

June 15, 2010
Helen Dorothy "Dottie" & John "Jack" Helm
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Dottie: Date of Birth: 7-16-24
John: Date of Birth: 11-18-17

Oral interview taken by Susan Walter and Sandy Duncan on June 15, 2010. Dottie & John Helm signed Oral History Release Form. Susan explained who we were and what we are doing for the CV Centennial.

Dottie: We had some conversations and some time with Peter Water. At one time we had a genealogy group started here at Fredericka after we moved here. It was really quite interesting. I worked with Imozelle McVey for years at Sharp Hospital in the Volunteer Dept. They bought the lovely old home down on Second Ave. I haven't talked to Imozelle in months now.

Susan: My name is Susan Walter and my friend is Sandy Duncan. The two of us have come to interview Dottie and Jack Helm who have long-term memories of Chula Vista and have some very specific memories that we are hoping to mine. The date is June 16, 2010, and we are sitting in the very beautiful living room here in one of the Fredericka Manor cottages of the Helms. (their grandfather clock then rang chimes of 4:45 p.m.).

The first thing that I think we should find out is, Dottie, when did you first start your association with Chula Vista? Living or knowing about it, or whatever.

Dottie: In visiting here as a friend of Jack's sister. I came down to the Helm lemon ranch during vacation. I was attending school at the University of California at Berkeley. I had met her and we had been camp counselors together. So she brought me down one school vacation and I spent it with her family. I had not met Jack at the time. Then Mary got the two of us together, including her, in San Francisco. And I made another trip down, I believe it was, and then after we were married in 1945, we moved back to Chula Vista in 1947. And my association has been since then, I mean fulltime, in 1947.

Susan: Jack, when did you first come to Chula Vista?

Jack: In 1917, November 18th.

Susan: Were you born here?

Jack: Yes, that's why I came.

Susan: Where were you born, actually?

Jack: Approximately 471 "F" St. which is just down in the middle of the block between 4th & 5th.

Susan: So were you born at home?

Jack: Yes.

Susan: Do you know if your mom had a nurse or anyone to help her?

Jack: I supposed so. Her mother was there and there was a doctor from National City. Probably the only doctor in the area.

Susan: Let's ask a couple of questions because we have some really good informants here. Jack, what's your first memory as a little boy, thinking about Chula Vista, what was it like living here for you?

Jack: A lot better than it is now.

Susan: In what way?

Jack: It was a small town and you didn't have to lock the doors. I don't remember much about living on "F" Street.

Susan: Where did you move to after that?

Jack: My mother was a school teacher and as an investment she bought a small lemon orchard. After my mother and father were married, they bought another orchard right next to hers which was on the end of what was then "E" St. - now Toyon Lane. We moved from "F" Street up to a small place at the end of "E" St. on the lemon ranch.

Susan: What was it like living on a lemon ranch?

Jack: Great, as long as you didn't have to work in the orchard.

Susan: Jack, did you have brothers and sisters?

Jack: Yes, younger, sister who is still living, my younger brother passed away.

Susan: What was your sister's name?

Jack: Mary Helena Helm (Dottie added: when she was married became Mary Hansen - she lives in Arizona - she was living here and went to school here and then San Diego State College - like we all did)

Susan: And your brother's name?

Jack: Richard "Dick".

Susan: What was your dad's name?

Jack: Karl Helm.

Susan: And what was your mother's name?

Jack: Ivy Fern Connell (how she got a name like that I don't know).

Susan: How did your parents get out here to Chula Vista?

Jack: Well, they met here. My mother was a Connell, her mother, Mary Jane, and Ed Melville were sister and brother.

Susan: So Ed Melville was your uncle?

Jack: No, my mother's uncle. (excuse my voice, radiation destroyed it)

Susan: So your great uncle. Did you ever meet Ed Melville?

Jack: Oh, sure.

Susan: Can you tell us a little about him, what he was like?

Jack: He was big man.

Susan: You mean, fat or tall or...

Jack: Tall, heavy, not fat, but heavy.

Dottie: They had a home, you know, at 4th and "E". Beautiful big, two story home.

Jack: Where the gas station is now.

Sandy: Do you have an original photo of that house?

Jack: Yes, I do.

Susan: Dr. Schoenherr would like to have some copies of pictures that he's got here.

Jack: I think I have already given them to the library.

Susan: Apparently they are not in a proper format for the book that he is writing.

Dottie: Well, Jack, has most of them on a computer.

Susan: Do you know anything about the Quality Dairy Products Company?

Jack: Ed Melville started it. At that time there were many, many mom and pop dairies and they needed a way to handle the milk. Ed formed the Qualitee Dairy company in San Diego (recollection is pre-1939), I think it was pretty much of a cooperative. Qualitee Dairy collected and processed the milk from quite a number of small dairies in this area and this part of the county. It was quite a complete cooperation.

Susan: When you said “process it”, did they turn it into butter....

Jack: Butter and cottage cheese, the whole bit.

Susan: Did they make ice cream?

Jack: Yesthick(?) – I remember that especially because Ed’s youngest daughter, Elma Henderson, when she and Walter Henderson were married they had the reception at the house on 4th and “E” and they brought ice cream from the dairy. And at that time they didn’t have dry ice and it was packed in salt and ice. And some of the salt got into the ice cream. I don’t know, I guess I must have been about 5 or 6 years old, but I can sure remember that, salt in the ice cream.

Dottie: Yes, I can remember that, too. Just in the home, hand crank freezer, you’d freeze it, and you had to be so careful not to get salt – you sprinkle the salt over the ice, of course, to decrease the temperature. You had to be so careful not to get any of that salt into the ice cream.

Susan: Do you have a photo of this house here?

Jack: I have a photo just like that and also a later photo.

Dottie: And he has a photo of some of the family in front of the house, including In the book here.

Jack: (he didn’t recognize the photo Susan showed him - he thought Lucy Elizabeth Butler was in one of them at their home)

Susan: Would you allow Dr. Schoenherr to come here and look at your photos, and copy them some way?

Dottie: Yes, I don’t see why not. We have boxes of photos in the other room.

Susan: I’m curious about your statement about not wanting to work out there in the orchard. Did you work in the orchard?

Jack: Well, sure. I drove a tractor when I was a kid.

Susan: What kind of tractor, do you remember?

Jack: Yes, they don't make them any more, it was a Cletrac – like a caterpillar.

Susan: I've never heard of that.

Jack: Well, it hasn't been made in a number of a years.

Susan: Do you know where your parents got that?

Jack: Yeah, I think dad had several used ones from time to time.

Susan: When you were working out there in the orchard, were you involved in picking fruit?

Jack: Oh, no, that was by the Sunkist Cooperative. Basically there were small, not large, corporations, orchards, family-type and they all belonged to co-ops, either the Sunkist or MOD (Mutual Orange Distributors). The Sunkist and the MOD operations had crews that picked the fruit. As a matter of fact I remember there were separate crews. Very early on there were white crews and Mexican crews.

Susan: So they didn't work together?

Jack: That was my recollection. Eventually there were only Mexican workers.

Susan: When the Mexicans were working in their crews, did they have a Mexican foreman or was it a white foreman?

Jack: Don't remember.

Susan: What were the crops that your family was growing then, oranges?

Jack: No, lemons, there weren't any commercial orange orchards here.

Dottie: I think there were individual orange trees, but not orange groves, commercial orange groves.

Susan: Do you remember the variety of lemons you were growing?

Jack: Well, there were several, there were quite a few varieties, actually, but most of them at that time were Lisbon and later there was the Eureka which had a tendency to bear pretty much all at one time. Lisbon spread the crop over more of the year. There were various types, but two varieties.

Sandy: How many acres did your mother purchase before she was married?

Jack: It was 7-1/2 acres. When she got married, they bought another 7-1/2 adjoining and then a little after that they bought across, what was then 6th Ave., now Hilltop, they bought the property on the east side of Hilltop that reached from Bonita Rd. to what would have been "C" Street about a 1/2 mile. And it had orchards on it. So they ended up, I guess, about 30 or 40 acres at one time - lemons.

Sandy: How about the Melvilles, he was involved in several businesses?

Jack: Yes, he had a lot of land and I think he planted orchards. I am pretty sure he sold my mother her orchard.

Sandy: He was in real estate?

Jack: Yes, and development and construction. He also started the Chula Vista Savings and Loan on "F" Street, the Melville building, it was on the south side next to the building on the SE corner of 3rd and "F" - we have a picture of the old state office here some place - it was in the building like that - next to the Melville building - you usually think of the Melville building as the one that is down there now - it was built later than these buildings.

Dottie: Jack's dad started the first garage in Chula Vista.

Susan: Do you know what year it was that Karl arrived?

Jack: 1911.

Susan: Did he start with a bicycle repair shop?

Jack: No - I imagine he repaired bicycles, but there weren't too many automobiles to work on. He bought a piece of property from Ed Melville, actually who else? I think Melville built the building for him, which was further east on F St. where the Congregational high rise is now, next to the church. Well, the building wasn't quite next to the church. The building was on the alley, the alley is still there.

Susan: Do know anything about the automobiles that he worked on?

Jack: At that time there were a lot of different kinds of automobiles. All of them built in the east and he worked on anything that came along. My dad came from Pittsburgh, PA, and he had a younger brother who came out later. I think my dad brought him out several years after dad came. They were partners in the garage and as it developed, they handled Chevrolets, Buicks. At one time during the depression (it wasn't a recession), the garage handled all of the General Motors products, except Cadillacs. That was Chevrolet, Buick, Oldsmobile, Pontiac and small GMC trucks. I think GM was glad to have a dealer at that time.

Susan: Were there any Cadillacs in this area?

Jack: Oh, sure.

Susan: Were there people rich enough to own a Cadillac?

Jack: A few, but there were more after War II, you didn't begin to notice them until after War II. We have a picture of the garage - dad took the picture - 1912 - that's when he opened the garage in Jan. of 1912. (Jack mentioned a photo of the Melville building just under construction).

Dottie: I think the first garage was named Chula Vista Garage. Then when his brother, Clarence, came out, they called it Helm Brothers.

Jack: When he first built it, all it said was "Garage".

Dottie: That was all that was necessary, it was the only one around. New garage built in 1928 (where Pacific Trust is now), corner F St. & Church. Later Karl and Fern bought the building (where Logan Plumbing and Stanlee's Cake shop were) for garage addition/expansion.

Susan: The actual relationship between the Melvilles and the Helms was?

Jack: My maternal grandmother, Mary Jane Melville Connell, and Ed Melville were sister and brother.

Susan: Have you ever heard of something called the "Connell Orchard"?

Jack: ?? (pronounced kun-ell)

Susan: Did they build a house somewhere?

Jack: Yes, that's where I was born. I think it was approximately 471 "F" Street (north side of F St.). At that time the numbers in Chula Vista were in just the opposite of the streets. The street numbers started down at the bay, that's 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th, 6th is now Hilltop, but the house numbers started at Hilltop and ran west towards the bay.

Dottie: The house numbers went contrary to the street numbers. So if you look for a house numbered in the one hundreds, it would be at 6th Street.

Jack: For instance, my folks lived at 21 "E" Street which was just this side of 6th Avenue.

Susan: Do you remember when they changed the numbering of the streets?

Dottie: It was long before I came.

Susan: Second Avenue originally was 4th Avenue.

Dottie: Was it before or after you went to Stanford?

Jack: I think it was before.

Susan: I did all this research on my house and kept looking for the wrong address. In the olden days it was 238 4th Ave., but now it's 238 2nd Ave.

Dr. Schoenherr has an address for the Connell family at "E" St., do you know anything about that?

Jack: Connells lived on F St. They never lived on "E" St., my family did. The Melville family lived on "E" St. and 4th.

Dottie: By the time his family had the house at the end of "E" St., that was Helm.

Jack: My grandmother Connell lived with the Helms on "E" St.

Dottie: But that would not be Melville.

Jack: No.

Susan: What was your grandma like?

Jack: She had a good sense of humor.

Susan: You're smiling. Why, what did she do?

Jack: Well, she was fairly liberal for her day, a lot more liberal than my mother. That's all I'm going to say. I'll leave it right there.

Susan: Was she interested in the Suffrage Movement?

Jack: No. She was member of the WCTU.

Susan: Oh, she was.

Jack: You know what that was? Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Susan: So did she take the pledge?

Jack: I guess so. My family never drank, until I came along.

Susan: And you caused them to?

Dottie: I remember a family gathering when there was no alcohol, they wouldn't drink.

Susan: Do Karl's photographs survive? It says that Karl was an avid photographer and took many early day pictures of the south bay area and Sweetwater Valley.

Jack: They are right here and I have a lot more of them.

Dottie: When they had that genealogy group, it was an earlier one, we worked with Donna Golden at the library. But we exchanged a lot of information and it is possible other family members had pictures, too, just like Nancy and John Parks. But Jack has more, I think, than anyone else.

Jack: John Rojas and Frank Roseman were working and I gave them a lot of pictures stored at the library.

Susan: Do you know where the Huffman house was?

Jack: No.

Susan: How about somebody named Dwight Gove?

Dottie: He's real estate and/or insurance.

Jack: I don't know him.

Susan: Did Karl go overseas, did he fight during WW I?

Jack: No. Clarence, his brother, was in the Army Air Force, but he never got any further away than Rockwell Field, they call it North Island now.

Susan: Was Clarence an aviator at Ream Field?

Jack: He was there, too. He wasn't an aviator, he was a mechanic. I guess I was the first one whoever flew, just for fun.

Susan: When did you get your flying license?

Jack: 1964.

Susan: Where did you go to?

Dottie: California and the West Coast, a lot in Mexico, across the country, to Alaska. I flew with him. I got my license, just in case.

Susan: Were you a powder puff?

Dottie: Yes and no - I wasn't a "powder puff", I was a "99" and I never flew in a powder puff derby. So my flying was mostly on the trips that we took. And I flew at other times, but was available in case, you know, Jack wasn't feeling good or something. I was just an assistant. I was the co-pilot on our trips. Or some times the backseat driver. On longer trips we frequently went with friends who were also pilots. So the men pilots would ride in the front and us gals would ride in the back.

Jack: Quite a bit of our flying in Mexico often there were two planes.

Susan: So did you go down into the Baja area or was it in the interior of Mexico?

Jack: Both.

Dottie: That was when a lot of the small towns had air strips because that was the way they got supplies. The way visitors came, too. So a lot of them were just dirt air strips. That was when most of our earlier flying was done. But we did make one flying trip to Alaska, we went out to Nome. That was quite interesting. This vast expanse of land - Alaska there are no roads - and when you were high over the top you would see these, they call them semi-circular canals - they are just water ways that have been closed off. It was interesting.

Susan: Have you ever heard of Elena Melville?

Dottie: I don't think so.

Susan: How about Isabelle Grant?

Dottie: Yes, I've heard the name. In fact, I'm not sure but what she was still flying when I was flying. But I don't remember her, I never met her.

Susan: Were there any Japanese farmers who were living around where you were? Can you tell us a little about them?

Jack: They weren't orchard people, they were vegetable people. They were mostly down along National Avenue in the flat land, it was more suitable for growing crops.

Susan: What kind of crops were they growing?

Jack: Celery, tomatoes, cucumbers. It was mainly celery and tomatoes. Matter of fact, what I remember mostly, early on, was just celery.

Susan: Did you ever work in any of those kinds of crops?

Jack: We sure did. During the late 40's, the lemon orchards pretty well gave out down here. So I converted all of our orchards over to vegetables and grew

celery and tomatoes, mainly. There were other things to keep the boys busy during the off season.

Dottie: The boys meaning our crew of workers.

Jack: We were trying to keep a basic crew year around help. You grew a bunch of stuff you really didn't want to grow just to keep them busy.

Susan: What do you need to do to convert orchards into crops?

Jack: First, you've got to take the trees out. In the beginning, I'd put a chain around them and pull them out with a tractor. Later we used a bulldozer.

Susan: Have you ever heard of a thing called a "rooter"? Did you ever use one of those? It was big heavy plow like thing.

Jack: That was a "ripper". That was a sub-soiler. It would just chisel the ground down deep and also pull up roots.

Susan: What did you do with all those trees once you pulled them out?

Jack: Burned them. Pushed them into a pile and burned them. When I first started, I cut a lot of them down and used the wood for fire wood.

Susan: Was the wood of any use in any other way than just being burned?

Jack: No.

Dottie: It made good fire wood. We had our fireplace and we used it in that.

Susan: Do you remember any of the Japanese farmers' names?

Jack: How many do you want? There was Iwashita, Azuma, Owashi, Kusaka. Some of these weren't necessarily in Chula Vista, I think down towards Otay.

Susan: Did you know any of the Segawa family?

Jack: Yes, Benny, I knew Benny quite well. He was quite a historian.

Susan: I've spoken to him.

Jack: Is he still alive?

Susan: Yes, he is.

Jack: I think he gave a lot of the box ends that had the labels on them for different growers. I think he gave them to the San Diego Historical Society, I'm not sure.

Dottie: We have one here.

Jack: I wasn't here when the Japanese were interned. I went to State College for a couple of years and then went up north to complete my engineering degree. I worked for what's now Chevron, it was Standard Oil of California during the latter part of the War and for a couple of years afterwards. We were up north.

Dottie: When we were married, we were living up in the Bay area.

Jack: They said I was an engineer when I got out of Stanford. So I worked for Standard Oil.

Dottie: Until his dad needed help with the orchards down here.

Jack: Dad needed help with the ranch and I got sick of sitting at a desk. I said I'd never come back to the ranch, but I did, best move I ever made.

Susan: Why?

Jack: We stayed the rest of our lives.

Dottie: Yeah.

Susan: Can you describe the house that you lived in on the ranch – the first one?

Jack: The first one was a cottage. Board and batten cottage. One board thick. It was the cottage that my mother had built on her lemon ranch. It was sort of a summer retreat.

Dottie: But it had added a newer living room. And his uncle had lived there in later years. It was a lovely living room. But just sort of hung it on the rest of the cottage. So we were there for 5 or 6 years (Jack said 3 years). We built on Hilltop in 1951, 50 moved in.

Susan: This first house, did it have all the amenities, electricity, gas?

Dottie: Indoor plumbing, running water, electricity and gas.

Susan: Bathrooms inside, telephone?

Dottie: Yes. Even though the telephone number at that time was 385 G – three numbers and a letter – the exchange later changed to Garfield.

Susan: Was it a party line?

Jack: Initially yes. It had a central down here on "F" Street.

Susan: What year was it that you moved back down here?

Dottie: 1947.

Susan: Now, this first home, how many bedrooms did it have?

Dottie: Two.

Susan: Did it have an attic or a basement?

Jack: Part of the house was basically built on the ground and the living room that had been added was built up a little bit.

Susan: Was the add-on living room a board and batten also?

Jack: Yes, I think it was. ??

Dottie: But, I think it was conventional construction, knotty pine paneling inside.

Susan: Was any of it insulated?

Dottie: I don't think so.

Susan: Was it cold?

Jack: Yes.

Susan: Was it hot?

Jack: I don't remember.

Dottie: Yeah, well, when it was hot you were always out working anyway and I think we had a floor fan. And we had a floor furnace. I remember putting the older of the two children's bassinette right next to the floor furnace so it would be warm enough for him in the winter.

Jack: We had some very cold winters about that time.

Susan: Did you ever have frost, I've never seen it here?

Dottie: Those were the days, or the nights when he would get a call, about 1 o'clock in the middle of the night. All the orchards had thermometers in them and when the temperature fell to a certain degree, then the farmer, the owner, the orchardist, would get a call, who would then get up in the middle of the night and go out and light the orchard heater, keep the trees from freezing.

Walter Carey, Sunkist packing house field foreman (at that time – later the manager). This procedure was used by Sunkist.

Susan: Is that what they called “smudge pots”.

Jack: “Orchard Heaters”, not smudge pots.

Dottie: Well, early days they were called smudge pots, but they were really orchard heaters.

Susan: Is there a difference between a smudge pot and an orchard heater?

Jack: Yes. Well, heaters were a Univ. of Calif. development which looks a little like a smudge pot, but it has a recycling device on it which burns the unburned stuff that makes smoke (smudge). The idea is not smoke. The idea is heat. I gave one to the CV Historical Society.

Dottie: This is a return stack.

Jack: When we moved off of Hilltop in Bonita, I gave two or three more, the city hauled them off, I don’t know what they did with them.

Sandy: Could you tell us the age of your children?

Dottie: Our son, Kenneth Steven, was born in 1948 and our daughter, Linda Jean (sp?), in 1950. Ken lives in Louisville, KY, a radiation safety officer for the Univ. of Louisville and the hospital. Linda lives in Detroit. Neither one has any children. Our son is going to be retiring the end of this year and come back out to California. He has a house in Carlsbad. So he’ll be close at hand. Linda is coming out next month for a visit.

Sandy: How is Valois Butler related to you?

Dottie: He was superintendent of schools.

Jack: Lucy, aunt Lou, Melville was Valois’ daughter.

Sandy: Did they have something to do with naming Flower Street?

Jack: Don’t know.

Susan: Clarence?

Jack: My dad’s brother.

Susan: Do you know when he died?

Jack: We have it on our charts.

Susan: Is somebody named David Anthony Helm related to you?

Jack: No.

Susan: Going back to the Helm Garage, how long did John work at the Helm Garage?

Dottie: He never worked at the garage.

Susan: Okay, I was curious because that's exactly what the question says.

Jack: As a matter of fact, my dad who started the garage never worked in the garage after we got the lemon orchard. He was a partner and dad owned the property until they built the last one here on "E" St. (Helm Brothers), the building is still here, it's where the body shop is half way down the block here.

Susan: I am really interested in this farm life that you came back to after being educated as an engineer.

Jack: It's all the same.

Dottie: You use a lot of engineering principles in at least laying out the farm. I think he really enjoyed the engineering. What he didn't enjoy was sitting at a desk most of the day.

Jack: In farming I was the boss, too.

Susan: What was life like for you living on this farm?

Dottie: It was not really exciting in the most stirred up sense of the word, but it was very different even though some of my family had been on farms – but I had never lived on a farm.

Jack: As things improved on the farm, she was able to devote all her time to the volunteer work. She never had to work. She never had to have a paying job. She did do record keeping and bookkeeping for the business.

Susan: So, your volunteer work, what did you do?

Dottie: It started with Girl Scouting. We moved around the country a lot. It was during the depression. My dad was a civil engineer who was working for a big construction company in Kansas City, MO. As with a lot of other people, he suddenly became unemployed. Subsequently to that we moved to California because mother's sister lived in San Diego with her family. So as a matter of subsistence we moved out and joined families together in San Diego. We did that for about a year. My dad worked with my uncle making mechanic's soap in the garage and distributed it to garages in the San Diego

area. So that supported the two families. Mother had been a Camp Fire Girl, but by the time I got up to that age we had moved to San Diego and the Girl Scouts were the stronger group out here. So I became a Brownie and then a Girl Scout and it just developed from there. Mother went into professional scouting. She had been a business teacher. She went into professional Girl Scouting. So we were part of the Girl Scout organization here for years and camp counselors. Mother was a business manager for Camp Tapawingo which was the early day scout camp up in Cuyamaca.

Susan: Do you have pictures of yourself in your scouting outfit?

Dottie: Oh, yes. And then later on I became interested in hospital work. So I spent about 40 years being a volunteer with what is now Sharp. Started with Chula Vista Community Hospital which was down on "F" Street and few other things along the way. But that's what was the volunteer capacity. It was important that we do some volunteer work in this community which was small, a small town. So I enjoyed it very much. Jack was always a part of it. He might not confess. When we went camping - I'd take my scout troop camping - he would always go along to help set up and so forth. So it was a family enterprise.

Susan: Was your son in Boy Scouts?

Dottie: Yes, and our daughter was in Girl Scouts.

Susan: So were you involved in the Boy Scouts as well?

Dottie: Oh, yes, in Cub Scouts, as long as he was involved in that.

Susan: Just out of curiosity, did you ever know a woman named Edith Wyatt?

Dottie: Yes.

Susan: I spoke to her a while ago. She was very involved in the Boy Scouts for a long, long time.

Dottie: I think that was after, well yes, we had a Cub Scout group here in Chula Vista because Ken went to Rosebank school and so the scouting was a very strong activity. The troop sponsored by the school so that made a big difference, too.

Susan: Were you ever involved in like a PTA?

Dottie: Not in PTA, in Parents' Club. Well, in Chula Vista we had Parents' Club at Rosebank which was in lieu of a PTA.

Jack: My mother was involved in PTA.

Sandy: I was involved with the Girls Scout Club at the Community Congregational Church. Were you involved with any church?

Dottie: Yes, with the Congregational Church, I sang in the choir for 10 years and enjoyed it very much, you know, with the people involved. We haven't been active recently, but we still are members there. It was a small town and you did become involved. You met other parents through school. Your kids played together. They started a youth activity or someone wanted to start a chapter so you helped out. Or they needed people, like when our youngsters got old enough to attend Sunday School, that involved me in the church and so I spent the time with the choir. So you do these things, I think, of course lots of people do now, there was more stimulus to belong to some kind of a volunteer group usually associated with young people when it was a small community, there weren't that many people here. In later years when our daughter got out of Girl Scouting, I continued with my work with the troops. So I had Girl Scouts until I was a "grandmother" by way of Girl Scouting.

Susan: Bill Rathmann, do you know him?

Dottie: His wife, Jan (correction "Jo"), I think was in scouting.

Susan: Bill told me he was involved in scouting. He was very proud of the young men. He had some Eagle Scouts.

Dottie: My Scouts went on to do many things. It was a big group, too, I think I had 30 at one time.

Sandy: So the book you have here is devoted to the Melvilles and Connells.

Dottie: I have boxes with just loose pictures, too. The reason I can't find things in here is the niece who is very involved with genealogy was down earlier this year and organized me.

Jack: We can't find anything now.

Dottie: I had made a big scrapbook about this long and this wide, made the covers and the whole bit and had all the families in there by family groups on these big pages. Well it was hard to manage, cumbersome. And just because of age it was beginning to come apart. So Theresa, bless her heart, worked on it and that's why we have these pages in a regular notebook now. They are pretty much by family, but it's not as easy to flip a page and have this whole family group together. You may have to flip through 4 pages and they are not labeled - I had them all labeled. She has them transferred to computer and can match the information to the photo.

Jack: Somebody questioned about engineering and farming. As I recall now, there were two or three of the Japanese farmers who had engineering degrees.

Susan: Do you remember “hot pots” ?

Jack: Hot caps, do you want to see one? (he went out to his storeroom and brought one in – Sandy took their photo with the hot cap – it’s for protecting seedlings – the one he showed us he had had for 60 years)

Susan: If you could describe one of your favorite stories about something that happened to you living here in Chula Vista – can you think of something?

Jack: No, not off hand.

Susan: Did you have pets?

Jack: We had Siamese cats for a long time.

Susan: They are kind of unusual, did you get them from a pet store?

Jack: The first one we got actually had been given to the bookkeeper at Helm Brothers Garage and his wife couldn’t stand cats so he gave us our first Siamese cat. After that I guess we got hooked on Siamese cats.

Dottie: We did. In fact our last one was part Siamese, Blackie.

Jack: Blackie was a black cat.

Dottie: Tell her about your goat, though, of which we have a picture.

Jack: Apparently I couldn’t tolerate cow’s milk so we had a goat. You know goats give homogenized milk, you don’t have to do it, they give it that way, very fine particles of fat that are easily digestible, and I can handle that. I don’t know when I got over it, but I can drink regular milk now.

Dottie: I think we have a picture of it in the front yard of the yard down on “F” Street. Jack and his kid (goat), Jack was only about this high and his goat was this big. That was a kid. Wasn’t there a cow in the background?

Jack: The cow was staked out in the front yard on “F” Street.

Susan: So you had livestock actually here in what we now consider city?

Dottie: You wouldn’t call it livestock.....

Jack: We had chickens.

Susan: What kind of chickens did you have?

Jack: Rhode Island Reds.

Sandy: Do you have a picture of your house with the trees around it?

Dottie: Which house?

Sandy: The one you spent the most time in.

Dottie: Well, the cottage, where we started was surrounded by orchard. Then we built a house on Hilltop Drive just down a little bit from the cottage. There had been orchard down there, too. Jack had planted more orchards after we moved down to Chula Vista from the Bay area. Then he took them out with the transition to vegetables.

Dottie: So I can find the picture, just a matter of which book is it in.

Susan: This house that you built, did you hire a construction crew to build it?

Jack: No. Leo Christy. John Parks' grandfather. He was by trade a lather, but he was a good carpenter, too. I guess we sort of designed the house and then a draftsman here in Chula Vista made the official drawing and Leo built it.

Susan: There is a house across the street from mine. It's on 2nd Avenue. That is one of the Christy houses, it's gray now, do you know of that house? I was told it was moved from somewhere else to where it is now? My address is 238 2nd Ave. The Christy house would be on the east side before Lansley.

Jack: That was Leo's parents' house. ? (east side of 2nd, south of E)

Susan: Do you know where the house was moved from?

Jack: I didn't know it was moved. Leo's parents' house was about, yes on second avenue – it was just on the other side of "E" Street on that side of the street. ?

Susan: Did you ever know anybody with the last name of Dehaan?

Dottie: The name is familiar, I think was a member of the Congregational Church.

Susan: How about Priester?

Jack: No.

Dottie: The only reason we moved to Fredericka was because we could have a garden behind our cottage. Jack is a confirmed gardener. As long as he can have a garden, he is happy. (note: they have a lovely garden out their sliding glass doors with tomato plants and flowers growing) Although I think he missed engineering when we first moved. If he hadn't become an engineer, I would never had met him.

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