

Interview with William Reid Coutts, descendant of William Bandini Coutts, nephew of Cave Johnson Coutts. John A. Daley, the interviewer. 1987

John: What is your full name?

Bill: William Reid Coutts. I was born March 4, 1906. My father was William Bandini Coutts, my mother was **LaDelle(sp) Isabelle Coutts**. Her maiden name was Veal. My grandfather was from Germany, Frankfort and he married my grandmother, she was a sister of Louis Wolfe of Temecula Valley. She was staying there and that's where she met my grandfather. They got married and they homesteaded where the Pala Mission is. Pala Mission was in ruins. So they homesteaded that and then grandfather gave it back to the church, I don't know what year it was.

John: Your grandfather Veal?

Bill: Yes ... I knew the Magee's. I knew old Bill Magee. ... They had two little cabins, kinda run down and I remodeled or cleaned them up and fixed them up. One was used as sleeping quarters and one was used as a kitchen. That's when I started spending time at Condor's Nest on weekends. That was about 1935.

John: Where was your mother born?

Bill: I think she was born in Pala. She was the oldest of seven children. The oldest boy went to New Mexico when it was still a territory. He had a store down there and he went to work. My grandfather had a store in Pala, a blacksmith shop. When he came from Germany, he and his brother, the family sent him from Germany so he wouldn't have to go into the military. So they sent him over here and he and his brother got separated in Staten Island being processed and they never heard from each other. So he spent some time there. Anyway, my grandmother told me about it, he couldn't find his brother and he wrote home and they hadn't heard anything so he came to Detroit and he stayed there, I think, four years. Then he came to California, I think San Joaquin somewhere. Now whether he knew Wolfe or not ... Wolfe was from ? They way I got it from my family was he went to work for Uncle Wolfe. I read something about Temecula and the history of Wolfe that my grandfather went into partnership, but I think that's wrong. He might have but the family never said that.

John: Was your grandmother educated there in Pala?

Bill: No, she was from Santa Barbara. She was born in Santa Barbara. I don't know how her sister met Uncle Wolfe. Her name was **Isabelle(sp)**. She was down visiting her sister, she wasn't very old. I don't know how her sister got acquainted with Louis Wolfe. But he owned practically all of Temecula Valley at one time. He was a big man there. He's buried there, and they have a monument out there for him in Temecula. There's houses going in all around there but they got a fence and put it around there to preserve it. Anyway, when they went to Pala, I think she was married when she was sixteen and they moved to Pala and homesteaded. I remember hearing her telling about they lived in a tent, this was my Grandmother and Grandfather Veal. He sold it to the Pala Indian Reservation.

John: Do you remember what year that was?

Bill: Probably about 1900. Grandmother moved to Oceanside. They never separated legal but they

weren't living together at the time of his death, but they weren't divorced. He died before I was born. He must have died around 1902 or 1903. No, it was after that because my sister was a baby. He must have died 1904 or '05, I was born in 1906. He had a cerebral hemorrhage.

John: When did your grandmother move to Oceanside?

Bill: She used to live on the bluff there for years and years. Above the Strand, close to where you were born. Down near Tyson, three houses down.

John: Is the house still there?

Bill: No. If it is, they've built around it. It was real old then when I was a kid. Bill Magee lives right behind it. One house over on Pacific. She had a restaurant there for a while.

John: Do you remember the name of it?

Bill: No ... the Veal House? Someone owned it before because there was English all around.

John: She never remarried?

Bill: No, no. She died way after he did because she was a lot younger. He must have been at least twenty years older than her.

John: How old was he when he died?

Bill: He must have been around seventy.

John: Do you recall what year she died?

Bill: Probably mid 1920's. Barbara could tell you where she was buried. Barbara Stillman. She raised Barbara. She was a Scott. Her Uncle and my **Aunt June (?)** helped raise her financially but she stayed with my grandmother on the beach down there. She's three years older than I am and I'm thirty-nine! That would make her forty-two. I'm eighty and she's eight-three.

John: Let's back up to your grandfather on your other side. No, your father.

Bill: My father was born in San Diego at the Estudillo house.

John: Why was he born there?

Bill: His mother was an Estudillo. And my grandfather, W. B. Coutts, my father's father, married her. I can remember when we walked into the Estudillo home and they were taking the tour there, Papa stopped and said to me, "That's where I was born. The room just as you go in to the right, that's where I was born." My grandfather, I'm pretty sure, was born at Guajome.

John: Now, your grandfather was Cave Coutts, Sr.'s brother?

Bill: No, he was the son.

John: He was the son of Cave Coutts, Sr.?

Bill: Yes.

John: Your grandfather's father was Col. Cave Coutts, who was married to ...?

Bill: Ysidora Bandini. Her father was Juan Bandini, he was from Peru. From Spain to Peru from Peru to up here. Anyway, my father was born in the Estudillo house in Old Town. The house is one of the museums down there. The Bandini house is a restaurant now. That's where Ysidora and Colonel Coutts met. She was on the veranda. The old story goes that she fell and he caught her. All of old Juan Bandini .. everyone said how ugly he was, I had some pictures of him, he wasn't a bad looking man. All the women, the descendants are all beautiful women. I used to pick out, in the early days when I moved to Los Angeles in 1916, I'd see them in the Society Pages and I'd say to Georgia, "I bet they're related to me." And I'd go down and read the article and they were from the Bandini family, the women, they just had that look. Even down to my brother Louis' daughter.

John: Where was your father raised? In San Diego?

Bill: See, my grandfather, he got a portion of the old ranch at San Marcos. I think Papa was out there. Colonel Coutts sent the two oldest boys back to College in Tennessee and Cave Coutts, young Cave, he took up civil engineering and my grand dad took up horticulture. And he couldn't raise a geranium, I don't think!

John: He got some property in San Marcos?

Bill: Yeah, that's where his ranch was. Anything he raised, no profit.

John: Was that all a land grant?

Bill: No, I think the land grant, the original land grant that Colonel Coutts was only 100 acres. He acquired other land around it. How, I don't know.

John: He had a store there, did you know that?

Bill: I imagine, all the ranches had stores for the surrounding area.

John: So your father was raised on the ranch at San Marcos?

Bill: Yeah, my grandfather was at San Marcos and I know Papa was there till he was a teenager. He broke his leg out there. He was riding in and caught it on the gate coming in on his horse, he was riding bareback, I think.

John: What kind of work did he do?

Bill: He had to leave school and he and Daddy ... he lost everything. I don't know how he saved something but he came to Oceanside and opened up a livery stable, the Coutts Livery Stable on Cleveland Street. You know that old brick hotel? [Traveler's Hotel] Across the street from it on the west side that's where his service stable was. I can remember when I was four years old, he got me my first horse at the livery stable. It was in a box stall and he told me to go in there and I didn't know it was there. It was a small horse and this horse ... he didn't know it was mean, but I opened the door and the horse kicked me in the stomach. So dad sold him and he got me a great big horse!

I looked like a little midget on top of him, I was small anyway. We got another inheritance from de Baker, my great-aunt on my father's side. She was Ysidora's sister. She married twice and they were both wealthy. Arcadia Bandini. Her second husband was de Baker and her first husband was Able Stearns. He was the one, for a wedding present, gave his sister and brother-in-law Guajome ranch. I always heard it was originally 100 acres but land was cheap. Colonel Coutts was an industrious man, he branched out he owned a lot of land. When he died, my great-grandmother sold some of it or lost it or borrowed on it. They always borrowed. My granddad was borrowing. He was in with the Title Insurance here in Los Angeles, he kept borrowing and borrowing. With the De Baker estate he got 103 acres right next to Calvary cemetery, that's just part of what he got. She died in 1912 and it wasn't settled until 1915, she left not will, so the nieces and nephews and heirs got it all. And that's what I'm getting money from today, from my father because she donated different pieces of land. She donated it to the government for the soldiers' home. She donated it for the home, not for them to sell. Can you get money from the government? They sold other property that didn't have clear title. I guess all together this time about twenty years ago I got some money from property she donated going through Santa Monica for the P.E. railroad and then they took the railroad out and the city of Santa Monica wanted to build a court house there. To get clear title they had to pay the heirs off. That was the first, I didn't get too much, I forget what it was now. See, my dad's share, I got. My granddad's share since he was dead would have gone to my father, his share was got down to me with four of us children. So I got a quarter of what my father would have gotten if he had been living. They want to drill for oil and she reserved the oil rights evidently, so if I live that long, I'll be in oil! She owned the whole block down in Los Angeles, the Baker block. Most of it was from her husbands. From Stearns and Baker, mostly Baker. Stearns, he owned practically all of Long Beach.

John: So your dad owned the livery stable?

Bill: My dad had to quit school. I remember him saying Papa was digging ditches to help support the family. He had the livery stable but he didn't believe in work. They never had to work, that's not the way they were raised. My dad had to go to work and the first job he ever had was digging ditches. My Uncle Will had the first barber shop. He had the first theater in Oceanside.

John: How many kids did your grandparents have?

Bill: Seven lived, nine kids, two died. Same on both sides of the family. My dad was the oldest, William Bandini. Uncle Cave was next--he was named after him but he wasn't a junior. Uncle Harry, and then my **Aunt K(?)**, she was a hunchback, and then my Aunt Ellen and my Aunt Gladys, she's still living. She's either 97 or 98. I had her baptismal record for this De Baker stuff but I gave it back to her. She's the youngest girl and then my Uncle Edgar. They're all dead but my Aunt Gladys. She lives in Lakewood. But going back to my dad, he learned the barber trade from Uncle Will Scott. He had the barber shop and then he had the first theater in Oceanside. I can remember that. It was in the old Odd Fellow's hall, I think it's down now. It was right on Tremont and Second street, right around the corner on the South side and on the corner used to be a grocery store. I think the first barber shop was up on Second street. His dad came to Oceanside and he barbered and that's where Uncle Will learned it. He married my mother's sister, my Aunt Julia and that's the property where Barbara (Scott Stillman) is living. He lived in the front house and she built a house in the rear a long time ago during the war. And when Daddy got this money, he came to Los Angeles and bought a home on Western Avenue. We moved up in 1916, he must have got some money before it was all settled, because I just read it wasn't all settled until 1915 and he came up here in 1913.

John: What kind of work did he learn to do after he was digging ditches?

Bill: Then he was a barber, then Daddy brought him up here and was supposed to have bought him a home but he didn't, that was my granddad. He just paid the down payment and put him up in business in soap. There was supposed to be a soap factory called Clean Hands, they traded it. It was good soap. I wish I had some today. They traded it for forty acres, between **Norwalk and B? park**. That was in 1917, I guess, before the war. And Pa went down there and he wasn't a farmer, the only crop he ever raised was one they had acquired. There was about five acres of sweet potatoes and the rest would probably be barley. Good standing barley. I think we were there two, three years. My eighth grade in school, I left there and graduated from St. Cecilia where I started school in Los Angeles. My granddad rented the place on Western Avenue and he moved out to the ranch, if you could call it a ranch, it was a farm. He stayed there for awhile. Then he and my grandmother came back and went back to 1517 Western Avenue, 1517 Southwestern Avenue. When they bought that house it was a dirt street, the street car coming out Pico ended at the end of Normandy. You had to walk up to the street car or go down to 16th Street, which is Venice Boulevard, and that wet car would go through there, the one that used to go to the beach.

John: Was your dad married when he came up here?

Bill: Oh sure, there were two of us, my sister and I. Came up in 1916, during the flood. Papa came up here looking for a house and we were stranded in Oceanside on account of that flood. I was born in Oceanside at home. The house is gone now, it was the old green house, clear at the end, I think it was Nevada Street, yeah, the end of Nevada Street, the north end.

John: The Green house? Was that the name of the people that owned it?

Bill: Nah, every house we lived in in Oceanside, the color of it, we called it!

Anyway, I started school there cause I can remember going from there to the old school. I've got pictures of it. The old school with the big statues on Horne Street. I used to walk there or run. They'd ring one bell and that was the one you were supposed to be there. But I wasn't usually there. I'd run up that damn hill past old Eli Jones, he had, rock was cheap I guess, they'd go to the beach and get it, he had a wall going clear around it. And I'd go by that wall ... ! And I'd make it because, boy, the old principal, Miss Dipple, she was a terror! The high school was on the second floor and the grammar school was on the first floor. The Newton family was an early family, my first teacher was Miss Newton.

John: What year did you first go to school?

Bill: 1912, I was six years old. I was in the fourth grade when I left there. It was 1916 when I left there. I started school with Oscar Gabriel, he was a dentist in Encinitas. Tuffy, they used to call him. Willie Webler, he's dead now. I think his wife is still living there, he married Fat William's wife, that's what we called him, he was fat. I can't think of her name, anyway, she had been married before. She married Fat Williams and then he died and she married Willie Webler.

Going back, I started school with Oscar, Ray McCallum. The McCallum's were an early family in Oceanside. Buster Kolb, they pronounced it Kobb. They had a nursery right over the hill there, as you go past the school down on the other side. But Jess Kolb had the first garage in Oceanside. Robert Kolb is his grandson, I believe. Going back to school, the only thing I can remember is my first day in school. It's in my memory, never will go out, went to the blackboard and they had those

erasers and the blackboard were sections. And Buster Kolb, he was next to me, and he pulled a couple of things out of his erasers and then slid it over in front of me. And even in the first grade in school, you didn't snitch on anybody. You learnt that! So, Miss Newton, she kept me in school, recess, after school. I didn't get any lickin's at school. Then my sister would take a note home probably, cause my mother would wait for me and I'd get a licking', too, and I wouldn't admit it. And I'd lick Buster everyday. After school I'd lick him every damn day trying to get him to tell and he wouldn't tell! He was the orneriest damn person, even when he got older! He was mean, I never saw him fight but ... that's what I remember about that.

I remember George Webler, that was Willie's brother, was two grades ahead of me. He used to beat me up pretty nearly every day. And Doty (George) Webler is the one Oceanside used to brag on because he went to the professional fights. Doty was just a nickname they gave him. George was his first name. I always looked at the girls I guess. I always had a girl, you know, Doty would want to take her away from me and I'd walk down the hill and I remember one time he was on top of me, beating the hell out of me, one of the teachers took him off of me. Then my dad, see, was a barber and one time, this fight I picked, and Doty was coming down the street, Second street, after Uncle Will built that barber shop there. And the theater was right along the same building, it's still there, I think, pretty sure it is. I thought, "Well, I'll pop Doty one" and my dad was stopping, and pa came out and said, "If you're going to lick him, I'm going to lick you when you get home." The only time I ever licked him! Man, that guy was ornery, even when he grew up he was ornery. Mean! I went to Escondido to see him fight one time, that's when he was on his way down. When booze and women got him. He was a good fighter, Doty was. I seen him fight a couple of times, he fought everything in the west coast, the middle west, but he was big time. But you just can't battle that booze. So I went over to Escondido and I walked in his dressing room, before Doty had this fight and he shook hands, "How are you?" and all that and all of a sudden, WHAM, took me in the kidney, just WHAM. No reason, absolutely no reason at all. A professional fighter whacking you in the kidneys, they know where to hit, you know. So I picked up something, I think it was a chair. "I'm going to brain you, you son of a bitch." He said, "Come on, can't you take anymore?" "You watch your step," I said. I always told him, "Someday I'm going to kill ya." So then another time, you know the old dances used to be over the second theater, that's the one that put Uncle Will out of business, they had the dance floor up above the theater, the Palomar, on Hill Street. They built it around 1923.

John: What was the first theater called?

Bill: Elysium. Will Scott, W. H. Scott. Then they put the new theater in and it changed, so Uncle Will couldn't get good pictures and they froze him out. But he kept the barber shop and the building. He rented the building for years to Archie Freeman and I guess Uncle Will sold the building to Archie. He had a pool hall there. I think his wife is still in Carlsbad, Charlotte.

John: How do you spell [his] name?

Bill: He fought under the name of "Battling Doty." Webler was his last name. If you looked up his records for his fight, it was "Battling Doty." He was a middleweight, I think he was a welterweight to start, but he wound up a middleweight. He wasn't very old. I didn't really hate the guy, but you get beat up every day when you're a kid ...! Claud Taylor, his dad was a truck driver, they weren't originally from Oceanside, but he was one of the young guys down there when I married Georgia, he was a friend of Georgia's. Claud Taylor and I got a bottle of bootleg and you had to hide it, so we had it hid under the old Baptist church. So Doty was on his way down then, no, I guess he was pretty well in his prime ... no, he started down, about 1922 or '23, he was probably still good but on

the way down. So he came to the dance and he wanted to know if we had a drink. I don't know what Claud told him or I told him so we went out and got the bottle, we had to hide, because kids would be around, you know, and always hung around the dance and would go hide in their cars or something and find the bottle. So we gave Doty a drink and went back up to the dance hall. You danced pretty near all the time. Every dance you had to dance with somebody, so we were rushing back. So Doty came up and asked Claud for a drink, and Claud said, "Well, you know where it is."

No, I take it back. He asked me for a drink and I told him, "Well, you know where it is, go out and have one," 'cause I had the next dance. Claud had gone out or taken somebody and somebody saw him hide it, so he had to hide it in another place. Doty came back and it wasn't there. So he was dancing ... he was hanging around ... I don't believe he was dancing, so as you walk up the head of the stairs, you walk up into this little small waiting room in the men's room and they had a desk and a settee and a library table. And he came up and started rambling and raving about hiding the bottle, so he called me a "half-breed S.B." Boy, I went clear over that table and he came up and started and went down the stairs. And he said, "Come outside." Oh, I was mad. So, if I'm going to get beat up, I'm going to hit that son-of-a-so-and-so. So Claud ... somebody told Claud that Doty had called me outside ... so they were building that garage on the corner ... Baptist church was across the street and there was some concrete block on a work bench and I backed up against this concrete block and these four square tile and I was going to hit him with and Claud come running around the corner and stood right along side of me and said, "Doty, you gotta whip us both. You are a professional fighter, take us both on." Doty wouldn't do it. So, that's the last time I ever saw Doty. I told him, "The day will come when I'm going to knock you from here to yesterday." Last I heard he was a merchant sailor, but he'd be 82, so I might not do it! But believe me, I might think about it if I see him, I really am! Maybe I won't do it made, but I'll hit him so help me, and I'll say, "There!"

Willie and I in Oceanside ... every July and Labor Day, I think, there was a couple times we'd have get-togethers, and in foot races Willie would be first. I would be second and **Eddie "Booksley(?)**, he came in third. I went to school with him but not in the first grade. His family came later, I remember. The three of us, every race. I couldn't beat Willie and Eddie couldn't beat me. One, two, three. We'd take all three prizes. And they'd have horse races on Cleveland street.

My Uncle Johnnie, he lived ... when he got married they gave him a piece of land along the San Luis Rey River, my Uncle John, my granddad's brother, my great uncle, Johnnie Coutts. When he got the money he moved to San Diego, when they got the estate from the De Bakers. He was into horses, trotters. He'd come in with his trotters, just like an old farmer, not a fancy harness on them or anything, they looked like old **plugs.(?)** I remember the horses, Tip and Sly. One was a pacer and one was a trotter. He'd run one as a pacer and one as a trotter. He'd put them in a sulky ... well those horses would change ... he wouldn't curry them or nothing. It was before I moved up here, before 1916. They'd come from San Diego and all over their trotters. Uncle Johnnie was quite a gambler and Uncle Cave had a trotter, but I don't remember him coming in. It seems like about twice a year I think they'd have it. Fourth of July was a big deal.

John: Do you remember Paul Peck?

Bill: He was with the Blade. I didn't know him personally. He bought it from Mrs. Spencer. Will Spencer was the one that had the Blade. Mrs. Spencer worked there a long time. She lived right next door to my **Aunt June (?)** I knew her kids, too. I don't think they are older than I am.

John: How old were you when you moved?

Bill: Ten years old. I went to school in Los Angeles. I graduated from **St. Cecilia(?)** and then I went to Lyola for two years and Poway for three months. High school and college combined then on 16th Street. I never graduated. My dad was a lathing contractor. I could lathe before I quit school. He came to Los Angeles, he and my Uncle Cave and they started shingling. In fact, my dad and Uncle Cave, my dad's brother, not my great Uncle Cave, they remodeled Coronado Hotel. My dad shingled it, my Uncle Cave both. He was a shingler. That was before I was born. Probably about 1900 or so. Of course, being a shingler he would lathe during some jobs for a cousin of his, who was a plastering contractor here in Los Angeles and then papa started doing his lathe and the plasterers would sublet the lathing out. Well, I learned to lathe Saturday's and worked Saturdays and holidays and when school wasn't going. When I left school I could drive 1500 and that was getting \$5.00 a thousand, seven and a half a day. That was a lot of money. My grandfolks said if I finished high school they would put me through college. You can't tell how things turn out. With a college education I probably never would have got the job with L.A. Lathing Company. I stayed home until Pa went broke, I think in 1923. Papa went broke and I had money in the Savings and Loan and I was going to buy a new Model T Ford, wasn't \$500, but I had over \$500. ... if Pa hadn't handled the financial end of it, too, he ran off with his payroll and he was doing a pretty good size church on Sunset and Alvarado. It busted Pa, so I gave him what money I had. I took \$60 and gave Pa the rest. He had to go sing for it. Ma had a fit. Anyway, I gave Pa the balance and I took \$60 and I went to Oceanside and that's where I met Georgia.

I wouldn't work. I'd hustle pool or shoot a little crap. I'd lathe when I'd go broke again! It was a probably 1922 or 1923. I lived with my Grandmother and I stayed with **Aunt June (?)** Grandmother lived on the bluff on Pacific Street about the 600 block. I lathed the Jones building there on Hill Street and Second. It's still there I guess. Jones Hardware, and the Odd Fellows had the upstairs. I lathed on that. Archie Campbell used to be a lathing contractor down in Oceanside. Georgia's dad was a plasterer. That's how come Georgia came to Oceanside, Georgia and Thelma. Georgia's mother married a guy by the name of Babby, a French-Canadian, her step-father. Georgia's maiden was Hughes. Anyway, he was a plasterer. He plastered on the building. In fact, they were plastering upstairs when I was lathing downstairs, I didn't lathe upstairs. He was a boomer. Oceanside was booming then. He was probably sent up from San Diego, he was a union plasterer. I don't think the lathers had a union. When he saw me ... he used to see me go take Georgia out, I could take her out Wednesdays and Saturdays. Not Sundays, Wednesday, Fridays or Saturdays. Sunday was a school night, I couldn't take her out. I met her at a dance at the old ... it was an old building, on Tremont, just off of Third, there was something else on the corner, north. Claud Taylor used to sweep out the theater for my aunt, that's how I first met Claud. I met him before I moved to Oceanside because I used to come down and stay with my aunt a lot, every time I got a chance. His dad was a trucker, they moved to San Diego. Anyway, I went outside and Claud came out and asked me if I'd loan him a dollar and ten cents. That's before I moved there, I was down visiting. Course, I'm flush, working all day, so I day, so I said, "Okay." I loaned him the \$1.10. And Georgia and Thelma, and another girl, all three of them ... Thelma had buck teeth and wore glasses and this other girl wasn't very good-looking, so that made Georgia stand out, I mean! And she was a good dancer. So I went over and asked her for a dance and she gave me, I forget which one, the next one was "Home Sweet Home". Well, to go back, Claud said he had somebody who wanted to get in to the dance. And Georgia was going with this, he was younger than I, Georgia was younger, too, three and a half years younger, but he didn't dance, but he probably wanted to get in to be sure to take Georgia home. I found out later that Claud borrowed this \$1.10 for Marshall Daley, his dad was a trucker, too. I found out later that that was Georgia's boyfriend. They were going to school together. The next time I met Georgia was out a Live Oak Park. We went out there, two or three of us, Dick Dickson, Jim Gibson. He's dead now. The Gibsons are

from Bonsall. You might have known his sister, she married Herb Johnson. Anyway, at the Live Oak Park they used to have a round dance floor. You'd always hear where the good music was and we'd all head for these different places. Georgia was there with **Dick's niece (?)**. Anyway, there was three of them with the mother of one of the girls. So I danced quite a bit. I rode out with ... I didn't have a car, I was still visiting, so they invited me to ride home with them and this one girl, Rich, anyway ... I asked Georgia if I could come over and asked her if she could go out. She said she could go out Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays so I made a date with her for Wednesday. Well, this Rich girl, I can't think of her name, I never asked her, I danced with her but I never asked her for a date. But she told Georgia I asked her for a date. So Georgia didn't think I was coming over Wednesday. She said, "Well, I thought you had a date with so and so." So even in those days the girls ... nothing ever changes. So I started going out with Georgia and so then I come back home and Georgia was going with **Marshall Bealy(?)** So we went to other dances and I took her out while I was down there. So then I went home and Papa went busted and I gave him my money. So I took \$60 and stayed down there until Georgia and I got married and then moved up here.

Cathy: What kind of dances did you do?

Bill: Oh, there used to be the waltz, the foxtrot. The Charleston was after we were married. Georgia could do it. I never did the Charleston and all those dances. Georgia could do it all. Well, I left Claud down there to be my ... watch my interest there, that was Georgia. I said, "Now you watch her and take care of her." And I think I took the train back down. Claud was right there at the station when I got off and he said, "I've been watching out for her." Claud liked to fight. He'd fight just to be fighting. In fact, the first time I seen Claud Taylor he was coming ... Noel Scheunemann, Noel was older, and he just beat the hell out of Claud. And Claud came up the theater there, maybe he was taking tickets, I don't know, he was just all beat up. I saw him coming across the street, beat him up by the boxcar down on the railroad tracks. And I heard him singing, "Dirty Rotten, what do you want for nothing," kind of half singing it. And I looked at him and I said, "Claud, what's the matter with you, what happened to you? Did you fall out of the car, or what did you do?" He was beat up. I took him in the barber shop and washed him up. But Claud was watching my interest. Well, we went together and when we got married, her folks were moving to Arizona and she didn't want to move to Arizona so we went up at Christmas and got married in Ventura in 1924. The 28th of December in 1924 in Ventura. She had to say she was 18 but Georgia was 15. Their great aunt left them an inheritance and the mother got so much for the two girls, jewelry, no money was left, the property was left. 15 was awfully young, because I was 18. I wouldn't have been 19 until March. Your granddad and Thelma were married four or five months before we were.

John: What was the age difference between Cookie and Georgia?

Bill: A year and two months, Cookie was older.

Cathy: How did you meet Jimmy Lawrence?

Bill: Well, Jimmy and I, he came back and went to school for a little bit in the fourth grade. They moved back to Texas. He didn't start in the first grade here. But I knew Jimmy before I went to school. I think we lived close to them at one time. Jimmy and I, we fished together, played softball together. He never played baseball, that's later, after I quit ball. He played on the Old Timer's with Cal Young, Woodie Jones, his aunt used to be Mrs. Hall, that had a big house going up Hill Street right on the Hill.

John: Did the theater have a piano and organ?

Bill: Yeah, it had a piano and they played between reels. Walter Bower was the piano player.

John: Did he play during the movie, too?

Bill: No, just in between, when they changed reels. No, I take that back, it seems like he did play on some of them. Like those serials, 'cause I can remember, you know the chase scenes, I guess he did, but the only time you'd really hear him play it was during intermission.

One time a guy came to Oceanside and they had heavy drapes ... I drove her to San Diego to get these drapes ... I drove when I was 11 and I was about 13 or 14. They had a 1923 Star, they didn't like that so in 1924 he got a 1925 Star, sport model. So anyway, we went down to where **Aunt (J)?** went in San Diego and got these beautiful drapes. They went from the front and also clear across the back. Of course in those days it probably didn't cost a lot. Well, this monkey took a pin and he given me a pin and told me to take it down and put it in this drape, to hide the pin. So I went clear down, showing off, and put the pin in this drape. Then he blind-folded himself, had a hold of my hand. I'll never forget, he snorted and raved and said, "Concentrate, concentrate." And he had a hold of my hand and I thought of everything, swimming in the Plunge everything except concentrating on where I put that pin. And finally he told the audience I wouldn't concentrate. He read other people's minds that way. I spoiled the act about him going down and getting that pin. I know that's a fact, that people can do that.

When I was at Lyola they used to have like a bull session. We didn't have gym, but they had a loft, unfinished, and we all would meet about once a month and this priest told about going to one of these séances. He tried to do all these magic stunts and all that and finally, he said, "Turn the lights on." 'Cause they do everything in the dark, and he said "There's a Catholic Priest in the house, and until he leaves I can't go on." And he told us about being at this, just to see what it was. Jesuits are pretty thorough in their education even after the sixteen years they gotta do, they still keep up on it. I know there's something to that. I've had amateurs try to hypnotise me, so it's in here. If you let yourself go, they could probably do it. I'll never forget that, they didn't know I was going to put it there.

Dr. Nichols, they was right across the street and they had their two seats reserved because they went maybe twice a week. They had the same two seat and it was just a small space in between the back row. Of course it had this big curtain and you'd walk into the ticket booth and they'd come up there and buy a ticket. It was a small chamber-like and **Aunt "J"?** on a hot day kept that door open. The old story about Nichols and Mr. Exton, Nichols was the bachelor, they lived I think with their sister up on the hill by the school on Second street and they'd walk up that street together and their motto was "Where you be, let the wind go free." And sometimes Aunt "J" would have that door open and boy, they'd have the worst stink! But my aunt, she wasn't above it either. I blamed it on her! She had a bulldog she would take it to walk home at night. Uncle Will would usually stay and help clean up and get things rearranged and he'd come home after. When the show was over, she'd go home and she'd take the dog with her. When I was there, I'd walk home with her. Mutt, he was a stinker, too. If Aunt "J" would do it, she'd blame it on the mutt and you could never tell. You could never tell if was the Mutt, Mr. Exton or Dr. Nichols! They were quite the characters, though. See, Dr. Nichols was a hunchback and he was a good friend of my Aunt, Teenie was a hunchback. Christina was her name. I think she was born in Bonsall. They lived on the hill, we called it the Exton House. It was a big two-story. Or it was the Hall house, it was a big two story and the rumor

around town was she was a Mormon and that Woodie Jones, instead of being her nephew was her son by one of her Mormon husbands. Woodie married Sybil Sparks. They are an old family, had a confectionery store on Second Street.

John: Where did you live when you married Georgia?

Bill: I came back and lived with the folks in Los Angeles and then I went to work. Papa wasn't contracting but I went to work. I went to work for a guy by the name of Pratt. I worked for him. I only really worked for two contractors, the one in L.A. and I went to work for Bob Pierce in 1937 and I retired in 1969. There were others, when I was loaned out.

During the Depression, there was no work. I went all over then, I did everything. That's when I fished with Jimmy a couple of times. I merchant sailed, we shipped out of San Francisco on the "Ecuador." Georgia stayed with Thelma. I sailed twice, I guess I was gone 69 days, two months. A buddy and I left here, he was selling real estate, by Del Ray, close to Culver City, down there where the Marina was all swamp. He was selling real estate there and the bottom dropped out earlier. We went up there in 1930. He had a new Chevrolet and he was making payments on it and I had Chrysler. I never had a new car until 1949. Course you couldn't buy one during the war, but he had a new Chevy. The payments weren't much but he didn't want to pay for them.

We drove to San Francisco, we got a room. We didn't know what part of town ... we were in a bad part of town and I had a cousin but we called her an aunt. The early people of California, the Spanish, it was a courtesy to call an older cousin "aunt" or "uncle". She was a second cousin on my mother's side. She was the daughter of Louis Wolfe. She had been married twice. So I called her and she insisted on us coming over and when I told her where we was, we're down around that mission, skid row, cheap! That's what we were looking for, we didn't have much money. So **Aunt ?** insisted we come over there and she was a chiropractor and she had a two-story house, those San Francisco houses, you know how they are, one right after another. And the basement where you park the car, a big basement. There was an attic, loft and she told us we could stay up there and we'd eat supper with her. Everyday we'd go out looking for a job, it was during Christmas time. He'd take one side of Market Street and I'd take the other. We got desperate so we hit everything, beauty parlors, anything. Millinery, everything. We said we'd go into anything. "Don't miss a door", that's how desperate we'd get.

So I had another cousin who was working in a bank, he was on my side, he was probably my second or third cousin. Frank Estudillo, he was on my grandmother's side. We had gone to the port captains and trying to get a ship out. All that time we were trying to get enough to eat on. We were eating stale cinnamon rolls. We'd only get one good meal and that was **Aunt Neddies?** and that was pretty good. Anyway, to make a long story short, went down to see Frank at the bank. I think he invited us to the house, I don't remember if we went or not, he was married to a school teacher. He gave us a letter to the port captain, I mean the General Manager of the Panama Mail. We had been down there, men were on the beach. You know the Depression, that was 1929, and this was the Christmas of 1930, so it was already rough. And they would just laugh at us and kick us off the dock practically and cuss us, cause we were college kids, cause we had suits on, we didn't look like bums. So we went to this general manager's office and he wrote a letter. He wrote about the letter that Frank Estudillo wrote to him and said, "Please place these boys if possible." He wrote on the bottom of the letter Frank had sent over and then signed his name. He wrote to the port captain, he's the one that does the ships. We went to him again and he said, "What, you're back?" I handed him the letter. Oh, he started to cuss, "I got men on the beach and you college punks ..." Harry had been to college, I never had. "All you want to do is ship out ..." Anyway, he made a big to-do over

it. So I reached in my pocket, I was the Treasurer, "Whitman and Coutts" I had three dollars and 75 cents in change. Of course we still had his car, we were still running around in it. They hadn't caught up with us yet and gas was cheap and we'd take Aunt Neddie for a ride and she'd fill the tank! Anyway, I pulled it out and I showed it to him and I said, "You got us wrong." And I said, "That's all we got. If you don't ship us the Coast Guard wants us, Harry wants to go, but I don't." I didn't want to sign up for two years. And it was for Alaska, six months in San Francisco and six months in Alaska and I didn't want no part of it, but I would've as a last resort, cause Harry was working on me. I showed him that and told him, "If you don't take us the Coast Guard will." Of course, he couldn't, it was over his head when it comes to the General Manager. He said, "Be here in three days." That \$3.75 lasted, in other words, and we shipped out and left the car with Aunt Neddie. She drove it till they came and got it. She had quite a time driving it. She had an old Cleveland. She drove it around town, she really liked it. It was a new Chevy, it was 1930. He hadn't had it too long. Nobody had new cars in the 30's, the Depression hit in 1929. Everything just stopped. Buildings, they didn't even finish them. They just stood there. Anyway, he gave us a job and after that I went down fishing with Jimmy twice.

John: There's a rumor that Jimmy brought in liquor from the water to Santa Margarita.

Bill: No, San Onofre. All Jimmy's relatives ... there was a fish camp there. They leased it from the Margarita ranch. And that's how come Jimmy got to be a fisherman. He used to go up there fishing with his uncles, he had two or three uncles.

John: Did his father fish?

Bill: No, he wasn't a fisherman. He was a painter, and that's where Jimmy started. He was a jack-of-all-trades, but fishing was his main fall-back. Jimmy was a good mechanic, too. He worked up there in San Onofre for quite a while, **County Line?**, they called it. Jimmy's main thing was fishing. That was his true love and Tom liked and tried to be a fisherman. He built a boat, put a big cadillac engine in it.

Tom was real mean to the kids. The little ones ... just couldn't get enough of the little kids, but when they'd get a little older, he'd just beat the hell out of the kids. Of course, I don't think Jimmy was afraid of him when he got older, but he had respect, you know. And Jimmy would tell him, "That thing ain't going to float, dad." Tom was the type not to listen to anybody. The boat just sunk! Tom was a pretty good carpenter, too.

Jimmy could do anything. He was a carpenter, I don't think he was too good of an electrician. He could work on cars and boats. He had an old Cadillac he used to run around in and he junked it and he put that engine in it. I think it was one of those two cylinder Cadillacs.

There were two fishermen from Carlsbad, McGarvins. They were fishermen, too. One McGarvin married Joe Stillman's sister, young Gibb McGarvin they used to go to the beach and they'd have to go through the breakers and they'd had their boat they fished out of moored out there, not much bigger than the row boats they'd take out there. So when they'd bootleg they'd bring ... they had to have some one to run the surf. McGarvin, I think, he used to work for somebody else around Carlsbad. I don't know if they brought dope in or not. Also another thing, someone got caught smuggling Chinamen. That was quite a thing. That's before Jimmy's time. But he could pull an oar second best to this Gibb McGarvin. I think Jimmy was probably better. Gibb was supposed to be the best on the coast. Jimmy was supposed to be next, but I think Jimmy was better than Gibb. They used to steal the old life boat, in the winter time they'd leave it, I don't know if the oars were in

it or Jimmy would get oars, and, we'd take the life boat out. We were dressed in clothes and we'd get those big breakers and then we'd stand up and an oar broke on him. Those breakers got a lot of power, you got jockey it this way and that. I could never stand up and row, wasn't even too good rowing the other way! The oar broke. I know, Jimmy could swim, but he had no wind, he'd tire right away. He would have drowned if I hadn't brought him in. He wouldn't have made it. No, I didn't bring him in, I kept cussing him, telling him, "You gotta make it, you gotta make it." I don't think we would have made it all with all our clothes if I hadn't kept after him. Cause he kept saying, "I can't make it, I can't make it." "Come on, you gotta make it." It wasn't too far, but it was far enough .. and those big breakers with the under tow.

So he'd run booze in. They'd bring it in below where San Onofre camp was. And they'd get so much every load. They'd run a bar boat to topside the breakers, put it in the boat, I guess. Jimmy's uncles, too, they probably had two or three skiffs. He used to make pretty good, \$50 a load. They probably brought it from Canada. They used to bring a big ship and leave it out, way out and run it in in smaller ones and then they'd get someone to run the surf. They couldn't run the surf, they'd dump it. During the bootleg days ... it started in 1918, I don't think Jimmy was married, no I guess he was. Thelma and Jimmy they lived up there, too. They had a beach house, it was a nice little house. He'd make the boats himself, put a Star motor in them. When he fished out of San Diego he had a factory made boat, one of those Jap boats, 38 foot, I think it was. When I fished with him, during lobster season, we'd fish lobsters. He set traps and we'd go keep on moving down south, sometimes as far as La Jolla. And they had two boats, Dick Bradley went in with him one year, that's the last year I fished with him. I was fishing shares, quarter shares. I was living in the old Mebach house, right by the railroad tracks, the street doesn't go through, next one past Sixth street, I think it's gone now. It was a two story house. Thelma and Jimmy were taking care of it and I think they got their rent free and I took one of the downstairs, furnished, \$8 a month. Then I moved across the street, went uppercrust. It was \$15 a month, furnished. A storm came up and they lost everything, boat, and Dick Bradley had a garage on South Oceanside, no, I don't remember the names of the streets, 1933 or 1934. They went broke.

Jimmy built another boat, a 27 foot boat and put a Star engine in it and the story goes when he was working there, you know an engine's pretty heavy ... Jimmy was powerful. He wasn't a big man, but he was powerful. He lifted that engine up. He had been working on it and he was going to put it in himself, in this boat and he worked night and day, didn't even sleep. And he got the boat out, and I was building traps. He called it the "Dolly Louise" after Dolly. The big one was "Linda", the big one in San Diego, the "Linda Lee." He was a worker.