

TAPE #6STEVE SANGUINETTI

(when were you born, Steve?)

I was born up here in 1894. Up in Irishtown. June 19, 1894. Spent all my early years here. But we moved down to Jackson; our home was down by the National Hotel, lived there quite a few a few years---after we moved up by the firehouse. Where the new road went through. You can still see the old steps. It was a dead end then, that was the last house, no road through at all. Till 1949 when they built the highway.

(Where did you go to school?)

Jackson. Went through the 9th grade.

(Were you ahead or behind John Pierovich?)

I was ahead of him, but I was in the same class as Andy. The judge. We graduated in 1910. Our good, old-fashioned teacher was John Wyley. He wanted to throw a baseball at you if you didn't behave. A real old timer. He slap ya on the head---but we were devils in those days. Ida Staff(?) was one of my classmates too. She's still living.

I guess we're the only ones left.

(What did kids do for amusement?)

Well, I used to milk cows---they had a dairy out there, ya know. I got 25 cents a day. I'd milk five or six cows, but I was only 8 or 9 years old. After I graduated I worked for Manuel ^{Silby} ~~XXXXX~~(?), he run a cigar factory here. The Elco Cigar Factory. I worked stripping the tobacco. I was learning the business and the trade at

the same time. I finally became cigar maker, and then ~~also~~ come the army. In 1917. I was drafted. I went overseas and served in the occupation in Germany. I went through and saw it all. We were a lucky outfit; got into action too. We were lucky to be in the Artillery. We really banged those Germans the last few days. We had these six inch guns...they finally surrendered.

We were such a good outfit we were picked to go in with the occupation. Oh Hell, the Germans were really good people.

We stayed there for six months and then we came back ---real glad to see the Statue of Liberty.

(What happened in school? Noonhours and recesses?)

We used to play ball and different sports we had. We had a great ball team---had a little league---we played Ione and Sutter Creek. But we never went for football.

(What happened to the cigar business?)

When I got back from the army I didn't like the job. But he was still in the business. And then prohibition came along and killed it. See, the saloons bought most of the cigars. The saloons closed up and so did Silby. Then he got sick; quit the business anyhow. He was Laurel Silby's Dad.

(Do you remember much about the old gas plant?)

Old LeTang---he had the gas plant. A lot of the people used the gas. We had electricity, but gas seemed to be cheaper. It wasn't good quality, it was made from coal. And he had to haul all that in here. God, he was a dirty man. The poor devil. How he stood it that long I don't know...well, he finally died. And the gas went out...no more gas. That was 1900...1910, God, I was six years old! It was about 1910 or 12 when he was through.

They were the good old days. Jackson was some town then---ain't like it is today. All these new people coming in---they've ruined the town. I don't know nobody down town no more. Hell, in those days everybody knew each other.

(I'm interested in the things kids were doing.)

Well, there was no work for any of the kids. Only delivering the newspaper. A little yard work, chores and things. That's all they could do until they got jobs...in the mines and things. Some of them worked on these ranches. A lot of guys went prospecting. Used to make good money in those days too. Used to prospect with the Chuma(?) family---my cousin Steve, that is. They had a big ranch by the river, ya know. When the Guinn Mine was running---Little Bar I mean---and they had a big boarding house there. Hell, there were 75 80 men working at the Guinn in them days. Old Chuma made a lot of money running that ~~boarding~~ boarding house. That's where Pearl lived, she was neighbors of them. Chulas, Sanguinettis, Sargeants, they all lived there.

(Were they placer miners or pocket hunters?)

They had mainly little tunnels, see. That's the way they worked in those days.

(How would they process their ore?)

...Who used to run the big tunnel, down on the river? I think it was the Sargeants, wasn't it? And then Caminetti finally got a hold of that property. The judge, ya know.

...They had little mills and they would crush it up, and wash it out. They were called classifiers---they's shake and the gold would go one place and the rest would run off.

(What are some of the other businesses you can remember downtown?)

The saloons---they were a big business in those days. They all made money. Course you could buy a glass of beer for five cents. Whiskey---ten cents a drink. And good whiskey too!

(They all sold the local beer, of course.)

Yeah, they had a brewery here, the John Strom Brewery. And Frank Podesta and Gamba had the soda works. Made their own sody---oh, it was nice. They made a sarsprilla that was out of this world. You don't see those kind of sodas no more.

Pete Cassinelli had the biggest grocery in those days. And Chicazolla had a big store. They about had it ~~na~~ until Safeway started to come in. Slowed the little guys up. But old Pete still had a good business---that was a wonderful store. They'd bring in all that Italian stuff, ya know, salamis and sauages and all that stuff...they even had furniture. Old Pete died in 44. And Frank Giannini just died the other day. He worked in there as a clerk.

Old Charlie Culbert had the Bank of Amador. Boy he used to squeeze the bills together! He was a good banker though. Course they had a big ranch over Amador City. Jesse McLaughlin worked in there for him. Grant McPherson, he worked there too.

His father ran the railroad out there. The Ione and Eastern they called it. McPherson was the general manager there. And Helen was one of his daughters. And there was Lloyd---he was a classmate in grammar school. I don't know if any are still living or not.

(Was the Globe Hotel going?)

Big in those days---the Globe and National.

(And the ~~XXXX~~ Model Bakery.)

Yeah. It was run by a fella name of DelPorto. He was the first in there.

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Then Pete ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~, he bought it. Then Pete got caught in the bread mixer---pulled his arm right off and killed him. While he was cleaning it some little nephew of his turned on the switch.

...the old Gugannoni Macaroni Factory, all our macaroni was made here. Right where the Tams store is, ya know.

Most everything was made here. Bread, macaroni---that's about all you ate in those days. And meat if you were loaded.

...There was Thomas' Butcher Shop, my Uncle worked in there.

Had there own slaughterhouse. Sam Bright was the first big butcher here. Thomas came in and worked for him. And Murray, he had two butcher shops here. And my father and three brothers, they had a grocery store; right where the bakery is now. Finally Del Porto from the bakery bought em out. My uncles liked to fight and my Father was right behind them. But they were good people---my Father was a wonderful man.

...Chinatown was right where Spinetti's store is. Lots of Chinamen in those days.

(When do you first remember a car coming through?)

Way back in 1910. Who had that first ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ tin lizzie?

He come here with the Ford agency---it was Heinemann! That was his name.

(Roads must have been tough on cars in those days.)

Had no paved roads. Jackson was just clay and flat rocks. Had the water wagon and used to water the street during the summer.

...Had the old Olympia Restaurant, Chinaman named Sing run it.

Had gambling there in those days. George Thomas he was the main squeeze, he run all the gambling in those days in the restaurant.

It was a lively town, wide open. The ladies were here too. Had everything the men needed. The girls never came on the streets--- only at night sometimes. That's what they ought to have today--- a regulated red light district.