

Interviewer: [00:01] Okay, hard question first. Please say your name and spell it.

Albert Alcalá: [00:06] Okay. My name is Albert Alcalá, A-L-B-E-R-T. Alcalá is A-L-C-A-L-A.

Interviewer: [00:15] And what year were you born [inaudible] and where?

AA: [00:18] I was born in 1949. I was in here in San Pedro, but actually made in Spain.

Interviewer: [00:25] [Laughing] Oh I see. You crossed the channel or crossed the Atlantic.

AA: [00:28] Yes.

Interviewer: [00:29] Tell us about; the one thing you're probably familiar with as having done this yourself is that my questions won't be heard.

AA: [00:35] Okay.

Interviewer: So, if I say, you know, what was San Pedro like? You can't say "it was great." We don't know what you're talking about.

AA: [00:41] Right.

Interviewer: [00:41] You have to say "San Pedro was great." And I'll remind you as we go along.

AA: [00:44] Okay

Interviewer: [00:45] So, talk about your father and your parents. Who was he? And what did he do? And when did he come here and his background?

AA: [00:51] Well, my father immigrated from Granada, Spain, and he was only 14 years old. They were having hard times in Spain and my grandfather was killed, and the family got together and they decided to send him to America with his first cousin, Carmelo, who was 21 years old. So, he was more or less to go along with him and keep an eye on him because he was awfully young, and took him about nine months to get to San Pedro. The reason they chose San Pedro was that we had a lot of immigrants from Spain living here in San Pedro. So, it would be a little more, easier for them coming to a foreign country to have someone that can actually give them a hand. So, it took them nine months, they went through Ellis Island and took a pretty long trip going down past Argentina around Mexico, coming up till they finally arrived in San Pedro.

Interviewer: [01:46] Now what year was this?

AA: [01:48] This was in 1920.

Interviewer: [01:50] And this is something new to us. We didn't know there was a large Spanish continue. We've heard about the Slavs and we've heard about the Italians and now there was a Spanish community here and San Pedro as well.

AA: [02:01] Yes, they were and a lot of immigrants came here to find a new life. There were a couple of ladies - one just died - she was 105. She lived in San Pedro 50 years, but actually she was living in Torrance, but her first job, her and her sister Emily, was working for the canneries. So, there were some Spaniards working in the canneries. Some immigrants that came here were trying to find a better life and as a result, they were able to do more for their children. A prominent federal judge, Judge Manuel Real, is people call him Real – a federal judge. His parents were from Spain, neither one of them could read. And his brother became a prominent attorney and vice president of StarKist canneries over at Terminal Island. He just recently passed away. But it's interesting - there are a lot of Spanish immigrants that have come here and contributed in many ways in the development of the port. And, all sorts of jobs.

Interviewer: [03:04] Let's go back [inaudible] because when your father came here, was there a community? I mean, there were there were there was the Norwegians and there were the Slavs, and there were the Italians - had their little community group. There were Mexicans, there was a Mexican here.

AA: [03:16] There was.

Interviewer: [03:16] Was there a part of San Pedro where basically Spanish immigrants lived, and if so, where was it? And what was it?

AA: [03:23] On Ninth Street and there were boarding houses there so...

Interviewer: [03:26] So many Spanish immigrants lived...

AA: [03:29] Many of the Spanish immigrants lived on Ninth Street. It was in the, where the original city hall was. In fact, there's a bar there called the Alhambra. Alhambra happens to be a Spanish beer in Granada. And I hear that my father was the first owner. A lot of people don't know that. And actually, another immigrant who was a bartender, they went into partnership and opened up that business. My father had worked in many business ventures in the harbor.

Interviewer: [04:00] Let's start - he gets here as a young immigrant. What happened when he arrived and how do you get involved with San Pedro?

AA: [04:06] My father, when he came to the United States, looked up a gentleman who was from his town. He was a good friend of my paternal grandfather, in fact. His name was Ignacio Gonzalez, who was here for the bloody thirsty things - a longshoreman. And what happened was my father was very young, so it's hard to find work, but he they gave him an opportunity at E.K. Lumber Company. His cousin got a job longshoring, and he did longshore for about 10 years. And when the Spanish War started, his cousin went back to fight in the war and he fought on the wrong side so he could not come back to the United States.

Interviewer: [04:51] The wrong side being rebels or the...?

AA: [04:54] The fascist side.

Interviewer: [04:55] So he was fighting the fascist side...

AA: Right. [04:56] Right. And then there was a problem that he couldn't come back. Although he had a daughter, whom I recently found - a lovely girl - and she had been looking for her father for many years and I found her. Our father has since died.

Interviewer: [05:11] Well, so your father came in and worked as a, worked in the lumber yards...

AA: [05:15] Yes.

Interviewer: [05:15]...and everything and tell me more about that. What did he do next? What was his story after that? And did he speak English? Did he have to learn English?

AA: [05:22] He had to learn English and there were other Spanish immigrants here somewhere in the liquor business. He worked for the Aguila family in the liquor business; distribution and stuff. Eventually, he opened up a nightclub called Johnny's Happy Days or commonly referred by merchant seamen in the port is the Klondike. At the end of the war, I heard that he had a big party for all of our soldiers, and they were all invited and the food and drink was on the house.

Interviewer: [05:53] So where was this bar?

AA: [05:55] This bar was on Pacific Avenue near First Street.

Interviewer: [06:00] This was in the beacon, the Beacon Street district?

AA: [06:02] It wasn't in the Beacon Street district, but he had a bartender that wanted to open up a place and he did open up earlier than, than the bar on Pacific. Sam's Alhambra, it's called now. It's near the original city hall building, which is now a market. But apparently all the city government was located in this old building. It still exists, which is wonderful. It should be maintained and kept as a historical site.

Interviewer: [06:32] So any stories your father told about his days in the bar scene? And this was pretty rough town those days, huh?

AA: [06:37] It was a rough town and he met a lot of interesting people. He had this one lady that I guess a lot of people would know her name was Edna, she was like a bouncer. And she worked for him; very loyal to him. And he hired a prisoner out of jail and actually gave him room and board and he would sleep overnight in the bar; protected so in case of vandalism and things and that guy was very faithful-faithful to my father. He passed away shortly after my father had passed away. He grieved him so much because he appreciated the opportunity that he gave him to work at all.

Interviewer: [07:12] Tell me about Edna, the female bouncer. That's a new one.

AA: [07:15] Edna the female bouncer eventually leased the bar and she's known around town as a prominent bartender. I don't know what has happened to her since she used to come visit my mother from time to time and always said that she had her protection whenever she needed it. She was quite a character. Tall woman. Red hair, built quite big.

Interviewer: [07:37] Any stories of her doing her job bouncing anybody out of the bar for any reason?

AA: [07:42] You didn't mess with her. If anybody got a little too rowdy, a little too drunk, they were asked to leave. If they didn't, she'd pick them up, throw them out. As I've seen pictures of a female bouncer, they had at Shanghai Red's [Cafe], and the woman had arms and tattoos. And there are some old historical pictures around town.

Interviewer: [08:01] And so, what are the things, other activities, that your father get involved with when he was in the early days here.

AA: [08:09] He had a sports fishing... my father, eventually he invested in a lot of businesses, a furniture business. And also, his love was the sea. And he had a sports fishing boat built and I heard a lot of the people that came to help him build this boat were craftsmen from Spain. The boat, I hear, is in Catalina Island. And I had the opportunity of possibly visiting the boat. His log is aboard the boat, but the current owners won't let me read it. The boat was at San Pedro Boatworks for repair. And I knew the owner and he ran across the log and he was reading it, because he didn't know about the boat - they were repairing it, how it was built and all. And he knew that was my father. So, he told me he had it in my father's boat. Apparently, the boat is anchored off of Catalina somewhere. And I would still would love to visit the boat. And I'd love to see that log. But he had a sports fishing boat where he would take friends out sports fishing, but I heard a lot of times a lot of times they didn't fish much; they liked to play cards. A lot of the fishermen and a lot of the people working in the port in their spare time always like to get a go around with their friends, have a drink, play cards. It's a pastime here in San Pedro. And a lot of them played cards.

Interviewer: [09:27] How big was the Spanish community in percentage-wise, say the population in San Pedro?

AA: [09:32] It wasn't that big.

Interviewer: [09:34] The Spanish...

AA: [09:35] The Spanish community - in those days there might have been 100 people. There were more immigrants from Italy, Croatia, [inaudible] what they used to call it then in other areas. There also were some fishermen from Portugal. In fact, I know one girl I went to school with, Ellen Rodriguez. Her father was an immigrant from Portugal fishing on a fishing boat and married a Yugoslav or Croatian girl and had his family. So my friend Ellen is part Portuguese and part Croatian.

Interviewer: [10:10] Give us - you've studied the port history - give us a little sense of the history of the Port of Los Angeles. I mean, how did it get to be a port and in some of its early days. You don't have to give me detail, but give me an overview of the history, early history, of the Port of Los Angeles.

AA: [10:26] Well, the early Port of Los Angeles started probably back in what was it, 1909 when we became part of the city of Los Angeles. The city of Los Angeles promised to get federal funds to develop this wonderful port, which is an engineering miracle. It's a man-made harbor in

the early days when the Indians were here probably before Mexico and Spain, which is another long story and how Mexico and Spain control this area and took it from the Indians. But what happened was, in the early days, this was a mud flat – everywhere you went is mud flats. The first landing was Tim's Landing, which was actually Sepulveda landing the Spaniards, but the Tim's bought it and the earlier ships when they'd come in, it would have to be high tide. If it was low – if they were unloading cargo, or trading, if the tide went low, they were stuck in mud, they could not leave this harbor. So what happened was the Army Corps of Engineers came and studied this area and they built this harbor. And after they built the harbor, they had to dredge that main channel. They rerouted the LA River in the San Gabriel River into a concrete river that goes into Long Beach, which Long Beach doesn't care for when during storms. But what happened there, they had these wooden pilings, the wooden docks that we all remember. And then they were running into problems when there would be storms and the tide would go up and down. They were being destroyed. So, the federal government came out and they started the construction of the federal breakwater, which calm the oceans down in the channel. And that took many years to finish. But the port has just been an ongoing engineering miracle. I've had the opportunity to read a book put out by the Army Corps of Engineers, it is the most accurate account of what the Port of LA is.

Interviewer: [12:20] What's the name of the book?

AA: [12:22] It's - it's a - actually, it doesn't have – it's a government publication. And they upgrade it from year to year. Recently, when they had to dredge, they ran into a problem. They couldn't dredge anymore because they were pipelines connecting Terminal Island to San Pedro; sewage lines, phone lines, electrical lines. And what they did is they froze the channel, it was just amazed me. They had to freeze the channel. Under the channel, they had these huge machines near the LA Maritime Museum, making a loud racket, and they froze the channel. And they had to dig a hole on the San Pedro part of the channel where the museum is, 100 feet down, and they tunneled under the channel. When they finished tunneling, then they had to bring in special pipes. And they had special divers that went in these tunnels and they connected this new pipeline, and then all of the electrical and everything they needed to do was switched and connect to Terminal Island. And when they were done, they turn this system off. And then everything started caving in where they had tunneled. And then they had to start dredging. And the first thing they did was take up the old pipeline. And I remember seeing them taking big sections of this pipe. And I don't know where they take these things, but and then also the mud. And now they will be able to dredge for many years, usually every 10 to 15 years they dredge because the ships that are coming into the harbor now are bigger and bigger.

Interviewer: [13:48] What did they do this, this freezing? [inaudible]. Give me the date that this freezing operation took place. I have to put it in context.

AA: [13:57] Well, the in the Port of LA near the Los Angeles Maritime Museum, what they did is they set up special machinery to freeze the harbor. It took place two years ago. It took them a little longer than they expected because there was a power outage at one point. And they had to start over and start freezing the channel again because it started caving in. But the purpose was to freeze the ground between San Pedro and Terminal Island so they could tunnel. They couldn't do that without freezing at first because if they tried to tunnel it would just collapse. Though the water above that there was a pipe and then what they needed to do was tunnel about 100 feet

down. And that was still quite a ways from the pipe so that they could leave a leeway that once they took up the existing pipeline they would be able to dredge for many years as they have. The port has had the channel dredged every 10 to 15 years. These new ships coming in like the Queen Mary too when she visited here, it was one of the few ports where she can actually tie up at a dock because these ships that they're building are just enormous. Even the oil tankers, these cargo ships that they're building, Evergreen and a lot of these companies. These ships are enormous.

Interviewer: [15:12] Let's go back to the history. You got the new the breakwater, the first breakwater is built

AA: [15:16] Yes

Interviewer: [15:17] Give us again a brief kind of historical sketch of how the port and town of San Pedro develop from that turn of the century, up through, let's say, World War II, what was...

AA: [15:30] Okay well, before World War Two, there were lots of immigrants from many parts of the world and from many parts of the United States coming out here to make a living. I hear that the pilings that were first driven down the wooden pilings, that there was a settlement of Mormons that came to San Pedro and there was a little section down below the Vincent Thomas bridge were Borax is that was called Mormon Island. And what they were homes. So, there were a lot of immigrants there. A lot of our immigrants from Mexico lived in a community, right where the cruise terminal is between where the new fire station in the Port of LA is, and the cruise terminal called Mexican Hollywood. Now, when the port started developing this harbor, it's it's wonderful, it's beautiful. They had to relocate people as they're still doing and on different areas. And these people were offered money and they had to buy, they bought them out and they had to buy homes and I met one woman that lived in Mexican Hollywood. And she bought between Grand and Gaffey on 18th Street. Her name was Antonia Trujillo. She since passed on, and I met her family – wonderful woman. And she worked at the YMCA, which is now a halfway house on Beacon Street. She worked in the cafeteria there for many years and raised her family on 18th Street but missed her home down in the harbor.

Interviewer: [17:00] Where did the name Mexican Hollywood come from? It sounds like maybe pejorative term. But it wasn't.

AA: [17:05] It was Mexican Hollywood, because all the residents were from Mexico. And they all knew each other. As in Terminal Island, they had the Japanese there, there was homes there. At the end of the war, they lost Terminal Island. It's the lost island, Terminal Island, they had all these Japanese, and the Japanese would be out fishing. And the wives would be canning the fish. The children were running free on Terminal Island, and the doors were open. They didn't close the doors at night, and everything was safe. And a lot of immigrants from Japan that lived there, remember Terminal Island, but it was taken away from them. Recently at the Warner Grand Theater there was a documentary that was done; actually wasn't complete. But it was very well done. There's a lot more to the story.

Interviewer: [17:58] Let's go back to Mexican Hollywood; do you know the origins of that name?

AA: [18:01] I have no idea how it was called that. Maybe the Historical Society does. They had done historical societies and articles on that particular area.

Interviewer: [18:12] Well tell me what you know of the – who are the immigrants who came and give me some of the backgrounds of who are the people who populated San Pedro in the early days of the 20th century.

AA: [18:23] In the early days we had immigrants from Spain, we had immigrants from Italy, north and south of Italy. Very many immigrants from Yugoslavia, which now they call Croatia. They came from Dalmatia; they came from islands, different areas. We had immigrants from the Philippines. A lot of them worked in the canneries, and just there were some Portuguese. Some of the immigrants coming here their population wasn't as large, and but there were quite a few people. It was the melting pot of Los Angeles. And at one point when they had the canneries and the fishing here it was one of the largest payrolls in probably the city.

Interviewer: [19:05] It's also unique because of the combination of immigrants who are here. There's no; I mean, all of LA had always had a variety of immigration, immigrant populations. This is sort of unique from the people that are here, right?

AA: [19:15] Very unique that were very hard workers. A lot of them didn't have the opportunity to go to high school, and they just knew work. And they had their families. And they wanted – they made their new life here in San Pedro. And they worked hard, because they wanted their kids to have that education they never had the opportunity to have. And many of the immigrants coming here – I know one family, they were from Spain, and they would get letters and they couldn't read them. My mother immigrated here in 1950 with my father she was married in Spain to him. He was the same age as my grandfather, in fact, a little older, and when he went back to visit his best friend that he had left behind in Spain when he was 14 years old, and his friend was 12, he went to visit him and he asked him who's this beautiful girl? He says it's my daughter. He immediately fell in love with her, brought her back here to San Pedro. But actually, they lived in Spain for a year. So, the story is, I was made in Spain. When my mother came to San Pedro she was eight months pregnant. And I was born here at the Old San Pedro hospital. And the doctor was a retired Navy doctor who'd opened practice here on Seventh Street – Dr. Dunbar. And in fact, in one of the parks on Harbor Boulevard, they have a monument to him, and he was like the Marcus Welby of San Pedro. He would make house calls. So he'd go to your home, take care of your – I remember he used to go visit my great aunt because she was in her 90s. She'd get pneumonia every year. And he'd go over there, treat her and then go home. But he didn't have to go to his office all the time although he had an office. And he married his nurse. I don't know if she's still living. And it's just; San Pedro was just a close-knit community. The people got along really well. There were a lot of neat friendships. We still get a lot of retired cannery workers that say that was the best days of their lives, the interaction that they had when they worked there, and they love the harbor and that's why they don't leave.

Interviewer: [21:25] And let's talk a bit about your experiences. Now as a growing up in the 50s and 60s is when you were here.

AA: [21:33] 60s, right.

Interviewer: [21:34] Talk about talking about your earliest memories of San Pedro in the harbor.

AA: [21:40] Well, my earliest memories were of the ferry boat. And I remember we would have to take the ferry boat in San Pedro. We'd get on a bus first because we were living on 18th Street, and that used to be called the Gaffey Street bus. And all the buses eventually ended up on Harbor Boulevard on the corner of sixth and Harbor Boulevard there was Hirshman drugs. There was a little place where you could buy your newspapers and candy there – Smokies. There were a lot of interesting places. It was the old Beacon Street on the other side of Harbor Boulevard that Beacon Street was there. There's a Sunrise Hotel there now. But it was sad when they tore those old buildings down; they should've been saved. They really should have been saved. This was a Navy town, they had a locker clubs there. Old barber shops. I met one lady that her father was a barber and he used to meet merchant seamen from all over the world. A lot of people coming to San Pedro would fall in love and stay here. They could be merchant seamen or from a foreign country. It was just a neat community.

Interviewer: [22:40] Talk about – for people don't know what it is – what was Beacon Street and describe it. And what's its importance in San Pedro.

AA: [22:45] Beacon Street, between Sixth and Fifth Street was very important. There were a lot of businesses, they were catering to the Merchant Marine and the Navy when they were here. Before World War Two we had the Pacific fleet. We had the Fifth and Sixth Street landings for the Navy and a submarine base here in San Pedro. A lot of people don't know that part of San Pedro history, but the Navy was actually here first before San Diego and Long Beach and the Pacific Fleet was stationed here. A lot of the ships were anchored off of what Cabrillo Beach is today. We had water taxis that would bring a lot of the sailors here across the channel from where the Maritime Museum there were Navy ships tied up there. We used to have Navy personnel walking up and down Sixth Street and of course there were bars for them – Shanghai Red's. There were places, Locker Club was on Beacon Street between Fifth and Sixth Street. Lots of barber shops, you know these guys needed a barber to get their hair cut. But this was an interesting part of San Pedro history. A lot of these sailors married local girls. At the local YMCA they would have dances for these guys. And I met Dorothy Bailey, she has since passed away. She is part of the Reese family. [Bill] "Tiger" Reese used to do announcing of baseball, football games for San Pedro High [School], and Mary Star [of the Sea High School] – mostly football. And she married a [man?] from Gloucester, Massachusetts, and we used to kiddingly call him Commander Chips Bailey but he never was a commander.

Interviewer: [24:21] But tell us more about Beacon Street. This is this was not; this was a pretty rough area though, wasn't it?

AA: [24:25] It was a rough area. Beacon Street in the old days – people coming [from] Chicago, New York, they were afraid of it. It was a rough area. We had a police beat where a couple of police officers would walk the street. Lot of people were arrested and put in jail where the existing city hall is today. There is a jail, it's still there, you should go down and film it. They used to call it seventh heaven. And a lot of these Merchant Marines that would get in trouble, or a lot of the sailors that would get in trouble, would be locked up. There's still a lot of graffiti in that old jail, and they'd watched their ship go down the harbor and leave without them. And you know, it was just a really rough area. But...

Interviewer: [25:06] Who were some of the legendary places and characters of Beacon Street.

AA: [25:10] One of the places was Shanghai Red's, it was a hangout. Tommy's Good Fellows. There was a lot of places; there were little little cafes, Ante's Restaurant was just a little small cafe until they made the large one they have today, but they catered to the Merchant Marine and to the seamen that came in the area. And the main shopping district to get clothing or to, to go to shops and things, was Sixth Street. You just go up Sixth Street. We had parades, they come straight down Sixth Street to Harbor Boulevard, or Front Street. Those were the main streets of San Pedro, which should be preserved. We've lost Beacon Street – part of it is gone, because of the redevelopment area. But San Pedro is just such a beautiful area that – thank God they've saved the Warner Grand.

Interviewer: [26:05] Let's go back to Beacon Street for a second.

AA: [26:06] Yes.

Interviewer: [26:08] This kind of legendary place – there must be a few legendary incidents. Is there the equivalent of the shootout at Tombstone? Or was there any kind of stories that came out of Beacon Street to illustrate how rough a place it was? Legendary character?

AA: [26:24] It was, pretty, yes, it was pretty rough. What happens around where existing city hall is today, there were a lot of ladies of the evening they were they were catering to a lot of people trying to provide a lot of services here. So, there were a lot of shootings. I heard there in the Al Capone days that some of those characters mafiosos actually came through here. These to hang out at the pike in Long Beach, but they knew about San Pedro.

Interviewer: [26:54] And so in; tell us about the fishing industry, Terminal Island. How does that fit into this picture?

AA: [27:03] The fishing industry and Terminal Island. The fishing industry was actually pioneered and started by the Japanese. And some of the first fishermen here – and they were really good fishermen – were the Japanese and they pioneered abalone fishing here too. And a lot of the abalone fishing was done up and down our coast, the Palos Verde coast and stuff there's a place called Abalone Cove, which I remember as a youth going down then you could snorkel and get this abalone. And abalone was just a big industry. The Japanese would sell it; I guess they make some sort of sushi the Japanese themselves. But the Italians would buy it and over where the Crusty Crab is there was an Italian that owned it prior, he would pound out abalone and make abalone burgers which were to die for. Of course, the abalone was used in the Italians' fish cioppino. The Chinese used to buy the abalone from the Japanese and they used to make abalone wonton soup. On Pacific Avenue there was a place called the Far East to the Strand Theater. It's now a parking lot for Washington Mutual. But there was a nice theater there I remember as a child going there. And my big thing was begging my mother for \$3 from me and \$3 from my brother plus the quarter or whatever it took for tax to go to the Far East and have abalone wonton soup.

Interviewer: [28:22] What happened? You don't hear about abalone much anymore. What happened?

AA: [28:25] Oh it was overfished. And then the area got polluted with this DDT contamination. It affected a lot of things. In fact, the fish that the eagles were catching in Catalina and feeding to their young was infected. But recently they've hatched two new, three more eagle babies and I guess the fish are not bad anymore. And I hear rumors that they're possibly going to seed the area for abalone again, which would be nice. You can still get abalone up north in Northern California but Japanese in different countries are paying top dollar and you don't see it in restaurants. And if you do, it's very expensive.

Interviewer: [29:07] Let's go back to you again. You were talking about your early memories going down to the ferry boat and then taking that. What are some of your other early memories growing up in this town and on this port near this port?

AA: [29:19] Well, it was going to the Fisherman's Fiesta. My earliest recollections of the port were just taking a walk down and seeing what was going on and visiting the fishing boats. In the area where I was living a lot of them, or the youngsters I grew up with were Italian or Slav and we would go down to visit their fathers they would be coming in from fishing. I remember sometimes bringing a bucket down because I get fresh sardines and my mother would fry them up. They're great. But I remember when they would put on the Fisherman's Fiesta it was one of the largest events in California next to the Rose Parade and the Rose Bowl. There were just thousands of people that would come down to San Pedro. And what they would do is a decorate all of the fishing boats and I remember one year there was over one-hundred of them. And they would give a trophy to the best decorated boat. And the families would be invited to go aboard. Usually the wives, children, and not too many of the public would get to go on, they usually had ten passes. And they were usually given to press or chamber commerce or something. But eventually they wanted more people aboard the fishing boats. And the families were getting upset because this is a family thing where the bishop or cardinal would come down, bless the fleet, and they would just be thanking God or thanking, just being thankful that they had a wonderful year fishing. And they'd also set up booths and I remember going down there and buying a swordfish sandwich, fresh swordfish, and they'd make their own tartar sauce. It was delicious.

Interviewer: [30:58] What's the history of the fisherman's Fiesta? Do you know when it started and why?

AA: [31:02] I don't know the exact year it started. I grew up in the in the 60s and 70s and 80s here, and I just remember it from there. I know they were fiestas before that I don't know exactly when they started. But it was a neat event. I remember the last one I attended. Fishermen had caught a great white shark and they had put it on ice. The [inaudible] aquarium helped them, and [inaudible]. And it was on display with thousands and thousands of people coming down to see this great white shark. And it was just a wonderful event for families to come down and just really enjoy the harbor. And they had different booths that you can have different types of ethnic booth. The Italians did their meatballs, sausage, sandwiches. The Croatians did their sauerkraut. That was just, it was just a really neat time. I wish that would come back. We miss that.

Interviewer: [31:56] What about Ports of Call [Village] [note: also known as Ports O' Call Village] What's the story of Ports of Call?

AA: [31:59] Ports of Call was a wonderful place when it first started. Unfortunately, the buildings have been here and it sits near water. I don't know what the maintenance procedure was. But anytime you're near water, termites and there were wooden buildings, a lot of the buildings on there are not very safe. I remember one time I went to... there was a restaurant at the end of Ports of Call called Whiskey Joe's. Before that it was called something else but one day we were in the restaurant and we mentioned to the waiters, and, that the floor was moving – it was shaking. It was... it didn't feel right. Well, I remember the next morning when we went to Ports of Call that the Crusty Crab well, not the Crusty Crab, this whiskey Joe's as they changed the name, that second floor had caved in. So, they had to tear it down. It was one of the nicest restaurants. They used to serve mainly fish. And they had a fish special where they had five different types of fish. I remember a lot of people having bachelor parties there and things like that. It was the called the Yankee Whaler [Inn] then.

Interviewer: [33:10] Let's go – give me the – you were here when it was built and all that. Tell us about the history of it what it was like when it first opened and...

AA: [33:18] When it first opened. When Ports of Call first opened it was exciting. They had the most marvelous shops opened up. Probably nicer than some of the ones that were ever on Sixth Street. We had things from all over the world, there was a place we could buy [inaudible] or there was a place that sold crystal. They had a river boat that was converted there and they had shops aboard it. And on the top deck they used to serve fish and chips. They were so good. I don't know what happened to that restaurant. Eventually the boat wasn't maintained and it started springing leaks and they had to tow it out. And it sank off of the breakwater somewhere. It's a barge now, but when the boat left a lot of people missed it, there was a penny arcade where we could go and play our arcade machines, which is just a really neat place to go, Ports of Call. And then Parker's Gallery is wonderful to walk in there and look at the beautiful art. It's still there. It's one of the few shops that are still there. We still have a Hickory Farms, you could go down there and at Christmas time they give you a lot of samples. I remember we brought a group of carolers and they gave us generous amounts of samples and apple cider. And the glassblower was there and he gave little necklaces to each one of the singers. It was a wonderful place to go. They had strolling musicians. It was a place where you could take your family. I think one of the most – the business that did the best were the little popcorn wagons and stuff, the little concessionaires there, they did quite well.

Interviewer: [34:52] And what happened to it.

AA: [34:55] It just deteriorated.

Interviewer: [34:56] Ports of Call.

AA: [34:57] Ports of Call. Eventually, the buildings, it became old it was over thirty years old and they really need someone to go in there and design a new Ports of Call. And just, you know, I think it needs to be all torn down including the Ports of Call restaurant. Because I've been in there – they added the second story, but when it rains it leaks. But if you look inside the walls of the original construction, it's bad. The only building that was rebuilt was a little restaurant called Artianos. And eventually when his lease was up, they wouldn't renew his lease. And Jamie Wilson, who was now running Ports of Call is in that building. But all the two by fours were

changed the building was completely rebuilt. The kitchen, the finest equipment was put in there. When they started rating restaurants for cleanliness, it was – it got an A [grade] right off the bat. It was a very inexpensive Italian restaurant where you could go and I remember going down there, especially when they had the Christmas Afloat boat parades. The owner knew me he always had a nice table there for me and I could see the boat parade and eat a fabulous meal and get out of there, maybe paying \$12 to \$14 at the most.

Interviewer: [36:09] Talk about Cabrillo Beach, where does that fit into the history of San Pedro and the harbor. It's a big – for people who grew up here, and how does it fit in the picture?

AA: [36:21] Cabrillo Beach is again a man-made beach. What they did they had to bring in the sand and when they put in the first areas of sand and what they call the calm site in the breakwater, a lot of interesting things happen with the local environment. Eventually they saw these little fish on the sand – the grunion. We have grunion hunts now. It was actually a good addition to San Pedro and to the sea life.

Interviewer: [36:53] Well, I remember them but if people don't know what a grunion hunting is, what is the what is a grunion hunt and what is the why is that [an] experience that teenagers particularly look forward to?

AA: [37:01] Well the grunion hunt is a certain time of the year. Certain times of the year, they have the grunion run ashore, it depends on the moon and all. Cabrillo aquarium has more information about that but it's when the fish come in to lay their eggs actually, and they come in and they kind of stand up and dig into the sand and they lay their eggs and then they go back out to sea. But what happens is a lot of people come down when they hear the grunion are here and they're only allowed to catch them with their hands. But years ago, you could use nets and things and grunion when you fry them up, in egg and flour they're just really tasty.

Interviewer: [37:41] Why is it...particularly I remember it particularly appealing for young people to go out in a grunion hunt.

Interviewer: [37:49] It's interesting for me because they can run into where the water and the waves are coming in and try and grab them and touch them and stuff and it just appeals to them. There have been times when they have said the grunion will be running and I remember going down and they didn't make it. That's a little unpredictable. Could be a day or two before after they actually estimate when the grunion will come in.

Interviewer: [38:14] I remember growing up is that it was a way to get a girl to go to the beach. You'd say "Oh, let's go grunion hunting." Whether they were coming or not.

AA: [38:19] That's true.

Interviewer: [38:20] And in the middle of the night if you just go out to the beach

AA: [38:22] Middle of the night.

Interviewer: [38:22] "Oh they're not running tonight," I guess.

AA: [38:24] Middle of the night and then curfew doesn't enter into the picture when they grunion are running because there's a lot of people there. Because right now as; if they see young people out after ten o'clock, they're asking you where you're going and what's up. It's not...

Interviewer: [38:40] Now what else about, you know, other memories you have growing up here. You went to high school when Pedro High?

AA: [38:48] I went to San Pedro High School and I graduated in the classes of summer sixty-eight. I remember from the high school you could see the port. One of the most exciting things was when the Queen Mary was coming in on her last voyage. She was on her way to Long Beach and she actually came in our breakwater before she went over to Long Beach and it was just spectacular to see it. And all of the boats that went out to greet her. It looked like from the top of the hill of thousands that I'm sure it was hundreds but up there – just like ants all the way around it and she had a naval escort. What they brought her into the Navy shipyard where they were able to take her into drydock and then start preparing her for her last voyage, which was to go to Long Beach and then she's there today. She's a hotel.

Interviewer: [39:37] And, uh, what year was that? Sixty-?

AA: [39:40] Sixty-seven?

Interviewer: [39:41] Sixty-seven, yeah. And also sixty-eight is the era of rock and roll and real rebellion.

AA: [39:48] Oh yeah.

Interviewer: [39:49] I mean, how did that fit in the – San Pedro, it strikes me as sort of a conservative town or was it not that way in the late 60s?

Interviewer: [39:55] Well, the kids growing up in high school and stuff were into rock and roll. And every time there was a concert somewhere, it was just they would go insane; screaming and hollering and yelling. In fact, when you'd go to local theaters and they had the Beatles, when they were making their movies and stuff, people were fainting and screaming and hollering. And it was just a[n] exciting part of history, Elvis Presley, all the rock bands, of course, they call him the king of rock and roll. It was just an exciting part of music. A lot of young people were becoming interested in music because of the rock era. Before that music was kind of boring. For some people it was music with to them was going to hear an orchestra play or something. Because in the old days at Point Fermin Park, as in Long Beach, they used to have these orchestras come on Sundays and play music and stuff. And then the kids were forced to go and they were just bored to death.

Interviewer: [40:56] What about the – was San Pedro High involved in antiwar protests? It was it that kind of scene? Or was it, was it a politically active place or were the kids pretty conservative?

AA: [41:07] No, they weren't conservative. The kids at San Pedro High School, were against war. There was an underground paper then that circulated in the school called The Bird which I have a copy of it at home. And it was antiwar. Very antiwar. It's just a lot of people just did not

go along with this killing. Some people had objections to taking human lives. And they were just really against it. And I remember the Vietnam War. I remember after I graduated, I went to Harbor College. And there was a young man who left college to go fight in the war. He was the editor of our newspaper at Harbor College, he used to write letters and tell us to stay in school that we didn't belong there. And shortly after a few weeks after we got those letters, he died. His name was Bob Kelly, the only son he had two sisters. And he lost his life there. But he sent letters advising all his friends, stay in school, do not go.

Interviewer: [42:10] Were there protests on campus? And...?

AA: [42:13] There were protests at Harbor College. There were protests at San Pedro High School when I was going there in 1968, in the summer class that I was in, but even after I graduated and went to Harbor, there was still more protest.

Interviewer: [42:27] But the time itself I get is a pretty politically conservative town, isn't it? For the most part, or how would you describe the politics of San Pedro?

AA: [42:34] It's a very conservative. San Pedro is a very conservative town. Very. But there is – I remember, in high school, I belonged to the Young Democrats in... I remember when Bobby Kennedy was running for office, and I walked the neighborhoods trying to get support for him. And I was given the opportunity to go the hotel where he was killed when my mother wouldn't let me go. And one lady who operated the Team post in San Pedro wanted to take me – she was one of our neighbors, the team post was a group of teenagers could go to this little clubhouse that and she – I worked so hard, she wanted to take me. But my mother didn't let me go. It's probably a good thing I didn't go because a young person near her was shot and killed.

Interviewer: [43:24]. Right. Now, but this is a Catholic town in many ways too.

AA: [43:27] Yes.

Interviewer: [43:27] So, were they for the Kennedys? Or were they despite their Catholicism still conservative?

AA: [43:34] They were for the Kennedys. People of San Pedro were for the Kennedys. They'll never forget John Kennedy. Although he was president only two years. The wonderful speeches, the quotes that today you hear – “Ask not what you can do for your country, but what your country can do for you.” He was just a marvelous speaker. The books he wrote. He was in World War II on a PT boat. He wrote a book PT 109.

Interviewer: [44:01] But what about the town? Were they, did they – San Pedro vote Democratic for Kennedy? Or were they Nixon Nixon?

AA: [44:08] Uh, no, they – it was split, but a majority voted for Kennedy, his charisma. And he just in debates with Kennedy ate them up and spit them out. Especially when they had a controversial question. He was right there with the answer. Or when Nixon would make an answer that was kind of like seesaw half. He would just say “No, you have to answer the question, and this is the way it should be answered.” And people went with him. At first it

looked like Richard Nixon was going to win it. The Quaker, he, you know, his history is quite interesting. The Quakers and the American history and all of that, and it was...

Interviewer: [44:49] He was the Vice President.

AA: [44:50] Vice President also.

Interviewer: [44:52] Talk about how this mixed community – because it's still, in other words, during the recent war in Bosnia did any of that conflict get reflected here? Because you had Croatians, didn't have Muslims, but you had Croatians that served. Did that affect this community? Were there any conflicts based on what was going on in the old country?

Third Person: [45:18] Sorry, we're gonna change tapes.

AA: [45:20] Change tapes again?

Interviewer: [45:22] ...back, we don't get everything. So, give me a sense of this, tradition here and how it really continues to connect to the past and in the recent conflicts that took place in Yugoslavia. How did it play out here?

AA: [45:37] Okay, out in San Pedro, what happens is we have so many immigrants from those areas that they were soliciting funds, they were going to the immigrants that were here, especially successful businessman and wanting large donations for both factions of the war. And a lot of the politicians that some that even had office, were actually residents of San Pedro, that were involved in the war there. And they were flying back and forth. And if you didn't help them, and you were Bosnian or Croatian things that were – car bombings you heard about in the in the news, there were a lot of cars being blown up. One business, in fact, was threatened and it did blow up just the façade, the front of the building, but it was to scare them because they didn't really want to hurt these people. They wanted their money. And it's terrible.

Interviewer: [46:36] What side with doing this? I mean, representing what sides? What were they soliciting?

AA: [46:40] Both sides of the war were. It would be kind of a similarity to a World War II: the Japanese - they thought they were all spies, and they put them in a concentration camp. And then afterwards, they weren't trusted. A lot of them couldn't have their fishing boats back. So, it was all a game about money and power. And when you get in these wars, you need a lot of money to support these efforts.

Interviewer: [47:09] Was I understand the sides. I mean, the Serb – the former Yugoslavia – was on one side.

AA: [47:17] Yes.

Interviewer: [47:17] And Croatia initially was on the other side.

AA: [47:21] On the other side.

Interviewer: [47:22] Bosnians were in the middle. Eventually the Serbs and the Croatians both turned on the on the Bosnian

AA: [47:27] The Bosnians, right.

Interviewer: [47:28] How did that play out here? I mean, was there a Muslim community here? Or was it basically the Serbs versus Croatians.

AA: [47:34] It's the Serbs versus the Croatians. There is a small Muslim community here, not very big, but it just was an awful time. Sad time. A lot of the local churches; because they consider Mary Stark Croatian because they have a Croatian mass. They were mainly concerned during that time of the children being hurt and medical supplies getting there and food and water. So, there were a lot of people trying to help in many different ways. Because this community anytime there's a disaster, anywhere, they're always out here that people – if they can't help, they'll give a dollar or two or something. But they were sending clothes over there. There was just a lot of people but that – we had so many controversial individuals living here that were actually involved that had a political interest, that they really needed funds and just a lot of bizarre, unusual things that were happening in the community.

Interviewer: [48:35] And the bombing of [inaudible] was that by the Croatian side or the Serbs side?

AA: [48:47] I think I heard it was the Croatian because he always said he was Dalmatian, because for many years, he comes to the Dalmatian coast.

Interviewer: [48:54] That's Croatia.

AA: [48:55] Croatia, but they considered themselves Dalmatian, and they really didn't like war, or what was going on. They just wanted peace. And these were immigrants that came here and made their life and had a wonderful business where all – whether you be Croatian, Yugoslav or whatever, it was the ethnic food, it was a place for families to get together. He just wanted peace. He was in this country and enjoying his freedom and for someone to come in and say “hey, we want you to give us X amount of dollars” – he just wasn't ready for it. He was afraid. But then when his business was threatened, I guess to, for his family and the business' sake he did give money, I don't know how much, but then he never had any more problems.

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