

Interview with

**Robert Walwick**

June 13, 2001

by Dick Nelson

for the

Oceanside Historical Society

P.O. Box 125

Oceanside CA 92049

Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne

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**Interview with Robert Walwick by Dick Nelson for the Oceanside Historical Society. June 13, 2001 at the home of Robert Walwick, 423 Crouch Street, Oceanside CA 92054. Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne**

Dick: Okay, this is an interview with Rob Walwick. It's Wednesday, June 13, 2001. We're at his home in Oceanside. Why don't we start off, Rob, with you telling us where you were born, your parents, who they were and things like that.

Robert: Okay, I was born in San Diego, California on the 22nd day of September 1927 at Mercy Hospital. Mother, Barbara Bell McPherson Walwick, was mother's designation. My dad was Earle R. Walwick. He didn't like to be referred, or anybody know what his middle name was, so I've always respected that. So he was E.R. Walwick, or Earle R. Walwick. But he would never disclose, until I finally found it somewhere. One time mentioned it and I was close enough so he could smite me, smack me around, because I was instructed never to say that name. I guess I was just testing him, you know how that goes.

Dick: What was your full name?

Robert: Robert Samuel.

Dick: But you've gone by Rob?

Robert: Yes, never have answered to Bob or Bobby, but it's always been Rob or Robbie, I've been called Robbie, but the Bobby thing, I don't just answer to that.

Dick: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Robert: I have two brothers, Earle Richard and Roger Charles.

Dick: You lived in San Diego then for a few years? Do you remember where you lived?

Robert: I remember McKinley Street. We didn't move to Oceanside until 1935. I had attended school at McKinley, so the school was down the street from where I lived.

Dick: What prompted the family to move to Oceanside?

Robert: Dad was a banker with Bank of America. He had been transferred from where he was in San Diego to the Bank of America in Oceanside in 1935, to become assistant manager with another old timer, I think he's long since dead and gone, but he became assistant manager to Roy Hoover. He was a well known banker and a person who took some interest in the community as so many of the independent merchants and the bankers tried to do, and a pharmacist, we had a couple of doctors and a couple of lawyers, one became a judge, that was Cottingham, I think. The other one was a man by the name of Hemmi. Those were the early years, I bet goes right back to the beginning of time for me, 1935. My best recollection, of what was going on.

Dick: You were about 8 years old.

Robert: Right, yeah.

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Dick: Where did you live in that first house?

Robert: We lived on McKinley.

Dick: In Oceanside?

Robert: No, in San Diego. And then we moved when I was 7 or 8. I started in the 3rd grade with Mrs., I can't remember her name, she was a single lady. Her recognition came when she married one of the most eligible guys in town, I guy by the name of Leo Mies, who was making himself a fortune buying and selling real estate, even back in the hard times.

Dick: Here in Oceanside?

Robert: In Oceanside, yeah. We lived on Horne Street. We lived at 307 Horne, a big old two-story frame and stucco, right next door to the MacDonald family whose dad was a pharmacist. He worked for Exton & Nichols pharmacy and he was a junior member in that organization. The town was about 3500 and there was still dirt streets mostly. I think mostly dirt, the only paved street was the highway and 78 and 76 and Highway 101, until the freeways were built, all that changed. Just a little quiet town of 3500.

Dick: Was that a little bit of a culture shock for you, moving from the big city?

Robert: Well, you know I was only in 2nd grade and started in the 3rd grade when I got here, so, it didn't mean much to kids. It just meant that we were not with our old friends and we made new friends right away, so what difference does that make? Kids are pretty flexible. We all three were brought up here. We were all born in San Diego, the brothers, Roger and Richard.

Dick: Were they older?

Robert: No, younger. Roger was the baby and Richard was the middle born. He was Papa's favorite. He had a Buster Brown haircut. He'd get teased about that. But that's the way his dad wanted his haircut. Don't you remember those little Buster Brown haircuts? God, he was a beautiful kid. He finally got a real haircut, though. Grandpa cried and mother said, "We gotta get the kid a decent haircut, Earle. Let's not make the boy fight his way out of school."

Dick: How far was school?

Robert: School was up on the corner of where it is right now, as a matter of fact. It was called the Horne Street school, up on Horne street. It was there between, actually it became, right next to it was the high school. So you just went across whatever it was that divided the two properties and it went from 8th grade to a freshman in high school, but with buildings right there on Horne street.

Dick: Was your mother a housewife?

Robert: Right, she was a housewife, looking after the kids while dad was at the bank.

Dick: He continued to work for Bank of America?

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Robert: Yeah, until he quit them and bought the Merchant's Credit Association which was a collection agency and a credit bureau. That was right up his alley, being a banker. So he bought into that and bought a guy out that got drafted. He was drafted, put in and then he was let go because he was 39. You may not remember that, but in those days everybody that came up to 39 or younger were drafted. But soon after that, when the war was over, in 45, why they sent those guys home. When it was officially over, they sent those guys that were 39 or older, they sent him home. Which was a break, I guess he got some benefits, I guess he got some G.I. Bill. That's where I lucked out, I got an old G.I. Bill. I was in for a year and a half and so that's how much G.I. Bill I got, plus in California I put in a year. They had their own program so that's what helped me get myself through law school.

Dick: Was that your dad that had to go?

Robert: No, this was ...

Dick: Or the fellow he bought out?

Robert: This was the guy he bought out, right.

Dick: Do you remember his name?

Robert: Yeah, Frank Telford. He was a well known man in town.

Dick: Where was he located?

Robert: He was located in what we called the Mason building on the second floor. The old Mason building is still down there. Below it now, I don't know, some kind of clothing store. It's the old corner of Third, it's not Third anymore, and Hill Street [416 Pier View Way]. I don't remember the name of that building. But my dad went over there to take over and I guess paid rent and took over the credit bureau. He took to and he made more dough in that than he ever did at anytime at the bank. He made a good living. He was a hard boiled collector. He knew about chasing accounts because they had to do that at the bank when guys weren't paying their loans, so he new about chasing after the guys that were delinquent.

Dick: Were these all types of loan, where somebody bought a washing machine, or a house, or a car?

Robert: Well, in those days, they called those loans, they had some kind of name, consumer loans. The guys that borrowed money for 90 days or 120 days, those were what they called commercial loans, where the guy just borrowed money on his signature or he borrowed money on his home, just pledged his home even though he might have a mortgage on it, he would borrow money. Some way or another, the banks in those days, were fairly strict. I maybe mixing that up with something, but consumer loans were very popular. People who were merchants, would floor their merchandise and the bank would pick up their paper and then as they would sell something they would sell it out of trust, because those things were actually held as trust for the repayment of the loan. So same with cars, dealers were financed that way.

Dick: You probably have a little bit of experience in the loan business, too.

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Robert: Oh sure, you bet. I just sucked up things, whatever I learned. I was always able to grasp things and I wanted to learn that business and I wanted to help my dad and I worked for my dad, too, after I got out of school and went to college and got my degree, then I came home and worked for him for a while.

Dick: You saw that he was successful.

Robert: Well, yeah, in those days bank balance was pretty important. Being a child of a banker, Pop, he always had the first two nickels he ever made in a safe place. He saved his money. I tell you what, what guy he was!

Dick: He went through some hard times.

Robert: Yeah, but he always worked and even though his salary was pretty skinny there one time, \$75 bucks a month. He was an assistant manager and that's what he drew. Of course, 75 bucks in those days, that's back in the early 30s. With that he paid rent, provided for his family and saved his money.

Dick: Let's go back to you in school. You went to the Horne Street school.

Robert: Yeah, I was in the Horne street school through the 8th grade. Then went next door to become a freshman. And went four years at Oceanside High. So those two schools were actually side by side, up there on Horne street.

Dick: All the schooling was in a common place, centrally located. Those last years, that was during when World War II started about your freshman or sophomore year?

Robert: Yeah, well, let's see the next major thing was during school I had a yard maintenance business that I developed because I was cutting grass when I was a kid, 7 or 8 years old. Twenty-five cents an hour. I learned to prune trees and cut hedges, had a pretty good eye. I was a big kid, strong kid. And so I made my spending money and some, on these lawn jobs and I had these jobs after school and during the summer and made some good dough. I had a girlfriend. I needed to have money. Dad would never, he didn't believe in that. If you were going to have money, you earned it. So that's the way it was! So no handouts. So that was at an early age, I learned about the value of the dollar and how hard you had to work to make a buck, at 35 cents an hour and it went up from there and finally it got to a point where I was landscaping places and planting grass and putting in one gallon size trees or shrubs. I put in grass and a few little shrubs when people were building houses, and they didn't always know who to get, but I took on the job and I watered those lawns and cut the lawns up. During summer, during the day, it would get so warm, why it would pretty well scorch the new grass, but that's how I learned. Then I worked part time, as a matter of fact, in Shancks Hardware in the feed department, insecticides. Delivering hay, delivering commercial fertilizer for avocado growers. I kind of stepped up from the landscape business and kept my best customers and then worked summers and after school for Mr. Shancks.

Dick: What was the name?

Robert: Shancks. That's a well known name in town. There was Howe Hardware, and it was called then Shancks Supply. I think they called it "feed". They had appliances, too. He had always

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sold stuff that had money, big ticket items. He was a money grubber, that sucker! Old Courtland Shancks. He's long since dead and gone. He had the first nickel he ever made, too. He got involved in getting the radio station here and he was an investor in that. He invested in stuff. Everything he invested in turned to gold. He was just one of those lucky guys, along with a few other of the old timers. They were kind of a group that were the money guys and they also had money come in fast. Gardner Barnard was one of the other guys, Judge Cottingham, he was another one of the guys that contributed. Jack Thill's dad, old Allie Thill, Al Thill, he had a saloon and a cardroom downtown at the Normandy. It may still be called the Normandy. They had a cardroom downstairs and of course the saloon above and shops, of course, that were well known, Ed Pogue's men shop, Elmer Glaser, had a shoe shop. Another old timer, of course, he's long since dead and gone. Those are the kind of guys that really shaped this community and it would have been good to get statements from those guys and then give them to you.

Dick: You mentioned when you were delivering to the avocado growers, was that Fallbrook?

Robert: Well, I delivered mostly to the groves and I did in Fallbrook, I guess people bought it where they could get it the cheapest. This is the commercial fertilizer, they were 80 pound bags and you could put a pretty good load on a flat bed truck.

Dick: What kind of truck were you driving?

Robert: It was a stick bed, a stick bed which you could then stack it up. The store house was on the ground, no platform, so everything when it came it was delivered on the ground, so every sack had to be put up on the truck and put on a dolly and then push the dolly around to put it on the truck. Took awhile to load the truck, but I did that. But anyway, that was good training, good discipline.

Dick: What about during school? What was recreation? Did you have a car?

Robert: Oh yeah, I had a car.

Dick: That was one you bought and paid for yourself?

Robert: Oh you bet. Matter of fact, I had an old truck that had the body off of it. It just had the hood and I put a flat bed on it to haul my tools around. It was a .. I can't remember the name of the make, it was an oddball name. It was a good truck. I did a lot of jobs with that but I can't remember, it'll come to me. Then I bought my dad's, he had a '35 Ford 4-door sedan with a trunk in the back and a wheel on the back. That was pretty classy in those days and of course as a kid in high school, I didn't want that on there! So I took that damn thing off! But the license plate, because the trunk opened at the top. The wheel was not on the back, take that off, put skirts on it, where the skirts were and the big hubcaps with a bar on them, a flashy hubcap. That was a slick car, lowered it. Used to hit bottom with it. My mom used to yell at me, "Robert, did you do something to this car?" We used to lower it down to make it look racy. She didn't like that too well. My dad said, "What are we gonna do with this kid? He's gone bad already!"

Dick: You get this knowledge from auto shop?

Robert: No, as a matter of fact, I was working. Because they had auto shop at the end of the day and I didn't want to do that because I had all these lawn jobs to do, so I didn't get involved in any kind of contact sports because I worked after school. It was pretty important to me, to have that

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dough. So I had some good customers and I hauled my stuff around in this old truck that I turned into a flatbed and strapped the stuff down. I did lots of yards.

Dick: What was the licensing procedures in those days for driver's licenses?

Robert: You had to be 16. I got a license when I was 16.

Dick: Was there a test involved or was it simply giving them a couple of bucks to get a license?

Robert: No, no. You had to go down and see old Judge Cottingham. He was such an a-----! For some reason or another I had to go down and see that ornery guy, he was really ornery.

Dick: Ornery to everyone?

Robert: Oh yeah, he was just ornery. He hated the world.

Dick: He was a hanging judge then.

Robert: Oh yeah, he was really terrible. Then I even had to appear before him, my first case was a petty theft case, but I got an acquittal. The jury decided, he didn't. He tried every way to help the D.A., I kept objecting. The D.A. was a handsome guy, Marvin Masure. He was a real ladies man and he was on the D.A.'s assignment up in Oceanside, Marvin Masure. He was quite a ladies man, a nice man. I learned some tricks from him.

Dick: Okay so you're going through high school, you've got a job, you're making money, you've got a car, you've got a girlfriend. What did the young bucks do in Oceanside for entertainment on a Friday night?

Robert: Well during school, while in high school, there usually was some kind of activity at the school and was dancing, as I recall. Now maybe it wasn't every Friday, but it seemed like it was quite often that we would have dances where kids brought their dates or guys and girls showed up single and the upper class men were there and they all liked to dance and I got to meet some of the older kids on a social status, rather than seeing that they were upper class men. They were always looking down their nose at Freshmen, typical. I guess it's typical wherever you go. The Freshman is the butt of every joke and every trick. They called me Tubby and they called me Robby and they called me fatso. I was a big kid. I had a lot of fat on me. But I had a football, so since I had a football I was a pretty popular guy because we got to play touch football. I think we played flag ball where you have pieces of cloth hanging and to make the tackle you had to [grab the cloth].

Dick: So you didn't have to wrestle them down to the ground.

Robert: Well, the kids got knocked down, but everyone wore Levis and that was pretty tough material. We played a lot of football after school because I had a football and then some little Mexican kids one day took it away from me and I couldn't take on six of those little guys, so I did the next best thing, I wasn't too far from Posole town, which is Mexican town, and went and got some of my Mexican buddies and I said "I want you to come over to the school and help me get my football back", and they said "you bet". So man, they got on their bikes and we went right back to school and those guys were playing with the ball and they wouldn't give it me, but I said, "okay" and it was, how I can I ever forget the names of those two guys? One became a fire chief in

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Carlsbad. They were good solid, Mexican kids, they were good students. Most of my time was spent with kids who wanted to learn. The kids that didn't want to learn, I didn't really have any time for them, because I couldn't believe they didn't want to learn anything. Can you believe that? Even in grade school it meant something for me to go to school and to learn. So anyway, I'm not trying to make out that I was some kind of genius, I made pretty good grades. I was the teacher's pet. I'd do things for the teacher, a big strapping kid, I'd do anything she wanted me to do. So I made a real personal relationship, most of our teachers were gals, women, and it wasn't until we got to ... the shop teacher was a man. Now this is not auto shop, that's a different thing altogether, this was wood. Woodshop. My eighth grade teacher, the home room guy was a man, Winston Nelson, big, strapping, nice looking guy and he was sweet on some redheaded gal, she was a teacher and everyone in awhile you'd spot them together. He was quite a guy. He was the guy, I got along fine with him, I got along fine with my shop teacher, he was the guy that gave you the swats. You had to go the shop and the shop teacher was the guy that gave you the swats, not the principal. He wouldn't do that. But the guy at the shop, he liked that and he had a paddle that had the holes in them, my god, he loved that! Oh my god, you'd try to put a book in there and he always figured that out! When he gave you a whack, he really gave you a whack and you felt that for awhile!

Dick: What did you build in woodshop?

Robert: I did most of the old toughies, like a made a bread board! I made mine out of mahogany. I think I still have it over at mom's place. I made ? for a whole year. Had to shape it with a shaping tool and had to sand it.

Dick: So no shark? board or anything?

Robert: No, no he wouldn't let us do stuff like that. No, no in those good old days, we learned out to use the tools. They didn't have any power tools. They didn't take any chance with kids around power. So everything was by hand. So we had brace and bit for making holes. But no power tools. I suppose the insurance company just wouldn't cover it.

Dick: Now you mentioned the dances. Was that before a band?

Robert: No, it was records. We had quite a collection that somebody had. I don't know whether the school had it but there was one person who was in charge of setting up the records and to bury them, jitterbug, fox trots, to waltz, the well known steps. There was always instructors there. There were people who were teachers as well as being chaperons. They had adult chaperons, obviously.

Dick: You never danced to Chet Heltibridle's, "Tiny and his Tip Toes" or whatever it was?

Robert: "Tiny" Heltibridle?

Dick: Yeah.

Robert: No, that must have been a time much earlier than that. That was long before I got into high school. That old guy, I think he's still around. Did you interview him?

Dick: I'm trying to.

Robert: Well, that will be good if you get him.

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Dick: I talked to him yesterday, as a matter of fact. He's leaning that way. He's got a lot of info, he's still in good shape. So World War II came along and you graduated high school?

Robert: Some way or the other I was, in my senior year I was attending junior college with some junior college credits, because I had everything else completed. I had what was called "senior problems" and I had government because I was the vice-president of the student body. So those were the two things I had to participate in. The rest of the classes I went to, the junior college, which was right on the same campus. Dean Carr at that time was dean of this college. I think Dean Carr is dead now. Has that name popped up? It probably will when you talk to John. Did you do Steiger yet?

Dick: No. So how did you get into the service?

Robert: I enlisted. I enlisted at a time when you could enlist for a year and a half. In 1944. I enlisted in the Air Force. My job in the Air Force was playing in the band. They found out that I played the trombone in high school and they said "you're going to band school." I said "I don't want to do that." I came into the service to learn something. "I know, fella, but your gonna play the trombone. We're sending you to band school in Washington, D.C." So that was it. So I ended up in Denver, Colorado playing my trombone for the band, the training command. I can't remember the name of it, but it was out there off of Colfax. They had quite a school. They had a fire control operator and I think they had other jobs, radio, it was a big training command. They had thousands of students there. We were in the band. Every night we had to play to bring colors down. Play Taps with a full band. That guy was a nut that was the commander of that. He was a colonel. He liked the band. He was a real spit and polish guy. Our music guy, our commander, or whatever they call the guy, our leader, he was Mexican and he was Gregoria A. Diaz. He could hardly speak the language but they made him a warrant officer. He was a musician. He really ran our butts. He made sure I had something to do every day. Like I got to stoke the furnace. I got to cut the grass. Because they knew ... guys ratted on me. They said "he's a landscape architect." So my mother, when she learned that I was out there in the snow, stoking a furnace. Of course, didn't have to cut the grass, that's for sure, when it was snowing. But god, that Denver was the coldest place I ever been in my life. The wind would blow and it would just turn you inside out, it was so cold. I really wasn't a very good soldier because I really wanted to be their leader because they needed somebody. But nobody asked me to. You only made two stripes after a year and a half.

Dick: Your talent was appreciated.

Robert: No, no. They found plenty for me to do.

Dick: Well, then you learned something.

Robert: Did I ever. I learned to keep my mouth shut. The best thing was to learn how to hide. Just melt away. How can you melt away when your my size? Well, I really wasn't that heavy then. I was about 180, 190. That's a pretty good sized kid.

Dick: How did you get into the trombone now?

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Robert: I started music when I was in grade school. Our music teacher was a man by the name of [Gustav] Patzner [nickname Ponzi]. His instrument was the saxophone. He played in the symphony orchestra that used to come out of San Diego. He was one of the members of the orchestra. He taught school and so he played all of the instruments. The guy was a true musician. And he was a nice man. Besides that, he opened the music store downtown and his wife ran that while he was teaching school. He had all the music classes. He was a good musician. I thought he was anyway. He really put those troops together and he taught us how to march and go to football games and play at the games and go out at half-time and put on a show. If you think that wasn't fun.

Dick: You got to travel around too?

Robert: Well, sure. We went to the football games.

Dick: The away games?

Robert: Sure. Got to go on our own bus.

Dick: How far did you go?

Robert: Well, like Escondido, Fallbrook and Encinitas. How about that? A traveling band. I remember there was a tall, slim guy that must have taught us. We see him occasionally. He became pals with the folks, they square danced together. Isn't that silly, I can't think of that guy's name. But he was a good man. So I went right into the band when I got into high school. So then of course, I got into the marching band. When we went to football games, we went in our own bus. We took all the instruments, the drums and all the junk that the band has. There was a great big gal, that was kind of like a big in behind. She was Mexican. She was good sized. We all had uniforms. Well, one day somebody was kind of taking their time getting out. They were bent out, getting out and I thought it was one of the guys and it was this gal, and I goosed her. Now, to this day, I think she kind of liked it! She said, "Robert, don't do that." She could beat me up, she was bigger than I was! So I said, "I'm really sorry." I can't remember her name. Boy, I sure remember that, what an embarrassment and I just turned red I was so embarrassed. Anyway, she was nice enough about it.

Dick: Did she stay in Oceanside?

Robert: No, she lived in Carlsbad. Trejo, she was a Trejo. She had a brother, she about sent her brothers over to beat me up.

Dick: Did you ever earn any money with your music?

Robert: No, I didn't do any dance jobs. The only dance jobs I did were when I was in the service and then we got paid. We played at the Officers' Club and we played at the NCO Club. We got paid well. We also were given, when they had a party they would have some leftover booze, why then, we'd take that leftover booze and bring it back to the barracks, which we weren't supposed to do, but we did it. But anyway, the guys that I drank with knew how to behave and didn't over do it. I'm dealing with guys who are playing in the band, who had come to band school and had taken up an instrument. One of my dearest friends was the lead trumpeter, Johnny Olinsky. God, he could

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play beautifully. He still does. He still has a band, too. As a matter of fact, he's coming down to play for my 50th wedding anniversary, which we're having this weekend. He's going to bring the band down, which I thought was a real gesture of friendship. A friendship that we've had all these years from the military. He's a big polish guy. His head's growing as fast as yours is. He's a tall guy.

Dick: Where is he from?

Robert: Right now he lives in Thousand Oaks. But he's been as far north as Ventura, I think it was where we used to go visit him. He lived inland from Ventura out on 126, out quite aways, where all the lemon groves were, on Darling, that was the name of the street. He lived on Darling.

Dick: So you were in the Air Force for about a year and a half?

Robert: I didn't do my full 18 months. I think I got out at seventeen. For some reason there was an early release but I was credited with a year and a half benefits to get in school, on the G.I. Bill. Are you familiar with that program?

Dick: I used it for four years.

Robert: Well, then okay.

Dick: I was in the Korean War.

Robert: Then you did your time.

Dick: That was three years.

Robert: You're lucky to get back. Were you in the marines?

Dick: No. Army.

Robert: Oh, the Army. Right there, well, you're lucky to get back. So that's why were in such good shape.

Dick: I had a full head of hair when I went over.

Robert: You were over protecting us. Saving our freedom.

Dick: What led you into law? You should have been in banking.

Robert: Well, I don't know. Okay, I'll tell you about that. That's interesting to me how I got into it, because I was going to be an optometrist. I thought that was my calling because I had become great pals with a local optometrist. He's long since dead and gone. We were great pals. As a matter of fact, he was one of my customers for mowing grass. His name was \_\_\_\_\_. I was in awe of him because he had such an interesting job. He tested eyes and prescribed glasses. I thought that was kind of neat. I didn't want to be an optician, but I wanted to be the guy that did the testing. I wanted to be a doctor of something. That was important to me, as a kid thinking in those days. The guys was so nice to me and he encouraged me, "Anytime you want to talk about it", we talked about

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it about a number of times. He liked the work I did around his place. He had a big place. I cleaned up after his dog. He had a big boxer that was in his fenced-in patio area. So I got to know his dog well. You know how it is. You have to. You get on the property and cut the grass to not have the dog tear your pants leg off. That was a nice experience for me because I looked up to him and I thought that's not a bad idea, a nice clean business. You're going to have to get up in the middle of the night to fix somebody's glasses, but still you'd be treated as a professional. Didn't even think about going into law. Well, it was in my senior year at college, University of California, Berkeley. My dad cut a little squib out of *The Transcript*, which is a legal newspaper, and it showed the SC was opening its law school in mid year. Pop knew I still had some of my G.I. Bill left and I just wasn't utilizing that. You know, you don't give anything away. He started working me over for doing that, so I could go to school on the G.I. Bill and get a law degree.

Dick: What had you been in prior? Had you been in pre-optometry?

Robert: No, I was in college prep, that's what we called it in those days. In those days, they didn't necessarily have gifted students like they do now, they separate them. Those who liked to learn, and I was one, and I liked to get with the teacher. And so I did my assignments. I did exactly as I was told. So maybe that's a big deal. I just understood that there's the authority. If he or she tells you what time of day it is, they tell you what to do and if you don't do it, they're going to report you to the principal. My dad told the principal "don't go easy on this kid, because once he's out of line, bring him in the office and give him a whack." Well, that's when they turned it over to the shop teacher, you know! I guess the first start was when Dad sent the clipping. I got to thinking about it. "I don't want to do that. That's a lot of hard work." So I had banking and finance, was my major. So I did accounting and I did other math. How far did I go in math? I went through Calculus. I went through ? Calculus. That was hard. ? Calculus was hard for me. Really had to study. I guess he finally got me into saying "nothing ventured, nothing gained." Get the G.I. Bill and they cover your tuition and books, so sure enough.

So I went SC law school. I lived there at the campus in a little house I rented. I shared it with another guy. It was right across from the gym. If you've ever been to SC, their gym is on, whatever that little street is, the tennis courts are on one side. I had this little house. As a matter of fact, my honey came up there and stayed with me and went to summer school one year to pick up some courses she needed, since she was a psychology major. Good student. She was one of these she studied the last night, read the book and remember it. The way she could learn. I said, "You really ought to be a lawyer." "I don't want to do that, that's crazy. I see how hard you work. I don't want to do that." She didn't want the long hours I put in. She didn't like that. So anyway, finally I got talked into it, so I just did it. I was a little skinny the first year because I was on some special kind of probation because I took the New Jersey qualifying test while I was in school, actually attending school. So I didn't try too hard on that and so I didn't pass it high enough. It's 70 points. I think I just made the 70, so they put me on probation. So if I didn't make the first year they were just going to put me out. So anyway, I knuckled down and made some good grades. I knew better than to just goof off. If you have a chance to show off, I had a chance to show off. I didn't do it, I just didn't care that much. That was bad. But you see, you learn some things the hard way. But just squeaking by, but I did pass the bar. I took the exam, why I tore that sucker up. But the thing was, some of the questions that had been asked before, and I went back through all the old exams and I practiced and then I took a refresher course with a guy from three professors, two from UCLA, one from SC. So I had this little refresher course.

One of them was the real property guy, Murphy. He was the property man of the highest stature. He was a walking encyclopedia. He was a good guy to have in a law school because he knew real

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property. He knew all the things you'd ever want to know. It was quite an experience. He wasn't a real neat personality because he liked to really terrorize you. He loved terrorizing me because one time he called on me, the first time he called on me I couldn't speak. I was really tongue-tied. Some guy smacked me in the arm and said "wake up, he's calling on you." I couldn't speak. So he thought that was funny and from then on he just kept calling me. I just was frightened. It happens to you. He wasn't a real grand-daddy type. We had some old grand-daddy types that were neat and they loved teaching law school and they loved all those students. It was a real experience. I never worked so hard in my life. But I made up my mind. My dad wanted me to do it. So that was a good enough reason. So I did. So I passed.

Dick: So when you finished, you came back here to Oceanside?

Robert: Yes, and then I came back here to practice. I went in with Charles Stevens and Bill Daubney.

Dick: When did you get married?

Robert: Okay. We got married and I was going to law school, it was June, of course. The 12th or 13th. It was 50 years ago. We had been going together for a time.

Dick: Your wife's name is?

Robert: Maureen.

Dick: What was her maiden name?

Robert: Rubidge.

Dick: She was an Oceanside girl?

Robert: No, she was from Glendale. She was actually a transplant from Connecticut.

Dick: You met her at law school?

Robert: No, I met her at University of California when I was attending at Berkeley. We became great pals. She came down to visit me and stayed and I came to her place at one break and stayed with her and her folks at Glendale. Got to know her brother. He's a big fellow, 6'3" or 6'4", tall, slim guy. He's dead and gone now, but he was a handsome dude. Had a mustache, a real ladies man. He was real friendly. He had a little '34 Ford. The '34 Ford Coupe used to be a pretty nifty little car. They put what they called the DeSoto bumpers on it, that's one of the ways they jazzed it up so it was really a humdinger of a little car. As a kid, looking at what kind of car I wanted to get, that wasn't all that bad. Nothing like getting a car and fixing it up with your sweat and tears and polishing it, putting skirts on it. All the dumb stuff that kids do. So I did a lot of dumb stuff, too. What the hell, just like everybody else. "Why don't you lower that thing?" "I don't know how." "Well, come on over, I'll help you. I'll show you how to do it." I said, "Okay, fine."

Dick: Well, you came back to Oceanside, then, you had a wife.

Robert: Yes, and she had her credentials. She taught school and rode her bike to the school house.

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Dick: Which school?

Robert: She went out Mission Avenue to [Mission Elementary]. That's right in behind those, you know where the District Office is, and across the street from that the Administration office, and across from that is one of the schools.

Dick: Where Canyon comes up?

Robert: Yes.

Dick: Next to the Rosicrucians?

Robert: Yes. Across from the Rosicrucians. I don't remember what it was. But she rode her bike and she got to be great pals with Tom Wright. Tom Wright used to have a Chevron station right about there where, you know where they had a fish joint and it never really seemed to go. They probably took it down. But right in there, [1806 Mission Avenue] there was a Chevron station that Tom Wright had. Tom Wright was an ex-mayor and he was a good man about town. Everybody knew Tom. He was a good man. I think Tom's dead now.

Dick: Where was that first home you had here in Oceanside?

Robert: That was here. I built this place here, on borrowed money, of course. But I had some savings. So I financed it through the Bank of America.

Dick: You didn't borrow it from your dad?

Robert: No. I didn't do that. No, as a matter of fact, he wasn't about to do that because he believed that you had to earn it. He was a pretty good guy about interest on his money. If you ever borrowed any, why you paid full interest. I didn't want to borrow and pay him interest on that, too. You see, in those days, you didn't take a whole bunch of dough. When I say whole bunch of dough, I think it was 3500 bucks.

Dick: There was nothing sitting here?

Robert: No, I had it built. We designed this place.

Dick: Right as you started your law career?

Robert: No, I still lived on Nevada Street in South Oceanside. We were still paying rent when we started building our place here.

Dick: So when you came back, you first lived on South Nevada.

Robert: South Nevada, right. Then I bought this piece from Dad. Paid him 3500 bucks for the piece that I have and built this place in \_\_\_\_\_. We modified it, this was a patio and it had some kind of a covering.

Dick: You've remodeled once or twice.

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Robert: We've remodeled a couple of times.

Dick: Okay, so you came to Oceanside and you started practicing law with who?

Robert: Charles Stevens and Bill Daubney. Stevens had been working in the L.A. D.A.'s office as a prosecutor. Daubney was down here.

Dick: Stevens was an exalted ruler at the Elks Lodge. His daughter is Karen.

Robert: That's right.

Dick: She works for the city clerk in Carlsbad.

Robert: Does she? Terrific. I didn't know that.

Dick: So it was the two of them. What type of law?

Robert: Well, whatever those guys were doing.

Dick: What does a new person, a neophyte lawyer do in an office where there are two pretty experienced guys? Did you have to prove yourself?

Robert: They gave me the cases, take them down and try the cases. They didn't want to bother with them. They didn't like to do a lot of preparation. But I said, "Okay, if you guys will tell me what you can about the case, and give me whatever research you've done, I'll make up my own brief and I'll take your case and I'll handle it." So I was going down there and trying their cases. Which was fine. I didn't mind. I had been in court before and I knew when to stand and when to sit down. Then I got busy with some condemnation cases with people who I got to know down in Encinitas and Cardiff, as the freeway was going down through that area. All those people were joined in a suit to take possession of their land for the freeway. I had a guy, an excellent appraiser, that I took to court to support our level of value. He was very good.

Dick: You were representing the State?

Robert: Representing the owner. The State is represented by the Attorney General.

Dick: The two figures are never quite even at the beginning, are they?

Robert: Not hardly. No, but we had a very competent appraiser to do our work for us. As a matter of fact, one of his projects, he appraised the ocean front of California from top to bottom. That was a pretty heavy undertaking. But the guy was very good at what he did. He was in Encinitas, he was well known within the appraisal field and he commanded respect of the people in the courthouse. Even old Judge Glenn, he was in Department 6, he was a hard head. That was when we had six judges.

Dick: Where was the court?

Robert: In San Diego. We had a section for domestic only, to handle divorces, default divorces

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and I think we did adoptions here in special sessions. But not much else was done, everything else had to go to San Diego. But they finally got up here with the branch courts, so we didn't have to take everybody down there. It's better to bring a judge up here. So that's how that branch court got started over there in Vista, which is now, I don't know what they use it for, I think it's a jury lounge. It's all shut up with the new courthouse. So everything I guess is in that new courthouse building. Before that I trudged to San Diego. Of course, criminal court was down there and the presiding judge was down there.

Dick: Was Judge Cottingham down there.

Robert: No, no. He was up here. He was in municipal court. He died around that time. As a matter of fact, he would have been a terrible superior court judge because the guy was, let me tell you about him, I'd go out to lunch with him, with some of the other lawyers, he liked that. He would shoot down at least five brandies and soda while he was having his lunch. He just loved his brandy and soda. But it never phased him. I guess the guy must have been an alcoholic. But he was a shifty old guy. He knew where to buy real estate. He knew where the good buys were. He made a fortune in real estate because he knew where everything was going. He was the guy that had the dough. He had some of these guys, Chester Heltibridle, old man Shancks and old man Howe. They were all hanging onto his coattails because they were getting in on those real estate deals, too. So anyway, those old guys started buying up this town. At a time when I was screaming at my dad, saying, "why are you sitting on all that dough, why don't you buy some land." No, he wasn't about to. He certainly could have but he just didn't want to be bothered. "Gee, Pop, you could have at least got a few of those nice old properties downtown." But no, other people saw the opportunity and they bought the buildings.

Dick: Where was Stevens and Daubney located?

Robert: Well, Daubney and Stevens, when I joined them, they were in the Mason building on the corner of the Highway 101 and Third Street. Now it's called Pier View Way.

Dick: How long did you work with them?

Robert: Two years. As a matter of fact, I set up my office in 1957. So I did all their trial work and all the stuff they didn't want to do. All they wanted to do was work out.

Dick: Who all was practicing law in Oceanside?

Robert: I think that old Judge Hemmi was still practicing. Just for his little clientele that he had. We had a man by the name of ... what was the name of the guy that lived in old Melbourne's house and was kind of a little dandy and married to a gal that had a big mouth? Can't remember. He had an office, right there next to the alley, it was Shaffer and Duff and then there was a little store and then there was this little office.

Dick: How many other lawyers were there practicing at that time, did we get them all?

Robert: Well, we had Feist and Bob Knauff. And Feist's son, Skip Feist, but they came later. After I was established. I don't know where they came from. Feist had been retired military. Navy, I guess. I know Knauff was a retired colonel.

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Dick: Did you meet socially? You had a county bar association. I know you were active in that, you were president, weren't you at one time?

Robert: Yes. We took a crack at that. We had Jack Powell, a lawyer from Vista, but everybody was very pleased in the North County Lawyers to name him our first president.

Dick: President of what?

Robert: The Bar Association of North County. That was the official title. So when I talk about the Bar Association, I'm talking about Oceanside, Carlsbad, Vista area. Escondido was involved and Fallbrook. It doesn't have anything to do with the San Diego Bar, even though most of us belong to both places. I'm just trying to think of any other guys who had their shingle out. But it was later on when Nick Banche joined Daubney. Daubney had some other young man in there with him, I nice young man. Daubney is now dead and so is Knauff.

Dick: What prompted you to leave after just a couple of years?

Robert: Well, I figured that I had had enough experience and had received enough time in court of both domestic as well as civil matters. I handled quite a few condemnation suits, the condemning of land down through, I believe as far north as maybe Cardiff and Encinitas. So I felt by that time that I could stand my own ground and make a decent appearance and handle cases competently and do as well as I had seen people practice law in a courtroom. I had some I wasn't too impressed with. I knew the guys weren't prepared, boy, I liked that. Guiliani, that was the name of the guy, and it was one of the first suits that I had, and he didn't do anything. He brought one of his case books, he brought treatise on something he thought the case was about. Of course, he didn't prepare a trial brief. In those days, I was hot out of law school and I knew what they wanted. So I just followed what they wanted down. These old timers, they just came to court with a couple law books and a paper stuck in them, sort of winged it. The judge would just rip into them. They weren't prepared. When I came and I submitted my trial brief and my contentions, there was the story. It was like taking candy from a baby because the guys just didn't prepare. So when you experience that, I don't help them. I'm paid to win the case. I'm paid to advocate for my client. I did well. Of course, on the condemnation cases I did well on those because the appraiser that I was using, he did a good job. He qualified as an expert witness and he had so much to say. I was proud to have the guy there because he was well know. He knew how to handle himself in court. He was real good. I tried his son once, and he was a drunk and I'd never do that again. That was a disaster, when his dad wasn't able to come to court.

Dick: The son was not the father?

Robert: The son was a drunk. I can't deal with people like that. I didn't deal with alcohol. I mean, I did my drinking at home and I did my drinking at the parties and I did it with other lawyers, but I knew when to stop and when to come home. Some of those guys like poor old John Stanton, he became just a lush. He and his buddy that came out of there, his pal, he was also a lush. Good lawyer, keep him off the sauce. Just like with John Stanton, he's a good lawyer. He worked for me as a matter of fact for a time, but I just couldn't get him away from that booze. He'd rather go sit in a bar all night telling stories, drinking booze instead of being home taking care of himself, taking care of his family. That really got me down. There's a time to play and there's a time to work. My dad taught me that. You never mix the two. When you play, you play. When you work, that's all

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you do. I guess that's what helps. I use to fault my Dad for that, but I praise him now for it. As I said, he kept getting smarter and smarter. The older I got, all of a sudden, he was smarter!

Dick: When you got out on your own, you were pretty well grounded in condemnation and that type of litigation.

Robert: Well, yeah and domestic. The lawyer's office is usually full of the worst cases. There are so many people were up to fifty percent or better. And if you weren't out there doing your share, it's all going to fall on somebody. Well, you only handled so many cases and to prepare for so many cases, unless you're a guy like Asedo, and he limited his practice to domestic. Then he had interviewers that were so good at it, that he didn't have to interview them. He had worked out a check list of stuff that he wanted and he had trained those girls to do the pleadings correctly and Ramon, of course, over there in that domestic court everyday, till he died. What a loss to us, but he was tough. If he didn't want to pass the time--he wouldn't even speak to you. I had to make him say hello to me. But I made him do that and we got to be good friends. When he was in a jam and he needed some help, he called me and I went over there to him to help him out on either a probate or something to do with a conservatorship or with a guardianship. He wasn't doing any of that stuff. We at one time were going to buy that Andreason building, because he had the one he built on the corner of [Clementine and Pier View Way]. It's now housed by the Vista Clinic. There's a clinic in there, nice building. Ramon built that. May he rest in peace. He turned out to be a good friend, even though he scared the hell of me. He used to love that. He loved beating up young lawyers.

Dick: How long did it take to build up your clientele? Did you specialize in anything?

Robert: Well, some of the specialties turned out to be what I did the most of, certainly. So when things were kind of lean there to begin with, I was out there roping them off the sidewalk doing tax work, income tax. That became a very important thing for me because I made some nice little fees on just doing tax returns. I tried to not charge anymore than a CPA would. At the time that I made the move it seemed like a good time to be available to do tax returns and there are some people that just don't get around to doing it. Some of those, all they've got to do is a refund, but they were so inept, or they were so reticent to try to do the return themselves and maybe missed something, that they brought them to me. So I always set the fee right up front for them so they would know before they left what they were going to pay, and of course, they liked that. I always tried to that so that there was never any surprises. So many young lawyers don't know how to do that. They don't have the gumption or they don't have the thought in mind, how important that is. Whenever you go to buy something, you want to know what the price range is. I had a pretty good clientele built up. I brought Stanton in at one time, I brought an old timer in, George Stahlman. I associated with him on some water cases, water boundaries and water use cases up there in Fallbrook and Bonsall and in that wilderness area where there were so many property disputes in those little communities. They didn't have a grid, except downtown Fallbrook. It's kind of like Vista. You go to Vista and you're all over the place and you're following those old cow trails back of Vista, and San Marcos, too. You get lost up there.

Dick: I may have already asked this, but where was your first office located?

Robert: My first office was at the Mason Building with Daubney and Stevens. Then I wound up at 322 North Nevada.

Dick: That was your sole office?

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Robert: That was my sole office and my dad had his credit bureau next door. So he rented me and then he built the building. We were in a house together. There was a little house which he wanted to get rid of and so I said, "fine, I'll tell you what. I'll buy that." He said, "No, you have the house, you move it." So paid to have that little house moved. I had it put on top of five garages, where I had built an apartment house, two up, two down and a five car garage. When I built the five car garage, I built it strong enough so you could put an upper deck on it. That's where I put that house.

Dick: Where was that?

Robert: That was up on Garfield. Some of my old property ventures. That was quite an experience, learning about people being tenants. I wasn't a very good landlord because I wanted people to take care of the place as well as I would take care of it. I learned the hard way. The eternal optimist, that was me. I had some old couple, pretty heavy set and they used to really like to hump it, and by god, they were just driving that poor little bed right down into the tiles. The floors were covered with asphalt tile. I guess they were happy! They always paid the rent on time and their place was always nice and clean, but boy, they were sure wearing out the floor!

Dick: How many children do you have?

Robert: I have now, five. A daughter and four sons. I adopted at age two days, a little Puerto Rican kid from the hospital who was born to a Marine wife and they knew some clients of mine and they knew that I handled adoptions. So they said "well, could you find a place for this little Puerto Rican, he's half Puerto Rican and half whatever she was. But the Puerto Rican impregnated her, then she went back home. She was from Virginia. So she had this cute little baby. Man, he had hair clear down to his eyebrows. Full head of black hair. You see, all of our babies were blond haired. This guy had full hair.

Dick: Did you raise him?

Robert: Yes. I did. He was the kid that o.d. on us. We had to take him to juvenile court and turn him in because he was stealing from his brothers and his sister. He was taking their bank book and forging their name and taking money out of their savings. We can't have that. So he was doing grand theft. He was in bad shape and he finally wound up becoming an adult and went to Sacramento. So now he's dead, from an o.d. on heroin. It happens to all of the families. I always thought we were a little better, above the average family because we had everything. We had a good place to stay. We always had plenty of food. I made pretty good fees. So we lived well.

Dick: What kind of local organizations do you belong to? You mentioned the Kiwanis.

Robert: The Kiwanis Club, I joined that. I've got 45 years in Kiwanis. I belong to the local Bar Association from its inception.

Dick: That was the North County?

Robert: North County, correct. I've always been a member of the San Diego County Bar. Then I've been a member of the Chamber. I served as a president of the Chamber, president of Kiwanis, president of the North County Bar Association. I was the second president after Jack Powell. Then Ray Feist became [president]. He followed me. I've always been a member of that.

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Dick: Your bar association is number one in longevity. I imagine the Kiwanis are next in longevity, the 45 years?

Robert: Yes. I joined Kiwanis soon after I passed the bar. There was a man who was a dear friend who was secretary of the Kiwanis, Frank Skylar, a grand guy. He encouraged me to become a Kiwanian. I did and we've been pals. I used to deliver to him. He had avocado trees and I used to deliver the commercial fertilizer that those guys used from Shancks Supply. That's how we became friends.

Dick: Where was Shancks located?

Robert: Shancks was dead across the street in the building that houses ... Okay, the trees and the fountain that front the building for the new city hall, to us, that's a new building. That building goes all the way back to Nevada street. You drove into Shancks and drove out. So the drive-in was right opposite where those palm trees are and the pond. [307 North Coast Highway] On the corner was the Mason building, which is still there, where I started practicing law up on the second floor. There was another guy who was a lawyer who was doing nothing other ... his name was ... he was a legend in his time. Cross, Harold Cross. He was an oldtime lawyer and he got bitten by the oil bug and he got involved in oil and promoting, buying and selling oil leases. He made himself a pile of money. He never did practice law, he was too busy making money.

Dick: Did he stay in Oceanside?

Robert: Yes, he stayed. He lived our way out here. He had a beautiful daughter and she married our big shot Mexican, Reg Marron. As far as I know she's still married to Reg Marron. She was a doll. My brother Richard used to date her. Jeanine. Jeanine Cross was the gal, boy, she was a beauty. Reginald Marron, he's an old time Carlsbad family. The Osunas and the Marrons practically owned everything down there, early leaders of that community.

Dick: Who else has been there with you in the Kiwanis?

Robert: The one guy that's been there, not as long as I have is Chuck Inskip. Chuck Inskip is a retired gas company man. As a matter of fact, he's still in the same place down there on South Clementine. Good Kiwanian. His wife passed on. Somebody brings him or they take turns bringing him to Kiwanis. He doesn't drive anymore.

Dick: What about Oceanside itself. You've seen a lot of water under the bridge in Oceanside. Who impressed you over the years in city government? Has anyone impressed you? Or in the community?

Robert: Well, the movers and the shakers, I've mentioned some of those.

Dick: What about the mayor?

Robert: Probably the guy that stood out most in that job was the big guy ... I thought I'd never forget his name ... [Sklar?] The other people that were impressive to me, well I mentioned the music teacher that became a merchant. Mr. Ponzi, that's what we called him.

Dick: What do you think about Oceanside? Is it headed in the right direction?

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Robert: We have so many people who work for the city who are not local people initially. They are transplants. If you had been hired out of some other city somewhere or these flesh peddlers who look up people when the city wants something. Of those who have the responsible jobs, one guy who was the chief lifeguard, he used to be a Kiwanian, he's [Ray Duncan?]. Ray Wilcox, I used to work for him. I used to be his janitor, dump out his cigarette butts and clean his office once a week, and he had a couple of guys in with him. Ray Wilcox, he was a real estate broker and he had taken a guy on by the name of Amby Veteto, who was also a big Elk. He used to take their cards and always catch a guy now and then not having signed his card and he would really make something out of that. Amby, he was just full of himself, but he was okay. He always had a glad hand out there, always welcomed you to the Elks.

Dick: Do you think Oceanside is going to make it on redevelopment?

Robert: Well, they seem to be waiting to do something, whenever the time is ripe. But they're making inroads on that area that they've got cleaned up. They got rid of all the honky tonk bars and pretty well cleaned up the downtown area. Whether that was good, bad or indifferent, at least it changed the image of Oceanside. We used to have fights and plate glass windows knocked out. The raiders were out here, the Marine Corps Raiders were trained out here and those guys came to town and their idea was to destroy something. Because many a marine decided those big plate glass windows somebody ought to bounce a brick off them. Whatever would possess somebody to break a plate glass window? It was terrible. I think we got rid of that. We do have some of those surplus stores, we had several of those. Elm Glaser moved out and moved up to a shop up on the hill. Then when he died, or his wife did, he quit that and that was just absorbed by the building that was up there. He was one of the guys who I looked up to. He was a very friendly guy, he was good for the community. He was Jewish. His wife was a nice little person. He had his little brothers, they all looked the same. They looked like Manny, Moe and Jack and they were all about the same size! They would come up and visit Elmer and they'd go out to lunch. The Miramar restaurant was a very popular place, it's still there, but not operated. It's right across the street from that AM/PM station, on the north end, just as you come off the bridge. There's the Bridge Motel and Restaurant and right next to it is a vacant lot and then there's a bait and tackle and then there's a little motel there. I think that's where all the hookers work out of. Then the little unit on the corner, which was a gas station, I don't know what it is now.

Dick: There's an inoperable gas station there on the corner.

Robert: That's the one. That was a Texaco.

Well, I don't have anybody particularly in mind now, that I have my friends in Kiwanis. Ray Kennedy, he used to be a banker. He was a bank manager and was with the bank there kitty corner from the BofA, which is now Washington Mutual.

I served on the school board. I did that for a number of years. I think it was six years. I became great pals with the guy who we brought in for the superintendent, that was Rod Moore. There's a grand guy. He's enjoying his retirement, traveling all over the world. He lives out there in San Luis Rey, bought himself a home and he married a charming gal, Norma. She's a real sweetheart. Rod used to be known for his running. He used to run down to the beach everyday. He would do his five miles religiously, ran or shine. He's an interesting guy. From the standpoint of the schools, that would be the guy that could give you times and dates. He knows the system. He would be the guy,

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if you could catch him. He wouldn't have any axe to grind. But he's tough to catch up with.

This is to certify that I have reviewed this transcript and attest that it is true and accurate. By my witnessing the signature, I grant the Oceanside Historical Society or its designees sole right to use this material in any way and for any purpose it deems appropriate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Walwick

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witnessed

Date