



## ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

An interview with  
**Mr. V. Wayne Kenaston, Jr., 1923-2005**

**February 8, 1978**

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### INTERVIEWER'S NOTE

This is an interview with Wayne Kenaston, Jr. at his home on Fair Oaks Drive Star Route, Box 100) Spring Valley, California in the morning of February 8, 1978. The subject is his father, Mr. V. Wayne Kenaston, Sr., who in the early 1930s was the Kleagle of the San Diego Klavern of the Ku Klux Klan, and other memories of this period that Mr. Kenaston would like to share with us.

Interviewed by Nancy B. Cuthbert for the San Diego Historical Society.

**NANCY B. CUTHBERT:** First of all, Mr. Kenaston, I would like you to share with us some memories of your father's background: when he was born, for example. Do you know the date of his birth?

**WAYNE KENASTON, JR.:** March of 1901 in Akron, Iowa.

**NC:** Did he go to school in Iowa?

**WK:** Yes, but at an early age his mother died and he moved with his uncle, Reuben Talbot, to a homestead in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, which is now the Headquarters of the Rosebud Indian Reservation. But in those days there were just a lot of Indians wandering around. He went to school and farmed; joined the Navy at the age of 18 or 19. He was at Great Lakes Naval Training Center and became interested in and got into early radio-transmission and receiving, code key operation-and that was his primary career during his Navy years.

**NC:** If he was 18 or 19, do you know if he joined at the time of the War in 1917--was he in during World War I, or just after World War I?

**WK:** No, as a matter of fact, I think he probably enlisted after 1918--just when I don't know. He spent most of his Navy career on the West Coast with Navy Air. He was very good with code, working with the key, and he seemed to pick it up readily. He flew F5Ls off North Island and was the radio operator on the Navy planes carrying the mail from San Diego to Long Beach. He was the radio operator on NC 6, one of the two great huge NC flying boats that Curtis made. The first four: NC 1, 2, 3 and 4 attempted to fly the Atlantic. I think one of them made it. NC 5 and 6 were here on the Pacific Coast.

In early 1922 they tried to have a Navy maneuver flying F5Ls and NC 5 and 6 to the Panama Canal, along with a whole series of destroyers and their attending ships on a military exercise. The NC 5 didn't make it and the NC 6 didn't make it--they both crashed. But I think one of the most interesting things is that his brother-in-law, Jack Dent, was a Navy radio operator also during World War I; and had several ships sunk out from under him. In the early 1920s he was on a submarine on maneuvers off San Clemente Island and my father was in a F5L on maneuvers also. They broke radio silence and my father sent his call letters to my uncle on his submarine and my uncle acknowledged back with his call letters, and that perhaps was one of the earliest transmissions of air-to-submarine communications that we know of.

He was in the Navy for the early part of the '20s. I don't know what year he was mustered out, but he went to work for a dairy and married in 1921 or '22, I believe, to my mother, Mary Pamela Dent, of Lakeside. They were married for a year and a half and I understand I was conceived on the floor of Dent's bakery in Lakeside. So I've been going to Lakeside since before I was born. He worked for a dairy, worked for the gas and electric company, which was then the San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric Company. As an electrician he helped put the red warning lights on top of the gas storage tanks. He was a telephone lineman and, I guess about 1932, got 11,000 volts in his right thumb and on his left toes, so he decided he didn't want to climb poles anymore. I think I still have his climbing irons. He went to work selling life insurance for Investors' Syndicate and then Prudential Life Insurance Company. He made a reasonable living up until the time about 1937, when the life insurance business practically broke his health. The doctor told him he didn't care if he dug ditches, but he had better get the hell out of the life insurance business. He had a debit account that he took care of in the area between Euclid and Boundary, University and El Cajon Boulevard. It apparently was a rough way to make a living.

He subsequently went to work for his brother, Lyle Kenaston, on the All-American Canal as an ironworker. He was involved in some of the labor problems of the Imperial Valley on the building of the All-American Canal on the power drops. He was subsequently involved with the Iron Workers' Union to the extent that he was elected business agent there of the Iron Workers in about 1938 or '39. We lived in Yuma for some time. He was involved in the Building Trades and Labor Council and was instrumental in the early part of World War II in training and supplying iron workers to the defense needs of the San Diego area, most particularly in the construction of the concrete ships for oil storage or whatever. He divorced my mother in 1945 at which time he was one of the last appointees of Secretary of Labor Madam Perkins as a Federal Labor Conciliator, with the Federal Mediation Service. At this time he moved to San Francisco and worked out of the San Francisco office. He became a regional director of the seven western states and later assistant regional director of the eleven western states and Alaska I guess. He retired from that service and became the head of the California State Conciliation Mediation Service, retiring from that. He is now gainfully employed, at the age of 77 come this next month, in partnership with four other men doing labor mediations and labor elections, labor disputes and that type of thing.

**NC:** He certainly is living a productive life. But let's go back now and see if you remember some other aspects of life in the late '20s or early '30s that might have encouraged him to become affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan. Did he belong... did he grow up in any church? Was he a member of a church?

**WK:** Yes, my parents were members of the Christian Church---I'm not exactly sure--I remember going to several different churches as a small child. I think perhaps a couple of my earliest recollections of Klan activities was running around the hall of the Klan building on--not Wightman, not Utah, but the first street west of Utah Street probably at Idaho Street and University Boulevard in North Park--which was the Klan Headquarters at that time, and playing with other children. If my memory serves me correctly, my mother made me a miniature Klan outfit with a little hood, which I don't remember wearing very much, but I must have worn it several times.

I do remember making a trip over old Highway 80 to the Mountain Springs Grade area for an open Klan meeting. It was a dark windswept rock-surrounded amphitheater with the burning cross and a bunch of Klansmen standing around in their white robes, which at the age of four or five didn't make much sense to me. It does come to me from hearing my father speak with another-family friend years ago. My father was also a member of the Silvergate Masonic Lodge and at one Klan meeting several of the members were also members of the Masonic bodies and accidentally gave the Masonic signs in the Klan hall, confusing the general membership, which I could understand.

So, anyway, that is about it. I hope my father at some time would feel that he would be able to share his own recollections of the Ku Klux Klan during his time. I am sorry, but he hasn't so far. Maybe he will at some time in the future.

**NC:** Probably because of the adverse publicity; although he seemed to have belonged to the Klan in the time when the supposed terror of the '20s was over and the foment of the '60s had not yet begun, and it was more of a social organization.

**WK:** Yes, I think it was quite a social type of behavior, because although--I remember my mother telling---they did distribute food baskets to the needy in the black community and do other limited charitable works of a similar kind, they did have a black singing group come in to entertain them.

**NC:** Do you remember as a small youngster hearing much that would indicate that your parents might be upset at any of the many factors that seemed to be upsetting to those of us who tend to be called "Wasps", like communists, for example---the red scare of the '20s--did you hear much about that?

**WK:** No, I think that was probably not the strong motivation, certainly not of my parents, my mother being from the South and my father being from the Mid-West, didn't seem to be strongly prejudiced in any particular direction. I do have, as a result of some of my own personal experiences, a basic hostility which has become more cemented through the years to the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and I am sure this has had its foundation in my early years listening to early conversations of my elders. I have found them to be not related to individual Catholics, but to the Roman hierarchy itself. It seemed valid then and it has become increasingly more valid.

**NC:** The one factor that seemed to unite the Klans throughout the country was this particular feeling of fear for the hierarchical effects, you know, in the Catholic Church. That brings me to another point. There was a complaint in the material that you so graciously gave the Historical Society--you know there were those forms that they had given out to the various members of the Klan and it intrigued me because one of the members complained that the Klan's political committee was really heavy with Catholic voters. And I am wondering, if, in San Diego, there were actually Catholic members of the Klan, or whether they were referring to the fact that Klan members might have voted for people that the Catholics might have liked. I couldn't understand the statement. He said, "One of the problems you are having is that your political committee is dominated by Catholic voters".

**WK:** I can't shed any light on that at all. You remember that in 1932 our home (was) on 55th Street in East San Diego. As part of the general neighborhood we were in opposition to the location of the Blessed Sacrament Church on 56th and El Cerrito. We did not want the zoning law changed, but we lost. That's when I was impressed with the power of the Roman Catholic Church over the City Planning Commission to the effect that Blessed Sacrament Church now occupies most of the property between 56th and El Cerrito and bounded on the south by El Cajon Boulevard. So several other childhood experiences .... which are not important now.

**NC:** Was there any feeling at the time, do you remember, about any racial aspects, particularly, maybe, Mexican Americans, or were there not a large number coming in at the time, or just not something you heard about?

**WK:** No, I don't believe there was---I don't recall any intimation or conversation of any basic prejudices of Orientals, or Spanish-Mexican neighbors, or any other particular ethnic group. I believe everybody was busy just trying to survive the depression. We made it through, fortunately. My father was able to work for the Gas and Electric Company during that period and selling life insurance, which nearly broke his health. The economics of the situation to a growing child, having no other frame of reference, it didn't seem to be all that bad at the time. But by today's standards it would have been pretty grim.

**NC:** What about Prohibition? I noticed in some of your material that the Klan itself was opposed to the rescinding of the Prohibition Amendment. Do you have any recollection at all of your parents' attitude toward Prohibition---or their friends' attitudes?

**WK:** Presumably, my mother was against the repeal of Prohibition, although my folks were Democrats and voted for Al Smith---I'm not sure about that, about their voting for Al Smith--but certainly for Franklin D. Roosevelt and the repeal of the 18th Amendment, because I can remember before that time some of our family friends apparently made home-brew in their basements. But I was not aware of any "rum running" or boot-legging, per se. At that age I wasn't aware of it. It doesn't mean that it didn't go on.

**NC:** It seems to be one of the things that the Klan was so opposed to---they were always chasing bootleggers---I figured that that might be the case.

**WK:** The Klan was chasing the wet-backs across the border.

**NC:** Did your dad belong to any other lodges besides the Masonic order and the Klan?

**WK:** Not that I know of. I don't believe he did. He might have joined the Elks at one time during the early '40s, but primarily he was so involved in the Labor Movement that he had little time for anything else.

**NC:** Now you said that he probably left the Gas and Electric Company around '32...

**WK:** 1932 or '33 or '34. It could have been 1934. I still have his badge from the San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric Company. As a matter of fact I don't now; I gave it to the Serra Museum last week.

**NC:** Oh, thank you for all contributions gratefully received. And then '34 is when he started working for the insurance company. About when did he get involved in the Labor Movement?

**WK:** As far as I can remember, it was about 1937. As a matter of fact, I remember spending the summer of 1937 in Yuma, Arizona. I even attended the Yuma Grammar School for a few months.

**NC:** Let's see if we can figure out, approximately, when your dad no longer was going to Klan meetings. There are indications up through 1933, say from about '30 to '33. Thinking of your age then and thinking of him in relationship to the insurance business, can you recall when that might have ended?

**WK:** No, I can't. I have no recollection of Klan picnics or going as a youth to any of their outings or anything like that; other than that I had previously mentioned. I do believe that it was kept pretty clandestine, or at least not obvious. I do remember that over on the north wall of our living room, from the time I can remember, there was a three-picture frame containing the photographs of Hiram Evans, Ted Moody and "Pop" Ayars---it might have been "Pop" Allen. Since it sat in our living room all those years, it must have had some significance to my parents, some meaning. Exactly what, I don't know.

**NC:** Do you recall any discussion at all about this group called the "tax-payers' auditing association"? There was material about that. Evidently they were opposed to the tax structure and it was couched in terms that made one think it was written by the Klan. I wonder if you had ever heard anything about that?

**WK:** None of this meant very much to an eight-or-nine-year old.

**NC:** Let's see, did you ever hear any talk at all about the 1922 incident when the-head of the Klan took off for Mexico because of stealing the funds?

**WK:** No, no mention of that, or recall at all.

**NC:** And in 1933 on Memorial Day the Young Communists League had a demonstration in San Diego and they were promptly pulled off the streets, boxed into police cars and taken away. Do you remember anything about that? Was the Klan concerned, or anything?

**WK:** I have no recall of that at all. May 30, 1933 would have been my birthday, my tenth birthday, and if my memory serves me correctly we went off on a picnic with my great aunt Fluella and my uncle George Benefiel, Uncle Reuben Talbot and other members of the family up past El Capitan Dam site. It was a beautiful area which is now covered by El Capitan Dam. I think that was about it--we usually went on picnics on Memorial Day, so I am sure if anything like that happened, that is where we were, out in the country. We did make quite a point of getting out into the country on holidays like that.

**NC:** Can you think of any other incidents at all where the Klan might have been mentioned, or any activities in which they may have taken part. Your mother evidently was a member of the auxiliary. You found some material.

**WK:** Yes, I found a copy of the Constitution of the Women's Auxiliary which I have given to the Society. I don't have any recollections, other than what I have given. I am not trying to be evasive, it is just that it was not an important part of my life. I do remember those things that I have shared, but other than those, I have no other recollections concerning my father's or my parents' activities with the Klan.

**NC:** That is important, because it evidently was not a focal point in your life, so that gives an indication of the importance of it. Before we go on to other memories that you have of your dad's activities in the Labor Movement and various things like that, just in your own opinion, give me a judgment maybe I should say, on how you pictured the Klan at that particular period---why you think your father might have been involved at all.

**WK:** Knowing my father probably much better now than I did then, I think that he now views his activities as a youthful excess and is quite defensive about it and reluctant even to discuss it, even with me, almost as if it is something he was ashamed of. And I don't know whether it is that or his

feeling of not divulging past confidences. And being a man of high integrity in holding his word, valuing his word quite highly, I would say it was more that it filled a social need, perhaps, among his fellow workers. I believe people belong to organizations because they want to and don't belong to them when they don't want to. And it is difficult for me to crawl into his mind in the early thirties for his thinking as to why he did. He being a rather gregarious well-organized individual, he likes people and functions pretty well in a situation like that. I definitely feel that his motivation was not one of outrage, anger, frustration, hostility, vengeance, fear--that type of motivation for his joining the Klan. It was just something to do and if I ever get a chance to talk with him more about it, if he will discuss his reasons, why I'll be happy to share them with you at another time.

**NC:** What about your memories now of growing up in San Diego in that particular time. What can you share with us, story wise, that you remember.

**WK:** All right. I mentioned that I was probably conceived on the floor of the Lakeside Bakery, but my parents lived in various apartments in East San Diego. One of them is still on Landis Street in North Park. When I was three, they bought a piece of property and had a house built at 4551-55th Street in East San Diego, which is still standing. That is perhaps the earliest memories I have of childhood revived by visits to the scene. I found my footprint in the wet cement of the driveway still there, and I couldn't have been more than three and a half years of age---this was in 1926. I remember our street not being paved. We had a septic tank because the sewer lines were not in at that time. It was a very small house and it was quite surrounded by sagebrush. it was three-quarters of a block north of El Cajon Boulevard, exactly a mile east of Euclid, in the area which seemed to be the terminus of the bus line. I remember if we wanted to go to town we had to walk a mile to Euclid and El Cajon to catch the bus. Then, finally, they got the old-fashioned buses coming in from La Mesa. El Cajon Boulevard was only paved two lanes in concrete. I can remember in 1923-24 that east of 55th and El Cerrito, out past College Avenue, were lemon orchards and I can remember big caterpillars tearing out trees for developing that part of the neighborhood. As a matter of fact, I used to run out there--I'd run away and watch the big tractors and I would get a pretty good beating when I got back from running away.

My first schooling was at Euclid Grammar School. We used to have to walk to Euclid, a mile. That lasted about six months, or one semester, and then we finally moved into some temporary school rooms at Andrew Jackson School, so I was in one of the first classes at Andrew Jackson Grammar School. One of my earliest friends of that day was Jack Brunner. He is now working in the insurance department of the Charles K. Fletcher Company, a part of Home Federal Savings and Loan Association. We are still good friends--that goes back about fifty years. He was my first friend. I spent several years at Andrew Jackson. My mother was taking education classes at San Diego State College when it opened in 1933, so I started going out to the College Elementary School and continued my studies there until I graduated from the sixth grade, at which time I went to Woodrow Wilson Junior High School. Of course this was during the 1935-36 Exposition at Balboa Park. It was a lot of fun to go--I had my season pass. It was a lot of fun to go to the midway and all the various exhibits.

In 1929, at the age of six, my parents took me on the *SS Harvard* on a boat trip to San Francisco. We stayed in San Francisco several days and came back on the *SS Yale*---or else we went up on the *Yale* and came back on the *Harvard*, which I suspect is more accurate. It was a pretty big thing for a six-year-old kid. I understand that later the *Yale* and the *Harvard* were both lost.

In 1931 or '32 we made a trip to Sequoia National Park camping, we had cabins, went hiking---a lot of fun with the bears for a six or seven-year-old. We lived on 55th Street until I completed my college studies in 1947. But going from Woodrow Wilson---I spent three years there--to Hoover High School, graduating from there in June of 1941, the largest class to that date. On Civic Affairs Day of 1941, as I had studied real hard and got one of the highest scores, I got first choice for the position as Port Director. On Civic Affairs Day they let the students take over City Government for a day. I had a great time with Joe Brennan, the Port Director. Major General Ralph Henry Vandeman was very kind to me and I conducted the Harbor Commission meeting. We went for a boat ride around the harbor and Joe Brennan took us for an airplane ride--my first airplane ride--from Lindbergh Field and we had lunch in the basement of the Grant Hotel and then an automobile drive around the harbor. I had always had an appreciation of our

beautiful harbor, but it was a love affair since then. I passed the entrance examination for the San Diego State College and started in there in 1941. The first semester hadn't been going very long before World War II broke out in Pearl Harbor. And I can remember rather vividly the Christmas vacation of 1941. The Army pulled in a battalion of artillery into the college elementary school, bivouacked them in the classrooms that I had attended some eight years previously, and had two 50-caliber machine guns mounted in the tower and 105 howitzers out behind the science lab building. But they were gone to another location by the time classes resumed after Christmas vacation.

**NC:** If I could interrupt you for a moment--what was your feeling as a young man. I remember those days on the East Coast but on the West Coast the invasion of Pearl Harbor and the bombing must have been doubly electrifying. Was there a lot of fear at the time that they would keep on going?

**WK:** I think fear and anger and preparation, not much panic. Let's see, Pearl Harbor was on Sunday; Monday war was declared and on Wednesday my father and I went down to a sporting goods store on 12th and Market and bought a 25/03 thousand Savage rifle and about 200 rounds of ammunition. We did quite a bit of target shooting. We were quite expecting the Japanese to land at Mission Beach or Ocean Beach and launch an assault at Mission Valley. Why they didn't I have no idea. We were certainly prepared at least to defend our homeland, if that was occasioned. I joined the Civil Defense Fire Protection Station 10---it was auxiliary firemen, Station 10 at College and El Cajon Boulevards---and I learned to handle a two-and-a-half-inch hose with other members of the community. They were undermanned at that time and were grateful for any help that could be given in answering a fire.

**NC:** Did you ever have to go out on one?

**WK:** I answered a lot of fires but only as a volunteer. Those hoses are heavy when they are full of water, and firemen need help in dragging them around. I did fight the fire of the skating rink at Marlborough and University. That was probably the biggest fire I helped fight. And numerous brush fires. I enlisted in the enlisted reserve corps in 1942, entered the service March 17, 1943, completed infantry basic training in Texas, served a year and a half, some as an aviation cadet and in the air force. Discharged in 1945, worked for Ryan Aircraft for a short period of time. I remember President Roosevelt's death. I resumed my studies at San Diego State College in the summer of 1945. I revised my course of studies from physics to social work and graduated from San Diego State College in the Class of 1947.

I worked for the Public Welfare Department for less than six months; sold vacuum cleaners for several years; worked for Kettner Boat Works as a boat builder and at various other ship yards around the Point Loma area. Bought a small fishing boat and subsequently a larger landing craft houseboat. I made my home on that until I was married in 1953. In 1954 I dove for abalone commercially off Point Loma and as far north as Anacapa Island. I really wasn't a very good abalone diver, but I didn't drown myself, or anybody else. It was interesting. My houseboat was abalone diving headquarters and I made some very good friends who are still around.

**NC:** I'm new at this aspect because I'm an East Coaster---how do you find the abalone, how do you pull it up?

**WK:** It's like hunting gophers, you have to think like a gopher. Most people could look at the bottom of the ocean and not see anything, and once when you are down there working hard you learn rather quickly what an abalone looks like under all the camouflage. I can remember Jerry Todd on the bottom when we were joy riding with him. He was working a live boat with a heavy suit and a tin pot helmet, singing away on the bottom over the intercom, and he said, "Hey, here's an octopus in here, I got him, he's got me, I got him, he's got me!" So there was lots of fun diving for abalone, but it's lots of hard work, it's a miserable way of making a living.

**NC:** What was the price in those days as compared to now?

**WK:** Not enough. So it was the end of a long cold day, very few abalone and I was at the end of my air hose, and I had the pressures of nature, and there was a large electric ray about ten feet away from me and I said, "This is it!" And I came back to the boat and I haven't been down very many times since. Anyway, I did make a several months' trip to Mexico with a friend of mine from the Point Loma area to Mexico City and we climbed on top of the Pyramid of the Sun, and as a good loyal San Diego State Aztec, I took my shirt off and worshipped the Great Sun God. Except this Mexican kept trying to sell me some artifacts and I said, "Go away, I'm worshipping the Great Sun God."

So we did then end up over in Sarasota, Florida. I think one of the most frightening experiences was coming back on the bus through Montgomery, Alabama, and I didn't get more than six seats from the bus driver. I got back on that bus and the further west I got, the happier I got.

**NC:** What scared you so in Montgomery?

**WK:** I'm a native San Diegan and they seem to function on an entirely different wave length than they do out here in San Diego. I had become aware of the southern sympathies of San Diego in my studies in history of the area and I consider myself a joining of both--not extremes---but of both influences, my mother coming from Texas and my grandfather, Samuel Offer Dent, who started from Chattanooga, Tennessee. He started a whole bunch of bakeries all the way across the South, my mother having been born in Pecos, Texas. He got out here in El Cajon and started a bakery in 1911 or '12. My mother came out in 1912 or '13. He also opened a bakery in Lakeside and I think old age overtook him about that time, so he ended out his days. He was a very fine-old man and I loved him dearly. He used to take me by the hand down to the Lakeside Depot to see the train come in. I can remember the big fire bell at the intersection of the main streets in Lakeside where they had a railroad engine driving wheel tire. It was a large iron ring and that was the fire gong for Lakeside. I understand that my half-uncle, Harold Dent, and Donny Pringle got drunk one Fourth of July and ran the fire extinguisher into Linda Lake. For years I remember going to the boat house in Lakeside. On the inside of the boat house, near the top, was a muddy mark about a foot and a half down from the peak. My mother told me many times that that was the height the flood reached in the 1916 flood. I was always impressed by that. It presumably has been painted over by now, but the boat house is still standing in Lakeside and I will always remember that.

In Junior High School I acquired a friend by the name of William M. McCarty and we are still friends---he is now an attorney. We've made various trips. One of our earliest trips was out to El Monte Peak---this was in 1945 or '46. We went across the San Diego River to a ranch, an old homestead, at the foot of El Capitan Mountain, owned by Wellington I. Hoover, who was an old man then. He is since dead and gone, but he and his wife used to buy bread from my grandfather. So I was no particular stranger to them and I enjoyed their hospitality. He had numerous tunnels looking for silver and gold veins at the foot of El Capitan. Bill McCarty and I climbed the face of El Capitan, the west face of it, and made it back down safely. We made some trips out to Borrego looking for the Lost Dutchman Mine, taking Mr. Hoover with us. He had said that as a young man out there in the early 1900s an Indian pointed out where the Lost Peg-Leg Mine was, but we did not find it. But we did have a good time. Mr. Hoover had quite a collection of ollas and other Indian artifacts. There was a Mission Mine on the property and when the Missions were closed, the Mission Fathers closed up the mine entrance. They used Indian labor to extract silver and gold from their veins. There presumably is an underground storage room of some kind or other and an entrance to a shaft where the metal was extracted. They made markings on several large boulders, and made maps of the same, so that they could find the entrance again, should the situation change.

Mr. Hoover knew of this one particular rock, a huge granite boulder, He knew that there were Spanish markings and what they represented. He spent probably fifty years out there digging on the property--patented it; it was a mine---and knew subsequently what the dangers to his homestead would be should the Catholic Church find the mine shaft and attempt to take it back over. So he blew up the rock including several of the markers. The Catholic Church hierarchy had the maps that the Franciscan Fathers had left, but they didn't know where the landmarks were. Mr. Hoover knew where



the landmarks were, but didn't have access to the-maps. The Catholic hierarchy in 1915 had a number of Alaskan miners mine the property, going all over trying to locate the entrance to the gold or silver mine, whatever it was.

**NC:** Wouldn't they have to have permission to get on his property?

**WK:** Oh, yes, he gave his permission, but they were not able to work out an agreement to mutual satisfaction, for the protection of each other, and knowing the power of the Roman Catholic Church I don't blame Mr. Wellington I. Hoover one bit. I'd blow up the markers, too. He was a fine old man and we enjoyed many wonderful hours out traipsing around the back country and mountains with him.

**NC:** Do you think he ever found the mine?

**WK:** He did find--and showed us--a silver enema syringe that the Fathers had used, and many other artifacts that they had used in their mining operations, besides Indian ollas and other things.

**NC:** What Mission? I have difficulty knowing the location.

**WK:** It would be a mine extending from the San Diego Mission. I would give reasonable credence to Mr. Hoover's story of this. It was related about 30 years ago, so you can see something might be lost in translation, but that is the general story.

**NC:** And what is the location you said: El Capitan Mountain?

**WK:** Well, it is at the foot of El Capitan Mountain, across the river from El Monte Park.

**NC:** What is there now?

**WK:** A whole bunch of holes in the ground that he dug over a period of 50 years: tunnels.

**NC:** Is it still in his family; does it still-belong to his family?

**WK:** I don't know. I see a W. I. Hoover writing letters to the Daily Californian. I have some weird ideas, but the old man Hoover was a pretty nice old guy and his wife was just charming, a charming lady.

My father is the fisherman in the family and I have my pictures of him and my mother out fishing in Sweetwater Lake in the early '20s. Some of my earliest recollections are going out to Fort Rosecrans where I would play around the piers and pilings while he would fish off the old ammunition piers out there in the early '30s. He had a fishing buddy by the name of Ed De Pillar. He and Ed used to sell life insurance together and they would take off on Saturday afternoons and we'd be all loaded up and ready to go. We'd go down to Tijuana and my father and Ed De Pillar would buy a couple of cases of beer. This was during, or immediately before or after Prohibition ---the repeal of it--and we would head south down the old Coast Highway and get down to Ensenada sometime after dark. I can remember following Ed De Pillar's old Model A Ford tail lights, seeing them bounce across the landscape, south of Ensenada to Estero Beach and they would camp at Estero Beach. By this time they had had a few beers and father and Ed would have quite a big time trying to put up the tent. By dawn would bring some hangovers, but they did enjoy fishing. There wasn't anything at Estero Beach except an old storage barn and thousands of shark carcasses. Apparently the Japanese or Chinese or Mexican fishermen would catch the sharks and cut off their fins and get their livers, and just leave the rest of the carcasses on the beach. The whole area is now somewhat built up to the

point where it is even hard to figure where we pitched our tent. Subsequently in the latter '30s we took my friend Bill McCarty with us and we camped at Point Abanda. There would no nobody around for a mile or two. We might see one other party, but usually nobody, unless some passing Mexicans. So we had the whole Point Abanda beach to ourselves and this was a very nice peaceful time and a nice time to grow up in. My parents did like to make trips. I mentioned going to Sequoia National Park at the age of six; around the harbor; on the Yale to San Francisco; and we made a number of trips to Mexico. I've been going to Baja since I was eight or nine years old and always enjoyed myself there. I still go to Mexico regularly with my friend Bill McCarty and we always make a point of not knowing where we were going, so it was always an adventure--to get away from the law business and the insurance business. We've been up on top of Pedro Martir a number of times, and to Bahia de los Angeles and that's about as far south; although we have been to Guaymas and numerous trips down there, just to get away from the pressures of society.

I remember that the brewery where my father and Ed De Pillar bought the beer was across the street from the Fronton Palace. I do remember the longest bar and at that time, in the early '30s, it was a full block long---if I remember correctly. I understand it is somewhat shorter now. It was always a friendly time and we never had any problems. Dad and Ed De Pillar in 1936 bought a 1928 Packard, put a 1929 engine in it, removed all the insides, built in storage, and drove about two-thirds way down Baja California. That was in the old days, in an old high wheel Packard. And that must have been an adventure.

**NC:** No bandits, or problems?

**WK:** No, they took .22 ammunition along to give to the policia, I guess, and were always well received. They had a good time and generally behaved themselves. I think we are fortunate to have Baja such good neighbors there. That is about all.

***END OF INTERVIEW***

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