

Male Speaker: Question is the first one. Please say your name and spell it.

Francesca Giacalone: Francesca Giacalone. F-R-A-N-C-E-S-C-A, G-I-A-C-A-L-O-N-E.

MS: Good. I know this is an embarrassing question, but you have already told me your age. Tell me the year you were born and where.

FG: I was born October 1st, 1924, in San Pedro, California, on the 360 West 9th Street. The 300 block on 9th Street in San Pedro, which isn't too far from here. [laughter]

MS: Tell us about your family, your parents. Who were they? Where did they come from and what did they do?

FG: My grandfather came from Sicily in 1895 directly to San Francisco to fish. They were fishermen in the old country. You know that San Pedro, San Diego, and San Francisco and up north were fishing communities. He brought my father here when my father was young in 1903. They survived the earthquake in San Francisco, and my mother came to marry my father. They were set up to be married. She was seventeen. She came over and they were married. They lived in San Francisco, had four children, and then moved for fishing purposes here. But my father fished in Alaska, San Francisco, and then settled in San Pedro. They built a home – a duplex. Fishing was good in those days. We lived on one side and my parents rented the other. We lived in a community of a lot of Italian, Croatian, a few Portuguese, but mostly Italian and Croatian, and then a mixture of everything else. We were not in a neighborhood of one ethnic group. We were mixed. We all got along. I was born next door to the Anderson Memorial, which was a godsend for our family.

MS: Well, let us go back before we get too far ahead. Do you have a story – your earliest memory as a little girl, something you can remember about growing up in San Pedro?

FG: I remember the big earthquake. [laughter]

MS: Oh, tell me about that.

FG: What was that? [19]32?

MS: [19]33.

FG: [19]33. I can remember I was in the kitchen with my mother and my sister and we felt the earthquake. We had been through small earthquakes, and I remember my mother saying, "This is a big one." So, she got us – the rest of the family, they were all scattered. But I can remember my brother, Nick, was selling papers down on Beacon Street to the Navy guys down there. My father was fishing, and my mother was very worried because he was fishing local, what they call. They didn't go out too far. So, she worried about the reaction of the earthquake. Everybody stayed up that night. No one went to sleep. We were all pacing all over. But we, kids, had a ball. We could play in the streets in those days. When we went to school, my school teacher that lived in Long Beach was killed. There weren't a whole lot of people killed. But she had

been walking near an old brick building that fell and it killed her. So, that always stuck in my mind that we lost our teacher to the Long Beach earthquake.

MS: What did it feel like, the earthquake in San Pedro? What did it feel like?

FG: Just waving. I can hardly remember. It isn't anything that...

MS: Was there any damage in San Pedro? Did you get around and see anything that...

FG: A little bit. The only one that I remember is my aunt's wedding picture fell off the wall and broke, and a bottle of wine or something spilled on it. I always remember her saying, "The earthquake ruined my wedding picture." Long Beach had a lot of the damage. Close to that time – and this is a childhood memory I'll never forget – was the big Long Shore dispute that they had in San Pedro. That was quite an event.

MS: Give me a sense of what year that was, and then tell me...

FG: That followed the earthquake time. I think that was...

Female Speaker: [19]34.

FG: [19]34. I was going to say [19]34.

Male Speaker: Just talk to...

MS: Talk to me. Yes. So, why do you not start by – because my question...

FG: What I remember is, of course, my people were all fishermen. We didn't have any longshoremen in the family. But our friends, but our neighbor that rented our house next door was a longshoreman. He became a scab only because he had a relative working, I know, in the PMA at the time. So, I couldn't remember how scary that was. That my father who fished and would leave the house at night to go fishing, had to go to the ILWU and tell him, "Now, I leave the house in the middle of the night and I don't want to be mistaken for –" because they were out for blood. But they didn't bother my father. But my parents had to ask that family to move because the fellow that was scamming had boarded up the windows so no one would break in. Because he had children. It was too scary for our family. My mother felt bad, but she had to ask them to move for the safety. Because across the street from where I lived was the carpenter's hall. They used to congregate there.

MS: Well, that is an interesting story.

FG: It was a...

MS: So, for a little girl, that must have been scary to see them boarding up the windows and everything. Tell me about that.

FG: The windows were boarded. Well, for fear that someone would break in, the longshoremen that were the rabble-rousers probably because – but I do remember that being a period of – we looked at it from a different angle. But we knew so many longshoremen. I remember the fellow. He was a family friend that was the shoemaker in town. He repaired all of the longshoreman's shoes for free and told them, "When you get back to work, then you may pay." They did. But San Pedro was that kind of a town, still is in the old – you know.

MS: As a little girl, what did you do for fun?

FG: We had the Anderson Memorial next door. You don't need to ask me what we did for fun. We had activities every day of the week. We had a playground. There was a swimming pool there, and a tennis court next door to my house. We played. We played with neighbor children. We played at the Anderson Memorial. The directors there had programs for us. Sometimes, they'd take little groups of us, a drama class or something, to Wilmington or – I forgot. The farthest we'd go would be Los Angeles, and that was a big excursion at the time. That was through the Department of Parks and Receptions.

MS: What were the games you played when you were a little girl?

FG: Everything. I used to love to walk on stilts we had there. I was on a baseball team. We played skates. We skated a lot. We had all of this accessible to us there. Then through school and school friends, we used to play a lot of – you don't mean like little girl were playing Jacks and things?

MS: No. What were you doing? Were you playing Jacks?

FG: Oh, sure.

MS: Well, yes.

FS: She said that because they don't do that anymore.

FG: Back then, games were defined boys' games and girls' games. Well, I had two older brothers. We used to go just a block or so away and watch the boys play baseball in the field. This is after hours because otherwise, they'd go down the Anderson Memorial playground. But we girls were observers. But I liked to play ball. So, it wasn't much longer, I joined a girls' softball team. [laughter] But we girls would skate. Skate around a lot. We didn't ride bikes because, sounds [laughter] strange, but when you're a family, you're not multimillionaires. We had a decent living, but my brothers owned bikes because they delivered papers. But we girls didn't ride bikes. We didn't have tricycles or anything. But we had a marvelous childhood.

MS: Now, you said you took an excursion to Los Angeles. I want you to tell me that story. Describe...

FG: Well, through the parks and recreation, we used to have these contests down at the Anderson. I can't even remember which one it was. But I remember winning this trip to go to

the observatory. Now, I didn't go alone. But we picked up children from other Department of Parks and Receptions. They took us to the observatory. That was a big adventure for me. I could have been about nine years old. Then we were able to go to...

MS: Tell me the story now. So, how did you get there? I mean, just describe what happened. So, one morning, you were going to take your excursion. What did you do to get there? How did you get there?

FG: I really don't remember. I don't remember. I know that when they had other activities – say, we used to go to present a drama play or something, we used to go to the Wilmington area. They would have mothers of some of the children – some of the mothers drove. Not all women drove back then [laughter], but there were some. Because I remember my mother giving permission for me to drive with one special mother that she knew well.

MS: Well, when you went to the observatory, tell me about that. You saw Los Angeles for the first time, and then you went way up in the hill. How did it appear to you?

FG: I don't know if it was anything that special. I mean, it was nice. It was an excursion. But back then, we didn't get excursions like that at school like the kids did much later. But it was a nice experience. We went to the scout camp there too. Not scout. My daughter was a girl scout. We went to a Department of Parks and Recreation camp for girls through the Anderson. I don't remember how we got there. But if we had to go to Los Angeles for any reason, which occurred once in a while, we'd take the street car – the red car. We'd take the red car to Long Beach a lot.

MS: Now, people do not know – a lot of people – what the red car was. Why do you not tell me about the red car and what a trip on the red car was like?

FG: Nice. [laughter] When I was real little, we had street cars on Pacific Avenue. I don't remember if I actually saw those street cars or if I remember my brothers and sisters talking about them. But I do remember the tracks because we used to skate up and go past Pacific to go to the library, which was on 9th Street. We'd take our skates and go. We had to step over the [laughter] tracks. Later, the tracks were taken down. We used to go to Long Beach to shop. My mother would take us there and we'd go and walk. We walked down to the PE depot. Got on the streetcar. It was exciting. But then the red car became part of my life because I went to work in Wilmington for a stevedoring company. Everything I ever had was related to the harbor. I used to walk down and take a streetcar, get off in Wilmington B Street and walk up to Anaheim.

MS: When you went into San Pedro when you were a girl, were there favorite places in the downtown area you liked to go? Maybe a store?

FG: Well, fortunately, we lived near the theaters. We lived within a short walking distance of the Warner Brothers, the Cabrillo. There was a theatre, the Strand, and we used to go to the beach. Cabrillo Beach took up a lot of our time. We used to go to the beach all the time. Sometimes, we'd take the bus up and walk back. It's a long walk. Sometimes, we walked both ways just for the excitement of picking up our friends on the way up. Now, I got off the track. You were asking me about...

MS: No. What you did downtown for the shops or...

FG: Oh, we had favorite shops. There were certain shops that were here. But you see, San Pedro, we as young girls, especially – well, of course, the fact that I was born into an ethnically Italian family, the girls are very protected. The boys can go out. All my brothers sold papers and they could go anywhere. We girls were restricted. We could not go beyond about 5th Street. When we came out of the theater, my sisters and I, there were three of us that used to go on Sunday afternoon. If the show lasted a long time and it got dark, my mother would send my brothers to meet us, and yet we weren't far from home.

MS: What about the movies? The Sunday movies or you would go to...

FG: Oh, we'd go there...

MS: Do you remember any particular – what kind of movies did they play? Did you have any favorite stars? What was it when you were –

FG: Well, the typical. We used to go to the Warner Brothers and they used to have the – what now they call odors. We called them cowboy films. They ran all the time. Theatres then were exciting. You could go as a special treat. Sometimes, they'd give you things. I can remember going with my mother and they'd give dishes away. But the Strand that was on Pacific got the movies after they had run at the, say, the Cabrillo Theatre. They ran the first time there. But those were two nice theatres. Well, the Warner's has been renovated and all, of course. But the theatre took up a lot of our time. The beach, the theatre, the Anderson Memorial. Kids would come from all over to the Anderson.

MS: There is always a toy store or a candy store or something in downtown that everybody looks in the window. Was there any kind of places you remember that were memorable places in downtown for you?

FG: [laughter] My uncle owned a tiny grocery store, a block from where we lived. So, we would always go in there. He was always giving us candy. But I know what you mean. You know that little store is still in existence down there. I'll tell you, it looks so small. When my uncle had the store, I thought it was a store [laughter] a big store. [laughter] Now, I go by it, it looks like a little TV. [laughter] I'm trying to think of the place we all went and got double-dip ice cream cones down on 6th Street. It was near Woolworth. We had Newberry's and Woolworth. We had a lot of stores in San Pedro now are gone. But we had a (Pennies?) here. We had a Montgomery Wards here. Then after the unions, all these stores, they wanted them to be unionized. San Pedro was a very union town. The stores moved out. But to get back to favorite places, Pacific Avenue, I'm trying to think of the name of the shop. I've forgotten the name of the shops. Do you remember Nick?

MS: He is not here, but it is okay.

FS: Let's ask about Buster Browns.

FG: Oh, we bought our shoes there.

MS: Okay. Tell me that.

FS: Start again.

FG: Yes. Buster Brown's shoe store was on 6th Street. My mother always took us in to get our shoes. They always had a treasure chest thing. After you bought shoes, they'd open it up and you can select a toy. We used to get stuff. Or you would earn credits. Then later, you turn in when you got – well, my mother with six children, we bought a lot of shoes. We would get roller skates or things like that.

MS: Do you remember the Buster Brown Radio Show? They used to have a radio show sponsored by Buster Brown.

FG: Yes.

MS: What about radio? Is that something that...

FG: Well, radio was our life then. We used to have a radio in the living room and we'd all zone in on that and just sit and listened to the radio. We did a lot of that. As a family, though, we played a lot of cards, when you have a large family. Then people used to visit in those days. We had neighbors over all the time and there was a lot of activity. A lot of activity. We didn't need TV. We were the TV. [laughter] We could've put on the [inaudible].

MS: [laughter] What were your favorite radio shows when you were a kid?

FG: We used to have *Amos 'n' Andy*. There were mystery shows. There were mystery shows. Oh, I can't think of the name of the one.

MS: There were suspense?

FG: My brothers used to scare us. Suspense. There were a lot of suspense shows on because my brothers would flick the light off. So, we girls would scream and be afraid. But I can't think of them. I've forgotten them.

MS: Well, your mother worked for a while in the cannery. Tell me about that.

FG: She did. Right after the depression and she...

MS: My voice will not be heard. So, when you say she, we do not know who you are talking about. So, you have to say, "My mother."

FG: My mother. This is a terrible day for me to be talking, huh? My mother felt that she needed to supplement the family income and she went to work at the cannery. A lot of the ladies

did work in the canneries. She used to walk down, take the ferry. You knew when the cannery – when the fish were in. You could smell. But we, kids, growing up in fishing families, that was money in the pocket. It was a good living. I can remember the day when, as a child – well, even later, even as adult woman because I married a fisherman. When if you said, "My husband's a fisherman, –" or someone had asked me as a young child when we went to school, "What does your father do?" We said, "He's a fisherman." We had a sense of pride in that because this was such an outstanding fishing community. The fishermen, we knew nearly all of them. The first thing they did when they were able was buy a home. They lived comfortably. They kept their homes nice. It was a nice fishing community. So, we were proud our fathers were fishermen. I know there's areas of the world you say you're a fisherman, that's bottom of the heap. Of course, any living you have is good. But we were proud to be children of fishermen. That was this kind of a community. Are you asking about my mother?

MS: Yes. Tell me about her experiences. What did she do?

FG: Cleaned fish. But my mother...

MS: Remember, you have to say, "My mother."

FG: My mother went to work at the cannery. She spoke English, but she had an accent. Let me say, she had an accent is what it was. But she was mostly with Croatians. At that time, most of the Croatians spoke Italian. Their families came here prior to Yugoslavia being formed. A lot of them were born in the area where Italian was the official language for a long time. So, she felt comfortable. In her day, Mr. Bogdanovich, that owned Starkist later, he'd walk around the women. He knew them all by name and treated them well. She had to join a union, which was a different thing for her. I remember my mother and her friends having to take a streetcar from San Pedro to Wilmington, where the union hall was. They felt they were going out of town. [laughter]

MS: What was her job? What did she do in the cannery?

FG: Cleaned fish. Tuna.

MS: I mean, literally, you have to describe it. What did she do?

FG: Is there a description of cleaning fish? They'd take the fish off the boat. They'd get these big fish. They probably scaled them. By the time my mother got to them, it was probably the fillets. They cut them up, prepared them for the cans. But they actually had to pick any leavings off bones. Because when you open a can of tuna, you don't want to bite into a bone. So, they worked right with the fish. Yes.

MS: Now, as a little girl, what did you think of that? Did she enjoy getting out of the house or was this a difficult thing for her, or what?

FG: It wasn't a difficult thing, but in my particular household, we had an older sister. The oldest sibling was a girl. So, she was old enough that she could care for us. Because she was, what?

Twelve years older than I am. So, when the ladies worked at the cannery, they didn't work every day. They would get telephone calls. So, my mother had a phone installed. When she'd get the call to go to work, say, "Maria, you have to be at work tomorrow at 7:00 a.m. Now, don't forget, you have to call so and so and so and so." My mother would relay. But most of the people didn't have phones. We, kids, used to do the relay. We'd go tell different ladies we knew, "You have to go to work tomorrow at a certain time." But I keep...

MS: Tell me about your father now. What did he do?

FG: Oh, my father was a wonderful man. Wonderful man. He was a fisherman. Fished as a young child in Italy. Came here very young. His father had sent for him. He was the oldest in his family of eight. He went to San Francisco. My father went fishing right away in the Barbary Coles days. Those were the days when Giannini, who started the Bank of America, used to walk along the docks, giving the fishermen loans for boats – loans for homes. My father worked with his dad. They sent money home to the old country. My grandfather would go back every two years, impregnate grandma. There were eight children. My parents were married 1911. My father's family had all come prior to that. My mother came and they were married in 1911. But I don't know. But one thing I always remember growing up in a town like San Pedro, where we were used to foreigners, we never thought anything about someone speaking a foreign language here and there. But we children went to school speaking English. Most of the people I knew, they stressed, "Now, when you go to school, you know this and that." I was bilingual as a child, but kind of lost it along the way because you don't use it being the younger. Then my aunts and uncles all came as teenagers and they spoke English well. They went to school here. But I have an interesting story. It did not take place in San Pedro, but it could have. My Aunt, Angela, my father's youngest sister, came here at the age of nine. Went to school in San Francisco without speaking a word of English. She graduated valedictorian of her class and got a scholarship to Berkeley. My father was the oldest. He could not read and write. His youngest sibling went to Berkeley. Now, that's the era I grew up in. I actually grew up with two – I don't want to call them my parents illiterate because they were smart in the ways that were important. My father could go down the fish market and when he brought in fish, they couldn't cheat him because he knew his math. He could figure it. But my father was actually illiterate when it came to reading and writing because he came here as a young boy. He didn't go to school. He went to work. My mother was illiterate in the sense that she only learned what we, kids, taught her to get her citizenship paper. But my parents were smart in other ways.

MS: Well, tell me about your father. What kind of man was he as a personality?

FG: A quiet man. Hard working.

MS: You have to say, "My father was."

FG: My father was a very quiet man. Very hardworking man. Was wonderful to my mother and to his children. A very gentle man. He fished. He had a small jig boat, not the big tuna clippers. His brother captained one of the big clippers. But my father had a small, what they call a jig boat. He had it here in San Pedro. But it was named *The San Francisco*. He used to walk from our house down to where the boats tied out – down at the port where they tied up the boats,



and go out. They would go like to Anacapa and all that area here. Part of my family fished Mexico fishing and all. But my father fished what they called local. I can remember as a child, my father, when they weren't making wine or preparing tomatoes in the backyard— oh gosh, that was fun times when we were kids. We'd have the whole neighborhood.

MS: We will talk about that too. So...

FG: Wonderful times.

MS: – food is so important with Italian families. Tell me about food in your family.

FG: Wine making. Gosh, I could tell you stories of that.

MS: Tell me all about that.

FG: But anyway, my dad used to sit and he'd make these baskets and make his own jigs for albacore. Hand make all these little things with feathers. We, kids, would prance around and think we're – I'll tell you, I would've told him, "Get out of here." [laughter] But my dad was always real good. "No, you can help me. You can sit and watch because I don't want you to get hurt on the barbs." He worked very hard. My father worked very hard.

MS: Tell me about your family and food and wine.

FG: Plenty to eat. I'm considered skinny in my family. My family, they were all on the plump side. My father's family is divided and I took after that side fortunately. I've never had a weight problem. But I'm not thin. I'm not skinny. But we always had plenty of food. We shared food. When I was a child, we used to have a lot of the merchant marine and all. A lot of them used to come in and get drunk and all. They'd wander up and they'd go to Mary Star, the church that was on the other corner. They used to give sandwiches out to the poor. They'd have long lines. Then they'd leave and they'd come up our block, "Can you spare a nickel in this?" My mother always said, "I'll give you something to eat, but I can't give you money. I need money for my children. But you can share." She'd give them a piece of bread. That isn't what they were after. The winos weren't, of course, after that. But families shared. We had Croatian neighbors. They would give us their goodies. My mother would send over our goodies. Of course, our food was very similar. We had only one Mexican family on our block. The rest lived all in the other part of town. They were kind of isolated. Well, isolated to us. We didn't go down there. Just not for any particular reason except my mother felt it was dangerous to be that far from home when you're not among your own people. Which is the people we grew up with. That's an old-fashioned notion, but it's not a bad notion. You try to protect your children. But we had a neighbor that she'd make tortillas. She'd send us tortillas. When my mother made raviolis, she always sent them over to her. Our house, you could always find something to eat. Anybody coming over, there was always food.

MS: We are going to change the tape. You might imagine, I am going to be particularly interested in these food –family traditions are around food. Give us a sense of what a family gathering, a meal, would be like in your house when you were growing up as a girl. What

literally would you have and who would be there? What would go on?

FG: Well, see, we used to have our own chickens in the backyard in those days. Everybody had chickens. They grew their own vegetables. We had chickens. So, we had fresh eggs all the time. So, in the morning, my mother would make us soft boiled eggs, oatmeal, usually. She let us have – believe it or not – coffee. But this is what the coffee was. It was milk. [inaudible] much milk with just a little dab of coffee flavoring, or hot cocoa. Food was delivered. We used to have a man that brought vegetables to the house. We had a man that sold meats that came. Later, we'd go to the markets. They didn't have big supermarkets then. We went on the one on 10th Street. 10th and Pacific there. But we ate all the time. We'd come home from school and there was always something to eat. My mother used to buy fruit from the vendors that came – she'd buy a box of figs, a box of peaches. Of course, we had peach trees, apricot trees. We had trees too, growing all over. Our neighbors, you shared them. We all shared. It was nice. But we always had a lot of fruit to eat. My mother always baked her own bread. You want to laugh? My older brothers and sisters, when they were little, my mother baked bread and would send them to school with their lunch, with home baked bread. So, later, she realized that the kids would say they were kind of embarrassed because the other kids had what she called American bread. It would be Weber's or Wonder Bread, the white one. It's funny, we have our sandwiches are the homemade bread. They thought it looked foreign. They wanted to fit in. My mother says, "Well, then I don't want to embarrass you. We'll buy the bread for your lunches." So, they'd buy a loaf of bread and my brother would make the sandwiches. My brother, (Rosario?) He'd lay out the bread and make all these sandwiches for everybody. I didn't realize until I got older that the homemade bread was much better. Not only better for us, it tasted better. I should have known. Because when my mother baked bread with the Anderson Memorial next door, she always made a batch in cupcake tins. The bread would pop up. Then we'd take it next door to the head lifeguard down there, the director. My mother would send the butter down. She'd give us Oleo margarine, butter for only special occasions, but they got butter on their bread. They looked forward to it. Our mailman would get a jug of homemade wine. Homemade.

MS: Well, tell me about the wine making, the vineyard.

FG: No vineyard. Our house had a wine cellar, as most of the houses did if they were built. My parents built their house from scratch. They didn't physically build it, I told her. But when the plans were drawn up, they had a cellar built. The cellar had an entrance from the inside of the house through a bedroom and a trap door, and then outside. Now, I can remember when my father used to have to get a permit to make wine. But there was the Mr. (Sinatapia?) down had the place that rented out the big vats. They'd deliver it to your house. Then my father would buy the grapes. The grapes were delivered, and the grape wine was made in our house. He had his barrels. That was a big thing, checking the barrels. I can remember sulfur being used for something. I don't know. Something to do with the barrels. But I was quite young in the days when they made their wine. But it was legal. I know there were days prior to that, during Prohibition, but I don't remember anything like that because – you know.

MS: So, what would be a typical family dinner? What would you have? What would be the menu for a typical family gathering?

FG: We had a lot of fish. Oh, you mean a holiday or a Sunday?

MS: Yes, a special dinner.

FG: A special dinner.

MS: How many people would be there? What would they have? What would go on?

FG: Well, we were eight. Then we had two single uncles they were over. After they got married, they'd bring their wives. Sometimes, grandma and grandpa would come by. So, we always had a full house. Actually, when my parents built the house – and it still exists on 9th Street. The kitchen's bigger than the living room because the kitchen was the center of activity. When my brother Nick went to, I don't know if it was junior high or high school. In woodshop, his project was a big kitchen table with leaves. We had a huge table. It opened out. It could fit a lot of people. But I learned something in childhood that was not uncommon in San Pedro. My mother used to always say, she'd say it in Italian, but in English, it would translate to, "A house is as big as the owner wants it to be to welcome everyone." In other words, even if you had a small house, your friends came. We, kids, would run outside. We used to have a lot of baptism, first communions, and confirmations and engagements and time and all. They'd put tables outside. They'd put boards up with the horses. Those old fashioned horses. Everybody had a few of those around. They put always a tablecloth. No paper. You wouldn't have that. Nice tablecloths, even with cut work. [laughter]

MS: What would be served?

FG: Always a pasta.

MS: "When we had dinners," you have to say that.

FG: When we had dinners, we always had a pasta dish. A lot of soup dish soups. But pasta was not a main course. It was a part of the meal. If my mother had made a roast for dinner that night, the pasta was there too. You had pasta and you had a roast. We ate a lot of fish. My father used to bring us the best fish in the world. We had live lobsters dancing in our – our laundry room was huge. It had two great big tubs. Because in those days, my mother's Maytag, you had to bring it up against the wash tub. So, my father used to come from fishing and dump these gunny sacks full of live fish, rock, cod, bouncing all over. He'd clean them out. We had wonderful fish. If we had a surplus, he'd give it to a neighbor. But we ate a lot of fish. We ate a lot of meat in the sense we had roast – a lot of roast. They used to even put a lot of roast – hunks of roast in the spaghetti sauce. A lot of vegetables – a lot of homegrown vegetables. We ate well.

MS: Sounds like it.

FG: Having an older sister, she used to love to bake. So, she'd make the best pies for us.

MS: Now, did you learn to cook in those or did you get...

FG: No.

MS: [laughter] Only eat?

FG: I was the tomboy in my family.

MS: Well, tell me about that. What did a tomboy in an Italian family – what was that like?

FG: Well, I'm second from the youngest. At dinner time, we all ate together. I'm the one that they had to go call. I had a nickname. They used to call me (Chichina?) as a diminutive for Francesca. So, "Go call your sister." Where would I be? Just up the block or hanging around the Anderson. But up the block, maybe a friend's house. But I was the tomboy. So, as we got older and my older sister got married and all, and the chores had to be divided. My oldest sister did most of the cooking with my mother, and another sister learned to iron. She was great at ironing. I didn't operate a washing machine until I got married because my mother didn't want us kids using the ringer for fear we'd get hurt. She'd say, "No, I do that. I do that." Or my oldest sister. But I didn't have to cook because I used to do the shopping. I used to go buy the groceries. My mother would give us a list, carry home big sacks of potatoes and all. I liked to do things like that. I just never learned to cook. But I had to. [laughter]

MS: December 1941 was a bit of a day, December 7th. Tell us about what –

FG: Remember it well.

MS: – you remember about the beginning of World War II in Pearl Harbor. What were you doing? When did you hear about it? What happened?

FG: The radio.

MS: You have to tell me about on December 1st, or whatever.

FG: December 7th. It was a Sunday. We were home, and that was [19]41. I was a senior in high school. But it was a Sunday. It was announced on the radio. It was just a war. Oh, well, as part of that, growing up as a child, whenever there was a big event happening, we used to have the paper boys running through town, "Extra. Extra." I can remember when Mussolini went to Ethiopia and they had the big extra. Then when Hitler marched into Poland, the big extra. So, we were a little bit attuned to war going on because that was 1939 and this was just two years later. It was kind of a scary time because the world was a little upset. The war in Europe had started. We hadn't joined it yet. But then when we heard this, my mother had two sons at home. Three girls were all at an age where we would've – I would've been in World War II. It's all right. My husband served it well in the South Pacific too. But it was bad. But it changed. Everything changed. As I said, I was a senior in high school and we didn't have a prom. We were going to school with all the Japanese American that live on our – niecey friends that lived on Terminal Island. We were all very close because their family were fishermen. My father knew a lot of the Japanese. The market that he used to sell his fish to was owned by a Japanese.

They had that common bond, and we did as kids too, because our families were fishermen. Some of the children were from the farmers, but the ones mostly going to San Pedro came from the Terminal Island. The kids used to take the ferry across and walk up. It was sad to know that they had to leave. It was our classmates. They didn't get to graduate with us. They had to leave. I was very close to a couple of them. [inaudible] was in all my classes. But until he died just a couple years ago, we still communicated.

MS: How did you learn that they were going to have to leave? Do you remember the news when suddenly...

FG: Well, I'll tell you. It's a little story. My father, coming here as a child, thought that he was a citizen of the United States because his father had become a citizen. There was a time, if you were under fifteen, you were automatic citizen. My father had assumed he fell under that. But he never bothered to go get an official paper or anything. Now, his father was a citizen. So, my father always said, "I'm a citizen through my father because I was underage." Not being literate, he didn't follow it through. We always blamed my smart aunt. We said to my aunt, Angela, "Why didn't you think –" She says, "We didn't think about things that day because we didn't have to worry about anything." But when the war broke out, the enemy aliens had to sign up. Well, my father, being a fisherman, just like you have security down there, had to prove by paper that he was a citizen. He said, "I don't have it. I came at a young age. I was nine or ten. My father –" So, they looked up and they found that it had changed. The law had changed just during that time. My father was not an automatic citizen. He could have gone and gotten it very easily, but – I don't like the word ignorant. But it was ignorance on – you understand what I mean. So, my father, technically – here's a man that loved this country. We never flew an Italian flag in our house. My father says, "We're in America. You'll be proud of your Italian heritage, but we're Americans." I know families that flew foreign flags all over the place. We didn't. We had an American flag in our house. My father was very happy to be here. So, he had to sign up as an enemy alien. We feel it killed my father. He had a stroke soon after and he died. He died right after the war started. They wouldn't let him take his boat out because it was a one-man boat. He was technically skipper. He could go fishing. He could fish for someone else. If you were – and there were a lot of them – a captain of a boat, you were an enemy alien, you could not take the boat out. But my uncle, he was a citizen. He was skipper of his boat. They never bothered the Italian Americans. They never bothered, other than that one incident with my father. Now, if he took another man on his boat and said he was a captain, they would let him fish. Because he did fish with his brother for a while after before he died. But I kind of understood this enemy alien thing. When they were calling my friends enemy aliens, it bothered me because I said, "I'm Italian American. They're at war with Italy, but no one is staring at me." They didn't treat us any different. Why are these people being treated different? It bothered me a lot. But at the time, when it was explained to us that Japan was a different situation in that they had submarines lurking around here, so called. There was one family that had a radio that they were in touch with Japan and all. I think it's a matter of, they looked Japanese. We blended. Especially my family. My father was a blue-eyed blonde Italian. So, our family was a mixture. We had blue eyes and brown eyes, but we were never shunned. No one ever come to me and said, "You're an enemy."

MS: Do you remember the day that suddenly everybody – there was a day that they just packed

up.

FG: Yes, they did. They didn't come to school. We were all wondering when we heard...

MS: Start again, "My Japanese American friends." You have to take a drink and take a sip and we will...

FG: A little bourbon would be better. [laughter]

MS: Yes. I agree.

FS: We did not think of that, but, yes.

FG: As a child, that was our home remedy.

FS: Of course. You got a little throat, you need a little....

FG: A little whiskey, not lemon, hot water. Wine, anytime you wanted. We don't have any alcoholics in the family. But anyway...

MS: You have to put that cup down so we can...

FG: One day –

MS: Hold on a second.

FG: – at school, we knew they...

MS: Wait a second. Go ahead.

FG: We knew the rumblings, but they just didn't appear at school.

MS: Why do you not start again, but you have to...

FG: I don't know if I'm going to make this.

MS: "One day, our Japanese American friends," so we know who you are talking about.

FG: Yes. One day our Japanese American friends just did not appear at school. One of them came – Billy (Sheep?) I still see him. He's a gardener in San Pedro. The reason Bill got to come to school is his father was born in Hawaii. He was a Hawaiian citizen. So, Bill didn't get sent away. The rest, they sent them to camps. My friend (Conche?) went into the army. Became a lieutenant colonel and sat at all the negotiations. When the peace was signed in Japan, he was there because he was bilingual. But he went to work for the U. S.

MS: So, what was San Pedro like during the war? It must have been quite a different place from

before the war, huh?

FG: Oh, we had so-called rationing, but our stomachs never – they rationed the meat. But we all knew when the markets got meat and we'd go – we had stamps. Fishing family, we had a lot of fish. Gas was rationed. So, you didn't go as far. Shoes. They were limited on shoes. The shoes you could buy didn't have leather soles for a while. But we didn't suffer. I don't remember, other than the town changed and that your friends went to war. My brother had to go in the Navy. My other brother was an architect, was [inaudible] because as a child, he was badly burned and lost his pivot bone. He had to give up his architecture work because no one was building houses. But he went to work at the shipyards, building ships, designing ships and things. But there were a lot of tensions. We had a lot of servicemen with the fort and the Navy. So, my mother always told us, "Girls, don't get involved with any servicemen because they come into town and they leave." I ended up marrying one that came into town however.

MS: What is happening? Your throat. I do not want to wear your throat out. What we are thinking is that maybe we could come back. You could come back next week when –

FS: Well, next week, yes.

MS: – your throat is better.

FS: Because there's more stories.

MS: Because you are starting to lose your voice even more and more and there is so many wonderful stories we want to be able to tell them. I know Nancy has got a schedule to look into next week.

MS: Let me cut.

FS: Wait, wait.

MS: Yes, we will stop the tape. Because I know...

[end of track]

Male Speaker: Just to remind us who you are, please say your name again and spell it.

Francesca Giacalone: I'm Francesca Giacalone, F-R-A-N-C-E-S-C-A, G-I-A-C-A-L-O-N-E.

MS: Okay. This is the second part of our interview with Fran. We heard some great stories about growing up. But we want to now talk – unless there are some stories you did not tell us you would like to tell us about your growing up years.

FG: Well, I think I covered pretty much. Life was simple but nice, comfortable, because I grew up with a lot of other people, just like me and my class. San Pedro's always been a good mixture of people. So, I might say what made me grow up is when World War Two started. I was a

senior in high school. I remember telling you previously that the Japanese kids that were in our class had to leave. But we had graduation. However, our class, we had no prom because lights out everywhere. It was a simple graduation. It was a summer class of [19]42. A lot of the young men, in order to avoid being drafted, wanted to go into the Navy, my husband being one of those. They joined up prior to graduation. Some of them went into the merchant marine. So, when I got out of high school, the thing was, well, you get a job. The war was on. Had I been a boy, I would have been just the perfect age to go into the service. So, I went to – I did pretty well in high school. I had a good friend of mine that I grew up with, went all through school with. She kept telling me, "My dad is going to give you a job when you graduate because you've helped me so much with homework and all." I thought, "Oh, she's just blowing smoke out of her hair." Then she says, "My dad is the head of a stevedoring company." She says, "He's going to give you a job." Well, naturally, everything boomed. The waterfront started booming. I was involved on the fishing end. I came from a family of fishermen. So, Gloria, telling me, "Well, I'm going to get you a job." Well, I was seventeen when I graduated. In order to get jobs in war-related things, you had to be eighteen. So, I tested for the Army supply depot, which just boomed. All of a sudden, there was all this work. Took a test for a secretary and passed it. They said, "As soon as you're eighteen, you can start working." In the meantime, Gloria calls me. I go to work for Associated Banning Company, which was in Wilmington. They were a stevedoring company that was later bought out by what is now Metropolitan Stevedore. The main office was in Wilmington. Well, to me, Wilmington could have been a million miles away. We used to pass the Wilmington station, going to Long Beach in Los Angeles on the red cars. But my older brother said, "Well, I'll take you there." I thought I was going for an interview. She called me. She says, "Come to work for my dad. I told him, 'You're a good secretary,'" blah blah, blah, blah, blah. So, I went over there thinking I was going to be interviewed. I walked in. They just sat – they were expecting me. They sat me down and put me to work. I worked there. I learned so much there because it was a busy place. Being war time, they had to work under the war administration. They didn't have enough longshoremen to unload the ships. They used to use the soldiers from Fort MacArthur. They would have separate payroll department for them. The rest had to go through PMA. But they had these separate payrolls for the soldiers. They always sent a couple of them up to the office to help with the bookwork on that. But I learned a lot about tonnage, the people that are involved in loading and unloading ships. You have your crane operators. You have, that time, your front man and your dock man. It was a little different setup here. I was pretty good at shorthand. So, so I used to take the longshore disputes, a lot of them, when they came because I worked for the company, not the union end, the other side. But it was a busy harbor. We had two offices down at Berth 188, which was the Furness Withy, the British line. Then we had the Berth 147 where they unloaded all the banana boats, the boats coming in with bananas.

MS: What did World War Two do to this town? It just suddenly, boom, exploded.

FG: Actually, the fishing end didn't change, except that a lot of the young men went in the service. But people moved in. Because when I used to – I had to learn to take the streetcar to Wilmington. The streetcar down that part of town was real busy. But a lot of them went to work in the shipyard. There was this influx of people coming in to work in the shipyard. They came from all over for shipyard jobs. So, I take the streetcar every morning. You meet people. You see the same people nearly all the time. Everybody was naturally, during a war time, you're in a



war-related industry. They all merge in. But it was interesting. I used to walk up Avalon Boulevard from B Street up to Anaheim. A lot of the unions were there. The engineers union, the seafarers, they were all there. I got to know some of the girls that worked in the offices. We'd ride the same streetcars. But I really learned about the harbor in general. I used to think the only thing I used to know about the harbor is, the Matson line used to come in all the time. I had a cousin who lived in San Francisco. He was a captain for the Matson lines. So, during the war years, they took them, and they gave them commissions, temporary commissions, because the boats were turned over to the service. So, he used to be down in San Pedro a lot. He used to come over to the house with all his braid and all. We thought that was really something. But the town was overrun with – well, San Pedro was home of the Eleventh Fleet for years. You're aware of that. So, we were used to this. When the fleet was in, all the sailors, you'd see them. A lot of them headed for Long Beach, a lot more action there. Or they didn't leave that part of town. But my mother used to say, "Now, when the fleet's in, you girls, when you go to school, walk straight to school. Don't talk to anybody." We get our little lectures. But the Warriors, everything – when the war broke out, of course, I was old enough to go to work. But everything changed. Everything seemed to be busy. Everybody was busy. Everybody was scrambling around. Then with Fort MacArthur here, we were really a busy town. We used to get a lot of company because anyone that knew our family that had a relative or a friend coming to Fort MacArthur or Terminal Island for the Navy or the Army would say, "Go over and visit the family." Actually, that's how I met my husband, because his ship was here. After being torpedoed, it was being repaired at Bethlehem. Well, I worked for Associated Banning. I learned a lot about the longshore industry and all that.

MS: The one you're working in specifically, tell us what that industry is.

FG: I didn't realize how important it was to live in a harbor town and that so much cargo came through here from all over the world. You think you exist in just a little town, but you don't. It was a busy place. Here you get all of these seafarers from all over the world converging on you. Wilmington was a busy place. But we always thought of Wilmington as just Wilmington, a little kind of an in-between little spot. We never went to Wilmington other than when I started working there. I don't know. I worked there till the war ended. Then I got –

MS: What was your job specifically?

FG: I was a secretary.

MS: What did you do?

FG: Actually, I started out – when I got hired, [laughter] I was recommended by the president's daughter. I did secretarial work. I took dictation. When I learned billing, we used to do the billing for the War Shipping Administration. Because they used to send an auditor regularly to check to make sure everything was all right. When I wasn't busy, I would help with the payroll. So, I learned all aspects. But I was hired as a secretary. That's what I did. I took dictation, typed a lot of letters, and used to take a lot of – like I said, we didn't have – well, they had Dictaphones, but we didn't use them too much. They'd have disputes. They'd call me in. I'd take the dictation. I was pretty good then.

MS: You did shorthand.

FG: I did shorthand, the old Gregg shorthand. I learned it in high school.

MS: What were some of the big disputes during the war between the...

FG: Oh, mostly, things about the gangs of people working.

MS: You have to say, "Some of the big disputes."

FG: No, not anything other than just employee disputes.

MS: You have to say it. Remember my questions will not be heard. So, you have to tell me what you are talking about in your answer. So, "Some of the disputes we had involved."

FG: Some of the disputes that went on when I was working there involved employees, maybe a jurisdiction problem. So-and-so shouldn't have been working on this particular job, or he got more hours. A lot of it was jurisdiction. Then it all ended up with, you pay somebody X amount of hours, and it was settled. They seemed like minor things, but to the person involved, it's important, because they were working under a strict union. When you have unions, you have this jurisdiction in this – what do they call it? I know the term so well. It eludes me now, because it was the same term in the shipyard. But anyway, then I got married after the war. My husband came back from the service. He wasn't my husband at the time. But then we started going together. I got married. Then when I got pregnant, I did what the majority of women at that time did. You stayed home. So, I stayed home. I had a little girl. Once in a while, they'd call me in if somebody went on vacation or something. But I actually quit work. Then I stayed home and raised three children, did all the routine stuff of PTA, Girl Scouts, all of that stuff. Then when I was in my early forties, a friend of mine that worked for a labor union, the union for Todd Shipyard, Bethlehem Shipyard, and some of the small marine repair units. It was called the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America. Now, that was 1968 or so, yes, that long ago. I thought, well, I can't go to work. I still have – I had a daughter ready for college. I had a son ready – grown, another one. Then I had a young son that I had late. I was thirty-eight when he was born. So, he was still in elementary school. So, they called me. They said one of the girls in the office was ill. They needed somebody that knew shorthand. Well, I had kept up my shorthand only because once you learn it, you doodle in it. Then I'd always been involved in PTA and Scouting and stuff. You use that stuff. So, I went to work temporarily. It was supposed to be for three weeks. I stayed twenty-two years. But when I went there, I said, "I can only work from 9:00 to 2:00 because I want to be home when my young one is home. I want to be home when he's out of school." Said, "Fine." So, the union at that time was located on Sixth Street in San Pedro. It covered what was Todd Shipyard. I thought, oh, Todd. Yes. That was where LA Ship used to be. Well, during the war, I used to ride the streetcar. All these guys used to work at Western Shipbuilding, LA Ship, and that's the same location. They said, "Oh, yes, they've left and changed. It became Todd Shipyard, a division of Todd," because Todd is all over. They were building all kinds of ships. They built a lot of ships during World War Two. Like I say, I used to see the shipyard workers going to work, not knowing that I was going to

work in that related industry later.

MS: What did you do? What was your role?

FG: I was a secretary there, too. I was a secretary. That was an interesting job. Our job was right across the street from the longshore dispatch hall. It moved from San Pedro. They bought the land over there and built the building. I learned a lot there because we had about 6,000 men in the union. The shipbuilding industry was going full blast. So, my two jobs that I had were related to the port.

MS: But there were two sides of the equation. You saw both sides.

FG: Yes. I worked for management. I mean, when I worked for the stevedore company, the union was the other side of the fence. Then I went to work for a labor union that covered the men working in the shipyard. My shipyard job was great because I did a lot of work when they had arbitrations. I used to do a lot of the typing and the grievances for the workers. I used to do a lot of political things. We were involved very politically, not only locally, but we used to write to senators all the time and all of this and that. You learn a lot. You don't learn much staying home, but that's an important job, too. I never regretted the years I stayed home. I was a homemaker for twenty years with my children. I have never regretted that.

MS: We are going to go back and pick that up for that same reason. But first of all, was it difficult for you to change your mind from – you were working for the stevedore company. Workers are giving us all kinds of problems. We have to make sure that – then you worked for the union. Those bosses are making it hard for us to – did you have any problem doing it?

FG: Not really, because there had been a time span. I could see both sides. I thought, oh, well, unions are needed. They're wonderful in that they do help people get better wages. Then I realized that when the union fought for a raise and all, the non-union people working at Todd benefited because they had to bring their fringe benefits up to their standard, even the bosses. You take a foreman, a quartermaster or a foreman that were non-union. When the union man got a raise, they got a raise. When we went into a severance plan – they had a pension plan, but then they got a severance plan – they automatically became part of it. So, I could see both sides. But I really saw the harbor grow up in that sense, watching during the war years, I'd say my early years, and then sitting back, and then later, the shipbuilding industry. Then that went kerplunk.

MS: How did that happen? Tell me what happened to the ship.

FG: I really don't know. I was working there. They had contracts and all. Then I think they just reached a point where they decided they could build the ships, the few that were needed. Because the demand for ships – they built the Liberty ships here and all that. But then the demand for ships was diminishing. It became like repair yards were doing. The Long Beach Naval Shipyard closed down prior to Todd of course. California Shipbuilding, which was in Long Beach, which was part of our union, closed down. They were a repair yard. There was no need for big Navy ships anymore. So, they decided that the yards in Seattle and Oakland could handle what needed. They closed this one down.

MS: Was it a sad moment for you?

FG: Well, I hated to see it for the employees. It didn't bother me because I had a working husband. I didn't have to work. I was working through choice, and I loved working. I just loved it. But I also turned sixty-five the same year the yard closed. So, they had some small repair shops they were keeping open. I had top seniority then. I could have stayed working. There was no age limit. But there was one other girl left working with me. She was a mother, a single mother of two girls going to a private school. She had them in a Catholic school. It's costly. She needed to work. I really didn't. I could draw Social Security. I could draw my pension. So, I took the layoff.

MS: Well, let us go back to those twenty years when you were involved in the PTA and the Girl Scouts. That is important too. We are going to change tapes. So, I'm going to talk about what San Pedro was – story about going on the red car. Tell me that story.

FG: Well, that was when I was a young woman working for Associated Banning Company. The war had just broken out and all. So, I used to go down, like I say, take the streetcar. Well, of course, the government had priority. So, when there would be a train coming through that was carrying cargo for the harbor for the government, they never had to stop. So, the red cars would have to stop and let them go through. Well, sometimes they would go on and on and on. I've always been one that's always on time and on. I'd get paranoid. I'm going to be late for work. I'm going to be late for work. Everybody around me would say, "Relax. They know why you're going to be late. You're working in Wilmington especially. They know they're going down the freight trains going down to the harbor." Sure enough, sometimes we'd be tied up like a half hour or so. There'd be shipyard workers on there and all. But the bosses all knew. The companies knew. I'd get to work. They'd say, "Yes, we know. Okay. [laughter] You were stopped by the freight train." We'd sit there and wait. Naturally, that was priority.

MS: They could probably see the freight train anyway. They knew it was going through town.

FG: One thing about growing up in San Pedro and going through the Warriors here in a busy harbor, I love this harbor because I still — I used to live within walking distance of here almost. It's where my parents built their home, and I grew up. Now, I live up by Averill Park, up on the hill. I can look out and see the view. I can just go over a short way and see the ocean. That's what I love about San Pedro is the ocean. On one side, you can watch the freighters go out. You can watch sailboats. You can watch fishing boats. Then you come over here and look. Some people complain about the cranes being ugly. I think they're beautiful because they mean work for the harbor. I do think they're beautiful. We had an opportunity to travel once we were older. We hit a lot of big seaports all over. We went to Europe and all. We went to Finland and Greece and England. We saw a lot of ports. We always said, "I don't know why people are gawking looking at this. We've got a better-looking port in San Pedro." When I ride over the bridge, I get very nostalgic. I can almost come to tears. I look at the harbor. I think, "Look how this has grown. Just look at all the people that are working here. How wonderful." It keeps the world going because there's a lot of freight coming through here, a lot of freight.

MS: Let us go back to World War Two. You are at Port town.

FG: Yes.

MS: The fleet is here.

FG: The fleet is here.

MS: Do you ever think maybe you might be attacked? Was there any fear here that you were possibly vulnerable during all of this?

FG: Yes.

MS: Tell me about that.

FG: We always had that fear because we had to...

MS: I want you to say, "We always had a fear of being attacked."

FG: We always had a fear of being attacked. We knew we were a port town. We were at war with Japan on this coast. We were vulnerable. So, we were constantly worried about – we had to go through these air raid tests or whatever they call them. They'd blow the sirens. We had to keep our shades down. Then every once in a while, we might get, it was mostly a false report that they saw a submarine. Although they do claim there were some. We thought, "Well, it happened to Pearl Harbor. It could happen here." Well, I think of that today. This harbor is a big place. So, yes, there was that fear. There was that fear.

MS: We started to talk about those twenty years when you were staying at home with your kids. Give us a sense of what it was like to be a mother in San Pedro. What kind of town was it to raise kids in?

FG: Wonderful, because we all...

MS: Let me finish. "Raising children in San Pedro was," start that one.

FG: Raising children in San Pedro was a wonderful experience because a lot of the people that I went to school with remained in San Pedro. After the war, fellows came back, girls got married. It's a close-knit community. Most of us went to San Pedro High. We're all very loyal. We have a lot of reunions and all. So, we were having children that went to school together. So, then when we were joining PTA, little leagues and all, the parents knew each other from school. We were buddies. Then our children became acquainted. We remain that way even to this day. San Pedro High has a lot of class reunions. I'm very close to a lot of people that I graduated with. We still remain close.

MS: Talk about the Girl Scouts and the PTA in San Pedro. What kind of institutions were they? How were you involved with them?

FG: Well, the schools had the regular PTAs. They had Alameda San Pedro Council that was with this area here. I was involved with the elementary school, Seventh Street School. I was PTA president there for two terms. Then I went on the council level. I became treasurer for the whole council. Then even after, when I went to work, I still was involved. I would take vacation days to go on as a mother and go on field trips with my younger son. I used to give a day or so every once in a while, to the library at San Pedro High. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the activities with my children. But a lot – as I say, San Pedro is that kind of a town. We have a church community, a little league community, a school community. People mingle. We don't care. We never worried about what anybody was. I don't know if you want this on here. You can knock it off. I had an experience. It was an experience in my family, was that when my son Nick was playing in Little League, they had – let's see. He's fifty-one now. So, that's been that many years ago. I wasn't working then. So, I was involved in Block Field, which is – you know where Block Field is? Down right off the waterfront there, have that big baseball field. They had a championship team here. So, they were going to have playoffs here. So, they were going to have two teams come from Richmond, California. We didn't know. The kids are coming, so we have to house them. So, being involved, I got involved with the housing. We were going to put these kids in housing. Now, our group of children that were playing here at Block Field were a mixture. We had every nationality. We had Black, Brown, Latinos, Whites, everything, and everybody got along fine. So, along comes a picture of the team. The team from Richmond had two Black boys. Now, this is prior to the Watts riot, just before the Watts riot. So, we thought, no problem. We have some families. We asked. We have two Black boys. Am I calling it – what do you properly call Black today?

MS: Black is fine. Some say [inaudible]. But black is fine.

FG: Okay, I don't want to offend anybody. They're children. We're all children of God. They were children. So, we asked them. They said, "No, we don't have room. We don't have room." We couldn't get anybody to take these two boys. We had a lot of Latino families. We asked them, "Can you take this?" Nobody wanted them. So, I told my husband, I said, "Isn't that strange? I'm really surprised that nobody wants to take the two Black boys that are on the team that are coming down." So, my husband says, "We'll take them. Don't hassle it." He says, "We'll take them. We'll give them Marilyn's room," my daughter's room. "She can go stay with her aunt, sleep at her aunts for the three days or so." He says, "There's no problem." So, I said, "Okay, that'll solve it." So, I said, "I'm going to take the two Black boys." The minute I said that, one of the other ladies said to me, "You know what, Fran?" Her name was Fran, too. She says, "You take one, and I'll take one." Then she says, "We'll get together while the boys are here and give them activities because you have to take them around." So, I had a friend that was my former neighbor that moved up on the hill, had a gorgeous home up, what they called Miraleste at that time, Rancho PV now. She had a pool and everything. So, we used to belong to the pool up at the – they had a hacienda hotel here and golf course up there. They had a swimming pool. For a yearly membership, your family could join. We lived very close to that. So, we belonged to that. So, these little boys, we wanted to keep them entertained – they were, what, ten or eleven – for the few days when they weren't in practicing and all. So, they wanted to go swimming. Well, I can't take the responsibility of taking children to the beach because the beach, if they don't know how to swim. But a pool, that I can get in with them and oversee them. So, I said, "Well." So, I called up my friend who had moved up to the hill. Rochelle was Jewish

and belonged to the Anti-Defamation League. So, I said, "Rochelle, I need a favor." She says, "What, Fran?" I say, "I'm housing two Black boys. One, I'm housing." I say, "(Fran Cirian?) took the other one. They want to swim." I belong to the Hacienda, but I'm not a crusader. There were no Blacks there. I can't take – I said, "I don't want anybody coming to me and offending the child and me." So, she said, "I'm going to give you a key to the back gate. You bring them here. They swim anytime they want. Fran," she says, "that's wonderful," this, that, and the other. I thought, "That's San Pedro. I can call on my old friend. She can be – " we did. We took them up there. They had a blast. It was wonderful. The young Black man, (Donnell?), that I had, his father came down to see the game. When he finally went home, his mother – they sent me a beautiful thank you letter. I got a card from that young man for fifteen years after. I used to get a Christmas card. Then all of a sudden, I didn't get them anymore. He probably grew up and figured – got married or moved or didn't think about it. But that was a wonderful experience for my children and my family. The Watts riot followed that. But I was surprised that Little League, that they didn't – but I did have a friend. I had two friends. The one that said, "Let's split the boys. We're going to make them feel very comfortable. We're going to give them a better time than any other kids." They were wonderful children. Wonderful children.

MS: Well, it was a very different time.

FG: It was a different time. That's the point. It was a different era.

MS: When you bought a house, you signed a covenant that said you would not sell it to a Black person, or you would not sell it to a Jewish person.

FG: Unfortunately. Right. I always felt, growing up in San Pedro, we didn't – no one really suffered any discrimination. The few Black families we had here, there were few of them, and they were – I went to school with them. We used to shower in the same places. Vivian was my shower mate, as a matter of fact. She was Black. After the war, when I contacted her to come to a class reunion, she said, "I didn't know I was Black until I joined the Army." During World War Two, she joined the Army. But that's nothing to do with the harbor. I just threw that in.

MS: But you mentioned – this is an interesting thing. We have been talking about all the different people who come to San Pedro. You mentioned your Jewish friend. Was there a Jewish community here at all?

FG: Yes.

MS: Tell me what you knew about that. Who was involved with that? Was there a synagogue here?

FG: Yes, they had one. Well, there are always a lot of Jewish families in San – very few Black families. We knew all the kids because they had no problems mixing. Because I'm an Italian American. I'm American Italian. I'm born here. My father was very proud to be here. We never flew an Italian flag in our house because my father says, "We live in this country. This is the way it is." But he said, "Always be proud of your ethnicity." I can't even say the word now. I'm fumbling. But he said, "Be proud of your heritage, but we're living here in this country." I think

San Pedro is really that kind of a town where people say, "Oh, you're Slav." We used to say Slav, Croatia now. Or you're Mexican. You're Italian. You're a Greek. You're this and that. But we would say it more in a light-hearted way, never offensive. I never felt offensive. Yet I know, living somewhere else, someone would have said, "Oh, she's Italian descent. Well, we don't want anything to do – I don't want your kids playing with her." But San Pedro, we never had that feeling. Everybody kind of – it was comfortable, comfortable place.

MS: This is a final question here for you. You lived through so many experiences, both connected with the port, growing up here and all of that. How would you describe how the port has changed over the years you have been here?

FG: It's become more beautiful.

MS: "The port has become," say.

FG: The port, from the time I was little, from being a fishing community mostly, what I thought of the port, if someone, when I was growing up as a teenager, said to me, "What do you see when you see the port?" I would say, "Oh, the fishing boats. You go across the channel with the ferry to see the canneries and the Japanese community there." To me, that was a port. But after the war, with the shipbuilding and all of that, it just became a more commercial thing. I realized that it existed on a smaller scale all the time, only I wasn't aware of it. But I became more aware of it when I went to work for Associated Banning, the stevedore company, and how important and vital this area is to the world. I'm real proud of San Pedro. I'm proud of L.A. Harbor because I think it is one of the most important harbors in the world. It is.

MS: You cannot end any better than that.

FG: I love it here. [laughter] They're going to have to carry me. I've even lived in the same house for, what, fifty-six years? You're going to have to carry me out.

MS: A crane is going to come over and pick you up.

FG: I like the layout of the area. I love having the ocean. I love being near the ocean. I love looking out at the lights. I love looking at the bridge. I love going on the bridge. When I go into other areas that don't have water around them, no port town, I think, "Those homes look beautiful and all, but they don't have an ocean. They don't have that wonderful harbor." Watching ships come in and out is a fascinating thing. There's something else I do. I don't know if you want me to tell you. When I retired, I wanted to give back to the community. I said, "I'm not a person who likes to stay home." So, I said, "I want to do something. I've got to get a volunteer job." So, I went down and the Anderson Memorial, where I grew up. It's the Department of Parks and Recreation. I mentioned that earlier. I started volunteering there, helping answering phones and all. I'm still doing books down there. So, I'm still volunteering there one morning a week. But I got involved. What happened was my union gave me a retirement party. Our executive secretary asked my parish priest – actually, he's the Monsignor from *Mary Star of the Sea* – to come and give the invocation. So, he showed up. They gave me a big party. That night, I guess he looked around and thought, "She must be pretty special. She got all of these plaques," and all



they gave me. Well, when you work for a union, you get to know political people. It was part of my job to be involved with the mayor's office, Bob Beverly's office, Anderson's office. I used to make calls. I got to know them. They used to use our hall for – a lot of the unions would meet there. The seamen's unions, they had a group, port council group. They would meet monthly. Many times, they'd use our union. You get to know everybody. So, I was pretty well-known. "Well, call Fran, she'll set this up, this, that, and the other." So, when I retired, all these offices gave me these resolutions. Well, I knew that had I not been working for a union, I would not have gotten them. But only it's a courtesy thing. That's why I don't pay much attention to plaques. But it was a fun thing. So, Monsignor Gallagher said to me that night, he said, "You know, what are you going to do after retirement?" I said, "Well, I don't know. I'm going to look for something. I'll do volunteering." He says, "I want you to be on the board of the Apostleship of the Sea," which is a Catholic maritime ministry. I say, "Well, what's that?" He says, "Well, I'll talk to you about it." He said, "You know a lot of people in the harbor. I'd like you to be on that board." I say, "Well, what's the board?" He says, "Oh – " at that time, Bob McVay, who was the police captain, was on it. Larry DeCarlo, they owned the DeCarlo bakery, was on it. They had some attorneys, Joe Mirkovich, who was a maritime attorney in Long Beach. I thought, I don't belong with all those people. I'm just an ordinary housewife that went to work. I was a secretary. I was a good secretary. He says, "Well, I'm very impressed with what I see here tonight." He says, "I'd like you to be on the board." Well, I went to the board meeting. Then I went to several meetings. I realized what the Apostleship of the Sea – have you ever heard of that? Okay. Apostleship of the Sea, they call it Catholic Maritime Ministry, it's a ministry. It's religious in a sense, but it's open. Ecumenical in the sense that any seafarer is welcome. Seafarers from all over the world come into ports. Then I found out that Father Bartlett's very involved with the Anglicans in that. He was head of that. He's done so much for all the seafarers. So, I knew Father Bartlett before then, but I got to know him better through there. But anyway, I said one day, "I'm on the board. We talk about things. But I'd like to see what they do there." So, I went down to – we had a chapel, a center. It's still there. It's down at Berth 93A. We run a place from the Harbor Department for it. It's a center. It's open. The seafarers that come off mostly the cruise ships – now, prior to 9/11, we used to get the fellows from the cargo ships. They wanted a place to come not only for religious service, but just a place to sit and relax and use the telephones. We serve coffee and stuff. All the major churches have that. I didn't know that. But the Catholics have the Apostleship of the Sea. The Anglicans have the Stevens Institute. The Lutherans had a group there, too. We were all kind of in this together. In other words, if a ship came in and had a crew that was – primarily like today, you might have a crew that's got a lot of Filipinos who are primarily Catholic. They want to have a mass or something. They'll call our place and say, "Can Father come over?" Or if it's mostly a Protestant group, they'll call the other group, and they'll go. Long Beach has centers. But I worked for the one that our church was involved with. But it's so ecumenical. I've met seafarers – I've been there eighteen years since I retired – I've met seafarers from all over the world, all over the world. Mostly now, since 9/11, we don't see the fellows on the cargo ships because they can't get off. But I'm there every Friday, down at Berth 93A. The fellows that work on the cruise ships come in. We get a lot of Filipino. We get a lot of Indians and from all other countries too. But it's very interesting because I'm involved with seafarers. There again, I'm involved with the port. I'm down there. If I go up to the third floor, which I do often because I buy my lottery tickets up there [laughter], you can look over the whole harbor. It's just relaxing. I find it very relaxing. I find it interesting. You realize, when you're involved with the working crewmen, how vital this

harbor is. So, many foreigners depend on us for their livelihood, these cruise ship fellas. It's amazing.

MS: We could go on and on and on, but I am afraid we have to call it a day.

FG: Yes. That's enough.

MS: Okay. We got your picture, which is good. You signed your document.

FG: But I've really been involved with this harbor.

MS: You really have, many different angles.

FG: Yes, I have. I really have.

[end of transcript]