



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

**An interview with
Phyllis Barker Burns, 1914-2008**

August 16 & 19, 1989

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PREFACE

Mrs. Burns still has the verve of a favorite child, the delight in people's doings that has always enlivened her life. Now gray-haired, her ready laugh has never left her.

She loves the bay-front house that played a large part in her growing years and is now hers. She is not really alone here; memories of family times surround her.

Fortunately she had a big adventure a few years ago that took her to New Brunswick, Canada to find her mother's family background and since then she has put together two fat scrapbooks that tell tales about the grandparents and aunts and cousins and what was going on in all the places they lived. Her grandfather, John Bass, came to San Diego in November 1869 -- two years after Father Horton bought the empty hillsides that were to become downtown San Diego, and six months after the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in May of that year.

Mrs. Burns herself was born in Coronado so she has stories to tell of her childhood there as well as the early growth of San Diego and days when she was involved in the musical scene -- soloist at the 1935 Exposition, in several churches, in Star-Light opera; director of choirs; teacher of music.

Although she had to refer to her papers to remind herself of dates, her memories of interesting times are fresh, and I'm sure, accurate. Sometimes the interviewer needed to refer to notes taken from the scrapbooks to make sure the dates were correct.

Ruth V. Held, Interviewer
August 16 and 19, 1989

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE

Interviewer's note: This interview is with Phillys Barker Burns whose grandparents came to San Diego in 1869 and who inherited this lovely bay-front home in La Playa where we are having this interview. As an outstanding soprano soloist she has been active in San Diego's musical scene and in teaching music in local schools. It is August 16, 1989 and she is being interviewed by Ruth Held of the San Diego Historical Society's Oral History program.

RUTH HELD:

Mrs. Burns, who was the first person in your family to come to San Diego?

PHILLYS BURNS:

John Bass, my grandfather, from New Brunswick, Canada.

RH: And he came here in what year?

PB: I am not sure whether he came here in 1867 or 1869. All I know for sure is that he was in the census in 1870.

RH: Father Alonzo Horton bought his property in 1867 and in 1868. I believe there were 23 people in town. In 1869 they were coming by the hundreds. How do you suppose he would have gotten here? Do you know for sure?

PB: I don't know for sure. I'd love to think that of the first people who came by train and ship there would be a list, as there was for the steamboat packets coming from Europe. Often there was a list, but as far as I know there is none.

RH: The transcontinental railroad was finished in 1869, in May, and he came in November, so he may very well have come across country by train. You never heard anything about, for instance, coming in covered wagons, or that stuff?

PB: Oh, no. I never heard, period, about his coming by train. Even then it just seems logical since it was there.

RH: What they would have done would have been to go to San Francisco and then come by steamer.

PB: Only it wasn't "they" it was he. The only way really that was safe without bandidos; no bridges and that sort of thing, so they went by ship, according to the research that I have read.

RH: And that was the steamer *Orizaba*?

PB: That was present at the time but I have no evidence.

RH: Did he buy property?

PB: Apparently he bought a lot. I have the location of it, at Fourth and K Streets where he set up a blacksmith shop. He advertised in the paper and that is in print when he was open for business.

RH: In one of your notes you said it was Fourth and F.

PB: It could be.

RH: Then they lived further uptown?

PB: It wasn't "they," it was he. Undoubtedly he lived in a boarding house because in those days there weren't many hotels and he was a working man.

RH: Imagine the size of San Diego as it had only been bought two years before. The population couldn't have been very much and there couldn't have been too many streets. However, I think in one of your notes it said that people were coming 200 at a time every time the steamer came in.

PB: This was part of California's history: boom and bust.

RH: And at the time we were so close to the old days that I guess there were still Indians up at Eighth and Date. You never heard anything from your grandfather about them?

PB: I never heard they said anything about them, no. I never saw my grandfather; he died before I was born. My grandmother was preoccupied with religion and family.

RH: What was your grandfather's business?

PB: He was a blacksmith which was a good thing to be in those days. Everybody had horses, everybody had wagons. The wagons had iron rims on the wheels and the horses had to have horseshoes.

RH: So he came alone. How did he happen to get you a grandma?

PB: He was from a town -- I've forgotten the name of it although it is in the book -- in New Brunswick which wasn't very far from Murray Corners. He went back I guess when he felt the urge or when it was time. This was a family that did go back often. Years later I have a diary of my grandmother going back to Murray Corners and the homestead. I don't know that you have seen that, but I will show it to you. But at any rate, they

were homing pigeons and they just naturally went home. He didn't live in Murray Corners but Murray Corners literally was a corner, period. The town that he was in was on the shore and perhaps more of a town.

He went back and went to a Christmas party. It seems strange to leave San Diego in the winter where it is lovely and go back to New Brunswick where it is bitterly cold. Often the space between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island where the family also had relatives was frozen solid and they went across that in a sleigh. It was scary because of course there could be floes that would break off. He did go back to New Brunswick and was there at Christmas time and at a Christmas party. It was in the homestead. I was told this by members of the family. There was a big party and, of course, the family gathered. How he happened to be invited, I don't know, but he was a young man, eligible, and probably because he had had adventures in the far west he was very much eligible. He heard my grandmother laugh. He was sitting in what would have been the front parlor. The cousins back there in the homestead said that she was laughing in what we would call the entry room. It was a big center room and the parlor was on the other side. I have pictures of the house because I was in the house and slept in the room where she slept. At any rate she was laughing and he heard her laugh and said, "Oh, there's the girl for me!" Then he met her and pursued her. I don't know on which time he went back; I just know that he selected her maybe on the spot and then they left and came here.

RH: I have a page from your notes saying that they were married on December 13, 1874.

PB: He could have gone back in 1872 or 1873 and heard her laugh, that sort of thing I don't know. At any rate, that is why he picked her.

RH: Then he brought his bride back to San Diego and at that time in 1874 Father Horton had been here five years and they probably had some good streets by then.

PB: Broadway existed as a street undoubtedly not paved or anything. Their first home that my grandmother told me about was on Broadway across from where the Broadway theater is now, up near the library.

RH: It was probably at the edge of town by then.

PB: It was probably way out but he could ride his horse to Fourth and F Streets.

RH: Did you ever hear any stories about how they got their water?

PB: No, I didn't. I am assuming there were wells; everybody had a well, but that is only a guess. I do remember being told about the flume when that came down, but that was after the 1870s.

RH: I suppose this was of a time when business was mostly in hides. You never heard any stories about the cattle ranches or any of that?

PB: One of Tom Williams' ancestors -- and this was all a part of a big family -- says he found some information that he lived out near Warner Springs, out in that area, and raised something there. This is still yet to be explored. This was a cousin and this would be after my grandfather was here. The problem is that there were several Walter Williamsses so this young man was doing this research and having a hard time finding just which one it was.

RH: Did you hear any stories about the fun they used to have, the events they used to have, or anything like that?

PB: The events were all centered around the family. That was the most important thing. My grandfather brought out one member of the family after another to settle here. There were great opportunities, apparently. My grandmother also brought one member of the family out so that eventually there was a whole passel of Besses and Murrays that settled here. So the family fun would be going up to Alpine which was an all-day journey in a wagon or carriage. I don't know whether they would have had a carriage or they would have gone by wagon. And also going to La Jolla was great sport. They had a happy time I guess, as all the happy times were family oriented.

RH: We haven't said what her name was.

PB: Thomasina Melissa Murray and she married John Bass.

RH: Do you have any idea when she would have been born? She was married in 1874.

PB: She was born in 1856. Her ancestors were traced back to Dumfries, Scotland. One of the relatives went back and tried to find out because when the first Murray came, he was already married. They left several grown older children in Dumfries, Scotland. So one of the relatives who gave me a great deal of information went back to Scotland and tried to track them down but they weren't there. The family there had died out.

RH: I want to get on to that John and Melissa Bass had some children.

PB: Yes, they had Marguerite, my oldest aunt in whose house I am presently living.

RH: It says in your scrapbook that is so full of information that she was born in 1877.

PB: I am sure if it says that, it is so

RH: Then they had another girl?

PB: Yes, Melissa Lena, and we called her Lissie. She became Mrs. Will Angier. Will Angier was an important person in San Diego when I was a child. He was an assistant superintendent of schools; also secretary of the board. There is a school named after Will Angier (Angier Elementary School).

RH: Then was your mother the next child?

PB: No. Then there was an uncle, James Murray. He never married. Then there was a John Waldo. Murray was in 1883; Waldo in 1890; then my mother was the last. Marguerite never married; we called her Peggy. When my grandfather died, I am not really certain of the causes, probably heart attack, in 1904 my grandmother was left with five children. Aunt Peg was born in 1877 so she was old enough to have been married but she never married. She helped my grandmother run like a rooming house, apparently a boarding house. I just barely remember the boarding house. By that time, and maybe my grandmother bought the property, I've never looked that up, but at that time my grandmother had a house somewhere near 20th and Broadway.

RH: Probably the house at 840 Broadway wasn't big enough.

PB: And maybe she sold it when she realized that the only way for a woman to make a living in San Diego at her age was to have a boarding house. So she had this place up on 20th and Broadway. I don't know whether the house is still there, it could be. But then eventually the one that I remember was the big house at Seventh and Beech. That's the house that apparently the picture was of, the Hamilton house. Maybe they bought directly from the Hamiltons.

RH: The family must have had some great times in those houses.

PB: It was taken for granted that the family gathered every Saturday at the big house on Seventh and Beech. Aunty Peg -- I call her that now because that is the name I wanted my children to call her. She was so indulgent to me, she never married, she never had children. She looked after my grandmother, she assisted her. She made the beds, did all the work, made all the meals. They apparently had added on to the Hamilton house. When I see the picture of when the Hamiltons lived there and when my grandmother lived there, there are obviously some additions.

Every Saturday we would gather. I am talking about the Murrays, my mother's family; my mother, my Uncle Murray and Lissie and her husband, Will Angier, and Aunty Peg. Waldo was long gone. I saw Waldo once when I was maybe about five years old. I have a picture of him with me. He left home and I've always been curious about why Waldo left home. Everybody spoke of him with great admiration. He was so bright and so industrious. Whatever happened to him and why did he leave home at apparently a young age and why did he never come back? I finally found the answer to that. I finally looked up his death certificate and he died in San Francisco in a Veterans Hospital, which is another interesting story. When World War I came he was apparently, until that time, coming down regularly.

Just what he did as work, on his death certificate he was listed as a longshoreman. That means he must have been tall, I should think, and be strong. My mother was short. My aunts were both taller. My grandfather, therefore, being a blacksmith, probably was taller. I would love to know more about my Uncle Waldo. I went up to San Francisco and tried to look it up and again I was just within months of being too late. The house which was sort of a rental where he had a room on Market Street had been torn down within the last few years and great huge high rises were there. I tried to get information from the Veterans Hospital as to his health history and so forth. Of course, the death certificate says what he died of but why he was in a Veterans Hospital is interesting and has to do with why he never came back after I was older.

He probably went up to seek his fortune in San Francisco. San Diego may have been in a low period. He probably went up as a 15- or 16-year old fellow and worked. When the war came in 1914, in 1917 we became involved he did not volunteer. He was a bachelor and my Aunt Lissie whom I greatly admired, loved and respected forever and ever, dressed him down for not either volunteering or going into the draft. Actually, he was drafted but became a conscientious objector.

RH: Oh, they had them then?

PB: They had them then, but they were not respected. Nowadays a conscientious objector has a religious reason, or there is something noble about being a conscientious objector, which takes the sting off. But in those days he was put in the brig and he was in the brig until perhaps the end of the war. He had signed the paper and then he was a part of the Army, but refused to serve. He served his time in the brig, but died in the Veterans Hospital, which I find most interesting.

RH: What about Aunty Peg. Here she was keeping this house . . .

PB: Can I go back just one second to the family gatherings? My uncle had a fairly prominent position. He was the most important person in our family, Will Angier. Everybody consulted him on business. He was a wonderful, wonderful loving man. He was the most important, the big person in

my life always. He would go to the University Club and play billiards. He always won and with his winnings he'd buy candy which was distributed to all the members of the family, which was a great treat. I remember certain kinds of candy which he always got for me because he knew I loved that kind, or silk stockings. He belonged to this group, oh, I've forgotten the name. Allen Sutherland had recently died and he was the youngest member of this what would have been the Mensa. My uncle was one of the senior members of that. They wrote a paper once or twice a year, a worthy scholarly type paper not reminiscences but a scholarly type with study involved.

Then we would have a big dinner and Aunt Peg would have prepared this huge meal. She made the most wonderful pound cake with a pound of butter. I can almost taste it today. The texture was perfect. Her roast beef gravy, how she could have gotten that wonderful flavor without any of the spices that we buy in little packages now, I don't know. She was a supremely marvelous cook. Her mashed potatoes were real. I remember her peeling tomatoes. Tomatoes had recently become acceptable. They were kind of poison apples earlier.

RH: Oh, I didn't know it was that late.

PB: This was mentioned, and they were a treat. Aunt Peg would stand there and peel them and pop the core when she sliced them, or cut them in portions, she would pop the core in her mouth and just delight in the flavor.

RH: I suppose she bought the meat from Hardy's meat market?

PB: Oh, of course. We went down to Hardy's. I often went on excursions with her shopping. We went to Hamilton's. There is nothing in the world that compares with Hamilton's, excepting maybe Portnum & Mason in London. And Aunt Peg always bought the best of everything. This was with grandma's money.

RH: Grandma did all right with her boarding house?

PB: Grandma was generous. Yes, that's another story, too, how well she did. Aunt Peg always bought first, number one quality coffee, number one quality tea, the best peaches, the best breads. This was her only pleasure, the only thing that she did. I must mention the money that went overhead along little rattling long wires, the little tiny boxes that you could see the money through. Upstairs in the balcony was the cashier. I've often wondered if Hamilton's had little departments because the money went up from different places. That was done usually Saturday morning. Aunt Peg must have spent all day cooking, but she took me to the Savoy Theater every Saturday for years and years. This was her one joy, her one contact with the world really. She was an ardent Christian Scientist; so was my grandmother.

My grandmother would go to Christian Science lectures, but Aunt Peg never mingled; she never went to church services; she was an adamant, ardent, hard-nosed Christian Scientist.

RH: And at the end of her life she was living in this little house?

PB: My grandmother eventually rented out the big house. I didn't know it was rented, I just knew that it was gone, we weren't there anymore. She bought what they called flats. It was off Seventh and Beech, 1466 Seventh Street. This had a flat downstairs. The land sloped down. There was an apartment down below which was rented then at the street level where grandma, Murray and Aunt Peg lived. Then there was a flat up above which was rented so that grandma was still making money off of rentals. Then when grandma died, Murray died very shortly close to grandma's death, I forget now which came first, although it is there in the book. When grandma died Aunt Peg came over to live with Lissie whose husband had died, Will Angier died. There was about 20 years difference in their ages. That is another long story. They had an idyllic marriage.

RH: That was this house next door.

PB: That is the house, 555, which was almost the first home built on the Point. They owned 100 feet or more out into what is now the bay. But that is the way the lots were sold in those days.

RH: That must have been about 1912?

PB: The only way that that house, which was a wonderful house, looked like it belonged on the Mediterranean. It should never have been torn down; neither should have my grandmother's house. They both were just too wonderful to be destroyed. That house had a Mediterranean style, tile-type roof. I have pictures of it also there. It was a big house with a wide terrace and a wonderful garden which Auntie worked. She was a teacher, she had a teacher's certificate. Actually, that is how she met Will. He was the principal of Lincoln Elementary school.

Lissie apparently went in as a substitute to teach and so when Will went in to observe, a romance began. He had been married before. His wife had died and he had three children. Aunt Lissie married him and they lived very happily. They lived up around Date Street, Elm or Fir, maybe around 4th Avenue or 3rd. That is where she first went to live. His children eventually were married. But the last year or so of their life with their father was over here at 555 San Antonio, which as I said was one of the earliest homes on the Point. There were fishermen's shacks. They had 175 feet along the front of the bay. The house was built of hollow tile, which was probably standard for the day. The only way to get hollow tile over to this end of Point Loma was by wagon. But you couldn't take it by wagon because in those days what is now Harbor Drive was under water at high tide. The San Diego River was still coming through. Even at low tide with the hollow tile which is heavy the wagons would sink down. So the hollow tile was floated over on a barge.

There was a pier. I remember the pier very well. whether the pier was there when they moved, I don't know. In those days, up until the time that I was going to college there were fishing boats out here. They tied their skiffs up on the Angier pier. Probably fishermen built that pier, or else Uncle Will built the pier in order to get the hollow tile landed. But as a child I remember the fishing boats anchored right out here in the bay, tied up their skiffs at their pier which was theirs as it ended up in their property. The fishermen had the privilege of walking through their yard and going out the gate, but they almost always left a fish or a lobster on glorious days when they came through.

I also was given the privilege of rowing their skiffs. I could borrow a skiff with oars, or I think uncle always had an extra pair of oars. Now when uncle died -- it had to be after 1936 or 1938 -- it was before the income tax was passed. I don't believe he ever paid a federal income tax. (At that time State employees did not pay a Federal income tax.) I remember that discussion going on. Uncle was a wise provider. At some point 555 San Antonio was divided and there was an apartment up above.

In my day as a small child, Carrie Angier Moses -- she married Brigadier General Emile Moses -- a wonderful lady. They are another part of Uncle Will's family. He was stationed here in San Diego. Actually, Carrie, my cousin Carrie, gave me a wedding shower when they were stationed at the Marine Base. They had quarters there. I don't know whether he was in command of the base, but he was eventually. Before he died his last duty was during the war and he was in command at Perris Island.

RH: Carrie was Will Angier's daughter?

PB: His only and beloved daughter. He wrote to Carrie a letter every week on Sunday, every Sunday, that is what he did, wrote her a letter. And she wrote back. They were stationed all over the world: the Philippines, China, Peking, Shanghai.

RH: Carrie was a girl when he moved into this house? Were there any special things for her?

PB: I think she was probably being courted by that time. They played tennis. My uncle was quite athletic. When he lived over in downtown they had a tennis court, or access to a tennis court. He and his daughter played tennis. The sons also became interesting people. I know Carrie lived here for a while during the war. Actually, in the upper part they put a kitchen in. Then also General Moses served when he was a young lieutenant in Nicaragua.

RH: This was the second World War?

PB: No, no, Nicaragua . . . we are talking about the first World War. The house was built before World War I.

RH: What were the names of Angier's sons?

PB: One of them was Harold, he was the oldest one. His final job and he was in charge -- now that is my impression -- of the Bank of Italy branches in Spain. Now, of course, it is the Bank of America. They had a house on the Point also, closer to the Fort, on Kellogg Street. Then, eventually, he built this lovely house on Owen Street and San Antonio which is all Spanish style. He brought back wonderful treasures from Spain.

RH: I note by your little booklet that he was born in 1888. There was another son born in 1890.

PB: His name was Corlies, a French spelling. And I was going to say, Peggy came over when grandma died. Lissie said she could come over here and live with her. Interestingly enough, the apartment that had been created out of the top level . . . You see there was a kitchen that had been put in there for Carrie which made it kind of a little suite. I remember before it became an apartment every weekend I came over and spent here. Uncle and Auntie would take me to the opera, or to a play, or to a ballet, or do something wonderful. Then we would always go to Ingersoll's for chocolate parfait. They were fantastic. I had a fantastic childhood. Before we went to bed Friday night, Auntie would wind down the bread dough because she made homemade bread for Uncle. They were both too heavy, but they dearly loved homemade bread. Auntie was also a fabulous cook and I'd get to wind down in this great big bucket the bread so it could rise through the night for the next morning. I did sleep upstairs in what they called a Murphy bed that came down. That room had a little wash basin of its own. No toilet there, but a wash basin.

Uncle took a shower every morning. Their big bathroom was on the bay side, a nice lovely room. Also there was a sun porch where I also slept sometimes. There were lots of rooms for me to choose from. Then in the morning early because Uncle was an early riser and diligent, energetic, a lively man, brilliant, when he took a shower you could hear him yell when the cold water hit. I don't think he ever had a hot shower in his life, not because he couldn't have, but because this was his discipline.

Another one of his disciplines, I am thinking that it was wonderful, he always had a huge big dictionary, one of the great big enormous dictionaries. He always found three words that he had never seen before and he used them three times in conversation that day.

RH: He must have been related to Bill Buckley.

PB: I don't know about Bill Buckley but he found out about it from my uncle. Uncle had never graduated from high school, he was a self-taught man. He became assistant superintendent and a principal before that.

RH: I am trying to get you to say whether you went swimming?

PB: Oh, always, of course, I still do. Uncle went swimming some. We went off the pier usually, because there was grass there at that time at low tide. It was slimy and I didn't want to touch it. Of course we always went swimming. After grandma died then the family gatherings were over here on San Antonio. Auntie had a dozen Haviland china, everything included, bouillon cups . . . She was a wonderful entertainer, a wonderful hostess, and so was uncle. He always made a little poem for everybody, a place card; always had a cute, clever amusing poem for everybody for every Christmas and always on Fourth of July. We continued to have family gatherings there I guess as long as Lissie lived, potluck-type things.

RH: Nowadays you look over there and there is Shelter Island, Kona Kai Club. Did you have any adventures at low tide, with the tide going out, getting stuck out there?

PB: I went out there before the Southwestern (Yacht Club) was out there. This was just a slough, there were the most interesting kinds of, well, they looked like worms. They stuck up like sticks the size of the lead in a lead pencil at low tide and they felt squelchy, good and warm. You could pick those up and pull them out. Of course the game was that you had with yourself, could you get the entire animal out because below the wooden part it calcified apparently. The hot pink flesh was down below like a worm and it was straight. But you could never get the whole thing out. Yes, there were crabs and all kinds of wonderful things. There was a man, Henry Gunther, who taught swimming at the foot of McCall's beach.

RH: This was later when he was teaching over at the foot of McCall's, wasn't it?

PB: I didn't study with him but I remember starting from that point. My father had a skiff and I was going to swim to North Island because there was no Shelter Island in those days, it was just a slough. I didn't quite make it. The tides were very strong. That was one of the wonderful things about swimming here. Every time a big boat went out the channel there were wonderful waves, you'd just go up and down. I always thought that was a great thing to look forward to. And, of course, the boats were going back and forth all the time.

RH: You still haven't told me if you ever got hung up at low tide on those sand bars.

PB: No. When the tide changed it was so strong that it was very scary to get back. I should say that sometimes when I was young I had the skiff and I was out rowing as I did every weekend that I was here and a seal jumped into my skiff. That was very scary; I probably screamed but I also bumped him over the head with the oar and he jumped out. There were seals in the bay then.

RH: Before we leave that part of your family, let's find out where they came from? John Bass' father came from England?

PB: John Bass' father or grandfather came from London, England. He was a hat and pelisse maker. Unfortunately, I don't know where the sign is, but there was a sign and it was in New Brunswick. Maybe if I go back sometime I can track that down, but they had the very sign that was on the great, great grandfather's shop in London. Wouldn't that be wonderful to have?

The Murray clan came from Scotland, Dumfries, which is in Dumfriesshire. They left several grown children there who didn't wish to come to Canada to make a new start. My grandmother's grandfather, or great grandfather, (a Murray) I've forgotten which, was born and shared the same crib with the person he later married. This was a family he didn't know, the Dobsons. Here she was very pregnant getting off in a storm in the winter.

RH: And was the baby born on the ship?

PB: I think the baby was born on shore. People took people in in those days. The Dobsons took the Murrays in and they may not have known them at all. The ship landed and it had a cargo and passengers who were going to settle in New Brunswick. It must have been very primitive. The road from

Murray Corners, when I finally found it, it is not on any map, not even on truck drivers' maps, was called Emigrants' Road. I have a photostat of that map that shows Emigrants' Road and the Murray, Murray, Murrays who lived right along that road. The Besses lived right close by, Bay Field, I think was the name of the town.

RH: So that your grandmother, Thomasina Melissa (Lissie) Murray, who was born in 1854 in New Brunswick, her father's father was the one who came from Scotland. Her father's name was James Murray and he was the one who was a baby when they landed in 1817.

PB: Yes, John was the original one. He was born in 1763, died in 1825; James was born in 1817 on Christmas Day. He eventually married Mary Dobson in whose crib he had rested when he was first born. They called him "rocked in the cradle of the deep." He was the first one born in Canada of the clan, and that was in 1817.

RH: It must have been a wilderness at the time.

PB: Yes.

RH: So here they were in the wilderness and they must have tamed it, took down trees.

PB: I don't know how much taming was necessary. I've been in New Brunswick and there is a lot of meadow land. Undoubtedly there were trees to be cut down. When I was there this cousin of mine in her eighties another wonderful person -- I picked her brains and asked her how they made money, how the grandfather had made a living. He had a farm and she made pin money by selling eggs and butter. I said, "How did you get butter?" I had made butter in World War II on cream once or twice and it came out cream colored. "So how did you get it so that it was the color of butter?" I asked, and she said, "We either put carrots in the whey or then eventually there came a powder which you could buy." Like remember the margarine that we had during World War II?

RH: So then they must have had some cows.

PB: Oh, yes, and horses and fields of wheat, probably. I guess the winters are long in New Brunswick. I didn't see any evidence when I was there of agriculture during World War II times. They raised foxes and that was a thriving industry but that would not have been my grandparents. He was a farmer and probably raised. oats, and maybe some subsistence kinds of things.

RH: Now let's get down to your own mother. We've talked about your aunts and your grandmother. Your mother was the youngest daughter named Gladys Louise, born about 1893. She married your father, Phillip Barker, here. His name was Phillip and your name is Phillys.

PB: From Gladys.

RH: Oh, from Phil and Gladys.

PB: They had three children; I was the first (born December 21, 1914) and then my sister was born eight years later, Beverly, born September 27, 1922. She was called Beverly but my mother said she could choose her own name and she chose the name Joy when she was about a year and a half old. My second sister was named Helene Delight, born July 27, 1924. Helene was a variance from the name Helen on my father's side. Delight, I guess my mother chose. My older young sister is now named. Mrs. Robert Rossman (Beverly) and they live in the foothills of the Gold Rush country. They did live for a long time in Redwood City near San Francisco. She retired after doing some secretarial work with Sears, Roebuck Company. He

sold things for a steel company. He graduated from San Luis Obispo (Cal-Poly) with an animal husbandry major but never became a farmer, never raised dogs. That is why he wanted a horse, I guess. They have two children. A son has a very fine job in San Jose in the Anderson accounting firm which is the biggest accountant firm in the world. The other son, I don't know exactly what he does but he lives in the Santa Cruz area.

The other sister has four boys. She married first a fellow, Jerry, who was killed almost crack out of the box in World War II in an airplane over the Philippines. My sister always, at least at the time, felt that maybe there was a defect in the plane since the plane was made by Convair. That is what they were flying at the time, which is not a surprising reaction. Then she married Joe Juliano who was obviously the son of an immigrant family from Italy, but very American. It is typical that he doesn't want to have anything to do with family traditions. He is very fond of his family and they live in Santa Cruz. They lived in Arizona first because that is where she met him. He was in the Air Force. He worked in Tucson and then they moved up to Riverton, Wyoming. He had something to do with mines, not that he was a miner. Now he lives in Wyoming and raises horses, race horses, quarter horses; breeds them, raises and sells them.

RH: Now I want to get back to your father.

PB: Phillip Barker. He was born in Choccalocca, Alabama. His father died at an early age. I'd love to know why . . . There was some kind of a vague memory that his father had something to do with brick works. This is the branch of the family that I know little about and I don't know how to find out any more. I've been stopped. Eventually, when he died his mother moved to New Orleans. My father sang with a little unchanged voice in an Episcopal choir and was paid a dollar or fifty cents, something like that; it was very small, every Sunday.

Then there was another brother -- and she also had a miscarriage some place along the line. She remarried a Terence Fitzpatrick. Whether she met him in New Orleans, I haven't been there to look up marriage records. It would be interesting to find out. Or whether she came out to Los Angeles. When I knew her she was living at 1224 West 51st Street which is now the heart of Watts. At that time not far from USC, probably a pretty good neighborhood, blocks and blocks of houses looking almost identical. There was a wonderful trolley system in Los Angeles and when I went to visit my grandmother there we went on the trolley downtown and had all kinds of adventures.

RH: You haven't told me her name.

PB: We called her Grandma May, May Helen Jaynes. Her mother, who was beautiful, and unfortunately it is all my fault, I lost a beautiful portrait which was a touched-up photo which was in an old-fashioned frame. Her name was Jane Auld, which I thought was a very romantic name. My father dearly loved his grandmother.

RH: Your father was Phillip May Barker (May, after his mother), born in Choccalocca, Alabama; his mother was May Helen Jaynes, born in 1864 in St. Louis, Missouri. Did she ever come to San Diego?

PB: Oh, yes. She bought into the San Diego Planing Mill, a third investment, or something, so that my father . . .

RH: It wasn't as hard on your family as it was on some others.

PB: He had a job; it wasn't much and it wasn't much money and I remember my parents being really worried because . . . Well, let's see, when I was ten years old which would have been in the 1920s, my father had bought . . . At that time, I guess, the planing mill was doing very well. San Diego was in one of its booms. He bought a very fine lot over on Kalmia Street just west of 30th Street. He built a house there. I remember going with them to scout other locations. They saw another lot that they were very much interested in. Remember the days when people bought lots without tract

houses? There was a lot that dipped down into Mission Valley. I look to see it now every time I go up and down Mission Valley. That is the lot that my folks almost bought.

This was a very nice location, not quite as expensive as the other one, but it was this little one at Kalmia Place, which was just a little "U" shaped lot from Kalmia Street and it dipped down into park land.

RH: That was just about at 30th, right?

PB: It was west of 30th. I could look out from my bedroom onto Pershing Drive and the golf course.

RH: This was the area called Burlingame?

PB: No, Burlingame was on the other side of 30th Street. There was no name for this section.

RH: Where had you lived before that? **PB :** In Coronado. **RH :** Were you born in Coronado?

PB: Yes, born in the house. I have a picture of the house, not as it was then, but it is still there, my house is still there. It was only a little house, only two rooms across, one was a dining room and one was a living room, then a kitchen. The lot was probably 50 feet, no more than that. It was near Tenth and G Streets. The house is still there, the roof line is exactly the same excepting that what was the porch in the bungalows that were being built in 1912 . . . I think the bride and groom moved to that house that daddy had built. it was brand new at that time. It probably would have been 1910 when they were married. We went over on the ferry, of course. All bungalows being built at that time had a porch, with the roof extending out over the porch. That is where I was born, in the house. My sisters were also born in the house because my mother was also an ardent Christian Scientist.

RH: Did you ever feel that it handicapped you to have a Christian Scientist mother?

PB: Yes. (I am not sure that you want to put this in because I think they are wonderful people.) I have found in my life of being a professional musician on a low level, a church soloist and so forth -- I've directed in many churches in almost every denomination at one time or another. It has been my experience that good. Catholics have the same quality of goodness as good Jews, and good Methodists have the same quality as good Presbyterians. Methodists do sing like crazy, they sing their hymns with great lust. But good people are good and the Christian Scientists are good, it is just very hard to be odd. I couldn't take my mother with me. She wouldn't allow me to take a physical exam. I went to San Diego High School and they would have a physical exam maybe once or twice a year, an exam for eyes, chest, for feet, for athlete's foot. I couldn't take any of those, so I was excused.

RH: So then did you start school in Coronado?

PB: Oh, yes. There was a wonderful elementary school at that time.

RH: Did you go clear through the eighth grade there?

PB: No, no, no. When I was in the fifth grade I went to Brooklyn elementary school and finished there. Then I had sixth grade at McKinley, which was a brand new school. It was closer to where my folks lived then.

RH: Tell me about your childhood in Coronado.

PB: You mean the Maypole dance? There was crepe paper flower costumes. It was wonderful. My folks eventually left Coronado because it was becoming an enclave of naval officers who had a different life style.

RH: Did you go to the beach a lot?

PB: We went to Tent City and, of course, we went to the beach.

RH: Tent City lasted until about 1920, didn't it?

PB: I remember year after year, we even . . . when San Diego was having a boom, we even rented one of the cottages for a week. Several times we went down and lived in the cottages in Tent City. What fun. The swimming pool and the best slide that ever was. The swimming pool was filled with salt water. The slide was fed with water going down the slide so you really slid. It was wonderful. It must have been made with metal in those days, but it was a wonderful slide that went down into the pool. And that is where I learned to swim. I took lessons. My mother also taught me. We also swam in the bay. A part of Tent City was a float, you swam out from the float. There was also a high dive which must have been 40 or 50 feet high. There were bleachers along there so you could watch the swimming and the high divers. I don't think I ever went off the high dive; I think we moved before I ever did that.

RH: They had band concerts there, too, didn't they?

PB: In Tent City, of course. Food for sale, spun sugar. The cooking must have been easy. I can't imagine my family having enough money to buy three meals out. There must have been some way of preparing meals. I remember the trolley going all the way down. Then of course we went to the beach, the best beach in all of the world, which is the Coronado beach. In those days we went right off from where Tent City was, which is now a State beach. Then of course later when Coronado got its seawall, when we lived in Chula Vista, two or three times a week I'd take the children and we'd all go swimming off of Coronado beach, the strand, which is the best beach.

RH: Did you have a car?

PB: Of course, my father had a car. My father really should have been an engineer, I think. He loved machinery and he took apart the Model T (Ford) every Saturday and got it back together again and we went for a drive every Sunday.

RH: Living in Coronado where did you drive? Did you go across on the ferry?

PB: We went across on the ferry. My father went across on the ferry every day to work. When there was a family gathering we went across on the ferry.

RH: Sometimes you would go by car onto the ferry and sometimes you would walk?

PB: Daddy went on the ferry.

RH: In his car?

PB: I doubt it. When I was a small child there was a trolley. The trolley went all the way past the hotel and so it went past our street. When we went on the ferry we walked up to the trolley and then took the trolley to the ferry. Then took the trolley after we got on the other side.

RH: But when you went to your family gatherings, you probably took the car on the ferry.

PB: I expect. Unless daddy worked Saturdays, I don't really remember.

RH: On some of those Sunday outings did you go out into the back country?

PB: I remember vaguely, very, very vaguely, or was I told, of the time that the Sweetwater Dam broke. That was in January, 1916.

PB: Well then I was very little, I was just two years old. That was a sight to see because the water was pouring over. It undoubtedly didn't get any further. We just watched the Otay Dam break and the Sweetwater River. We saw the Sweetwater River come down into San Diego Bay, down at the lower end. Also the Otay River did the same thing. Of course we lived in Chula Vista. I have interesting memories of Chula Vista, too, from 1936 on.

RH: This was not with your father?

PB: No, it was not with my father. I remember my father drove up to Yosemite when there was just a narrow road. My mother believed to the day that the reason my first sister, Beverly, had a hard birth, what we call a dry birth, was because she was pregnant. The car that daddy was driving up the hill -- this was before there was any nice road into Yosemite -- he had to let the car roll backwards. I think a spark plug broke, that's what spark plugs do. So he had to let the car roll backwards so it was in a wide spot so that another car could come down. And she was frightened. That is what she says.

My father did get a ride and did pick up a spark plug. For the rest of his life, proclaimed the genius of replaceable parts. He probably had to go all the way to Merced to buy a Ford spark plug. And catch a ride by chance and get up there where my mother had spent, with me, too, two or three days or nights up there in the wilderness with bears and all kinds of things. We might have been all the way in, I don't know where it happened. There are bears in the Sierras still.

RH: How long did your father live?

PB: You have the date there, 1964. In the meantime daddy had built this expensive house on Kalmia Place, which we mentioned, and then came the Depression. Daddy was down to \$16.00 a week. I remember my mother sending me for four lean, loin lamb chops. I also remember my mother making French toast for the family -- there were three children and my folks -- out of one egg. I remember a loaf of bread when it was a dime or less.

My mother's big thing for the rest of her life was taking adult school classes. Really, there should be a great monument erected some place that would reach the sky with the names of people who educated themselves. My mother didn't graduate from high school either. That is one of the things that I firmly believe in, like the sun rises, in adult education. Certainly the example was the proof. My mother took these classes and they called them the Smith-Hughes classes; Smith and Hughes apparently were the people who put the act through the State legislature.

PB: My mother took Spanish, she took Russian, she took sewing, she took copper, all these wonderful things. **RH :** You said your father sang.

PB: As a child and he had a good voice as an adult but my mother was a Christian Scientist. Where can you sing as an adult unless you are a soloist?

RH: At home.

PB: Over at the Angiers every time we had a family gathering, which was a number of times a year, there was a billiard room, when uncle was alive, and a wonderful billiard table. Isn't it a pity, I had no place to put it. But a billiard table costs a fortune and what a fun thing it would have been for my sons to have played on, but it was gone. That room not only had a billiard table which was the most important thing in the room, but it also had an old upright piano. I was also supposed to sit at the piano, uncle could always get me to do anything; he was so sweet, and I was to play *Whispering Hope*. Everybody stood around the piano and sang songs of that sort every time we gathered. It was wonderful.

RH: And the voices were pretty good?

PB: I was satisfied. I am sure my uncle must have sung well. I'm sure my mother must have sung. I remember my mother singing and daddy undoubtedly sang, but he had no outlet other than that which is a pity.

RH: Now when you mentioned San Diego High School, how did you go?

PB: By the trolley, the streetcar. At that time we lived at Kalmia Place. I went down on the Number 2, down Broadway. But I often went home on the Number 7 because it was so exciting to go over the canyons. Also I went on the streetcar to come over to my aunt's and uncle's, and see the wonderful, wonderful high rise that there was over the train tracks and over the highway, where the Marine Base is now. You remember on Pacific Highway there was a great high vaulted, way high 30, 40, 50 feet in the air, it went way up. Then the track peeled off somewhere and went on to Ocean Beach. The La Playa one came down Rosecrans and up Barnett.

RH: When I went to San Diego High School which was before you we would come from Ocean Beach and go down Dutch Flats which is Barnett and ended up along India Street. In the meantime I guess we went on the old. Pacific Highway, or whatever was there. The streetcar came out to Ocean Beach where it hit the bridge at Ocean Beach which is at Bacon Street. That is where the Toonerville Trolley shot off to Mission Beach. Of course Mission Beach wasn't anything until 1925, so the trolley was along about those years.

PB: I still had just hoped that some day they will put the trolley back because they still own the land in La Jolla. There is a trolley space and if you own a house on La Jolla Boulevard it goes just so far, or maybe another block in.

RH: Did you get into music at San Diego High?

PB: Oh, yes. I was in the girls' chorus from the beginning at Woodrow Wilson Junior High School. I took piano lessons until I was in junior high until about the ninth grade I got lazy in practicing. That was Miss Phillippi, the famous Miss Phillippi. Then when Miss Phillippi and Mr. Aseltine were transferred to San Diego High School, that was the year I went to San Diego High School. Miss Phillippi didn't have chorus there, the Reyers did.

RH: "Pop" Reyer they used to call him.

PB: I was in the beginning girls' chorus and the advanced girls' chorus (at San Diego High School). Then when I went out to San Diego State College I got into the Treble Clef, which was the prestigious one and I got into the quartet as first soprano, which was still more prestigious in my first year. So that sealed my doom as a musician, I was hooked.

RH: You were under Miss Smith.

PB: Deborah Smith.

RH: And she put on an operetta every year.

PB: She was involved but she didn't do it. I guess it must have been the drama department. Everybody sang, the girls' chorus and the boys' chorus, but that wasn't her thing. There was an operetta and I had ingenue roles in those. I was in *The Desert Song* last and I was in *Robin Hood*.

RH: Do you remember any of the other singers who became famous?

PB: Sure, Rena Case and John Tyers. That was a fun time. I was in the quartet until I chose to drop out; I was in as long as I wanted. I really had to drop out either at the end of the last semester or at the end of the last year. I went for five years because I got three credentials; elementary, junior high, and special secondary music. In practice teaching I just had too much preparation to do.

RH: When did you get your A.B.?

PB: In 1936.

RH: And did you go back later for an M.A.?

PB: Oh, yes. I don't know what year I got that; it was after I was married and had children.

RH: Our notes say 1961.

PB: I went to the University of Colorado at Boulder -- we did -- and I went to USC. I took various classes at Claremont Colleges but most of it and the degree was earned at San Diego State. I have enough units to qualify for an equivalency for a PhD which puts me on the top level salary wise. But that was because my husband thought I should.

RH: Tell me about meeting your husband.

PB: More stories. I was working at the office at San Diego State. My folks didn't have any money to send me to college in 1931; it was the Depression when the building industry was down and it stayed down. I had accumulated a bank account of several hundred dollars from birthday gifts and Christmas gifts from relatives. The San Diego Federal Savings and Loan, the one run by Starkey, if that is the right name. Accounts were frozen during the Depression so when the time came for me to go to college my aunts and uncle put the money in an account so that that would pay for my tuition. I had no new clothes to go out to college in, not a single new thing. I had hand-me-downs which Aunt Lissie recut and shaped to fit my size. My tuition was paid out of that fund.

I worked at San Diego State in the office, not because I had any talent at all, 'cause I didn't, not for office work, but I did. I was also elected treasurer of AWS. At some point or other I was given the privilege of becoming a member of "Cap and Gown" which is now called Mortarboard. But in those days it was for the highest rated women in service, it wasn't just scholarship, it was for service to the institution at San Diego State. I was elected chancellor the first year and reelected chancellor the second year. Most people can't belong to that twice but because of my fifth year and because of Dean Mary McMullen, bless her heart. I was in and out of her office once or twice a day because she was the sponsor of "Cap and Gown" and I was the chancellor so we worked together. I asked her opinion about everything and she tipped me off about the Exposition coming to town and that they

were going to be hiring people and would I like to, maybe I knew of someone, or maybe I would be interested doing this myself. I went down and was the first person, maybe it was by accident as there were probably about 150 to 180 women in this room. But at least I was among the first to get there at a conference room in the U. S. Grant Hotel when Chase & Sanborn were looking for waitresses.

RH: Now this was for the 1935 Exposition?

PB: I don't know whether they did it in 1935 or whether they came in 1934. I don't remember, but they were getting their employees lined up. I was there in maybe the sixth or seventh row because I got there early and the room filled up with dozens and dozens of people, some of whom I knew, some of whom I did not know. It was important that I knew some of them because they started down the line with your name, when you were born, what experience that you had had and so forth and why they should hire you. It was all very quick and very brief. But I tossed in a ringer. I said, "I am Philly's Burns* and I was born in so-and-so; I am going to San Diego State; I am a music major and I am a member of the girls' quartet, and we are all here."

Oh, their ears pricked up and I think that was the first time that it had occurred to them that there could be music in their planning because they were going to be selling Chase & Sanborn coffee, tenderleaf tea, Fleischman yeast, Royal puddings and jellos. They knew they were going to have Spanish style because after all this was next door to Mexico. They knew they wanted Mexican costumes, or a New Yorker's version thereof. I think that was when it occurred to them. "Who were these other people?" So I called these people, Reinette Chase, and two other gals and said we are a quartet. We weren't. I had always sung in a quartet but they were not members of the quartet; they were members of Treble Clef. I figured we could find some four-part music; I could also find some Spanish music, and we were hired. It turned out to be a wonderful job because we were paid 65 cents an hour. The standard price was 35 cents an hour. It was good; it was terrific. The first week or two we were trained as waitresses in these weird costumes which came some place out of eastern Europe, had nothing to do with Mexico. Then very shortly they hired a Mexican band. I got acquainted with them and saw my opportunity. The quartet sang for a while, with or without the band.

They turned in their costumes and I ended up singing solos with the Mexican combo which was wonderful. I had enough Spanish and I knew Spanish songs. It was really very hard to find many quartet things but I did all the standard Spanish, early California, Mexican songs. I remember doing a song with this round-faced Mexican. These were all gentlemen of Mexican Chicano, not a great deal of English, who had never been, I think, circulating with this many gringos. The only language they knew to sing was Spanish and the only songs they knew were Spanish. I asked him one day if he knew *La Paloma*. We worked out a routine. I went to the far corner -- there was a wall all around with two entrance gates -- I waited just inside the entrance then the band started the beginning of the song. Then I stepped inside and sang two phrases of *La Paloma*, then this fellow, I've forgotten his name, [*Philly's would have been Barker, not Burns in 1935 as she wasn't married to Burns until June 1936 -- Transc.] it could have been Jose, sang the next two. I advanced a little further and eventually we met on the little platform with his arm around my shoulder and my shoulder tucked into his shoulder and finished *La Paloma* in harmony of thirds, of course, as it should be. It was great sport.

A young man by the name of Ted Burns had come to San Diego I don't know how many years before. I didn't know him at the time. We will start with from when I first met him. He made it a point to get acquainted with me. Of course you always had breaks, you always had to go some place to eat. The lights were beautiful; it was the first time I had ever seen colored lights against buildings. Whether it was new in the country, but it must have been new in San Diego. It was just beautiful along the Food and Beverage Buildings. The gardens were just wonderful. It was very romantic. We went out to eat. He got acquainted with me because he was interested in my singing. He told me that he was standing outside. He always made it a point. He was working as a dispatcher for -- you remember the long kind of car things with rubber tires that carried people around? There was a whole fleet of these. He was a dispatcher for those when he was on duty. Since he was a dispatcher he could schedule his time and he remembers standing at the

gate one time and someone said, "Oh, I know her, she is pure Castilian." And, of course, he knew differently. That was the romance, then, at the Exposition.

RH: Were you married soon after that?

PB: No, we were married the next year. He had been born in La Crosse, Kansas. His father was an itinerant baker who married his mother and then left town, as bakers were wont to do in the west. He came back and stayed long enough to father another son who was Ted's younger brother. Then he left for good.

RH: He was born about when? Let's see, I am looking at my notes. We have him here born November 1903.

PB: Okay. Then, eventually she married again and he was an iron worker. I think his first name was Durward. They came to San Diego. Ted, in the meantime, was ready to go to college. He went to some one-horse, one-carriage college in Oregon which was a religious college. There was some Church of the Brethren connection with his family. He went there and was going to become a preacher. Actually, he was a circuit preacher in either southern Oregon or northern California among the lumber companies. He became disillusioned, as most teenagers do. If they are going to become disillusioned, that is the age. He thought the people who were coming to church were not so good. Of course you and I know, Ruth, that it is the sinners that go to church because they are the ones who need church. At any rate, Ted hadn't discovered that.

Then at some point he came down and got a job as a playground director in San Diego. He actually sponsored and was the coach of a young fellow -- and his name appears some place, I think -- who competed in the Olympics in Los Angeles in 1932. I remember meeting this young man. It was in one of the track and field events. From playground department, he went to probation office and was a juvenile probation officer for quite a few years. In the meantime he wanted to go to college and become a teacher because it was apparent that there was nowhere to go without a degree. So he took most of the exams, he took most of his units for college from San Diego State by taking them by examination. I remember going with him when he had to pass Psych I (Psychology I) from Steinmetz. He met at Steinmetz' home, and that's another story. He was the leading ACLU member, a liberal.

RH: And accused of being a "Commie" later. He had to leave town, actually.

PB: Ted got his credential and as soon as he got his AB then we were married in 1936. I graduated in 1936 and maybe he graduated in 1935. I don't remember. He got his first job in 1936. He was at Memorial (Junior High School) which was logical because that is where he had done his playground work.

RH: You know, I had just left Memorial in 1935.

PB: Mr. Bill Oakes was the principal.

RH: Mr. Oakes is a Christian Scientist, but that has nothing to do with it.

PB: We had our honeymoon in the house which the Oakes rented in Pomona which had extra rooms in it. Ted took his first year of graduate work at Claremont Colleges. That happened to be the year we were married. That was our honeymoon, big deal, right? We spent the night at Hotel Del Mar, the Stratford Inn at Del Mar, which they are trying to revive. Then we went up there directly the next day, to Pomona for six weeks. I took voice lessons in Los Angeles. I went back and forth. By that time I was ready to go on.

I got a job; 1936 was a terrible time to get a job because I was married. A woman who was married didn't have much of a chance. Grace Walker (of Warren Walker, a private school in Point Loma) was a friend of mine. She and I were in college at the same time, so I applied for a job with Mrs. Walker and I got a contract. But between the time I signed the contract and the first day of school, I received a call from Sweetwater Union High School District. They had an opening because a wonderful good friend of mine had accepted a contract and then went up to Los Angeles where she got a better job. I was the only new teacher hired, that year in Sweetwater Union High School. I went to Chula Vista Junior High.

RH: There is an interesting part of your life there, in Chula Vista. You had these Japanese kids. I had some of them at Memorial. They were great.

PB: Oh, they were wonderful Japanese children. They all went to Japanese school in the afternoon after they got out of school. They worked in the fields in the morning. Sometime they found time to study, because their parents were determined and they did. Look at the Yamada family.

RH: When did your children start coming?

PB: We adopted a child. It must have been in 1938 or officially maybe 1939, because I was younger than Ted. He hungered for boys. Ted didn't say anything about it; it was just obvious now that I think about it, my number three son is absolutely, passionately, a father to a baby that was born . . . His wife left him before the baby was born, and my number three son called Chico (California) every week to talk to this infant baby from the time she came home from the hospital. It never occurred to me where this came from. But Ted had this passion of a father with boys. So I thought it only fair that he should have a kid. I was still taking voice lessons and he thought I was going to become a great opera star someday, so he was pushing me along. I thought it was only fair that he should have a child who would be the right age. I told him to go ahead and see if he could find a child to adopt. We found one.

RH: Did he find this child, or did you get it from an agency?

PB: Oh, we first went through the orphan asylums in San Diego. But they were babies. I didn't want a baby; if I wanted a baby I was going to have my own. There weren't any children of the right age, I thought it should be around eight years old. Then he began to work through Los Angeles. We did go through a place in Los Angeles, probably now in Watts, where there was a whole sun room full of infants, then a whole area of three- and four-year-olds. That wouldn't do. Eventually he kept doing the leg work. Ted was a very quiet, very private, a rather introverted person. I don't remember him telling me all of this and this and this, but eventually he said, "They think they have someone they want us to look at." We went and I said, "That's the one!" I fell for him right away. And no wonder, he was a beautiful boy and he became a wonderful loving man.

RH: How does it feel to be the mother of a Major General?

PB: It feels marvelous. I can be very proud because I can't take any credit. I happen to know -- and this again is another story -- that for anybody to get into Annapolis from anywhere in San Diego is almost impossible because of all the Admirals' sons that are over in Coronado.

It seemed to me logical for Ken to go into the service. Every bit of his character. I had not experienced seeing the leadership qualities that he has, but I had seen the fact that he fitted in. He had been in the junior patrol and all that sort of thing, elected treasurer of this and this sort of thing, so that it just seemed logical to me. He was an athlete. He was a member of the star county team for the whole county, an athlete, a quarterback in football, when he went to Sweetwater High School. So everything fitted in. And we knew the Flachsenhars.

RH: Oh, Marjorie Stose was a Treble Clef.

PB: At that time "Flash" was the officer in charge of athletics of the Eleventh Naval District. Marjorie Stose is a long-time San Diegan that maybe you could interview sometime. My hairdresser, who is a Nisei -- in other words she was born in Hawaii, but was of Japanese parentage -- had become a hairdresser so that she could put her two younger brothers through medical school. She did this by selling farm produce on the streets after she was married and had children of her own. She worked for the hairdresser who was a friend of the secretary to the man who was Congressman (Clinton) McKinnon. Mrs. Daley's good friend was McKinnon's secretary and so he got to take an exam and he got to Annapolis and then joined the Air Force immediately.

RH: And in the end became Major General with 35 years of active duty.

PB: He ended up as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. His area was from Marrakesh to Bangladesh. Fortunately, he didn't have to go into Iran or Lebanon.

RH: Do you know his wife's name?

PB: Dorothy Lyle Lyne. She is an Annapolis girl. They were married in the Academy there. They have two children, both graduated from San Diego State, both in the business department. Pamela who married a Jeffrey Axell, who is an executive chef with the Hyatt chain of hotels, now near Walnut Creek in a town there where there is a new Hyatt Hotel there. Alison is employed, I've forgotten the name of the company, if I ever did know it. She has been out of college two or three years and she is a hot-shot computer person. She is a new employee in a company that sends her all over the country to teach people how to use their equipment.

Then we had two children of our own: David Stuart Burns who was born November 21, 1942 and Christopher Phillip Burns who was born June 1, 1949. The Stuart is because there is a Stuart name some place in our background. David is perhaps in New Mexico and Chris is teaching third grade in Valley Center Elementary School. It is not just that I think so but friends who have been present in his classroom find him a crackerjack teacher. He is so wonderful in his relationship with his children. He has supreme control without any effort. It may not have been the first day or two but he is wonderful with those children and they get the best music training, probably west of the Rockies, in the third grade. They know more probably than most high school kids do today.

RH: Does he have a good voice?

PB: He is really committed. I am sorry that he does not sing much now. He sang as a little boy; both sons did in children's choirs in school. He sang at Horace Mann and he sang at Crawford when Charlene Archibeque was there. That was an extraordinary high school; there has never been a better high school choir director. I am saying that knowing Myron Green. She was extraordinary.

Chris is as dedicated to guitar. He practices guitar every day, every night when he comes home from school. He gets Jamie and Sarah, when Sarah is around, to sing with him. Jamie is his wife, but not Sarah's mother.

RH: You haven't told me about your career in singing around town. You directed choirs here and there, you sang in Starlight Opera.

PB: I sang leading roles in Starlight Opera. I was Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* one year and I sang the leading role in *Pirates of Penzance Pinafore*, *Chocolate Soldier*, and one other Gilbert and Sullivan one. That was for a couple of years. Then I did Gretel. I dropped out for by that time I had children, two small children, Chris and then David Christopher Phillip.

RH: Was it easy for you to have these babies?

PB: Oh, no problem. You mean physically?

RH: Yes.

PB: If I hadn't had to deliver early, the babies would have been born on the dates we wanted them. No, there never has been a problem.

RH: Christopher is the one who plays the guitar. Is he married? And his wife's name?

PB: Jamie Piburn who went to Point Loma Presbyterian Church as a child. She is the Housekeeper, which is an executive position with Scripps Hospital which is in Chula Vista. And they are now bicycling through Ireland. I was the soprano soloist at the Point Loma Presbyterian Church when it was still in the chapel. They had four soloists. Burling Stump was the director and Mary Stump was the organist. Then when Burling had to stop they asked me to stay. I didn't want to because I thought adults would come and go, that they wouldn't be committed. I just wasn't sure. I knew the children that I had in my choruses in school were there when I wanted them. I think I only sang as soloist for a couple of years. Then I had some wonderful years at the Point Loma Church, directing through the war. I took the opportunity of being soloist at the Naval Hospital -- and you were singing in the choir -- during the war because there was a young man who had just graduated from Union Theological who was a music major. He was a church man. I was a music major but I didn't have church music. When I had a chance I whispered to him that I have a wonderful alto -- she is really a mezzo -- and I'd like to have something for her to sing with the choir. So he would reel off the names of a half a dozen titles of things, plus the publishers, and how much the music cost. I jotted these down. I got a real graduate training from this fellow. I would never have been able to get it from an institution.

Then the catch was that I left after the offertory. The offertory had to come before the train from Los Angeles crossed the tracks because if the offertory was early enough I could get to Point Loma on time to lead the choir down the aisle, but if the train which was a long troop train in those days, I had to wait for the train to come, I would slip in after the choir was already in and the first hymn was being sung. I nursed my baby while I was directing that choir between services.

RH: Did you direct other choirs?

PB: Oh, yes. I directed from there. I stopped when the second. child was born and then from there I was soloist at Brooklyn Heights. Wait a minute. When I first graduated from college, maybe even before, I was singing soloist in Christian Science churches, which was logical because I knew how they felt. I knew what to avoid. I had a great deal of empathy for them and I knew how the services were run. They paid well, also. I was out at La Jolla at the Christian Science Church for a number of years. Then also at 22nd and C Street church for some years. That must have been during college maybe.

When I was in college I also took organ lessons. I sang as soloist with Ethyl Kennedy at the First Presbyterian Church for nothing. That was a great experience. But the second September I felt that she was pulling out the same music. By that time I was a sophomore so I went over to Marguerite Nobles. I didn't want to sing the same music, I wanted to learn more music. Marguerite Nobles was at First Congregational Church. I was there all during college. I took organ lessons from her. I was not paid, no one was paid, this was during the Depression. But my pay was in organ lessons which was a godsend. I needed that for my music major.

Then when I graduated I got the Christian Science church jobs, and sang solo. Then I eventually got this job at Point Loma which I loved and stayed to direct it. After the baby was born I took the baby in a car bed and went to Brooklyn Heights and was a soloist there. After that I went to the Christian Science Church as a soloist for a year or so. Then I got the job at National City Congregational Church. I loved that job. It was a small church but the people were highly educated. The people in the choir were the wheels of the church. I had the brother and sister and mother and son, father and daughter, I mean the choir was all related.

RH: To finish up your choir directing experiences, do you have any other little incidents you want to bring up?

PB: I don't know whether or not I mentioned the experience at Point Loma during the war. I had gotten the position as soloist in the Navy Chapel for the Navy Hospital. How could you be a soloist at the Naval Hospital and be directing the music at Point Loma? Well, hospitals begin their day early; they begin their services early and I went, with permission to go, because the man who was directing was a recent graduate of Union Theological Institute with a fantastic knowledge of music. I learned more from him than I did from any graduate class I could have taken in church music. I probably was there six or seven months when I was offered a job by a man who knew Malotte who wrote *The Lord's Prayer*. He said after the war all I needed to do was to write to him and he would see to it that I would get a job. He was a member of the church for whom Malotte had written *The Lord's Prayer*; or there was a connection like that, which I thought was interesting.

The war was not over, needless to say, but the war created a problem. I worked at the post office during the war. We really needed the money because the income tax had just switched over to deducting from your salary. I was teaching and I thought it was fine for them to deduct the tax on the salary then there wouldn't be a big payment to make in March. However, we still had to pay in that same March for the previous year. So we were behind; we really needed the money. So I got a job at the post office. The baby was four or five months old. This was the first child that Ted and I gave birth to. The radio was on always, and every 15-minute commercial break was of how they needed people to come and work in the war plants. They pay you for learning how to rivet, ala Rosie, but that was a full time job. By that time I had had Kenneth whom I suppose was about 13 years old and David was four or five months old.

You couldn't teach according to state law until your child was two years old. Times have changed, right? I got a job at the post office because I just couldn't bear hearing them talk about the need that there was. That would be a part time job. I knew someone who had gotten a job there. I left the house about five o'clock (in the afternoon) on the bus and went into the San Diego central post office. I worked for four hours and if I wanted to stay later -- there was a great deal of work because this was a great center for Navy mail, overseas mail -- I had to take half an hour off for lunch. That was mandated again by California law. But even then I often worked until one or two o'clock in the morning. I walked from the post office down to the Chula Vista bus, which was four or five blocks. It was scary somewhat. I got a purse that I could dangle, figuring that if somebody approached me I could slug them with this bag. The ride home on the bus was very terrible because there were young 17- and 18-year-old sailors and marines who were going to go overseas so they got very, very drunk and the results were all over the floors of the buses and people. It was pathetic to see these boys going off to war. You couldn't be cross with them but when you were standing crowded in that bus and the bus went past the 29th Street repair base you tried to avoid those whose eyes were a little too glazed.

One day going in on the bus -- the bus wasn't too crowded at five o'clock going towards San Diego -- two young officers got on board the bus and sat behind me. One said to the other, "Well, what do you do when your superior officer tells you to do something and it is just wrong to do, what do you do?" So my ears stretched backwards to hear this story. The story was that this young, probably an Ensign, on board a destroyer which is very narrow; there was a typhoon warning. All the ships that were anywhere within the Pacific Ocean were directed to a particular atoll. Maybe the atoll did not surface, but it was an area where the water was more calm and the ships could get in there. They needed to unload tanks and heavy supplies from the aircraft carriers which were so tall. Many of them in those days were converted from passenger ships so that they were very tall. So this fellow on

board his ship, and apparently a narrow ship which also was not all that stable, they were unloading and the fellow on the landing deck, I suppose two or three stories above him. The seas were calmer but still the typhoon was about to come. It must have been very scary. This fellow would have them lower on the cranes heavy things out of order. The heavy things should have gone on the ship early, so they could be put in the center of the ship to add stability, but instead they were just sending everything, in any order. There wasn't much space to maneuver. And this was the point of his question, "What do you do when your superior officer tells you do something?" There is no answer to that question, a sensible answer, particularly in a crisis situation.

Then the fellow went on and asked about the typhoon. Obviously, he and his ship made it, but there were many ships which did not make it. They tried to follow one another. The waves were so high and there was so much spume in the air. A half an hour might pass and they wouldn't be able to see a ship which might be just 75 or 80 yards off of the bow. They were trying to follow one another to a safe place, in order to lend support, I suppose, or pick up survivors if a ship did turn over. His ship made it but they made it on their own because at some point they lost track of where the others were. When they got to the repair base, it might have been Subic Bay, they could see the results of this storm. He described how the propeller of a great ship had been offloaded because now they had to be repaired. These great bronze propellers which are very thick he said he saw where they were curled like a rosebud. You can imagine how reluctant I was I have us all get off the bus. It was a wonderful story because at that time no one, civilian side, knew of the dangers of nature. We knew of gunnery and bombs, but this was never in the news.

When I continued to work at the post office which was interesting in itself because they had all the rejects of the aircraft factories. If you had any wits, any at all, you would learn to build airplanes, but if you passed their low test you ended up working in the post office because all the men had been drafted. There was only the foreman and one other man in that whole post office, where there might have been 80 women, most of whom didn't know what they were doing. I noticed, as a teacher, I figured that when a child was retarded, it simply meant that they were slower and they would eventually catch up. Then if they were very slow in the seventh grade, probably by the time they got through high school. This was a myth. Whether anybody else believed it besides me I don't know, but I learned that this is not so. When you are retarded, you stay retarded. There were 50 per cent errors in that post office. They had to put up with it because that was all they had.

If you want the story, a very dramatic story, of a true incident and a petition concerning the Japanese, I have it and also there is a copy in the UCSD library where they are storing away documents because I read it at ICL. It was in their library and they wanted to keep it. It is called *The Red, White and Blue Trap*.

RH: Was this a petition in the post office?

PB: The petition was passed by the workers in the post office. Now you've got to realize that the women in the post office were nearly out of their minds with fear and anguish because they had sent their marine husbands off to the South Pacific. News did not come frequently and I am sure they read every post card that was Navy mail because it might have some information about where their man might be.

RH: This petition was to get the Japanese out of here?

PB: To get the Japanese out of California, period, forever.

RH: They asked you to sign it and what did you do?

PB: This is a literary document and I am reluctant to answer it in just a few words. It is written, I hope, rather well; they seemed to think. So I said, "I didn't have time; I had to go back on the floor." They somehow must have read my mind knowing that I could not sign such a document. I had had

Japanese children; I knew Japanese families.

There was nothing to fear in California from the Japanese; that was all nonsense, hysteria. I was in Chula Vista where there were a third of the population were Japanese. They were so glad to be in America. They had already been incarcerated in camps; they had already been sent. I know that the historical society has information about this. But I know it from personal friends who left.

While I was working at the post office I lost my job, incidentally, because I wouldn't sign. I had taken Psychology I and heard about peer pressure. I wouldn't have believed that it was that powerful, but it was. I couldn't have stayed.

RH: And do you know something, you've gotten off onto this because you started to tell me how you were working at the Navy hospital.

PB: I'm coming to that.

RH: Now let's have that.

PB: Because I was working at the post office, I got the lowest kind of sticker for gasoline. I think we could have three gallons of gas a week, something like that, We turned in our tires. I don't remember how many gallons but it was a ridiculous amount of gas. But that sticker enabled me to get gas because I was working at the post office and at night. Eventually I was able to drive to the hospital and do my stint in the hospital chapel. Then if the offertory came at the right time I was able to get to the Point Loma church and lead the choir into the service. But should there be a train crossing the tracks and it was just within minutes. Some Sundays I made it and some Sundays I didn't. The choir would already be in and the church would be singing the first hymn before I got there.

RH: Now we are going to jump down to what have you been doing lately? What are your musical activities?

PB: I retired from directing church choirs, from the Chula Vista Presbyterian Church where I was director of music after twelve or fourteen years with great reluctance but that was because of gas shortage. I was living in Point Loma at the time and to get down to Chula Vista. You stood in line at the gas station and then you could only get four or five gallons during that crisis. So I gave up going down to the church. I was employed for one year at the First Presbyterian Church directing children's choirs. I went to the Point Loma Presbyterian Church which I had often attended and found that they had on their calendar a rehearsal for recorders. I had used recorders in teaching seventh grade children. I had bought a tenor recorder but had not gone any farther with that, than the soprano. I had broken my arm very severely and I thought well maybe this is something I could do. I'm probably going to be too old to sing with a good enough voice any more so I'll take up the recorder. I am deeply involved with recorders now.

RH: Are you into any musical groups like the Opera Guild.

PB: Incidentally, before I say that, I must say that I direct the recorder group at the Point Loma church. Yes, I am a member of the Opera Guild but that is a social thing. I was for two years a member of the board of the symphony. That was when Robert Shaw was here; that was a long time ago. That is when he wanted the common touch, I think, the musicians' input instead of the socially prominent people. Music Makers, I was a member and president of it, a number at various times.

RH: Any other kinds of groups that you belong to or are active in?

PB: I am pretty well occupied with recorders at the moment.

RH: A you get together with any of your old friends?

PB: I go to the opera with people who sang in the Lemon Grove Congregational Church choir. I still see Verna Lamott, of course, at the Point Loma church, and you, in the very first choir that I directed. Every once in a while I've gone down to the Sweetwater High School reunion where I run into children that I directed way back before the war.

RH: What about Starlight?

PB: I sang in Starlight for one full season and sang leading roles in three Gilbert and Sullivan and *The Chocolate Soldier*. Then I also sang the role of Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*.

RH: When the operas come to San Diego do you sometimes get into their choirs?

PB: I sang in the chorus for several years after I had retired. Yes, it was fun; I enjoyed it.

RH: Do you play the piano anymore?

PB: Only when I need to. it is a tool that I use, I don't play it for fun.

RH: I have a copy of your book, Iron Lady at Sea. What is this about and when did you get into that?

PB: This is about the *Star of India*. My third son had a daughter (she is probably my last granddaughter) and even though this is a divorced family, Chris, her father, sees to it that I have a great deal of quality time with her when she is down here. The time is very precious to him and yet he says, "Would you like to take Sarah for an adventure?" I wrote a little book of the very first Christmas that she was down, she might have been 15 months old. I thought I'd get her a teddy bear because all of my boys had had teddy bears. I bought one and propped it up on this table and one day it told me a story. So that was Sarah's book. I wrote the story and it was a cute story. I typed it up and I illustrated it with the teddy bear in the garden in various places. I introduced also one of the horsemen which is a nutcracker from Vienna. She just loved that book and she carried it around, this little thing just barely walking. So I thought the next Christmas I would give her some more books. I did some picture books because she was just a little girl, one was called *All About Balboa Park*. I took a picture of the mounted policemen, the merry-go-round, the square dancing and all that sort of thing in Balboa Park. Then I started a book called *All Around the Bay*. I was frustrated because I couldn't get the picture of a sailboat close enough. My zoom lens doesn't go far enough. I had another idea of *Who*; I'd illustrate some poetry for her in that wonderful recitio poem, *Who Has Seen the Wind*. I wanted to have a picture of the wind blowing leaves, kites and sails. I read in the paper that the *Star of India* was celebrating its 120th birthday. I thought maybe they will put the sails up because it is a celebration. It is at the embarcadero and I could take pictures. I called them and found out that they did have the sails up and they would be taking them in about three o'clock. I went over with my camera loaded to take pictures of the sails up close that could fill a picture. I got into a conversation with a fellow in a red t-shirt. It turned out, in this conversation that he was taking a break, but he was one of the young men who were going to take in the sails. I knew exactly when this was going to happen so I waited and sure enough I got some wonderful pictures of taking in the sails with these young men.

Also I was very much taken with a hand-painted (sign) on butcher paper with a felt pen printed, "Happy 120th Birthday, *Star of India*. " It was in pink and blue ink. And I thought here is this big iron freighter, looking like a freighter, and somebody would . . . The ship must have a real personality. I went on board and got in to talk with Dave Brierly who happened to be on board. He is the curator of the Maritime Museum.

He told me about the little boy who helped weld the spars. The spars are also iron. This is the first ship that was made of just iron, not framed, not sheathing, but it was made at the Isle of Man, from the sign that was banging over the ship. Isle of Man, where is that; Ramsey, where is that; an immigrant ship; immigrant ship to where? There were just lots of questions. Dave just intrigued me by telling me about this little boy. I went up to the San Diego Historical Society library which had just opened and I was one of the first ten people to be in there. I asked them if they had any information about the *Star of India*. They pulled out their files. On the way home I got the idea that maybe I could write a story about this ship. So I did; I wrote a little book called *I, Star of India*, as if the ship itself was a person telling the story. This was for Sarah. Then I had whole months of taking pictures of the *Star* so I could have a lot.

Eventually, I showed the book to you and you thought it was good. enough to show to the children's librarian. She flattered me inordinately by not looking at the pictures but reading. And reading when she was being interrupted all the time. She liked it and she talked to me a long time about the book. This was working time for her but she said there is a shortage of books of this sort and why don't I write a bigger book? She really wanted to know more about the ship, and she thought maybe I could publish this little one.

Publishing is a hard business and I didn't want to write up all this factual information, do a dissertation. I had written. a thesis, I had written all those papers getting my master's degree, I didn't want to do that again. But on the way home it occurred to me that I could make the little boy who worked on the spars, nobody knew who he was, what his name was, they just knew of him. There are lots of mysteries about that book that Dave didn't know. I pursued those mysteries and didn't find the answers to all of them. But then the monkey got on my back. After having written the Murrays book the monkey was still there. My husband had done writing and I felt as if he would have been pleased.

RH: It is a charming little book. My husband read it just the other day and he said, "That's a pretty good little book." Coming from a writer.

PB: That's very, very nice. The book is now on sale and all the docents are expected to read it because it gives them the color, the experiences of the people because I had Jem as a young man, I timed the book so that he could go wherever they were immigrating to. They were migrating to New Zealand, five months without ever stopping.

RH: Are you going to write any more?

PB: I doubt it. That was the monkey that was on my back; the monkey helped me with the Murrays and the monkey stuck around. I would just have to get hooked. I loved doing the research, for the *Star of India*. Incidentally, I found very interesting information from the UCSD library which has the parliamentary papers. Of all things, a library in La Jolla would have the parliamentary papers for a couple hundred years, correspondence to and from. Also, I went to the Isle of Man and I found that Jemmy's cottage looked just like I thought it should look. It wasn't his house; I just named him Jemmy.

RH: What have we forgotten to talk about? We've covered a lot of things.

PB: It all has been fascinating.

RH: I think we will call this the end of the conversation. The Historical Society thanks you so much for all the light touches that you have given us; early Coronado, early San Diego, the war.

PB: I didn't tell you about the Halloween when my father and a friend of his on a prank towed the trolley in Coronado for several blocks away from the stable where the horse was. They personally towed it as a prank. This was my father who was married at the time.

RH: I expect we could go on for a couple more hours. Thank you so much; it has been such a pleasure.

PB: You are welcome, Ruth, you've done such an excellent job of steering me.

END OF INTERVIEW
