



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

An interview with
Edward Franklin Reed, 1879-1953
and **Jessie R. Campbell Reed**

December 8, 1960



[MP3 Audio File](#) [Length: 00:45:01] (20.6 MB)

This interview was conducted by: Edgar F. Hastings

PREFACE

Reed, Edward Franklin

Interviewed at his residence at 921 Twentysixth Street, San Diego on December 8, 1960 by Edgar F. Hastings for the San Diego Historical Society.

Note: Such extraneous matter as the interviewer's questions and comments and material of no local interest, etc, has been omitted.

My folks came from Indiana and back there my father was in two or three different businesses - he made brick and he was also a building contractor.

Mother's brother, Will Warner, was already here in California and he wrote to my father and told him what nice weather there was out here with no cyclones, no blizzards and they kept writing back and forth and then my uncle wrote father and said, "We are having a Boom out here and you come

out here." At that time my father was walking nine miles a day back and forth to work for a dollar and a half as a carpenter, so he just picked up and came cut to San Diego. Uncle Will was building the old horse barns over on Orange and Coronado Avenue and so father worked on that for quite a while and then father sent for us to come. He had come out to California in May of 1887 and then in July he sent for mother, my sister Mamie and me. We came out on the train and it took us about five days to get here.

When we arrived he had a room for us at the old Holt Hotel - Fourteenth and Market - it was H Street then and we lived there two or three months and then we moved down to Front & G and rented - we had three straight rooms and that was during the boom and we paid thirty dollars a month. I think the old man who owned it was named MacKenzie.

I used to walk up to the old B Street School - the three little one-room, pink schools. Billy Schlitz, who ran the K Street Inn, went with us to the school.

After we lived in the three room house we lived on Ninth between Market and G - Island.

I went to the Little Sherman School on Seventeenth and H and after that I went to a private school for two or three years - an old maid lady had a private school on Fourteenth and Market. I didn't go to high school.

ROSEVILLE, EARLY DAYS

When we moved over to Roseville in 1889 I went to school over there a couple of years. I went to school with Manuel Mandruga and Ed and Ralph Warner too. Mary Hastings was teaching school over there.

When we moved over to Roseville we lived in the little old hotel right on Rosecrans Street - it was turned into a laundry afterwards. My father and Will Warner built a little store building right next to that big white two-story house where Hawkins had a grocery store - it's still there - about a block over from the Portuguese Hall. Hawkins had the grocery store downstairs and we moved in upstairs. Father and my uncle had the whole block next door and they built a store building with a straight front on it - a regular saloon with a bar and then they fenced in the rest of the block and put posts down and cut laths up over the top and put sagebrush all over the roof and made a regular beer garden and sold beer, whiskey and all sorts of alcohol. *Little Roseville*, the double-decker boat was running then over from San Diego and on Sundays it would bring two or three hundred people over there. I remember father had all sorts of entertainment - baseball games and I can remember a fellow swallowing a sword - there wasn't room for dancing though. Father did pretty good on Sundays, but all during the week there wasn't a soul going through.

There were only seven families at La Playa then and only a few Chinamen on the waterfront. I only remember one Portuguese family - the Mandruga family - but there were other families over there and the old men all had long beards. All of them had salmon boats and we used to go down when they came in with a hundred to two hundred barracuda - that was all they caught then and they had no use. for anything else. They would clean the barracuda. salt them and put up on racks to dry and then bundle them up and when they got a load they would fill the salmon boats and sail over to the steamships at the foot of Fifth Street - at the old steamship wharf - the old *Santa Rosa* and the *Corona* - and ship the fish up to San Francisco to the Chinamen. When they cleaned the fish we used to go down and get the fish eggs to eat.

SALMON BOATS

(Note: Although popularly called "Columbia River Salmon Boats" this type originated with the salmon fishermen on the Sacramento River, according to Henry Rusk of the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco. Mr. Rusk is an authority on local types of small craft in California --GFM, 3/26/61)

Every year in the summertime the Portuguese would have a race with their salmon boats - they would grease the bottoms - and would come over here in front of the steamship wharf and they would have quite a time and get in horrible arguments and whoop and holler - oh, they had a great time! The boats were all sail - they had no motors then. I don't know why they called these double boats, salmon boats, for they were more like a Monterrey boat - double enders. They were good boats and they cut the water fine. The Portuguese were good boat builders and I think some of the boats were built here.

We used to go up the canyon and get our water from a well - straight up the canyon - it was for our drinking water and was all that we had over there. Father had fixed a fifty gallon barrel with a swivel on each end with a rope on it and my sister and I would pull the barrel up the canyon. Using a bucket on the well we would fill our barrel through the bung - then put the bung back in and then we would roll the barrel back down the hill and we would steer it with the ropes and we rolled it right down to the house. It was good water. The well is fenced in now by the utility company. One day my sister and I were filling our barrel two fellows came along. There were lots of quail and rabbits over there and they had been hunting. They stopped at the well and got a drink. Later on when my sister was about nineteen years old she met David Senter Martin at a dance, and he said, "I remember you, you were the girl I met over by the well." Then they went together and were later married.

There had been two wharves in Roseville at one time. There was one wharf next to the other canyon where the street car went up McCauley Street but it had been wrecked when I went over there and very little of it was left standing. Somebody had said it was old Jorse who had built it. The other wharf was down where Canon Street comes right down and it was a nice wharf. We used to go out there fishing and catch just small fish.

Right to the right of this wharf was a big red building where they had started a nail factory, but it only ran for a few years and then they switched it over to a screen wire factory. Ed, the oldest Warner boy, was working in that factory and I was down there one time when he was running a machine making the screen wires and one of the wires flew up and hit him in the eye and it put his eye out. It didn't last very long as a screen wire factory.

I remember that over in Roseville was a boy named John Crippen, and there was Frank and Fred Jennings and they had the two white two-story houses where the school is now - that was all there was there then. The Warners lived up in the other canyon down below McCauley Street and Frewes was up in there too. Then right down between there in the valley the Foggs lived and those were the only people over in there.

The *Little Roseville* was just a pleasure boat and it made two round-trips a day - just on excursions. There weren't any lots being sold those days over in Roseville, but they were selling lots over in Ocean Beach. You could have got lots in Roseville at that time for twenty-five dollars, if you had wanted them.

Will Warner started the first cannery over there. He would put barracuda in round cans like salmon and then put in a bay leaf and then some oil and drop the cans in the great big brass kettles and boil for so many hours. I can remember being down there at the cannery and seeing him take the cans out after they had boiled - each can had a hole in the top and he would drop a little solder in that hole and then they were ready. He had tried smoking mackerel with sagebrush, but that didn't work. People didn't care for albacore and they didn't know what tuna was then, so they just had barracuda and yellowtail. We would use the albacore for bait to catch the mackerel - albacore was oily and the mackerel would come to it in the water.

The Chinamen would go out in rowboats to the jetty - there was a bar there then - and they used to get the big Pismo clams. They would load up their boats and then bring them in and bury them right there at Roseville and us kids used to go down and swipe one of them once in a while - they were the big white clams. There were only four or five Chinamen over there and they lived in little shacks right there on the waterfront. There were one or two junks but most of the junks were down at the foot of Fifth Street.

I have seen sharks over there that were fifteen or twenty feet long. They had chains out with hooks on them and they would put a fish head on the hook and would catch the shark.

There was an old man over there they called "Captain" who had a little shack right by the wharf and he used to take the backbones out of the sharks and make walking canes out of them - he had hundreds of them. I don't think the old fellow was an artist.

When we lived at Sixteenth and N Street - N is now Commercial Street - things were really dead and there was absolutely nothing doing then. My father would see a load of lumber go out and he would follow the lumber and try to get a job - Mr. Campbell was a carpenter too and he did the same thing. We paid our rent to a policeman for a while and finally he got so he wouldn't take the rent and I don't know how many years we lived there and after we moved out my aunt moved in and lived two or three years and nobody collected the rent. That old house is still standing - one house from the corner on Commercial. The owner must have just left and abandoned the house - guess they didn't want to pay the taxes on it.

My mother was a Warner and there were eleven children in her family. Aunt Rose, Aunt Kate and Aunt Ann came out and also my Uncle Charlie. He bought a lot out at Ocean Beach right up on the hill for twenty five dollars, but he didn't like it out here and so he went back to Indiana. When my grandmother and grandfather Warner decided to come out here they gave Uncle Charlie a cemetery lot in Indiana and they took the lot in Ocean Beach. My grandparents lived here until they died and a year or so after that mama went to the court house to see about the lot. She paid three dollars and a half in taxes on it and then turned around and sold it to Mr. Campbell for about three hundred fifty dollars and he built a house on it. Nick De Collier had a boom over there. There was a nice hotel at Ocean Beach and a nice hotel at Pacific Beach.

When we lived down on Sixteenth and N we had a horse and I used to herd cattle around there for Clarence Webb who had a dairy right at Sixteenth and Logan. He had about twenty-five cows and we used to take them out to Park and let them feed all day and then I would take my horse on to school and tie him up and then after school was out I would go and meet Webb and we would herd the cattle back home.

I finished the eighth grade in school and then I went to work for the Russ Lumber and Plane Mill. I went down there picking up laths at one dollar a day and finally I got in the mill and then I learned to run the machines and I have been doing that all the rest of my life.

The first machine I started on was in the beehive factory - making beehives. Then I got on a molding machine - a sticker - and made little bars for beehives five at a time. They were called a sticker because you would stick a piece of lumber in and it would come out molded. I worked there for Russ for four years.

The Englishman - Old Weldon the contractor - was building the County Hospital. Mr. Campbell knew him and so one Sunday I got Mr. Campbell to go out with me to Weldon's house on Logan Avenue and I struck him for a job. He was going to put a mill in up there. I was making two dollars and twenty-five cents over at the Russ and carpenter's wages were two dollars and fifty cents. Weldon said he would give me a job for three dollars a day and give me eight months work and so I went up there and worked for eight months. He had a mill and a gas engine and a sticker and a band saw.

From there I went down to M. A. Graham's on India and B Streets. He had a big mill - one of the first mills in San Diego. I worked there for ten years.

That was at the time when they were taking up the old wooden flume that went down B Street - it took the water down from the canyon - Cabrillo Canyon -into the Bay. The wooden flume was torn out and they put in concrete. The flume is still there too, but not very many people know it. It's a big thing when you get down to India and B. I remember it is about twenty feet deep and about twenty feet wide.

Graham had the West Coast Lumber Yard on Broadway and India and that was where he got his lumber. Then he went over and started the Western Lumber Company on the north side of Market Street and then afterwards they moved it over on the water side when he sold out to Sullivan.

LUMBER

Mexican Hardwood

I quit Graham and went to work for Frank Knowles and Mr. Campbell. They had bought about six hundred thousand feet of Mexican oak - it was from Colima, Mexico, about eight hundred miles south. A New York outfit had gone in there at Colima and put in the very best flooring machines and everything. They had to haul the lumber down out of the woods to the ocean where there was no port or anything. They had to go in there with a lighter, load the lumber on that, take it out in the ocean and transfer it to a boat to be shipped up here. Later on the Mexicans got in there and burned the whole thing up and then we couldn't get any more of that lumber. It was some of the best and prettiest flooring that you ever laid your eyes on - Mexican oak - and it was in all of the first houses in Loma Portal. Old Knowles sold it to them for sixty dollars a thousand. I started a hardwood mill with Mr. Campbell and then we made other things out of it - furniture and such as that.

I got married when I was twenty-one years old. I was working at the Russ Mill when I married Jessie Campbell. We were married at her home at 839 Front Street by Reverend Taylor of the First Presbyterian Church - he was drowned later when he fell off a boat in the Bay.

GARAGES, EARLY

My father-in-law, John Campbell, was a contractor. He built the San Diego High School. He had a shop, a mill and everything.

After working with him I went to work at Dave Campbell's Garage on First Street where Stevens Duryea is. Dave Campbell was my brother-in-law. I worked there for him about two or three years and then when the Ford Motor Company took it over I stayed and ran the Service Floor for the Ford Motor Company - it was a Branch, not an Agency - they had their own manager down here running the place. Henry Ford was here once and he went through it one Sunday, but I wasn't down there that day. After they closed it down and gave Sinclair the Agency I transferred to Detroit like a darn fool. I worked about three years in all for Ford Motor Company. I went to Detroit in 1917 when they were just signing up for the draft. I tried to get in the woodworking department, but could only get either the rear end or the motor department and so I went into the motor department: I started right down at the bottom and worked right up - picking up motors, putting them on the stands, putting in crankshafts tightening up bolts - only worked about five or ten minutes on a motor and we were putting seventy-five or eighty motors through there a day. Some Indians went back there from the Carlisle Indian School and just worked a couple of days and said it was too much a sweat shop and they left and went to join the Army. I stayed on for just about six months. If you just quit you couldn't get a job with them again, so I asked for a leave. When

I was on my way back I stopped off in Los Angeles - I knew the superintendent there on Santa Fe Avenue and I struck him for a job and he put me to work. I rented my house here and moved my family up to Los Angeles and we were there for eight months and then it was closed down during the war and we came back to San Diego.

LUMBER YARDS -- MCCORMICK'S

Then I went to work for Charles R. McCormick down by waterfront by Benson's. McCormick's was a lumber company. I worked there nine years. I started in and got carpenter's wages - eight dollars a day - and I ran the big molding machine that made all kinds of moldings and sills - it wasn't a

high speed machine because it had four heads on it and we put cutters in there to cut the different shapes of moldings. They had big matchers though - big high speed machines that could run a load of up to three thousand feet of lumber through in fifteen or twenty minutes.

BOAT BUILDING

Campbell Machine Co.

After that I went down to the Campbell Shipyard and put in a mill there for them. I went to Los Angeles and bought a lot-of big machines - they had to have them for the boat timbers. One machine could run the keels through - sixteen and eighteen feet square - and we had five or six band saws and two big band saws - forty-two inch which would tip to run the bevels on the frames. I worked there for twenty-three years running that mill at the foot of Eighth Street right on the waterfront.

TUNABOATS, FIRST IN CALIFORNIA

They had the first shop up on the Santa Fe railroad tracks and then moved down there. They built their first tuna boat - first in Southern California - for Medina - right there by the tracks. Old Man Manuel Mandruga was the designer for the tuna boats.

It was the Campbell Machine Company - George and Dave Campbell and their wives- they owned all the stock in the company. At first Dave had a little machine shop in back of his place when the Ford Motor Company took over on First Street - where the Pickwick Stage is - that's where he had the little machine shop. Dave had learned his trade down at the West Coast Engine Company - gas engines - with Sterne. Dave moved his shop down on Eighth Street on this side of the railroad tracks and Mr. Campbell built a building for him and he was there for a good many years.

Then when they started to fill in the City Dump and burned trash, tin cans and it filled up way out into the Bay, he moved out on the waterfront.

Then they started in building little fishing boats thirty-five to sixty-five feet long and then they built bigger and bigger ones. When we got the heavy machinery, we built them one hundred fifty feet long. We had keels come down that were one hundred ten feet long - keels were first shipped on boats and then some came down on the cars. The keels were so long that they were on three cars and there was a turn table on there so they could get them around the curves. During the War they built three YMS's - little patrol boats for the Navy. They were built out of oak and we bent the frames and all. I retired about 1955.

NATIONAL GUARD

I have a picture of Company A of the National Guards. A West Point graduate.

Captain Spounds was the Captain and his father, who had been in the Civil War, was a Major and my father was Master Sergeant and I was the mascot. We went up to Long Beach and established a camp there with all the California National Guard.

There wasn't a thing in Long Beach but one little shack on the water and a little drug store. I was about twelve years old then and I remember going in swimming up there. Company A was a crack company and it took all honors up the coast in drills - Jim Walker, Whetsells, Keyes, Senter Martin, and Herman Fritz - he drove an express wagon - they were all in Company A.

I remember there was a negro family here and they used to have two little burros hitched up to a little spring wagon - they made little guitars or banjos out of cigar boxes and they used to go around and sing all over the town. One of them - a little colored fellow - still belongs to the East End Gang.

I have a picture taken of the Chevalier Company No. 6- U.R. Knights of Pythias San Diego County, California Captain Spillman was the captain and my father was the first lieutenant. They were a crack drill team and they took trophies all up the coast and Yosemite Valley and all over.

During the Spanish American War Captain Spillman organized a company of National Guards and took them up to San Francisco but they never did get out of San Francisco.

Captain Spillman was a West Point graduate but he didn't stay in the Army. He and his father ran a dry goods store on Twenty-eighth and National. He had the Armory Hall built out on Twenty-eighth Street for the National Guard and they had their competitive drills in there and they also had dances on Saturday night. That old building is still there.

Reed, Mrs. Jessie Robinson Campbell

My mother and father were married in Scotland and then they went straight to Manchester, England where father was working putting up a big building.

He had learned the carpenter trade and become a contractor and he was only twenty-three years old then. My oldest brother, John C., was born in Manchester in the same house I was born in.

Father finished the job in England and we went back to Markinch, Scotland and my brother, Dave, was born in my grandmother's house there. But before he was born father had left to come to America. He went to Gainesville, Texas and had a big mill there and built houses. Dave was over three years old before dad ever saw him when mother and we three children came to America also. We were only in Gainesville a year but mother was very ill the whole time and the doctor said to father, "If you don't get her out of here, you won't have a wife very long - and it doesn't agree with your children either." The weather was so very hot there and our blood was too thick - so we were all ill. Dad said, "Where will I go?" The doctor said, "Go to San Diego." So we came to San Diego in 1887.

When we got here dad's first job was working over at Hotel del Coronado. Dad built the Buckingham Building on Second and Broadway across from the theater. Then he went over to Roseville and worked there putting in the wharf - they had a coaling station somewhere over there - and he put in all those big houses for the quarantine station - he worked for O'Brien on that. He built all those big house at the Rosecrans Fort.

FORT ROSECRANS

For years we lived on State and E Streets right across from W. W. Stewart's.

Then dad was out of work and couldn't get any work and we moved to Los Angeles for about a year or two. We didn't like it there so we coaxed them and we came back to San Diego.

Then he went into contracting - he built the Overbaugh Building on Sixth and Market - the building on the southwest corner; he built the car barns way up by Adams Avenue; he went to La Jolla and worked for Scripps and built her home; worked on the hospital and he put in that rock that is all

around the streets there. He built the La Jolla High School and then he built the San Diego High School; he built the quarry at Santee and had the rock cut and brought in. Dad passed away about 1935. Mother lived until 1951 when she was almost ninety-two.

I went to school at Middletown and then to high school when the high school was in a building down on Second and F Streets. I quit after two years and I didn't go up to the Russ. Mrs. Taylor was my teacher down there at Second and F.

We used to go to Company A dances in the Armory out on Twenty-eighth Street and also to the Armory on Second Street. The Jessops used to go with us. Armand Jessop took me home many a time and I could have gone with him if I had wanted to.

We went to picnics out at Linwood Grove and we also went to big picnics out at Lakeside - we went out by train.

TENT CITY -- PRIVATE COTTAGES AT

(Note: In the early days of Tent City, up to around 1915, the south end of the place was all privately-owned cottages, put up on land rented from the Tent City management -- GFM)

For years and years we lived over at Tent City every summer. We had our own tent and our own platform, and every year we would go over and put our tent up.

They would call us up and ask if we wanted it again for the season and every year we were pushed back a block or two and dad and the boys would have to go over and pull the flooring down to the next block. It was fifteen dollars for the season. We had to rent a tent after they stopped us from having our own tent over there, but we still went over there for a couple of years. After we were married we went over to Ocean Beach and took a tent and camped right down on the sand. I remember an old family here and it was pretty well gone, they lived down on Thirteenth or Fourteenth and near the waterfront. We called them the Saw and Hatchets. There were two brothers who used to come up every week to cut wood for mama - we burned wood in the stove to cook with. This old Saw and Hatchet would chop a great big pile of wood and if mama went out with a quarter, he wouldn't take it - that wasn't enough but if she took two dimes and a nickel or five nickels he would take them. He wouldn't go with just one piece of money. One of the brothers lived up in the County Hospital for years. There was a sister who lived with them but she wasn't as bad as the brothers. They say the reason they were crazy was because their mother and father had been brother and sister.

We used to have a Chinaman come to the door every morning with vegetables, but we didn't ever have trouble with him.

When I went to school there was just one colored girl in our whole school. Her father was the janitor in the City Water Department. This girl never came near us unless we went over to her and asked her, "Come on. Do you want to play jacks, jump rope or play ball?" Otherwise she went over and sat by herself and did her studying.

Down on Front Street there was another negro family and he was a worker in Hardy's Butcher Shop. He had a family but they were younger than I and didn't go to school when I did. In the whole of San Diego they are all the colored people that I remember then.

END OF INTERVIEW
