as much as five feet. So they proceeded to make an open place for the river to go into the ocean right there at River Point; otherwise, it would have filled Newport Bay up in just a few years.

- G: Do you remember why they cut down those willow trees?
- M: Well, they cut the willow trees down to farm the land. Santa Ana in the early days cooked and heated their houses with the wood from the willow trees that ran the river bottom.
- G: Of your relatives who have been prominent in southern California history, which ones did you know the best?
- M: James McFadden was the most prominent one and he was the Republican boss in southern California for many years. My father Robert McFadden had the active operation of the crews that handled the freight at Newport and also the crews who built the railroad down to Newport when they finally built it, which was along about 1890, I guess.
- G: You say that James McFadden was the boss of the Republicans in southern California.
- M: That's right.
- G: Who were some of the politicians he was responsible for getting into office?
- M: I can't give you their names; I don't remember them.
- G: Did he serve any political office himself?
- M: He never ran for any office of any kind as long as he lived.
- G: How was he able to be the Republican boss never running for office?
- M: I don't know. It was a matter of personality, I guess, but there is a lot of mythology connected with politics because after Uncle Jim died, for three or four years nobody ran for office around this country without coming and asking me about it just because I have the same name. (laughter)
- G: Do you think it might have been because he had [some] say so on where the funds would go, or that he would have power as to who would get political contributions?
- M: No, I don't think that had anything to do with it. It was just a matter of personality.
- G: Besides his political operations, what were some of James McFadden's other major contributions?

- M: Well, he owned quite a bit of real estate down south of town from the corner of what was Delhi Road and now is Warner Avenue south for a mile, clear of the river. He owned that for many years in the early days. My father took charge of it when he came out here and sold off what is known as Gospel Swamp, which is in the neighborhood of Greenville, to the farmers that were coming into the country. The last 1,500 acres was such a worthless salt grass meadow that there was no sale for it at all and he just kept it. Uncle Jim kept it as long as he lived and 160 acres of it, I believe, or 260 acres of it, sold within the last three or four years for \$4 million. (laughter) That's where Sand Point is now.
- G: You say it was a salt marsh. Could you describe what the area was like?
- M: It wasn't a salt marsh it was just a marsh. In the early days the river filled the whole low country from the Costa Mesa mesa over to the Huntington Beach mesa nearly every winter. After I was through high school, Rick Walker and I took a canoe that I owned . . . this was after 1912 because I bought the canoe then. I got in it down at Newport, paddled right to the corner of Delhi Road and south Main Street and got out of it. It was good going all the way. Quite a good many years ago the Irvine Company cut a deep gulch from a low place at the head of Newport Bay into the lowland that's right north of where the University of California at Irvine is now. That enabled the water to go into the bay without going clear down the river mouth the way it had gone before.
- G: When you paddled your canoe from Newport up to Santa Ana, what were some of the things you saw along the way as far as wild life or the general way the country looked?
- M: Well, everybody in what we called Gospel Swamp in those days, and which was called Greenville in later years, had a boat that they kept on the shady side of their barn. Of course, when it was all flooded those boats were in use, but the cattle were on the high places where they didn't have to swim and so were the horses. The rest of the country was under water.
- G: Was the wildlife very plentiful then as far as birds and ducks or geese?
- M: Oh, yes, millions of them. They counted the geese out in Newport mesa by the acre not by the hundreds or thousands in those days. I suppose there were more geese wintered there than anyplace else in the world.

- G: What was the largest flock that you recall seeing down in the Newport area?
- M: Oh, four or five acres, where Balboa Island is now. It was always there but it was always covered with water at real high tide, except for a couple of acres. When the Santa Ana winds started . . . where all the geese and ducks would usually spend their time out in the ocean in the daytime, they came ashore right now! I can remember being over on that island once when the Santa Ana wind started and I laid down on my back and shot the geese.
- G: Some of the old-timers remember swans in the area. Do you remember ever seeing swans or any other exotic type of birds?
- M: Yes, I've seen flocks of white swans that had as many as fifty in it in the early days. I remember once when a flock came over me, I thought they were white geese until they got right over me.
- G: What was the Newport area like in those days? How would you describe it?
- M: Do you mean the Gospel Swamp area?
- G: I mean the harbor area.
- M: The harbor area was a primeval solitude, there wasn't any bridge across to where Newport is now. I was about four years old when they built that bridge, and I can remember my father taking me down there when they were building it. They had a horse-drawn pile driver. The population on the peninsula has all built up since then, of course. There wasn't any bridge across to what's called Corona del Mar until about 1920. That's very recent comparatively speaking. There was no way to get over to Laguna Beach from Corona del Mar except with a boat. There was no road in the early days.
- G: Do you remember when the Pacific Electric came to the Newport area?
- M: I do, very distinctly; it was 1905.
- G: What changes did Pacific Electric have on the Newport area?
- M: They built clear down to where the Balboa Pavilion is now and it had a very stimulating affect on the population. The population of Newport grew up much more rapidly while

that road was in operation. Of course, the Huntington Beach mesa was primeval solitude when that road was built and it was all built up afterward. I drove the team that surveyed the railroad from Newport up to what was called Smeltzer in those days. They shipped 2,200 cars of celery out of there the first year. My uncle Jim promised them he would build the railroad if they would put that land all in celery and have a way to get rid of it.

G: Did you ever meet any of the Huntingtons who had financed the Pacific Electric Company?

M: I don't remember that I ever did. I probably did but I don't remember it.

G: Talking about the Smeltzer area and the early celery growing, do you remember the Chinese who first came into that area?

M: I remember them very distinctly, but they didn't farm out on the mesa that Costa Mesa is on, they farmed on the river bottom between here and there. We called them China gardens and there was a great big one on the north side of Fifth Street about a mile east of Bristol between Bristol and the river. There were several more of them down on what we called Gospel Swamp which is down, oh, three miles or so south of that.

G: Approximately what year was that?

M: Oh, it was along in the 1890s.

G: Do you remember down in the Smeltzer area when they had difficulties in regard to the Chinese laborers and had to have guards over them to keep the population from persecuting them?

M: (Laughter) I don't remember that, but I think that is pretty much exaggerated. When they graded south Main Street from what was Delhi Road, or Warner Avenue now, on down to Newport Road they had a crew of about fifty Chinamen with wheelbarrels who did the grading. My father and Uncle Jim paid for it themselves because this was part of Los Angeles County in those days and Los Angeles didn't give a damn whether we ever had any roads down here or not. They needed that road very badly to haul freight over from Newport up to here and Riverside and San Bernardino. Nobody ever bothered the Chinamen. I can remember when there were China gardens out west of Santa Ana between here and the river, and then we had a pretty good sized Chinatown in Santa Ana where city hall is right

now. I can't remember when the Chinatown burned down. Everybody that knew anything knew it was going to burn and we were all there to see it.

G: Did you witness the burning?

M: Yes.

G: Could you describe it?

M: Well, there were only two or three buildings left then. They just got the Chinamen out of them and suddenly it caught fire and burned up. Everybody was there watching it; nobody did anything.

G: Were any people injured?

M: No.

G: Why did everybody seem to know about it ahead of time?

M: Well, it was done maliciously and with malice aforethought. The word spread around in those days amongst the people who knew their way around quite well. Well, I don't suppose everybody in town knew about it, but I'd just started practicing law then and I knew it.

G: When you say it was done maliciously, exactly what do you mean by that?

M: Well, I mean that they wanted to get rid of Chinatown and they just deliberately burned it down. Mrs. [Martha M. Shaffer] . . . I can't remember her name, owned her land there. She owned twenty or thirty acres up where Bullock's [Department Store] is now on north Main Street at the same time. I know her name perfectly well but I don't remember it.

G: What did she think of the burning?

M: I don't know, but she was able to sell her land off for more than the Chinamen could have ever paid for it, so I don't think she suffered any as a result of the fire.

G: So she rented it to the Chinese?

M: She rented the land to them, yes.

G: Do you remember the building of the railroad from Newport to Santa Ana?

- M: The first job I ever had for wages was carrying the water bucket for the crew who laid those rails and I got fifty cents a day. My dad was the boss of the crew and a man with the name of [Joseph] Bright had the contract for building the bridge across the river down to Newport. His headquarters were up in San Bernardino.
- G: How old were you then?
- M: Nine years old.
- G: How many people were on the crew?
- M: Well, I suppose they had thirty or forty, quite a good sized crew.
- G: Were the laborers Chinese?
- M: No, no, they were Americans and Mexicans.
- G: How many rails did they average per day?
- M: I have no recollection of that at all.
- G: Do you have any idea how long it took them to build the railroad?
- M: Well, I don't know. I imagine two or three months anyhow.
- G: What were your father's feelings when you sold out the railroad?
- M: Well, my father and Uncle Jim owned the vast proportion of the railroad and the lumber business, and the wharf was known as the Newport Wharf and Lumber Company. It always paid a profit and my dad told me there was never a year after they built the wharf that it didn't pay a profit. They sold the railroad business to a man who was a miner up in Montana and he had a lot of property over in the northeast corner of the county. They thought he was buying it for his own good, but he sold it to Southern Pacific; he was just acting as a stooge. They wouldn't have sold it to Southern Pacific under any circumstances because their affiliations were all with the Santa Fe.
- G: What were your father's and your uncle's feelings when they found out that Senator Jones . . .
- M: I don't know what their feelings were. There was nothing they could do about it then because it was a year or so

after they sold it that it was transferred to the SP [Southern Pacific].

G: Did you ever meet Senator Jones, the man they sold it to?

M: I don't remember whether I did or not. I probably did.

G: After the railroad was sold, was it used as much as it was?

M: No, they moved the business all over to Santa Monica which was their headquarters in those days. The reason they bought it was to put the competition out. It ended Newport as a commercial port entirely. Newport Harbor, of course, is one of the busiest and most teneted pleasure boat harbors in the world. When I was seven years old my dad gave me a fourteen foot skiff which was the only pleasure boat on Newport Bay. I doubt if there is any area in the world that has changed more in one man's lifetime than Newport Harbor and the surrounding area. I can't believe it when I go up in those high buildings in Newport Center . . . I'm always looking at them.
(laughter)

G: So you believe you had the first pleasure boat.

M: That's right.

G: Do you still have a pleasure boat in the harbor?

M: No, I haven't had a boat down there for fifty years or more. No, not quite that, I think I moved my canoe away from there about 1915 or so.

G: Why did your family sell out down in Newport?

M: Why did they sell out?

G: Yes.

M: Oh, they got a good price and they were getting old and they decided they would sell.

G: Did they or any other members of your family ever regret selling it that early?

M: Well, my father and Uncle Jim were the only two members of the family that had any interest in it and they never said anything about it or if they had any regrets.

G: Could you describe Robert McFadden?

- M: Well, he had three brothers and they were raised in the Hedge neighborhood of the Catskill Mountains, New York. They all came to California in the very early days. Uncle John taught school up in northern California during the Civil War and the rest of them were all out here soon after the Civil War was over. There were three brothers and one adopted brother, and they all had beards. All the men wore beards in those days. John McFadden had a hardware store in Santa Ana as long as he lived and he was mayor of the town for a few years. Archie was a farmer out between Santa Ana and Tustin, and my father and my uncle were in the lumber business until they sold out in the 1900s.
- G: Your father and your uncle James always seemed to be in close partnership with one another.
- M: They were.
- G: What was their most profitable year as far as the lumber business goes in Orange County?
- M: I don't know. I wasn't old enough to keep any track of that in those days.
- G: Was the lumber business quite prominent in building up Orange County during the boom of the 1880s?
- M: Yes, I think so. They had a wholesale yard at the top of the hill to the northwest corner, or the west corner of where Costa Mesa is now, and then they had another wholesale yard right east of Corona. They had yards in Riverside and Redlands besides the one in Santa Ana, so they furnished a lot of lumber for southern California.
- G: Did you ever travel to Redlands or San Bernardino?
- M: Oh, yes, I was up there occasionally.
- G: Were their main headquarters in Newport or in Santa Ana?
- M: Well, I think the headquarters for the bookkeeping and so on was in Santa Ana.
- G: Could you describe Archie McFadden?
- M: Well, he had a gray beard and he was 100 percent farmer. He spent all his time as a farmer and like most everybody else, he took his family to the mountains for two or three weeks every summer. He had two boys who were about my age so he always took me along which added greatly to my

enjoyment as I was growing up. He continued to be a farmer as long as he lived. He was a very able farmer and quite prosperous.

G: Which part of Prospect Street was his ranch on?

M: Well, he lived on Lyon Street.

G: Yes, right. Which part of Prospect did he have his ranch on?

M: Well, pretty well to the north in Santa Ana and the main part of it was on the east side of Prospect. Then he bought forty acres or so on the west side before he died, and it was right opposite. It was up south of Lyon. Not Lyon, Lyon is a north and south street. Oh, I forget the name of the street but it was . . .

G: Was it north or south of Seventeenth Street?

M: It was north of Seventeenth Street.

G: Who was Archie associated with and what were his main interests besides farming?

M: He wasn't associated with anybody with his farming. He was president of the Orange County Farmers Insurance Company, so he took an interest in what was going on in the community.

G: Could you describe John McFadden as far as his personality and his major interests?

M: Well, he had a black beard that turned more or less gray before he died. As I said, he was mayor of Santa Ana for several years and he was a very able and sociable man. That's about all I can say. Of course, I was a boy growing up during most of his life. His hardware store was the leading hardware store in Santa Ana. To begin with it was on the east side of Main Street between Fourth and Fifth [streets]. Then they moved over so that it followed on the north side of Fourth Street, about half way between Main Street and . . . Oh, what's the first street east of Main?

G: Sycamore?

M: No, Sycamore is on . . .

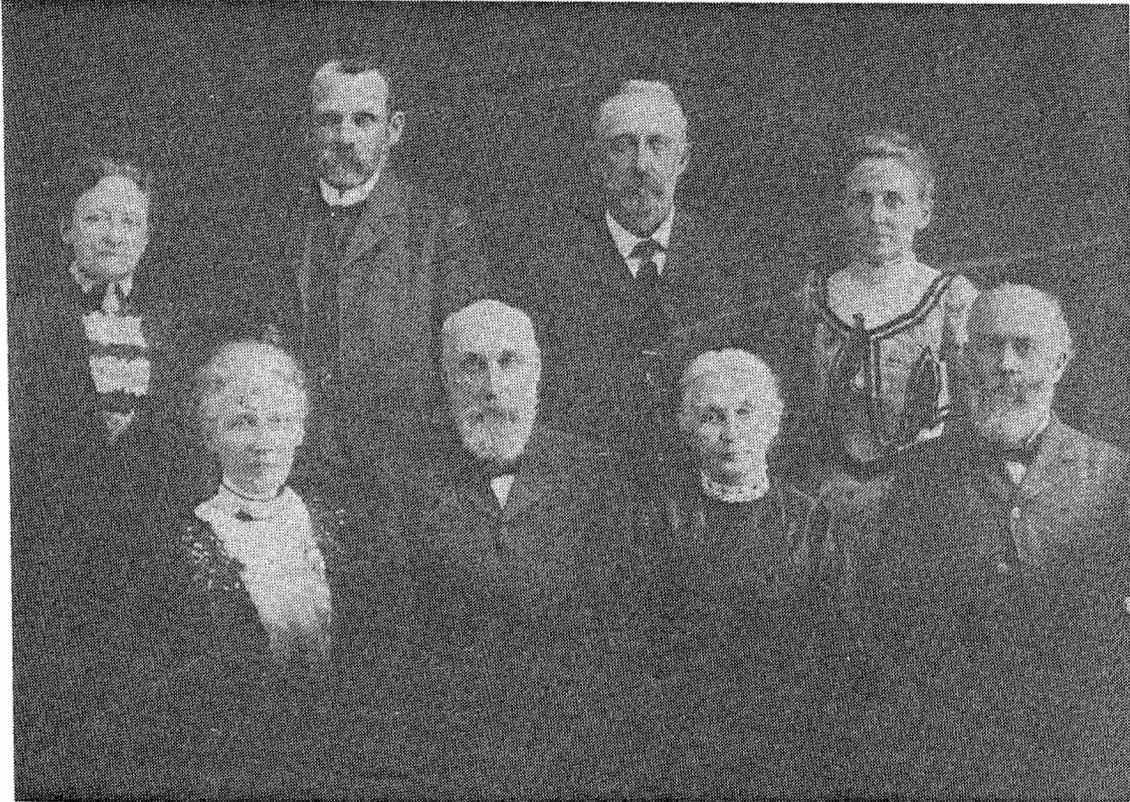
G: Bush?



McFadden brothers

Standing: Robert McFadden; **seated:** (l-r) James McFadden,
Archie McFadden, John McFadden

ca. 1870



Back row: (l-r) unknown, Robert McFadden, James McFadden, Anna McFadden; front row: Janet Adams (Aunt Nett), Archie McFadden, unknown, John McFadden.

- M: Yes, half way between Main Street and Bush Street.
- G: Going back to Newport and the Newport Harbor area, what was the atmosphere like down there during the summer? Did any of the people from the local areas come down?
- M: Oh, a great many of them did, yes. They didn't sell any land at first, they just rented the lots for people to build on but, eventually, they sold lots. Of course, that was before the day of automobiles. They had a big livery area, barns and corrals and everything for the horses on the bay side of the peninsula. There might be as high as 10,000 people on the Fourth of July and that was a vast crowd for those days.
- G: Did most of them stay in tents?
- M: They did if they camped there and, boy, the fleas would pretty near tear you out.
- G: Where did the fleas come from?
- M: They were just raised right there in the sand. (laughter)
- G: Could you describe your father's efforts in the development and construction of the Newport Harbor area?
- M: Well, they just went along with it. As the business grew, they built the wholesale yard, the railroad, and the lumberyard up in Corona. They expanded, kept up with the growing expansion of southern California.
- G: Did your father and your uncle construct the houses that they rented on the beach?
- M: No, he just sold them the lumber and the people that lived in the houses did all the construction themselves.
- G: So as far as you can remember, your family has never been in the construction business?
- M: No, never.
- G: Do you remember the Stevens family's association with the lumber business in those days?
- M: I knew [Sherman] Sherm Stevens very well, he was a close friend of mine. I knew Horace, his boy, quite well, he was a little younger than I was. Stevens and [Charles Edward] Utt were in partnership in a lot of the real estate dealings, especially out on the Irvine ranch with

Mr. [James Harvey] Irvine, [II]. I was a close friend of Mr. Utt, I suppose maybe the closest friend he had the last twenty years of his life. We made quite a number of trips to Mexico together. He enjoyed Mexico very much, and so did I.

G: Was Sherm Stevens ever in partnership with your family in the lumber business?

M: No, he and Utt were in partnership and he was in partnership with Mr. Irvine in the development of San Joaquin ranch. They developed about 1,200 acres of orchards, the first orchards next to mine that were put out there.

G: When was the first time you met J. I., James Irvine II?

M: I suppose I met him soon after 1901 because about 1900 and 1901 there were a lot of small oil companies started up around Bakersfield. They hit that oil field up there and that was when I first got acquainted with him, with Mr. Irvine, but I moved out on the Irvine ranch in 1906. We had eighty acres out there that I just sold about three months ago and I suppose during the last twenty years of his life I was the closest friend that Mr. Irvine had in southern California. Whenever he came down here, and that was more and more often as he got older. Everybody who went to see him went because they wanted something except me. I went just because I was a friend of his and, of course, he enjoyed that very much. We both liked to hunt and fish and we went fishing up in British Columbia once or twice or three times, to a place where he belonged to a fishing club. We both enjoyed it very much and we fished in Peters Lake together and had a good time.

G: When you say that everybody else who went to see James Irvine wanting something . . .

M: Well, he owned the Irvine ranch and they would want to rent part of it or buy something or something of that sort.

G: Did he feel hounded by the people who came in and asked for money and different things?

M: They never bothered me any; I never had any money to get rid of them. I don't think they bothered him in that respect particularly.

G: What were some of the major contributions he has made toward the development of California and the West?

- M: Of course, the first one he made was giving Orange County Irvine Park. That was a great thing for the county and for all southern California because people came here to go to that and he backed the community hospital in the early days. It wouldn't have kept going if it hadn't been for him. So he had a very strong interest in the things that were for the benefit of the community and the leadership recognized that fact.
- G: Did you know anything about his interest up in the north as far as his association with various railroads?
- M: Well, I have as much or more knowledge than anybody else did because he wasn't an outgoing man at all. He was very hard to make friends with but he and I, as I said, got to be very close personal friends. After that time he was very open-minded with me and talked over everything with me that came up, financial or otherwise. He was glad to have somebody to talk to that didn't want anything out of him except himself.
- G: What would you say his major interests were up in northern California?
- M: Well, he owned a lot of land up on the north side of the San Francisco Bay where Richmond is and he owned quite a bit of land back of the hills, back of Oakland, besides that. He owned quite a big acreage down in the west central part of the San Joaquin Valley that he took a good deal of interest in getting developed. He was a developer.
- G: Was any of that land oil land?
- M: Oh, I don't think he made an awful lot of money out of the oil business. I don't think he lost any, but I don't think he made an awful lot.
- G: What were his major difficulties as far as land development was concerned?
- M: Well, the major item out here on the San Joaquin ranch was getting water and he did everything he could to push that along. He and Mr. Utt and Sherm [Stevens] bored some wells down here in the lowlands and pumped the water up to where the San Joaquin Development Company put in the 1,200 acres of orchards and irrigated that. Of course, that got him started on getting as much water for the land as he could, but most of the water on the Irvine ranch has come since Mr. Irvine died. Of course, all the water from the Colorado River has come since then.

Sugar beets early staple of the ranch

BY JUDY LIEBECK

By 1901 California was the nation's leader in sugar beet production. In 1911 Orange County was producing 100,000 tons of sugar beets per year. During World War I, Orange County's six sugar refineries produced one-fourth of the nation's sugar supply.

The Irvine Ranch produced thousands of acres of sugar beets which were marketed through the Southern California Sugar Company, a Santa Ana factory established in 1909. Many growers were less than pleased with this particular factory and they banded together and formed the Santa Ana Cooperative Sugar Co. in 1911.

LOOKING BACK

James Irvine provided the co-op a 23-acre site on the outskirts of his ranch along with considerable money to build the factory. He hired Chris McNeill, a well-known Orange County contractor (1901 Orange County Courthouse, Balboa Pavilion, Irvine General Store and the Irvine Hotel) to build the factory. It was to be the last sugar factory built in Orange County.

The cooperative bought up thousands of acres around the factory and leased them out to sugar beet growers. At one time, the co-op owned or leased 50,000 acres. Growers carried the sugar beets to the factory in horse-drawn carts. Holly Sugar Company bought the plant in 1917 and handled the sugar beets from the Irvine Ranch from then on.

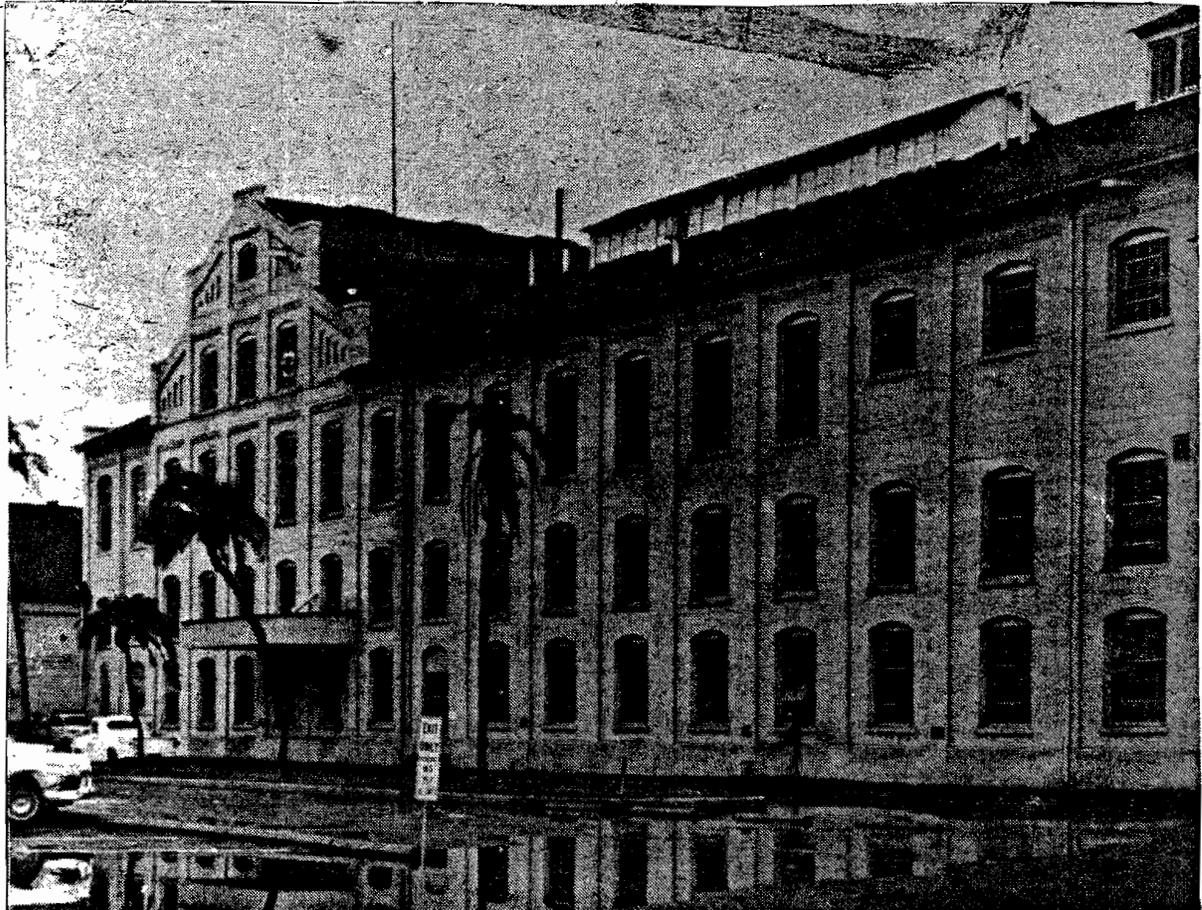
The Irvine Company (TIC) experimented with using whole beet tops and processed beet pulp for cattle feed. The cowboys kept extra busy making sure the cattle didn't choke on the tops. Occasionally, they had to reach down the animal's throat to pull out an uncooperative beet.

By 1967, TIC grew only 835 acres of sugar beets in Orange County. TIC continued to grow several thousand acres of beets in the Imperial Valley. The year 1968 was the last in which TIC set aside Orange County land for sugar beet production.

Holly Sugar processed locally grown sugar beets until 1976. Difficulties with securing cheap farm labor, competition from more profitable crops and encroaching development led to the demise of local sugar beet production. In order to keep the plant open, Holly Sugar had to get its sugar beets from outlying areas such as the Imperial Valley.

In 1979 the plant was converted to process imported sugar cane. March 4, 1981, was a day remembered as the big layoff at the Holly Sugar Co. The conversion to cane had failed and the factory was losing millions annually. Operations were suspended in February, 1982, making Holly Sugar another victim of the region's increasing urbanization.

(Judy Liebeck is a member of the Orange County Historical Commission and is a historical curator of the Irvine Museum. Her column will appear during the year-long celebration of the Orange County Centennial.)



Sugar cooperative: James Irvine built the Santa Ana Cooperative Sugar Co. in 1911. The street in front of the building was named Dyer Road in honor of Ebenezer Dyer, the first successful American sugar beet grower.

- G: He was associated quite strongly with the sugar industry. Could you tell me something about that?
- M: Well, I don't know an awful lot about it except that he was very much interested in it and he and my uncle Jim built a sugar factory down at the southwest corner of Delhi Road and Main Street. The people that brought the sugar factory over here and put it up brought a secondhand one from over to Colorado where they owned it. It was very inferior. It made both Uncle Jim and J. I. sore as the duce to have that happen, so they proceeded to go and buy some land and put in a new sugar factory over where the sugar factory is now. It was very successful right from the start although, of course, most of the beets that they make sugar out of now come from Imperial Valley. They're not raised around here, but a lot of them were raised here to start with out on the Irvine ranch and around Gospel Swamp.
- G: Did you ever meet J. I.'s first wife [Frances Anita Plum]?
- M: Oh, I guess I did. I was a very close friend of his daughter [Kathryn Helena Irvine Lilliard] who died when Katie [Kathryn] was born, that's Charlie Wheeler's wife, and I knew his second wife [Katherine Brown White] quite well. We had them up to dinner occasionally at my father's house here in Santa Ana.
- G: Do you remember anything at all about his first wife as far as what she looked like?
- M: No, I don't.
- G: If you were to describe his second wife, how would you describe her?
- M: Well, she was a very strong-minded woman and she . . . (laughter) this isn't for publication. Somebody described her to me as someone that everybody in the world except me was afraid of. She bossed everybody, all the men that she came in contact with that didn't do just as she told them, except me. (laughter) We were always very cordial to each other and she was very friendly to me and I was very friendly to her, as long as J.I. lived, as long as we were associated after that. She was a very sociable woman, to me anyhow and, of course, when I was with her we were by ourselves, we weren't in a crowd. She was a very able woman, a very good business woman.
- G: Did J. I. do what she told him to do?

- M: (Laughter) No, I don't think so. J. I. was a pretty strong-willed guy himself. Of course, he was accustomed to having his own way all the time because he was a rich man. Very.
- G: His obituary said that there were some years before World War II where he had an income of over \$30 million per year. Was that obituary inaccurate?
- M: Yes, he didn't have such an income as that.
- G: So long as you knew him, his income would have to be about half of that?
- M: How many?
- G: They said that before World War II it was around \$30 million per year.
- M: I don't think he ever had an income of over \$2 million or \$3 million a year. That was a lot of money in those days.
- G: Which were the most profitable of his interests? Were they in northern or southern California?
- M: I would say that his interests out here were the most profitable of anything that he had. Oh, I think he made a good profit out of this land that he had in the San Joaquin Valley, but nothing like he did out of this. Of course, he made a profit on the land he owned around the San Francisco Bay, too, but he made that profit by selling it at an increased price, not out of the land itself.
- G: Myford Irvine was known to invest heavily in the stock market. Was James Irvine active in the stock market?
- M: Not that I know of. Not that I know of.
- G: So J. I. was more of a real estate type of investor. Of the people in the Irvine family that you knew, who would you say you felt the closest to?
- M: Well, I was pretty close to young Jimmy [James Irvine III] as long as he lived. Of course, he died when he was a very young man, and I was pretty close to Myford, but I never had the personal friendship with Myford that I had with young Jimmy. I was pretty close to the oldest sister, Kathryn. She was the gem of the family but, of course, she only lived two or three years after she started on her own.

- G: Of the things that have happened to that family, what do you think have been the most important?
- M: Well, of course, the thing that got Mr. Irvine's goat was his children dying when they were so young. He thought that was terrible, and it was terrible, and he talked very frankly to me about it. He probably didn't talk to anybody else that way, but he did to me.
- G: Did you ever meet any of the important visitors who came to the Irvine ranch during those years or did you ever go to any of the social events at the ranch?
- M: They didn't have any official events. (laughter) They just ran the ranch, period.
- G: As a charter member of the Santa Ana Country Club, could you describe its relationship to the Irvine ranch and the Irvine family's involvement in its founding and development?
- M: Well, all I can say is I was a charter member of the country club and the only reason in the world that I joined it was because I thought the country needed it. I never played a round of golf in my life and I think that was Mr. Irvine's attitude, too, because he wasn't a golfer. Myford was the kingpin of the founding of the country club and as long as he lived he was the whole show. Of course, he didn't live but a very short time after it was founded.
- G: Did J. I. have a lot to do with the founding of the Santa Ana Country Club?
- M: I can't tell you that; I don't know. I imagine he probably did. Well, I think that Sherm Stevens and some of these people who took an interest in playing golf had more to do with it than even he did.
- G: Did they buy the land from the Irvine Company?
- M: I don't remember anything about that. I think they own it now, don't they?
- G: Yes.
- M: I don't know when they sold it to them.
- G: When was the first time you met James's daughter?

- M: She was the one that died when Katie was born. Oh, I'd known her quite well for four or five years before that. I moved out on the ranch in 1906 and I got acquainted with all of them pretty quick after that.
- G: Of all your activities in Orange County agriculture, what do you look back upon as the most rewarding?
- M: Oh, I think maybe the pioneering of raising orchards out on the Irvine ranch was more rewarding than anything else. I planted the first walnut trees that were planted on the Irvine ranch, and then I gradually made the grove into citrus, sixteen acres at a time. The San Joaquin Fruit Company, that is Sherm Stevens, Ed Utt, and Mr. Irvine, planted their first orange trees out there the same year I moved out on the ranch, so the whole job went on at the same time.
- G: What do you think are the major reasons why the walnut industry in Orange County has declined through the years?
- M: Well, there are two main reasons for it. One of them is the fact that the people moved in and occupied all the land that was in orchards. The second one is that after the freeze in 1914 they realized that this was a much better place to raise Valencia oranges than Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Everybody that could moved down here and planted orchards.
- G: Then the freeze didn't have any affect on the walnut trees themselves, but it had an affect on the citrus trees and it moved the walnuts south?
- M: It didn't hurt the citrus trees in Orange County compared to what it did up there. It killed orchard trees to the ground in Riverside and around there, and it just set them back a little here.
- G: Did the insects have anything to do with the walnut trees' decline?
- M: No, it just made raising walnuts a little more expensive.
- G: What were some of the difficulties in harvesting walnuts?
- M: Oh, we never had much difficulty harvesting walnuts. They shook them off the trees and had Mexican crews that picked them up.
- G: Do you remember the mechanized shakers that the Irvine Company used in recent years?

- M: No, I don't. (chuckle) We started walnut houses, associations, to handle walnuts at the same time we started the business and they kept up right along. So we didn't have any difficulty after we once got them harvested.
- G: How many walnut packinghouses were there at the height of the business?
- M: I thought there were six of them in Orange County at the height of the business: Santa Ana, Orange, Anaheim, Garden Grove, Fullerton, and Placentia.
- G: Which of the houses was the most successful?
- M: Well, the one in Orange was the biggest for awhile, but it went out of business. The one out at Irvine lasted longer than any of the others because they had walnuts out there longer. But they were all successful as long as the walnut business was going strong.
- G: Were there any difficulties in marketing walnuts?
- M: No, we had a very strong association. We had a big portion of the walnuts all over the state that belonged to it and they did the marketing.
- G: Where were the largest markets for the walnuts?
- M: Oh, along the East Coast, from Boston, [Massachusetts], south and, of course, around Chicago, [Illinois].
- G: Were there ever any large shipments that went overseas that you can remember?
- M: Oh, we had a very profitable business over in Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. Still have. But as far as Europe was concerned, of course, they were shipping walnuts into the United States long before the walnut business got going here at all. So they never got any great degree of exchange, although it was profitable as far as it went.
- G: Where did the major competition for California walnuts come from?
- M: France.
- G: Did they have different types of walnuts?
- M: No, they had the same walnuts that we had.

- G: Were they able to market them for less or for more?
- M: Oh, I don't know. They were just competitive. Of course, they were going before we were.
- G: Did the walnut association ever try to have protective tariffs as far as walnuts?
- M: Ever do what?
- G: Did the walnut growers ever want a protective tariff for walnuts?
- M: It seems to me we had some protective tariff most of the time. We kept close track of it during the time the walnut business was going the strongest. I was very much interested in the walnut business, of course. I was president of the walnut growers association for quite a number of years. I was the one that made the motion to move the headquarters from Los Angeles up to Stockton, [California], when the business moved up into the central part of the state.
- G: What other parts of the nation had the biggest possible areas for walnut growing other than California?
- M: Oregon and Washington were the only two states that had any competition at all, and Oregon was four or five times as much as Washington and, of course, it was about 10 percent of California.
- G: Did you have mostly competition or cooperation between Oregon and Washington in regards to California?
- M: Oh, I don't think the competition amounted to anything.
- G: Did any of the growers up there ever join any of your associations down here?
- M: I think they had an association of their own, if I remember right.
- G: When were the first persimmon trees planted in Orange County that you can remember?
- M: Well, I planted the first big orchard. I planted 160 acres of them out on the Irvine ranch, interest on a lease that I had from the Irvine Company. I believe it was about 1912.

- G: Where were some of the other persimmon orchards that you can recall?
- M: The biggest was up in the area west of Redding at the very upper end of the San Joaquin Valley. It was practically up in the foothills north of the San Joaquin Valley.
- G: Do you recall how large that might have been?
- M: Yes, I think they had 160 acres, and I think it's still going, as far as I know.
- G: Were any other growers on the Irvine ranch or in Orange County interested in persimmons?
- M: Anymore? No, I don't think so. There were a lot of them out toward Garden Grove in the early days, but the people ran them out. I don't think it was the fault of business that they went out, just the fact that they sold the land off for houses.
- G: There has been a question in California historical circles as to the name that the persimmon was marketed under. Do you recall the name?
- M: Satin Gold.
- G: That was the only name that you can recall?
- M: That was our first grade sales, 100 percent.
- G: Were there any other names that they were marketed under.
- M: No. No, not that amounted to anything.
- G: What were some of the difficulties in the marketing of the persimmons?
- M: Well, the main difficulty was that they were a brand new fruit to most everybody back East. They'd never seen it. I shipped the first carload of persimmons that was ever shipped to Chicago out of California. Of course, they had a very attractive look to them when they were put on the shelves and that helped a whole lot in getting them sold. You had to build a taste for them from zero to where it is now.
- G: Where in the nation are the largest persimmon groves that you can recall?

M: Well, Ed Utt and Sherman Stevens raised a lot of them out on the Irvine ranch at one time, a big lot of them. I think they were the biggest growers. I don't remember anybody having a terrific amount of them besides them.

G: Did they have any difficulties with spoilage?

M: Oh, well, they've got a certain storage life, as long as you stayed within the rules that we found out would work, why, you were all right. You couldn't go any further, so that was it.

G: Did they ever use refrigerator cars?

M: Yes, we did. We used them exclusively shipping them to the East.

G: Were they ever successfully shipped frozen?

M: No, I don't think they ever were because the minute that you thaw out a frozen persimmon, it's ready to eat. You can't keep them for any length of time.