

IRMA OKSEN REAVES

Preface

The recorded cassette tapes and transcriptions of the following interviews with Irma Oksen Reaves conducted by Alzora Snyder are part of the Oral History Project of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association, 261 East Beach Street, Watsonville, California, 95076. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by Sharon Vilorio and were edited for continuity and clarity by Jane Borg. During the editing process, the script was reviewed several times by Mrs. Reaves who supplied corrections and additions and gave her final approval to the following transcription. Elsie Post also helped to review the transcription in process.

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INTRODUCTION

Irma Oksen Reaves was born in 1906 at Watsonville, California. Her mother, Emma Schanbacher, was a lifelong resident of the Pajaro Valley (1875 - 1948), and her father, Jim Oksen, lived in the area from the time of his arrival from Denmark at the age of seventeen in 1884 until his death in 1924.

The three interviews with Mrs. Reaves, conducted by Alzora Snyder of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association, give us an excellent picture of family life and other activities of work, school, church and recreation for Watsonville residents from 1910 to World War II.

Irma Reaves is the author of two books about the central coast region of California: Tassajara (1985) and Arroyo Seco (1986).

The following is a recording of an interview with Irma Oksen Reaves made on May 21, 1985, at the Reaves home, 1184 Green Valley Road, Watsonville, California. Arrangements for this interview were made by the Oral History Committee, which is jointly sponsored by the American Association of University Women, Watsonville Branch, and the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. Alzora Snyder, Volck Museum Archivist, is the interviewer.

SNYDER: Irma, please state your full name and your birthdate.

REAVES: My name is Irma Oksen Reaves. I was born on January 15, 1906.

SNYDER: How do you spell "Oksen?"

REAVES: Well, it's spelled O-K-S-E-N. But, yesterday, looking through some old papers, I came across my dad's passport from Denmark to the United States, and I discovered that "Oksen" was spelled O-G-K-S-E-N. In the early years, they pronounced my name as "Ogksen." Then, later on, the English pronunciation came out which was "Oksen."

SNYDER: Where were you born?

REAVES: I was born in Watsonville. I was born at 607 Walker Street, at my grandmother's home.

SNYDER: Is that where your parents were living?

REAVES: No, my parents were working and helping Mrs. Quilty in Tassajara Springs. They were married eight years before I was conceived. I was conceived in Tassajara Springs, and they remained there until two months before I was born. My mother and dad came out in a horse and buggy in the snow in November, and I was born in January.

SNYDER: So, your mother was at your grandmother's house?

REAVES: At my grandmother's house.

SNYDER: Now, tell me about your father -- his full name and where he was born.

REAVES: My father's name, his Danish name, is Jens Lassen Oksen . . . Ogksen, and he was born in Denmark. He came to the United States when he was seventeen years old.

SNYDER: Did he have any brothers and sisters?

REAVES: Yes, he had one sister and three brothers.

SNYDER: Did they come?

REAVES: No, he worked in San Francisco as a stevedore for awhile until he had enough money to send for his mother and his brothers and sister. Tobina was his sister's name. And, there were Peter and Louis and Magnus. That's right, that makes five children.

SNYDER: Now, tell me about your dad's parents. Were they in Denmark?

REAVES: Yes. My dad's mother's name was Ansine Oksen, Ansine Schmidt Oksen. She came from Starbeck, and her father had a bakery there. In fact, I have some of his cookie recipes.

SNYDER: Good! Did the grandparents ever come to America? Ansine and her husband?

REAVES: My grandmother came with the children, but she had lost her husband in Denmark when he was quite young, and she raised the five children herself.

SNYDER: Now, let's touch on your mother's family. What was your mother's maiden name?

REAVES: My mother's maiden name was Schanbacher -- Emma Ida Schanbacher.

SNYDER: Where was she born?

REAVES: She was born in San Francisco. Her parents moved to Watsonville when she was six months old.

SNYDER: Irma, what was your grandmother's name? Your mother's mother?

REAVES: My grandmother's name, her maiden name, was Fredericka Katrina Buob. She was born in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1848.

SNYDER: And your grandfather? The man that married her?

REAVES: Albert J. Schanbacher. He came from the same place as my grandmother, as far as I know.

SNYDER: Did they have other children?

REAVES: Yes, they had eight children in all. Would you like their names?

SNYDER: Yes.

REAVES: The first one was a little girl, and her name was Matilda. Then there was Charles, and Albert, and Emma . . . Emma Ida, which was my mother . . . and Justina, Rosa, Fred and Julius. I think that's eight.

SNYDER: Tell me again about your aunts and uncles, the Buobs. Were they here in Watsonville? Born in Watsonville?

REAVES: No, they were born in Germany. They would be my great aunts and uncles. After my grandmother married Albert Schanbacher their first four children were born in San Francisco, as far as I know, and the rest of them, the other four, were born in Watsonville. Julius was six months old when Mr. Schanbacher died.

SNYDER: Now, how long did you stay at your grandmother's house when you were born . . . you and your mother?

REAVES: We stayed there a few months, and then my folks went back to Tassajara. My dad had opened the Springs for the summer visitors. I lived in Tassajara most of the year with them, with the exception of a few months during the winter when they came to Watsonville. I lived at Tassajara until I was a little over two years old.

- SNYDER: Then, where did your family go when you were two years old?
- REAVES: Well, my dad had bought this home on First Street, 232 First Street. We lived there when my older brother was born. His name was James Albert Oksen, and he was born July 20, 1908. At that time, my dad was in the hack business. Now, whether he had owned the hacks at that time or was working for another party, I don't know. The name "Daddy Bauer" rings a bell with me. I believe he had the hack business at that time. Possibly, my father was working for him.
- My father originally was a butcher, and we moved out on the Riverside Road where the Tuttle Company slaughter house was located. He worked for the Tuttle Company for several years. At that time, my younger brother, Lloyd Peter Oksen, was born at the residence nearby.
- SNYDER: What year was that?
- REAVES: That was 1910 . . . October 21, 1910.
- SNYDER: What do you remember especially about the time in your life when you moved from Tassajara to Watsonville and then out to the Riverside Road? Any childhood memories?
- REAVES: I can remember when I was about four years old. We were living on First Street, and my father, "Papa" as we called him then, picked me up out of bed early in the morning, wrapped me up in a blanket and carried me out on the front porch to watch Halley's Comet in the western sky. That's one thing I can remember!
- When I was a little older, maybe a few months older, we were living out on the Riverside Road, and Papa took me to town one evening in the horse and buggy. He and I stood on the catwalk of the old, wooden covered bridge, and we watched the showboat on Lake Watsonville. What fascinated me so was the fact that Buffalo Bill was on that showboat with his horse, King. He gave his horse a drink out of his silver cup and out of his hat. I thought that was so fascinating!
- SNYDER: What do you remember about your bedroom? Did you have to share a room with your brothers?

REAVES: No, when we lived on First Street, I had my own room, and they had one large room just off of the bathroom.

On the walls of my room I had numerous photos of actresses and actors. We girls had a hobby of sending for the pictures and autographs of the movie stars -- Mary Pickford, Mary Miles Minter, Pauline Fredricks, Billie Burke, Wallace Reid, Thomas Meighan, Tom Moore, and many others!

I can remember living at my grandmother's house too. It was a two-story house and had a lot of rooms. In fact, my grandfather owned a tannery. But, this was before I was born. My grandfather had passed away before I was born. My grandmother boarded men from the tannery which was located at the further (north) end of Walker Street. There were living quarters, sleeping quarters, for the men in that area.

When we visited my grandmother, I can remember the big living room with the phonograph, the Edison phonograph, in the corner. I used to dance around to the different cylinder records and pull up my skirts. (she laughs) I was about three years old.

SNYDER: What songs?

REAVES: (still laughing) "Waltz Me Around Again, Willie," and oh, let's see . . . "School Days," "Under the Old Apple Tree," "Red Wing" and Souza's marches and half a dozen more.

SNYDER: Was there a piano in the front room?

REAVES: No, not at that time. My grandmother had a large place. She had nine rooms with three bedrooms upstairs -- two smaller and one real large one with two beds in it. A banister! Oh, I mustn't forget the banister! We slid down that banister, and my mother used to worry about us. (she laughs)

SNYDER: Do you remember any of the neighbors on Walker Street?

REAVES: Yes. The Briggs lived across the street from my grandmother. Next to my grandmother's place was where my great grandmother and grandfather lived. Although, this great grandfather also died before I was born.

SNYDER: Which family was that?

REAVES: That was Great Grandma and Grandpa Buob. They came over the same time that my grandmother came over to the United States from Germany.

There was a big lot between their place and my grandparent's house. I believe the Tindalls lived in that house in later years.

My grandmother had quite a large place. There was a big storage place where they kept the buggies and the surreys. In the back was a stable where they kept the horses. She had a big chicken yard and cowbarn with cows.

SNYDER: These stables . . . would they be for the hack business, or not necessarily?

REAVES: No, these were for the family horses. There was a big cellar underneath one of those buildings.

SNYDER: Who did you play with in those days?

REAVES: When I was at my grandmother's, I was quite small so I really didn't have any playmates outside of my brother. Well, even so, my brother was a baby at that time -- my oldest brother.

However, we had quite a few playmates down there on First Street, when we were older.

SNYDER: Tell me who some of them were.

REAVES: Well, our place was located on the corner of First and Locust. Across the street was Sky Tuttle's place. There were Fern and Reuben Tuttle . . . they were the younger ones. Then, catty-corner was O.S. Tuttle -- they called him "Boney." He was quite a heavy-set man. Their grandchildren came down from Oakland -- Loyd and Frances Miller. Loyd Miller is an attorney in Santa Cruz now. Thelma Pearson lived across from us on the other corner. In the earlier years, the Christensens had lived there. I started school with Mabel Christensen. She and I used to walk to school together each day.

SNYDER: Did you have dolls?

REAVES: Well, yes. But, you know, in those days, we didn't have half a dozen dolls like they have today . . . or a dozen! I had one particular doll, and I was in love with her.

SNYDER: What was she like? Was she a rag doll?

REAVES: Oh, yes, I mustn't forget Tessie! (she laughs) That was a doll that came with me from Riverside Road. She was really rather decrepit looking because she needed a bath.

Out on Riverside Road we had to take our baths in a washtub. We had no facilities there for bathing. That was a big night -- every Saturday night.

However, when we came to town, we had this long, tin bathtub. I filled it up with water one day and dunked Tessie in it. I don't know what happened to Tessie . . . if she drowned . . . but I think my mother got rid of her. She looked terrible! (she laughs)

SNYDER: Can you remember doing any chores?

REAVES: Yes, I used to help my mother in the kitchen with the cooking, and it was my duty to wipe the dishes every night. But, I always had another "call" at that time. (she laughs)

SNYDER: Your mother had a wood stove I presume?

REAVES: Yes. She cooked on a wood stove for quite some time until, I guess, I must have been about nine or ten years old when she got a Spark gas range. There were four burners on one side and an upper oven and a lower oven on the other side.

SNYDER: Can you remember what some of your favorite dishes were or some that she prepared for your dad?

REAVES: No, I really can't remember exactly what my favorite dishes were, but my mother had my grandmother's set of twelve Limoges dishes and they were beautiful. We used those on special occasions. I still have them. My husband packed them up for my great granddaughter, my first great granddaughter.

SNYDER: Did you go with your mother to do any of the shopping?

REAVES: Yes. Do you mean grocery shopping, or other shopping? We used to order groceries over the telephone frequently.

SNYDER: Who from?

REAVES: I believe, if I remember right, we got the staples from Charles Ford Company.

SNYDER: Did they deliver?

REAVES: Yes, they did deliver. I don't know if it was Charles Ford or Ford & Sanborn Grocery Store at that time. However, my folks raised an awful lot. They had quite a large place. I would say probably an acre and a half of ground with a house.

SNYDER: For vegetables?

REAVES: Vegetables and berries. We had one fruit tree. It was an apple tree.

SNYDER: Did your mother can?

REAVES: Yes, definitely. In those days, they did 'open kettle' canning. They didn't use jars for tomatoes in those days. They had cans. You could use them more than once, and there was a lid that fit on the top and you had to use sealing wax to seal it. Just the tomatoes were canned that way.

My mother wouldn't can stringbeans. One of her close friends got botulism, and so she absolutely refused to can stringbeans.

SNYDER: Were there any street vendors?

REAVES: Oh, yes! That's where we got a lot of things, too. There was a fish wagon that came around. There was a meat wagon that came around and a vegetable cart -- the vegetable wagon. And, a hominy cart . . . I guess you would call it a 'wagon' also. And, a rag man. You remember the Rag Man!

SNYDER: Sure! Picked up all the junk that you had.

REAVES: Yes. We were afraid he would pick us up too!

SNYDER: Tell me about a special occasion, like a birthday party.

REAVES: Well, we didn't have parties for every birthday like some of them do nowadays. I had a real nice party on my ninth birthday and had my school friends. Then, as I got older, I helped with the parties.

SNYDER: Do you remember any of the parades in Watsonville especially?

REAVES: Yes, I remember the Fourth of July parades and the Apple Annual parades. We didn't have the Christmas parades then like they have now.

SNYDER: What about Christmas in your own home? Or, did you go to grandma's?

REAVES: Well, mostly we had it in our home. We had been to grandmother's once or twice, but it was mostly in our home. While we were small, my folks would decorate the tree at night. Of course, we thought Santa Claus did it. They put the little candles on with the little metal clips. The house really did smell from redwood 'cause it was mostly redwoods that were used in those days.

As we got older, we helped decorate the trees. We sat around the fire -- the woodstove -- and popped popcorn and strung popcorn and cranberries. The cranberries complemented the strings of popcorn.

SNYDER: Did your family have any church affiliation?

REAVES: Yes. When we lived in Watsonville, my father was in the hack business and that required seven days of work a week, which I guess you know. My mother got us children ready for Sunday School every Sunday. We would attend church, the Presbyterian Church, with her after Sunday School.

SNYDER: What about your grandparents?

REAVES: My grandmother Oksen was a very devout church-goer. My father would pick her up in the morning in the hack -- years later on, in the car -- and take her to church and bring her home. She had a beautiful voice. In fact, all of my grandmother's children had beautiful singing voices. You could hear her voice above all the rest of them in the congregation.

SNYDER: Describe the church for me. Where was it, and what did it look like?

REAVES: Well, the church was located on what was called 'East Third Street,' at that time. It was a short block from the Plaza. Two doors away was Mintie White's residence. She was my first grade teacher. There was a stairway in the front of the church. I'd say probably six or eight steps going up to the first level. Then, there was a little hallway.

SNYDER: Was it a wooden building?

REAVES: Yes. Off this little hallway was where I had one of my Sunday School classes. Then, on the side of the church was a walkway which went back to the Junior Department. There was a big hall there. Off the Junior Department was the Primary Department. That's where I started. I really started to Sunday School there. I think, if I remember right, I went two or three times to the Methodist Church with Fern Tuttle, and then I went to the Presbyterian Church. That's where my grandmother went every Sunday.

SNYDER: Can you recall the names of any of the Sunday School teachers or the minister?

REAVES: Yes. There was Mr. Howe, Reverend Howe. He was the one that married me in 1924. Reverend Rich used to speak there occasionally. He was the one that performed the ceremony for my mother and father's wedding.

I can't recall any of the rest of them. I know there were more ministers, but right now I can't recall them. Of my teachers, Mrs. Galletly stands out in my mind as she was a dear little old lady. Then, there was Mrs. Silliman. She was head of the Primary Department for awhile and also of the Junior Department. Shirley Shepard played an important part. Miss Andersen was the one that taught us our first Christmas songs. My first one was "Away in a Manger." That I can remember. I can't recall her first name, though . . . Miss Andersen.

SNYDER: Tell me about the clothes that you wore. Were they home-made?

REAVES: My mother was a seamstress. She made practically all my clothes. All we had to buy were stockings and shoes and hair ribbons. Of course, hair ribbons were an important part of our dress in those days.

SNYDER: Where would you buy your shoes?

REAVES: Well, Alexander's and Varnell's, if I remember right, had shoes to sell. I think that's where we bought most of our shoes in the early days. Alexander's dry goods store was in competition with Daly Brothers. They were located right in the same area where Alexander's Men's Clothing was located in later years. My mother hesitated about taking my brothers shopping with us because they had the stools along the aisles for the customers to sit on while they selected whatever they wanted. My brothers would get "loose," and they'd go up and down the aisles and spin those stools. That just about drove my mother up the wall! (She laughs.)

Daly Brothers dry goods store . . . we shopped there quite often, too. That was on the corner of East Third and Main Street.

SNYDER: How did they handle the money?

REAVES: With . . . what did we call those things?

SNYDER: The over-head carriers?

REAVES: Yes. I can't recall what they called those . . . I can't think of it . . . 'cash trolleys?'

SNYDER: Tell me about cleaning your clothes. Did you wash by hand?

REAVES: Yes, we did all of our own laundry. I say, "we," -- my mother did when I was small. Are you interested in the type of washing machine that she had?

SNYDER: The first one?

REAVES: Well, the first one that I can remember outside of the washboard.

When we lived in the country she used the washboard, I think, as far as I can remember. When we lived in town, there was a little shed outside of the house that we called 'the wash shed.' She had this large wooden tub that sat on a stand. I remember there were springs underneath the tub. At the top of the tub -- on the topside edge of the tub -- was a little handle and we used to take the little handle and push it around -- back and forth, back and forth -- and that rotated the clothes. Then, there was a hose on the tub where you drained it outdoors. After you drained it, you filled the tub with rinse water. You would put the clothes through a handwringer first, and then you'd put the clothes back in the tub and fill it with rinse water. Then, the clothes went through the same procedure again.

SNYDER: Was there running water in the shed?

REAVES: No. She had a little stove out there that she heated water on, in a big copper boiler. The white things went into this boiler to boil. We didn't have the type of detergents we have now, and Clorox. In those days, they had to boil the white things to get them clean . . . to get them white.

SNYDER: Do you know if she ever made her own soap?

REAVES: No, I can't recall her making her own soap. My grandmother did. But, I don't know how she did it.

(END OF SIDE A OF TAPE 1.)

SNYDER: Irma, let's go back. Why were the children afraid of the Rag Man?

REAVES: Well, he was quite a character.

SNYDER: What did he look like?

REAVES: (laughing) I don't know exactly how to describe him, but I know that he was cross-eyed. It seemed like the youngsters always stayed clear of him.

SNYDER: Seems like I remember he was dirty.

REAVES: Yes, he wasn't very clean. That's for sure.

SNYDER: Was there a dog catcher, as we know it today?

REAVES: Yes. His name was Moorehouse. Oh, how I did hate to see him come around because he always managed to catch two or three dogs a day.

SNYDER: Did your family have dogs?

REAVES: We had a dog, but we had to keep him penned up.

SNYDER: What kind?

REAVES: Just a dog. (she laughs) He was black.

SNYDER: Did your mother have chickens?

REAVES: Yes, she did. My grandmother also had chickens.

SNYDER: Any other animals?

REAVES: Yes, my grandmother had a cow. My mother and father also had a cow. We really enjoyed that beautiful rich cream. We had banana or strawberry cream cake every Sunday.

SNYDER: When your shoes wore out and needed half-soling, did you take them to the shoemaker?

REAVES: They didn't have shoe makers like they have today. My father used to sole our shoes mostly -- the ones that needed soling. Particularly for my brothers!

SNYDER: What about reading stories? Do you remember your mother reading to you?

REAVES: Yes, I do. My mother read to us almost every night. It seemed like Horatio Alger books were some of the favorites. Of course, they're more or less boys' books, but I enjoyed them just as much 'cause I was really a 'tomboy.' My father was seldom home at nights as he had to meet the trains.

SNYDER: Did these books come from the library, or were they in your home?

REAVES: They were books that we had bought.

SNYDER: Was your mother in any clubs?

REAVES: Yes, she belonged to a sewing circle at church, and she belonged to the Rebekahs. She joined the Rebekahs Lodge when she was eighteen years old. She lived to receive her fifty year pin.

SNYDER: Now, the Sunday School teacher, Miss Andersen, what was her first name?

REAVES: That was Jessie Andersen.

SNYDER: Did your family do any camping?

REAVES: Oh, that was our main hobby! (she laughs)

SNYDER: Where?

REAVES: Most of the time at Tassajara. After my mother and father left Tassajara when they were helping Mrs. Quilty, we went back every year and camped there. They had camp grounds. Sometimes we stayed at the hotel or cabins, but most of the time we enjoyed camping.

SNYDER: Did you fish?

REAVES: Yes. Beautiful fish . . . beautiful trout. Lovely trails to hike on.

SNYDER: Well, tell me where you first went to school.

REAVES: My first school was . . . we didn't have Kindergarten in those days . . . the Primary School on East Lake Avenue.

SNYDER: Your first teacher?

REAVES: My first teacher was Mintie White.

SNYDER: Some of your schoolmates?

REAVES: Shall I get my pictures out?

SNYDER: (while looking at the pictures) Now this was probably the 'new' Primary School which replaced the first one. Is that right?

REAVES: Yes, it is. The 'old' Primary School, which my mother attended, was moved to the back of the school grounds, and that was used for the fourth grades.

SNYDER: And this was on East Lake Avenue?

REAVES: On East Lake Avenue, on the first block, right next door to the veterinarian, Dr. Ramsey.

SNYDER: And some of your classmates?

REAVES: Well, there was Muriel Rhodes, Geraldine Ross, Alberta King, Mabel Christensen and Verona Whitten. Helga Jorgensen, Ronald Maher and Frederick Hansen. Malcolm MacQuiddy and Albert McGinnis. Walter Pellisier, Clinton Allison, Jimmie Jones, and Marcella Cardoza and June Dempsey. Mae Walker and Pauline . . . I can't remember her last name . . . Virginia Miller, Thelma Green. Those are some of them.

SNYDER: Those all sound like Anglo names. Were there no Japanese?

REAVES: No, I can't recall any Japanese in the first grade. Wait just a second . . . I believe there was one or two. I think there was one Japanese boy in my first grade.

SNYDER: Was there only one first grade, or were there two?

REAVES: No, there were two. Shirley Shepard taught the other.

SNYDER: Shirley Shepard?

REAVES: No, I'm mistaken. I think Shirley Shepard taught the second grade, and Miss Frazier taught the other first grade.

SNYDER: What were your favorite studies in the primary grades?

REAVES: Oh, drawing. (she laughs) Art.

SNYDER: What time did you have to be at school?

REAVES: Nine o'clock.

SNYDER: And what did you do at noon?

REAVES: Well, we took our lunch in a little lard pail. That was what most of the youngsters used in those days. It smelled so good when you took the lid off and smelled the aroma of an apple!

SNYDER: What time was school over?

REAVES: Well, that varied. In the lower grades, school was out about 2:00 or 2:30. Then, as we got older, we stayed in class longer.

SNYDER: Now, you had to cross Main Street?

REAVES: Yes. That was no problem in those days. Of course, we had to look out for wagons -- horses and wagons. There were a few cars, but not very many.

SNYDER: You had recess?

REAVES: Yes, we had half an hour recess.

SNYDER: What did you do then?

REAVES: Well, we played hopscotch, statue and farmer-in-the-dell. We used to have some small dolls, and we took these tiny dolls to school with us. One thing, as we got older . . . possibly in the third grade . . . we had these 'Penny Poppy Shows.' Only you gave pins instead of pennies.

SNYDER: How did those work?

REAVES: Well, we took an old shoe box and cut a hole in the front and covered the top of it with colored paper. We didn't have cellophane in those days so it had to be some different type of paper -- usually crepe paper or celluloid. Inside, you decorated it like a room and put little characters in there. You would charge a pin to look in this little opening. Sometimes I would go home with a lot of pins; sometimes I wouldn't have too many. (she laughs)

SNYDER: Who helped you with your studies? Or did you need help?

REAVES: Well, I guess I needed help, but we didn't have homework to do like they have now. Not until we got into the upper classes. We spent the whole time studying in school. We had certain time for each study and we accomplished that in school.

SNYDER: Let's talk about some of the other grades and teachers.
Second, third?

REAVES: Well, for my second grade, I had Mary Brown for my teacher.
For the third grade was Josie Colehauer. In the fourth grade
I had Tacy Dempsey. That's when I moved to the 'old' Primary
School that they moved to the back of the school lot. I
was only there for one grade. It was really a fire trap at
that time. Of course, we had fire drills every week, I believe.
At least it seemed that often.

SNYDER: Did you have to line up and salute the flag?

REAVES: Yes. I can't recall doing that in the lower grades.

SNYDER: Did you ever have to stay after school?

REAVES: Yes. (she laughs) I can't remember staying after school
in any grade until after I got into the fourth grade. Tacy
Dempsey kept me after school one night until about dark, and
I began to cry. She had some figures on the blackboard.
She made a zero like a six, and I had mistaken it for the
wrong figure. Finally we got it squared away.

SNYDER: Irma, describe what Mintie White looked like. How did she
differ from other teachers? Or was she typical?

REAVES: No, I would say she was a little different than most of
them. She was a very kind person. The others were also.
She had a full face and a full figure. As I remember, she
dressed mostly in white. She was . . . I wouldn't say
'stern' . . . but, she had her ways of expressing herself.

SNYDER: Firm, maybe?

REAVES: Possibly. But, she was a wonderful teacher.

SNYDER: What about your second grade teacher, Lucy Brown?

REAVES: Mary Brown.

SNYDER: Mary Brown . . . what was she like?

REAVES: A spinster. She had real pretty auburn hair, and she wore it in a 'pug.' She had pretty sparkling brown eyes, and I would say medium build.

SNYDER: And Miss Colehauer?

REAVES: Josie Colehauer. She was rather tall -- a slender woman with salt and pepper colored hair. A heart of gold! She was a very sweet person.

SNYDER: And Tacy Dempsey?

REAVES: Tacy Dempsey had beautiful white hair and blue eyes. Tacy came from Pennsylvania, and by the time we left the fourth grade, we knew more about Pennsylvania than we did of California. She told us all about the coal mines and about different places in Pennsylvania. She always talked about Pennsylvania. She was a strict teacher, and I got my hands slapped with a ruler a couple of times.

SNYDER: Did you ever have to stay after school?

REAVES: Yes. That was when she put the numbers on the board and an "O" looked like a six. I couldn't figure out that problem.

SNYDER: What did you do at recess? Did you play with the boys?

REAVES: No. The girls weren't allowed to play with the boys. There was a wall -- a wooden fence, a solid fence -- between the boys' side and the girls' play yard. The drinking fountain and the washbasin were on the back porch.

SNYDER: And toilets?

REAVES: The toilets were separate. As I remember, they were separate from the building. There was a big stairway going up the back of the building.

SNYDER: Were there teams that played after school? Intramural?

REAVES: No, not in those grades. At least I can't recall.

SNYDER: Who was your fifth grade teacher?

REAVES: My fifth grade teacher was Myrtle Byrd.

SNYDER: What did she look like?

REAVES: Well, she was a very pretty woman. She had pretty hair and very 'chic.' Her features weren't as pretty as some of the teachers.

SNYDER: And your sixth grade teacher?

REAVES: My sixth grade teacher was Arvilla Barrett, and she had salt and pepper colored hair. She wore it sort of loose with a 'pug' on the top. Rather tall person.

SNYDER: And the seventh grade teacher?

REAVES: My seventh grade teacher was a beautiful woman. Her name was Edna Andersen. She dressed very smart. She married Leo Regan, the druggist.

SNYDER: I wondered if any of the teachers were married and if they had children in the school with you.

REAVES: Most were spinsters.

SNYDER: And your eighth grade teacher?

REAVES: She was a spinster also -- Mary Zmudowski.

SNYDER: What was she like?

REAVES: Well, she was, I would say, very masculine. A big, tall, sturdy woman, and she wore her hair slicked back in a 'pug.'

On our first day in school, her greeting was, "If you keep your ears open and your eyes open and your mouth shut, we'll get along beautifully!"

- SNYDER: Did any of these teachers rule with a ruler?
- REAVES: Yes! (she laughs)
- SNYDER: Which ones?
- REAVES: Tacy Dempsey did. I got the ruler on my hand a couple of times. And Miss Zmudowski. Those are the only two that I can recall. Miss Zmudowski never quit with the ruler.
- SNYDER: Miss Zmudowski?
- REAVES: Well, I believe her greetings didn't set too well with the class because the boys in her room gave her a bad time. They put a mouse in her desk once or twice, tacks in her chair . . . oh, various things that boys will do. I don't know . . . some of the girls might have done it also. However, the boys tormented the life out of her. In fact, she promised me a shaking from the first day I was there, but I never got it! My folks knew her real well. (she laughs) But, she did move me over to the boys' side of the room. She thought she was reprimanding me by doing so. She was really tough on the boys. She took them and shook them and knocked their heads against the blackboard. If she had done that today, there would have been quite a disturbance. Possibly there should be more teachers like her.
- SNYDER: Did she ever use a razor strap?
- REAVES: No, I can't recall her ever using a razor strap. She never had a husband, so she probably never had a strap. (she laughs)
- SNYDER: Do you remember parents visiting school?
- REAVES: Not very often. Of course, on holidays or when we had entertainment the parents would be there. But not discussing school . . . the report card told everything.

SNYDER: Did you have special Christmas programs?

REAVES: Yes.

SNYDER: In the grammar schools?

REAVES: Not as many in the upper grades as in the lower grades.

SNYDER: Did parents come?

REAVES: Yes.

SNYDER: Tell me what your desk looked like.

REAVES: Well, of course, the desks were small in the lower grades. If I remember right, some of the desks had seats that were attached to the desk behind with a little ink well in the corner. Underneath the top of the desk was a little shelf in which to keep the books.

SNYDER: What about rainy weather? Did you have an umbrella?

REAVES: Oh, yes. Everybody had an umbrella in those days -- even the boys. We had raincoats and wore rubbers over our shoes. The teachers always made us take the rubbers off in class because it wasn't good to wear rubbers over the shoes. It caused rheumatism.

SNYDER: What about students in your class? Did the pupils who were in the first grade stay with you up through the eighth, or did half of them move away?

REAVES: Well, I would say that less than half stayed with the class.

SNYDER: What about the reading room? Did everybody in the room read the same book at the same time? Did you read aloud?

REAVES: Yes, we did. We all read at the same time. The teachers would call on us to stand up and read a certain number of paragraphs. Of course, we had to keep track and pay attention to what we were doing. If we lost track of our place in the book, we were kept after school, in some cases.

SNYDER: What do you remember about having homework?

REAVES: I don't remember having too much homework in the lower grades. In fact, I can't recall doing any homework in the lower grades. In the upper grades, we had homework for spelling, arithmetic and some English. Also for history and geography.

SNYDER: Was math easy for you? Mathematics?

REAVES: No, that was my worst subject. The plain arithmetic wasn't bad, but when it got into other fields, then I didn't do too well. There were so many other subjects that I liked better.

SNYDER: What about books? Did you use the Watsonville Library?

REAVES: Yes. I took books home. Some of the books I took home I can remember -- the Pollyanna series. Oh, mostly girls' books.

BORG: Do you have any recollections of the Zmudowski family?

REAVES: Martin Zmudowski was the only boy. He was a butcher. Also, he was a friend of my father's. My mother used to go to the Rebekahs with the other two Zmudowski girls. I can't recall their names. Was one of them "Josie?" I don't know.

BORG: Would Martin be about the same age as your father?

REAVES: I would say yes. He may have been a little younger than my father.

SNYDER: Did they not live on First Street?

REAVES: They lived on Second Street. They had a big, two-story home on Second Street.

BORG: Were there any other brothers and sisters of the Zmudowski family?

REAVES: Not that I know of. There were three sisters and Martin. Mary and two sisters -- I can't recall their names. But, they were friends of my mother's. They were the ones that used to go to the Rebekah Lodge. Mother would go with them.

SNYDER: One was Dora?

REAVES: Dora, yes. Dora Zmudowski. The other one was Josie.

BORG: The parents' names? Do we recall those?

REAVES: No, I don't think the parents were living when I was small. If they were, it was when I was very small.

BORG: Did any of those sisters or the brother marry?

REAVES: Not that I know of. I'm sure that they didn't.

BORG: What business had their father been in? Zmudowski Beach State Park -- it's out in the Springfield District -- I was wondering if that had been their farm land.

REAVES: I don't know. I was wondering that myself because that was named later. I should recall the year.

BORG: She might have bought it herself.

REAVES: It could be. I think they had plenty of money as far as that part is concerned.

SNYDER: I know she owned it because she donated that to the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. That was in her will.

(END OF SIDE B OF TAPE 1.)

The following is a recording of a second interview with Irma Oksen Reaves made on May 22, 1985, at the Reaves home, 1184 Green Valley Road, Watsonville, California. Arrangements for this interview were made by the Oral History Committee, which is jointly sponsored by the American Association of University Women, Watsonville Branch, and the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. Alzora Snyder, Volck Museum Archivist, is the interviewer.

SNYDER: Irma, yesterday we did talk about your childhood, but I wondered today whether you had any other thoughts about things that you remembered.

REAVES: Well, I had a very happy childhood. My parents, I would say, were fairly strict, and they knew where we children were and where we were going at all times. One thing I remember about my early childhood was (when) I was about six years old. My folks bought me a Chautauqua Board.

SNYDER: What's that?

REAVES: It's a scroll with a desk underneath it, and it hung on the wall. On each side of the scroll were two knobs. These knobs turned the scroll. There were various things . . . pictures to draw and copy, writing, and animals . . . oh, just everything imaginable! It was very educational.

Another thing I remember were the tramps and hobos. Also gypsies that used to come to our back door. I don't know the difference between the tramps and the hobos, but I believe one of them worked and the other just asked for something to eat. They put a sign on a picket fence or something because the same ones came back each year.

SNYDER: How close was your house to the railroad tracks?

REAVES: We only lived a block from the railroad tracks, but that didn't matter. They were everywhere. (she laughs) However, one time my mother fixed a bologna sandwich for this fellow. He didn't ask for work, but he wanted something to eat. She fixed this sandwich. When she handed it to him, she gave him a cup of coffee . . . had the sandwich wrapped up nicely in wax paper. He opened the sandwich, and he said, "Huh! Bologna!" and he walked away. (she laughs) That cured my mother from handing out sandwiches.

REAVES: We lived about a block from the railroad tracks. I can remember the flagman coming out everytime a train went to pass and holding up a red sign . . . a stop sign. He was very clever at carving things. He'd carve chains out of one piece of wood.

We kiddies used to like to put nails on the tracks and let the trains run over them. Then we'd make rings and various things out of them.

We walked to school. We walked about a mile . . . my brothers and I. We had no transportation except on rainy days when our daddy would take us to school. There were about three different routes that I took. One of them was up First Street to Main, then down Main to East Lake where the Primary School was located. The other was up Second Street, and another was up Third Street. When I came to the corner of West Lake and Rodriguez, I would cut across a lot where the old Christian Church used to be.

SNYDER: What did the Christian Church look like?

REAVES: Well, it was a wooden structure and it was quite old . . . sort of a tan color.

SNYDER: Did you ever attend that church?

REAVES: No, I didn't, but I do believe . . . I'm not sure . . . that that one burned down. Either burned down or it was torn down. And the new stone church was built on Alexander and East Lake.

SNYDER: Did any of your relatives attend that Christian Church?

REAVES: Yes. Magnus Oksen, my uncle, and his family attended. In fact, he was choir leader at this stone church.

There was a little girl that lived across the street from me. She and I used to go to school each day together. We'd have our nickels and pennies saved up, and we'd stop at Martin's Grocery on the corner of Main and West Lake and buy our 'all-day' suckers. On the way home, we stopped at Buckhart's Candy Store. Her sister worked at Buckhart's, and so we were quite well known there. We stopped there every day, and Mrs. Buckhart would hand us a piece of candy. Our next stop was at Quinn's Butcher Shop. When he saw us coming, he always took a weenie out of the case. However, we didn't dare loiter too long, or our parents would worry.

At school, we didn't have P.E. in the lower grades. We did have many different activities -- 'ring around the rosie' and 'drop the handkerchief' and 'statue' and 'tag' and 'farmer in the dell' and jump rope. We used to say, "Bean porridge hot, bean porridge cold, bean porridge in the pot, nine days old" and jump into the rope. While we were jumping rope, we would say, "salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard, cedar, cider, HOT," and when they'd come to 'HOT', they'd turn it real fast. You really had to jump! Then, there was a double rope . . . that was a little more difficult, but we mastered it.

The skating rink on Second Street . . . that was quite a favorite place for the youngsters to go . . . particularly on Saturdays. Sometimes after school, too. I took many a spill there. Also, in that same building, the auditorium, the Brown and Curry Revival meetings would hold their meetings every year.

SNYDER: Did your folks go?

REAVES: Yes, my mother would take us children. In fact, that was where I first gave my heart to the Lord. We looked forward to those meetings.

On a lot next to the auditorium is where the Wilbur Players came to put on plays each year. It would be about three or four days of the same play. I can remember one play distinctly . . . "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Of course, all the girls had eyes for the leading man who was very handsome.

BORG: Was that outside?

REAVES: It was in a big tent.

When I was smaller, shortly after my brother was born, my mother missed me one day. She looked down First Street, and she saw me jumping from the gutter into the street, back and forth. My daddy had his livery stable and hack barn on First Street near Main Street . . . about a half a block from Main Street. I was heading up there to see my daddy, my 'Papa.' My mother didn't know what to do. She couldn't leave my brother because he was small. Harry Bridgewater was the postman at that time. He came along on his bicycle, and she asked him if he would please pick up her little girl because she was afraid of the beet wagons that were going up and down the street. So, he went up First Street and gave me a ride home on the handlebars of his bicycle. Unfortunately, I don't remember it. (she laughs) I was about two and a half years old.

SNYDER: Now, you spoke about the beet wagons, and I know that the factory . . . where was the factory?

REAVES: Well, the factory was built right next to my grandmother's home on Walker Street. It was between my grandmother's home and Kearney Street.

SNYDER: O.K., did your mother work outside the home?

REAVES: No, she didn't. She had many things to do at home. Each day she had certain chores, certain duties that she had to do.

SNYDER: How did you get those pennies and nickels that you spent at Martin's Grocery? Did you have an allowance?

REAVES: Well, I wouldn't call it an 'allowance,' but whenever we wanted something, my folks would give us money for certain things.

SNYDER: Now, tell me a little more about your grandmother Schanbacher. I see that she remarried.

REAVES: After several years, she married a nice man from Switzerland. His name was Carl Kuehnis. He had no children. He had not been married before, as far as I know, but they had two children in that union.

SNYDER: What were the names of those children?

REAVES: Bertha Kuehnis, who later married Frank Beazell, and Eugene Kuehnis. He was an electrician. In fact, he's the one that wired the T & D Theatre in Watsonville.

SNYDER: Did you ever have a nickname?

REAVES: Yes. (she laughs) When I lived at Tassajara with my folks up to the time when I was two years old, everybody called me "Tassy."

SNYDER: Why?

REAVES: Because I was a Tassajara baby. I was conceived there.

SNYDER: O.K. I think that we'll move along to your high school days now.

REAVES: Do you want to hear about the floods?

SNYDER: Tell me about the floods.

REAVES: Well, I don't remember the 1907 flood, naturally, and I have a very faint remembrance of the 1911 flood when the Salsipuedes Creek overflowed. We were living on Riverside Road at that time. Then, there was the 1914 flood, and, I believe, 1922 and '38. The last one I remember was 1955. I was nursing at that time. I had just gotten off a case and went down to the Veterans' Hall to help out. My husband and my boys were helping at the levee. A man came up to me and asked me if I could deliver a baby. I said, "Well, I've never done so, but I could sure try if it was necessary." But, it so happened I didn't have to do that.

Floods were quite a thing in my childhood. I know my parents didn't look forward to them, but we kiddies had a lot of fun . . . we'd build rafts and float around in the water.

It was rather a sad situation after the water went down because the ground was covered with silt, and if the water got in the houses, it just ruined the carpets.

However, Oscar Brugler worked at the powerhouse on lower Walker Street, near the river. Whenever the river crested or the levee broke, he would always blow the whistle -- the powerhouse whistle -- to warn the people about the floods.

SNYDER: Irma, when you went to high school, were you required to dress in a certain manner?

REAVES: No. At one time, they wore white 'middies' and skirts, I believe. But, not when I attended.

I didn't take a four-year high school course. I took a four-year 'commercial course.' That was shorthand, typing, business arithmetic, bookkeeping, spelling and penmanship, and so on. I was happy that I had signed up for the four-year commercial course in preference to the high school course because it came in handy later on.

SNYDER: Tell me who some of your teachers were.

REAVES: Art was my favorite subject, and I had Miss Sarah Waite. She was a dear little old lady. I also had Miss Spaulding, Mr. Munson, Mr. Forkner, Miss Palmer, Miss Flaucher. I can't remember my math teacher's name, but he sat in front of the class and read the Sacramento Bee all morning. I think that's one reason I didn't like math because I really didn't get the fundamental parts of it. Of course, Fay Briggs, too . . . I can't recall her maiden name.

SNYDER: Armstrong.

REAVES: Fay Armstrong, that's it. All four years that I was in high school, she was our P.E. teacher.

Like I say, I liked art the best.

SNYDER: What about the boys . . . were they required to take P.E. or some military training?

REAVES: Yes, the boys took P.E., but they didn't have military training at that time. I think it was right after World War I that they had a militia in high school and the boys were in uniform.

Another subject that I liked real well was Glee Club.

SNYDER: You sang?

REAVES: Yes. I loved that. We would put on plays for the public and different programs, and they were very successful.

In P.E. we had about half an hour each day of calisthenics. After that we could choose whatever we wanted to do. Of course, there was basketball, volleyball, hockey, tennis, and baseball. In my second year of high school, I was chosen as one of the girls' softball players on the baseball team. We had a lot of fun going from one town to another playing the different teams.

SNYDER: How far did you go?

REAVES: Oh, Monterey, Salinas, Santa Cruz, and Gilroy . . . not too far. We went by bus. Of course, we would reciprocate, and we always had refreshments for them afterwards.

I can remember the tug-of-war. I believe it was the Freshmen and Sophomores that had it each year.

SNYDER: In the mud?

REAVES: In the mud. A big puddle of mud in the center of the athletic field. A big rope with the Freshmen on one end and the Sophomores on the other. Whichever team pulled the opposite team through the mud was the winner.

SNYDER: Do you remember feeling that there were 'cliques' in the high school?

REAVES: Well, I guess you'd call them 'cliques.'

SNYDER: Groups?

REAVES: Groups that would pair off.

SNYDER: How did you wear your hair in those days? In high school?

REAVES: Well, my folks never wanted me to cut my hair, because short hair wasn't as common then as it is now. They used what were called 'rats' that were made of hair. Women put them on the side of their head and then pulled their own hair over them, to cover the 'rats.' These were called 'puffs,' and they were 'in!' You also had a 'bun' in the back. You could spruce it up anyway that you wanted it. But, I never cut my hair until I was eighteen.

SNYDER: Which high school teacher influenced you the most?

REAVES: Well, that's hard to say. My drawing teacher had a great influence on me and also my shorthand and typing teacher, Miss Palmer. Also Mr. Forkner, my bookkeeping and business arithmetic teacher . . . I guess that's all he taught. I didn't

have Mr. Munson for many subjects. He was used, more or less, as a substitute teacher for our class.

SNYDER: What do you remember about parties in your high school life?

REAVES: Well, there were quite a few private parties that we went to. Of course, there was the Prom. The Junior Prom was a lot of fun, but after awhile some of the boys broke in and took the refreshments and caused a disturbance.

SNYDER: Was there any punishment attached to that?

REAVES: I really couldn't tell you. I don't know. We didn't get it! (she laughs)

SNYDER: Were there any Halloween parties?

REAVES: No, I can't recall any Halloween parties. There probably were, but I can't recall any particular ones. We had barn dances, mostly private ones.

SNYDER: What did the high school girls wear in P.E.?

REAVES: They wore white 'middie' blouses and black bloomers. We had a limited time to go from one building to the other. When we were in the 'new' high school building, we had to rush to get upstairs in the 'old' high school building where our lockers were located, and change, and get down on the field before the second bell rang. Outside of that . . . we wore tennis shoes, of course.

SNYDER: After P.E. class, were there showers for you?

REAVES: We didn't have showers in our days. We took our showers at home. (she laughs) If we had showers at home! It was usually a bathtub.

SNYDER: What made you decide to take a four-year commercial course instead of a regular course? Did someone advise you to do that?

- REAVES: No, I don't think so. I just decided myself that I would, and that it would be more beneficial to me in later years. I am happy that I did that. In fact, after I finished high school I went to work for Sheehy and Cumming Brokerage. I was a stenographer there. I didn't have to do the bookkeeping. I didn't particularly care for bookkeeping. Leanore Perry was the bookkeeper. She had been with them for a number of years.
- SNYDER: Where were they located?
- REAVES: They were located on Main Street across from the Fox Theatre, upstairs.
- SNYDER: About how long did you work there?
- REAVES: I didn't work there too long . . . probably six months or so. I became engaged and decided to work in the apples. I could make a little more money in the apples before I got married. (she laughs)
- SNYDER: Which apple company did you work for?
- REAVES: Oh, I have to stop and think. Kusanovich was his name.
- SNYDER: Let me go back to the high school. You went to the Junior Prom. Where was that held?
- REAVES: Well, as I remember, it was held in the new high school building. I know there were seats in the auditorium, but there was space enough between the seats and the stage to dance. Of course, there weren't as many students then as there are now.
- SNYDER: What did you do in the summertime when you were a child? And, in high school, did you work?
- REAVES: Yes, all of us kids did. I don't mean my brothers, but all the girls my age worked. I worked for Heinz Catsup factory stacking bottles one summer. I worked hulling strawberries one summer. I worked in the apples . . . on a machine paring apples . . . I guess you'd call that place the 'dryer.'

SNYDER: Do you remember the name of the strawberry place?

REAVES: No, I don't, but it was on Walker Street. Of course, pitting 'cots was great fun for all the youngsters.

SNYDER: Where did you do that?

REAVES: Well, we did pit 'cots in Aromas for Seeley's. We'd camp out there for a couple of weeks.

SNYDER: Were your parents with you camping there?

REAVES: My mother and my brothers, and then there would be other families. Glendawyn Cox, her two brothers and her mother were with us one year. In the evenings, we would all hike down to the Aromas dam and swim.

There was a big pitting shed . . . I believe it was Copriviza's pitting shed . . . on Pine Street where we used to pit 'cots, also.

SNYDER: Irma, when you worked in the apples, do you remember how much money you earned?

REAVES: As I recall, I think I made thirty-five cents an hour.

SNYDER: How long was your day?

REAVES: Well, there may have been shorter days, but I remember sometimes I'd work ten hours. It would just depend on the supply.

SNYDER: Do you remember how much they paid you for pitting apricots?

REAVES: As far as I can remember . . . way back then . . . I think it was ten cents a box. It wasn't bad if the 'cots were large, but sometimes we got little peewee ones.

SNYDER: How long was your day in the office with Sheehy and Cumming? Was that nine to five?

REAVES: Yes.

SNYDER: O.K. Now, I want to ask you a little bit about the butcher shops. Did your father work for the Tuttle Company?

REAVES: My father worked for the Tuttle Company, but not in the shop.

SNYDER: Where.

REAVES: He worked at the slaughterhouse. He was working at the slaughter house before he went into his own hack business. He was in the hack business working for, as I said before, 'Daddy Baeur,' B-A-E-U-R. My father and Mr. Kennedy bought out . . . I'm not sure, but I think it was . . . Mr. Hansen. After Papa left the slaughter house, he went into the hack business with Mr. Kennedy. They had their barns and livery stable, as I said, about half a block from Main Street.

SNYDER: Did they have an office on Main Street?

REAVES: No, they didn't have an office, but they had hack stands. One of them was at Lovering's Cigar Store, and the other was at Martin's Cigar Store.

SNYDER: Where were these two cigar stores?

REAVES: Lovering's Store was on the corner of Second and Main, and Martin's was on Main, I believe next door to Krough's Drug Store. They had, I would say, about five or six hacks. On some of them, the driver had to ride on the outside. I think there was one where they were enclosed, more or less. All vehicles required a team of horses.

SNYDER: They used horses?

REAVES: Yes. They had their own horses -- about eight or ten horses, or better. I can't remember.

I can see my dad, yet, polishing those hacks for weddings and funerals. Of course, they met all the trains at Pajaro Junction, and at the depot at Watsonville.

- SNYDER: Can you remember what years these would be? How old were you? About what years was your father in the taxi business?
- REAVES: In the hack business, you mean? I believe it was 1911 when he and Mr. Kennedy went into partnership together. They were in the hack business until automobiles became popular. Then it was 'taxi business.'
- SNYDER: What do you remember about their first automobile?
- REAVES: The first automobile I had ever seen?
- SNYDER: Yes.
- REAVES: The first electric car I ever saw was Dr. Bixby's. I believe the first automobile I ever rode in was a Buick sedan, with no doors.
- SNYDER: Do you remember what kind of car Kennedy and Oksen bought?
- REAVES: One of the first ones they had was a Winton limousine.
- SNYDER: Winton limousine?
- REAVES: Winton limousine. Also, a Thomas and a Studebaker. Then, they had several Model T Fords -- touring cars. Also, Moon-Kessel and Franklin.
- SNYDER: Did they buy those in Watsonville?
- REAVES: No, they had to order them, and my father would go to San Francisco and bring them home.
- SNYDER: You mentioned two hack stands on Main Street. Where were those located?

REAVES: Lovering's was on the corner of Second and Main, and Martin's Barber Shop & Cigar Store was the other stand that was next to Krough's Drugstore, near Third which is 'Beach Street' now.

SNYDER: About how many years was your father in the hack business?

REAVES: In the hack and taxi business, altogether?

SNYDER: When did he quit the taxi business?

REAVES: Well, my father passed away in November of 1924. He was in the business up until the time he passed on. He was in the business from 1911 until 1924.

SNYDER: Oh, he was? He didn't butcher again?

REAVES: No.

SNYDER: Alright, we'll move on to some of the other businesses along Main Street. Did you ever go to the T & D Theatre?

REAVES: Oh, yes.

SNYDER: Was there any other theatre?

REAVES: The first theatre I had ever gone to was the Lyric on Main Street. I can remember the picture I saw, but I can't remember too much about it. It was called "Baby Violet."

At the time the T & D Theatre was there, I can't recall another theatre in Watsonville.

SNYDER: You mentioned Mrs. Buckhart giving you candy. Did they not have a wagon?

REAVES: Yes. Mrs. Buckhart asked my brother about getting a wagon and driving for them and selling Buckhart's ice cream. So, my dad bought a wagon and painted it. I painted the signs on the sides. I guess my brother was about fourteen or fifteen years old when he sold Buckhart's ice cream out of his wagon. He'd drive around town. He had a little hand bell, and all the little kiddies would come running

out after an ice cream cone. There were eight sleighbells on the horse's harness. These bells could be heard for a block away.

BORG: Which brother?

SNYDER: Oh, it was my older brother, James, "Jimmy."

(END OF SIDE A OF TAPE)

SNYDER: Irma, what do you remember about the Volck Company?

REAVES: Their office was on Walker Street. I remember after Edna Flath graduated she worked in the office for a number of years. My folks' home was on the corner of First and Locust. Behind the house, we had a large barn and a chicken yard on the side. Behind the chicken yard, my folks had about half an acre, or better, of land which they usually planted in potatoes and various kinds of berries. My dad sold this piece of land to Volck Chemical Company. He never did say so, but I believe he was sorry after he did because it was a terrible stinking mess. It was terrible! Volck built a big wooden fence on Locust Street so you couldn't see this big puddle of green scum on this half acre . . . green and yellow. (she laughs)

SNYDER: Do you remember the Universal Hotel?

REAVES: Yes, I do.

SNYDER: What memories do you have of that?

REAVES: The only memory that I have of the Universal and the Roma Hotel is walking past there, going to school and coming from school.

SNYDER: What about the lumber company that White and Dehart operated?

REAVES: I can remember a big fire that occurred in the lumberyard.

SNYDER: Where were they located?

REAVES: They were located on Second and Walker, on the railroad tracks.

It reached almost to First Street -- the lumber company. During the fire, we all went down to the packing house on the corner of First and Walker and sat on the steps and watched the poor old lumberyard burn down. It really made a big fire. This was during the night.

SNYDER: Were there any Chinese dryers operating?

REAVES: I am sure there were, but I can't recall the names.

SNYDER: What do you remember about baseball parks in Watsonville?

REAVES: The one I remember mainly is the park that belonged to my grandmother. It was called the Schanbacher Park. It was on the corner of Ford and Walker Streets, adjoining the tannery. That was used for baseball and for various other things. When the circus came to town, they pitched their tent there. They rented the property. Also carnivals. The grandstand was catty-corner on Walker and Ford Streets, for viewing the ball games.

SNYDER: Do you remember the band concerts?

REAVES: Oh, yes. They were great fun. We looked forward to them every Saturday night during the summer. We kiddies would have so much fun playing. Of course, our mother always went with us, and she met friends there that she knew.

SNYDER: Where was this?

REAVES: In the Plaza. After the band concert, my daddy always took us home in his taxi. We often had an ice cream soda before we went home.

SNYDER: Did your family go on picnics?

REAVES: Yes, we used to picnic quite a lot. One of our main picnic areas was Werner's Hill. We also used to have May Day picnics at Thompson's Grove in the foothills.

SNYDER: Why did you go out to Werner's Hill?

REAVES: Well, it was just a beautiful place. We'd hike out to Werner's Hill and picnic. We always came home with big bouquets of Johnny-jump-ups. (They were like a small yellow and brown pansy.)

SNYDER: You'd walk?

REAVES: Oh, yes! We even took walks out there on Sunday afternoons. My mother was a wonderful chaperone, and they always wanted her to chaperone us. They didn't want a chaperone, but we always had to have one.

SNYDER: What about camping? Where did you camp?

REAVES: Well, Tassajara was our main place that we camped practically every year. We also camped at Hihns Timber, up on the top of Eureka Canyon. There was a real large lake up there that they claim was made during the 1906 earthquake. We used to go boating on that lake.

We didn't camp at Camp Goodall, but my folks rented a cottage there one year, and we were there for a couple of weeks. We were also at Port Watsonville. We rented a cottage from Frank Oliver at Port Watsonville one year.

SNYDER: Do you remember any Apple Annuals?

REAVES: Yes. I don't remember the first one in 1910, but I remember the others. It was really a gala event. They had beautiful parades, floats of all descriptions. The main float, on which Queen Ruby rode, had a large white eagle. My cousin, Viola Oksen, was one of the attendants who stood under one wing of the eagle. Norine Kane stood under the other wing. The Queen had two pages who stood beside her, by her throne.

SNYDER: Do you remember anything about Moss Landing?

REAVES: Yes, I remember that we always had to travel through Moss Landing to get to Salinas in the early days. There was a little dirt road that took off to the right of the main road, and I remember the wharf leading out to the water. On one side, before you came to the turn to the wharf, there was a post office and a grocery store. I believe Mr. Day ran the grocery store; I'm not sure. On our way home from our camping trip to Tassajara, we always stopped with the horses and wagon at Moss Landing for our last camp. My dad and the boys would always fish. It was always terribly foggy. It seemed like everytime we got there in the summertime it was very, very foggy.

During World War II, there was a regiment of colored soldiers that was camped in the cemetery. I thought that was rather queer. It was in the Castroville Cemetery, near Moss Landing.

SNYDER: What about the whaling?

REAVES: That's another story. My father took us over to Moss Landing to see a whale when they brought one in one time. We watched them cut it up. The men ran over the top of the whale and slashed it. The blood oozed out. But, that wasn't the worst part of it. The smell that we got in our classrooms at school was terrible. However, we also got a delightful smell from the Heinz Catsup factory. That was a really nice odor. (she laughs) Garlic!

SNYDER: What do you know about the Y.M.C.A. in Watsonville?

REAVES: I thought the old Y.M.C.A. building was rather unique. When I was a youngster, I presume about eight years old, they had a 'Girls' Day,' and all the girls could swim there in the pool. That's where I first learned to swim. I don't remember who my instructor was.

SNYDER: Where was the 'Y' located?

REAVES: It was located on Main Street, across from Jefsen Apartments.

SNYDER: What can you tell me about World War I?

REAVES: Not too much. I remember my mother taking me down to the Watsonville Depot. There was a trophy train there. I had my little camera, and I took a couple of pictures. One was of the soldier boys, and the other picture was of the tank that they had on the trophy train.

SNYDER: Were any of your family in World War I?

REAVES: No.

SNYDER: Do you remember anything about Chinatown? Did you ever go there?

REAVES: Only driving past. I don't remember too much about it. However, I have seen the Chinese walking down Main Street. I

thought their shoes were quite odd. Chinatown was taboo in my day because, I believe, they had opium dens over there. It was across the bridge. In the early days, the men wore their hair in queues, a braid down their backs.

SNYDER: Did you ever know any colored folks?

REAVES: I didn't know them personally, but, as far as I know, at one time there was only one in Watsonville. I believe his name was Mr. Johnson. He had a shoe shining stand next to Lovering's Cigar Store. He was everybody's friend.

SNYDER: When do you first remember listening to the radio?

REAVES: Oh, I guess when we had our first radio. I must have been about nineteen or twenty. It had a big round speaker. I think it was an Atwater Kent, if I remember right.

SNYDER: Can you tell me anything about Prohibition? Did that affect your family in any way?

REAVES: Oh, no. I'm sorry I can't tell you much about that.

SNYDER: Was there liquor in your parents' home?

REAVES: No. The only time there was liquor in my parents' home was when my dad went to an Odd Fellows' meeting, and they had beer and sandwiches for their refreshments. He would bring a small bottle of beer and a cheese sandwich home to treat my mother. Of course, being German, she did drink the beer. (she laughs)

SNYDER: What about your grandparents? Did they have beer in their home?

REAVES: I can't recall that they had beer. I think that they had wine.

SNYDER: You mentioned awhile back that you became engaged after you had worked a short time. To whom did you become engaged?

REAVES: At that time I fell madly in love with my first husband, and I think the feeling was mutual. It was love at first sight. His name was Creston Aldridge.

SNYDER: Creston?

REAVES: Creston Aldridge.

SNYDER: Was he about your age?

REAVES: A little older.

SNYDER: Did you know him in school?

REAVES: No, I met him through a mutual friend.

SNYDER: Where was he from?

REAVES: He was born and raised in Browns Valley Canyon, Corralitos. He went to a trade School.

SNYDER: Tell me a little bit about his family or his life before you married him. Were they farmers?

REAVES: Yes, his father was a farmer. Of course, his mother was busy like the rest of the mothers, raising her family. There were five children.

SNYDER: What were some of their names? Your in-laws.

REAVES: Creston was the oldest. Then there was Spellman and Anna Belle. Margie, Franklin -- that's five.

SNYDER: When were you married to him?

REAVES: I was married on January 14, 1925.

SNYDER: Where did you live?

REAVES: We rented a little house in a court on Second Street. It was called "Woods' Court," and that was our first home.

SNYDER: What kind of work did he do?

REAVES: He was a mechanic. I can't recall the name of the garage that he was working for at that time.

SNYDER: Did you continue working?

REAVES: No.

SNYDER: When did you have your first child by Mr. Aldridge?

REAVES: Bobby was born April 15, 1926.

SNYDER: At home?

REAVES: Yes. He was born in Casserly District, in a little five-room house.

SNYDER: You had moved?

REAVES: Yes, we had moved out in the country. He was born in Casserly District at home. Dr. Koepke was the doctor. By the way, Dr. P.K. Watters was the doctor for all of my mother's children-- my brothers and myself.

SNYDER: Were they born at home?

REAVES: Yes, definitely!

SNYDER: Was there a hospital in Watsonville?

REAVES: Not that I remember. There was when Bobby was born, but not when I was a youngster, that I can remember. (I'm sure there must have been one, though.)

SNYDER: Would this be Dr. Watters' Hospital that you remember best?

REAVES: Yes.

SNYDER: Was there another hospital?

REAVES: Yes, I don't know whether very many people remember it, or not, but there was another hospital. This was approximately 1918, 1919. It was located on West Lake Avenue right opposite the church that I mentioned awhile ago.

SNYDER: West Lake and Rodriguez? Was that right?

REAVES: West Lake Avenue, yes.

SNYDER: I forgot to ask you about your Uncle Julius Schanbacher. What did he do?

REAVES: He was an electrician. He had an electric store on Main Street.

SNYDER: Did he have children?

REAVES: Yes, he had two children. George was the oldest and Olive was the girl.

SNYDER: Now, back to your first baby. Was it easy for you to take care of children? Had you had any training?

REAVES: No, but it was easy. It just came naturally. (she laughs) I love children. I think I inherited that from my mother and dad. They were both very, very fond of children.

SNYDER: Can you tell me a little bit about your first marriage?

REAVES: Unfortunately, my first marriage ended very sadly. After three and one-half years, my husband was killed in an automobile accident.

SNYDER: Were you with him?

REAVES: No, I was in San Francisco with my mother. She was hospitalized and wasn't expected to live.

SNYDER: Was anyone else involved in the accident?

REAVES: Yes, but he wasn't hurt very badly. He was knocked unconscious.

(END OF SIDE B OF TAPE # 2)

The following is a recording of a third interview with Irma Oksen Reaves made on May 28, 1985, at the Reaves home, 1184 Green Valley Road, Watsonville, California. Arrangements for this interview were made by the Oral History Committee, which is jointly sponsored by the American Association of University Women, Watsonville Branch, and the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. Alzora Snyder, Volck Museum Archivist, is the interviewer.

SNYDER: Let's go back to your high school days, Irma. You say that your parents were strict. What did you mean?

REAVES: Well, I would call it strict. As I said, my folks would not let me go out with boys alone. I always had a chaperone. Dad would pick me up in the car after parties. We had some parties in the church hall and some in private homes. But, they would allow boys to come to my house.

When I was a Sophomore, there was a boy in my drawing class that I was rather sweet on, and he kind of liked me, too. He asked me to go to a public dance with him at the Civic Auditorium. Oh, I was really thrilled! I went home and asked my mother if I could go. She said, "Well, it's O.K. with me, if you ask your dad." So, I asked my dad, and he said, "Well, Irma, if your mother goes with you, it's O.K." So, when the boy called to take me to the dance, I took my mother and my two brothers with me! (She laughs.) He never asked me to go anyplace after that. (Folks didn't have baby sitters in those days.)

SNYDER: That's too bad! How did you meet your first husband? How old were you?

REAVES: I was about sixteen . . . a Junior in high school . . . when I met Creston through a mutual friend, Bea Caudill. Right after I met him, there was a Christmas party in Corralitos, and he asked me to go to that party. Of course, I was in 'seventh heaven.' But, it ended up I had to take my mother with me, but I was proud to have her because she was a wonderful person.

I was engaged one year before I told my parents. I was so thrilled with my diamond ring. I used to look at it every night, but they didn't see it. We were both very much in love.

SNYDER: Where did you and Creston marry?

REAVES: Creston worked part-time for my dad. Mr Kennedy went blind,

and my dad had to take over his duties as taxi driver. We were married at my home on First Street. It was just a small wedding, a family wedding. The Aldridge family was there. I was very, very fond of them. They were lovely people.

My dad passed away just two months before our wedding. I wanted to postpone it, but my mother said, "No, it's bad luck to postpone a wedding." So, we got married, and we went to San Francisco on our honeymoon.

SNYDER: Did you have a shower? Did they do that in those days?

REAVES: Yes, I had two showers. Mostly linen and lingerie. But, it was not like today. We were happy with odds and ends to start housekeeping in those days. I had one set of good dishes and some pots and pans that were given to me, also quilts and comforters.

SNYDER: Did you have a hope chest?

REAVES: Oh, yes, I had worked on my hope chest for several years. I had it full. It was really a lot of fun setting up housekeeping.

SNYDER: Where did you set up your first housekeeping?

REAVES: Well, as I said before, we lived in Woods' Court at first.

SNYDER: Where was that?

REAVES: That was on Second Street, right near the Auditorium. Then, we moved to a five-room house in Casserly District when I became pregnant. That was about six months after we were married. Bobby . . . his name is Robert Creston . . . was born there in that Casserly home.

SNYDER: What year?

REAVES: That was April 15, 1926. My mother was ailing. She wasn't very well. We moved back to town and lived on Rodriguez and First Street so as to be near her. The house was owned by Mr. Riboni.

SNYDER: Today?

REAVES: I don't know about today. It's still there and in very good condition.

SNYDER: When did you and Creston think about buying a house?

REAVES: Well, our dream house . . . we thought about our dream house for some time. We were married two years before we bought a lot on Oregon Street and built our new home.

As I said, my mother was ailing, and she had to go to San Francisco for an operation. She was in a hospital for three weeks and very ill. At that time, we had sent for my husband and my brothers several times. We didn't expect her to live. I roomed up there near the hospital with an acquaintance of ours. I had little Bobby with me.

The day before my mother was ready to come home in the ambulance, Creston had bought a new, used convertible car to surprise me. He was going to come up and pick up Bobby and me.

On the way to see his folks in Browns Valley, he met a friend of ours. He asked this friend if he would like to ride up there with him to see his parents. Well, Creston knew Browns Valley Road very well. He was raised up there and knew each turn. He could drive it with his eyes closed. A car went to pass him on one of the curves. (Pacific Electric had just put in a pole on this curve.) As he went to pull the convertible out to let the car pass, he got in the soft dirt and was unable to turn back. His car turned over and went down an embankment and killed him instantly. I said before that this other friend wasn't hurt. He was knocked unconscious. As soon as he came to, he managed to crawl up the embankment and go for help.

SNYDER: Did your mother come back then from the hospital?

REAVES: We sent her to Sacramento to stay with my uncle for several months. She didn't know anything about Creston's accident for three months.

SNYDER: Do you have a date of that accident? Or, death of Creston?

REAVES: Yes. July 20, 1928, at seven P.M.

SNYDER: What did you do then? Did you come back home and live alone?

REAVES: I came back, and I stayed with my brothers. They were at the home place. I stayed with them and kept house for them and would run back and forth to Sacramento to see my mother.

SNYDER: I see that you remarried later. How long were you single?

REAVES: Well, it was almost a year before I dated. I had no interest in men. Bea, my friend, insisted that I go out with others and so she made a blind date for me with Ted Reaves. There were three couples that went to Santa Cruz that night to the Plunge. I dated others, but I had no interest in them. Ted was the only one I really cared for after that. I soon fell deeply in love with him. He was so good to me and to Bobby and to my mother.

I really had to make a new life for little Bobby and me. Ted would send me roses each weekend.

SNYDER: Was he a local boy?

REAVES: No, he was born in Indiana. He came to Watsonville when he was about seventeen years old. He lived with Dr. and Mrs. Herbert at that time and until we were married.

(In fact he still brings me bouquets.) He did something that very few men would do -- he would bring bouquets to me to take out to the cemetery to my first husband's grave. He also drove me there.

SNYDER: Tell me a little more about Ted. His family.

REAVES: Well, his mother and dad were divorced very early, when he was about nine years old. His mother came to California to be with her folks, and he lived there most of the time in Los Angeles . . . in that area.

SNYDER: Did he have brothers and sisters?

REAVES: He had one sister who was about two years older than he.

SNYDER: Did you work a little bit after Creston was killed and before you married Ted?

REAVES: Yes. When Woolworth's first opened, I worked in their store for a little while. Then, I worked for Montgomery Ward's when they first opened. I worked behind the cosmetics and jewelry counter.

Then, a little later, I managed the Moo Cow Ice Cream Parlor. I worked there about two months after we were married.

SNYDER: Where was the Moo Cow?

REAVES: It was on Main Street in the 400 block.

SNYDER: When did you and Ted marry? Can you give a date?

REAVES: Well, we met on April the 29th, 1929. We got married on October the 25th, 1930.

SNYDER: Were you married in your home?

REAVES: Neither of us was interested in a home wedding or a big wedding. So, we went to Carson City to be married. Another couple went with us. The four of us were married in a church in Carson City.

SNYDER: Who was the other couple?

REAVES: The other couple was my brother and his 'intended.'

SNYDER: Then, when you came back, where did you live? In the house that you were living in?

REAVES: Well, we lived with my mother in her house for several months. Then, we moved to our Oregon Street home. About that time I quit work.

SNYDER: Why did you quit work?

REAVES: Well, Ted wanted me to quit work. Then, it wasn't too long before I got pregnant with our baby, Gerald Theodore. We

called him "Jerry." He was born November 28, 1931. We were both so happy, and Bobby was so elated to have a little brother. He was five years old at the time.

Bobby was in first grade at Mintie White School. Several months after he was in school, he got the whooping cough. Well, a short time later the baby contracted it. In a few weeks, the baby's whooping cough developed into pneumonia. God took him home at the age of seven months. It was a very sad situation for us. It wasn't too long afterwards that I caught the whooping cough. The only childhood disease that I had had was chicken pox.

Ted was working at Dr. Herbert's ranch at that time, during the Depression. He didn't want to leave me alone during the day. I went out with Ted to work. When he left in the mornings, I went with him.

SNYDER: You nursed?

REAVES: Not at that time . . . no. I had the whooping cough, and that's why he hated to leave me along. Dr. Herbert offered to rent us a little cottage on the ranch in Amesti District. It was called Maluhia Ranch which meant "Place of Peace."

SNYDER: Was that an Hawaiian word?

REAVES: That's an Hawaiian word. That's where Dr. and Mrs. Herbert had come from -- Hawaii. Dr. Herbert used to be the head doctor in the Queen's Hospital in Hawaii for years.

SNYDER: Did you keep the house on Oregon Street?

REAVES: We rented it to two of our friends -- Doris and Everett Mollenhauer. They had just married in Washington and come to California. They lived there in the house for quite awhile.

SNYDER: Did you and Ted have any more children?

REAVES: Yes, we wanted another baby so badly. I could hardly wait, but Dr. Herbert told me it would be better if I waited at least six months. So, God gave us another little baby boy on August 12, 1933. We were so very happy. We named him Ronald Theodore, and we called him "Ronnie."

I can't explain just how happy Bobby was to have another baby brother. He called him "Skippy," and that name stuck with him.

All my babies were born at home or at my mother's house. Ronnie was about a year old when Mrs. Herbert passed on, and Dr. Herbert wanted us to move into the big house with him and his son, Charles. Bobby entered Amesti School for several years.

SNYDER: Irma, where on Oregon Street was the house?

REAVES: Well, our house number was 545 Oregon Street. In fact, we had the only house on that . . . no, there was another one. Mrs. McKenzie had a house on the corner at that time. There was a real large house across the street from us on the corner, which belonged to the Apperson family. The rest was apple orchard.

SNYDER: Now, is that where you were living when you got the whooping cough? When you would go out to Dr. Herbert's ranch?

REAVES: Yes, we were living on Oregon Street. That's before we rented the house in Amesti District from Dr. Herbert.

SNYDER: Did you go to a physician for your whooping cough?

REAVES: Well, I didn't. Of course, Dr. Herbert was more or less a 'built-in physician' for us. But, he did call in Dr. Marshall in regard to our baby's illness when he first came down with it. I suggested giving the baby whooping cough shots, and Dr. Herbert said, "Well, these shots are just coming out now, and they don't know too much about them." He said, "Let's put it this way. If it was my child, I would not give him the shots."

SNYDER: Did he recover?

REAVES: No, our baby died.

SNYDER: Tell me a little more about Dr. Herbert's house. Where was it located?

REAVES: It was located on the left side of Amesti Road, directly across from Mann Avenue. The driveway that led into the house was across from the Nissen home. You could see the big stucco roof from the road. In front of the house there were acres of Bosc pears, at that time.

SNYDER: Did Dr. Herbert operate a ranch?

REAVES: Charlie operated the ranch for his father. Ted was helping him at that time.

SNYDER: Tell me about the inside of Dr. Herbert's house. Was it big?

REAVES: Oh, it was a big Spanish structure -- all one story. It had five bedrooms and five baths in the house. It had a big patio, a real large living room overlooking a loggia (or lanai), a very large dining room with a beautiful koa wood set which he gave to Ted and me after he left, a kitchen with a servants' pantry, a den, and, of course, each bedroom off the lanai had a bath. Then, there was a guest house outside with a bath between two bedrooms, and the servants' quarters had a bedroom and a bath. There were twenty-four tons of tile on the roofs.

SNYDER: Did you leave there about the same time that Dr. Herbert did, or did you stay on the ranch?

REAVES: Yes, we stayed there for awhile. Dr. Herbert sold the ranch later. He remarried after a couple of years and spent most of his time in the Islands, although he went back and forth from the ranch to the Islands. His daughter was still living in the Islands.

We had been looking around for a home to buy for some time, but we couldn't find anything that we really liked until we found our place on Green Valley Road. Ted and I both fell in love with it. Dr. Herbert sold the house about three weeks after we had moved from the Maluhia properties.

SNYDER: What happened to your Oregon Street house?

REAVES: That was rented. We rented that to Doris and Everett Mollenhauer.

SNYDER: When did Ron start to attend school?

REAVES: Well, we moved to town on Rodriguez Street, Rodriguez and Sixth Streets. I believe that house was owned by the Lucich sisters. Ron started Kindergarten at the Rodriguez School . . . that was the Radcliff School. His Kindergarten teacher was Bunny Crow. She was in love with Ron, and he was in love with her. She was a darling. She used to come out to see him at the Maluhia Ranch later. This was before we moved to Green Valley.

We were there for a couple of years and then we moved back to Maluhia at the request of Charles . . . on Amesti Road. Ron went to the first and second grade at Amesti School.

We bought our place here in Green Valley in 1940. It was quite a large house with five and a half acres. It was part of Rancho Corralitos. We knew Jim Caudill, Bea's father, very well. He knew this house for years, and he said at that time when we bought it that it was at least 125 years old. It is put together with square nails and hog's hair plaster between the slats. It is really a well-built house. It withstood the 1906 earthquake exceptionally well and the ones that we have had since. The last earthquake that we had, we had a little disaster! (Morgan Hill, 1984)

SNYDER: I would like to go back to the early 1930's. Do you feel that the Depression affected you and your husband?

REAVES: I think that the Depression affected most people. I think that it affected the rich more than it affected the middle class . . . they were the ones that didn't have quite as much. It seems odd to say it, but I think the Depression days were some of our happiest days. (We had to skimp and save. It taught people the value of the dollar.)

SNYDER: Did you know anyone who was really affected by the Depression?

REAVES: We knew several people that had lost quite a lot, but they made the best of it. But, it was fun raising our own vegetables; we had our pigs and our chickens, turkeys, and different things at the ranch. We used to go out . . . my husband and Bobby and I . . . and hunt cotton tails, and in dove season we would hunt doves.

SNYDER: Now, is this in the Corralitos place?

REAVES: This is in the Amesti District . . . Dr. Herbert's place. He had a real large apple orchard behind the house. The house sat up on the hill. There was a beautiful walkway down to the barnyard.

SNYDER: Did anyone live with you in that big house?

REAVES: Yes . . . oh, in the big house?

SNYDER: Dr. Herbert's.

- REAVES: Well, before we moved to the big house . . . it was during the Depression, and Ted's mother and dad lived with us for six months. My mother had to give up housekeeping, so she was with us, also.
- SNYDER: Did you all live together and cook together as one family?
- REAVES: Yes. We cooked on a little two-burner kerosene stove. I believe it was a three-burner, but we couldn't get the third burner to work all the time. We heated the house with a little wood stove.
- SNYDER: Was it a hard house to heat?
- REAVES: No, our little rented cottage was an easy house to heat. It was a very comfortable place. All our friends used to come out there. None of them had children at that time, and they would come out in the evenings and we'd play games -- different types of card games. We didn't gamble. (She laughs.) We did play with chips. (She laughs again.) 'Michigan' was a favorite card game.
- SNYDER: When did you leave Dr. Herbert's property and go to your own home?
- REAVES: That would be 1940, as I stated, when we bought the house. Then, Ron attended the Green Valley School.
- SNYDER: When you were at Dr. Herbert's did Bob start school at Amesti?
- REAVES: Yes, as I said, he went to Mintie White through the first grade and then when we were at Dr. Herbert's cottage he attended the Amesti School. He skipped the second grade and went into the third and then attended the fourth grade there. From there we moved to town on Rodriguez Street, which I had mentioned. He went to the Rodriguez Street school for the fifth through sixth grades. That was when Ronnie started kindergarten.
- Then, we moved back to Maluhia. At that time, Bob was in the seventh grade. He finished the seventh and eighth grade at the E.A. Hall School in town. That's where he graduated from elementary with the first graduation class from E.A. Hall School in 1939.
- SNYDER: What did Ron do? Continue school?

REAVES: Well, Ron went to the Amesti School for the first and second grades. Then, we moved over here to Green Valley. From the third grade to the eighth grade he went to the Green Valley School. Some of his teachers were Mrs. Florence Bailey . . . she was the Principal . . . and Mrs. Peggy Arias and Mrs. Arthur, and Mrs. Ruth Bradley. Although they only had two teachers at a time, they also had a music teacher that came from Santa Cruz once a week and taught them band.

Ron and our nephew who was with us (and which I'll tell you about later) played the trumpet. They liked to take their lunch to school. One day, Ron had forgotten his lunch. Ted and I were on our way to town so we dropped his lunch off at the school. I knocked at the door. They were having band practice. I knocked again, and nobody answered. So, I opened the door just in time to see one of the teachers . . . she had hold of Ron by his hair, and she was giving him a good shaking! When she saw me, she turned so red! (She laughs.) I went out to the car laughing, and my husband wanted to know what was so funny. I guess he (Ron) deserved it. (She laughs again.) Ron's class was the last class to graduate from the Green Valley School.

From there he went on to high school and graduated from high school. Then, he went on to Hartnell College in Salinas. He drove the Hartnell bus back and forth from Watsonville to Salinas.

SNYDER: Did he keep the bus out here where he lived?

REAVES: Yes, he kept it out here in front of the yard.

SNYDER: Did anyone live here with you in the house on Green Valley Road beside your two boys?

REAVES: Oh, yes. As I said, we bought this home in 1940, and in April of 1941 we took our three nephews in with us.

SNYDER: Who were they?

REAVES: They were my brother's three children. He and his wife separated.

SNYDER: Can you tell me the names of the three boys?

REAVES: There was Lloyd, Jim and Ralph Oksen. We thought at the time, including their daddy, that their mother would come back, but she never did. So they lived with us. The three of them were with us for four years. They attended the Green Valley School.

Then, my brother remarried, and they took the two younger ones to live with them. Lloyd cried. He wanted to stay here. He was such a pal to our son, Ron. So, we raised him until he was twenty-one when he got married.

SNYDER: Did you live in this house at the time of World War II?

REAVES: Yes. During the war years they would march the children from the Green Valley School down here to our house, because it was a large house, and practice bombing drills. The children would lie on the floor in our living room and in our big hall in the front so that in case of a bombing, they would know just what to do. If they couldn't all get in the house, they marched across the road into the apple orchard and were told to lie down under the apple trees.

We had a suit of armor that Dr. Herbert had gotten from his ancestors that was collected on the River Nile in the 1700's. Dr. Herbert, at his age, wasn't interested in it. Ted was so enthused about that armor and liked it so well that Dr. Herbert gave that armor to Ted when he sold the house. We had that in our possession for years.

The teachers used to march the children down here to see the type of armor they wore during the Crusades, when they were studying the Crusades. Unfortunately, our place was burglarized in 1972, and that was one of the many things they took.

(END OF SIDE A OF TAPE)

SNYDER: Irma, you said that Ron graduated from the eighth grade at Green Valley School, but I don't remember about Bob. Where did he graduate from the eighth grade?

REAVES: Bob graduated from the E.A. Hall School in town.

SNYDER: Then he went to high school?

REAVES: He continued with high school.

SNYDER: Before he got to high school . . . I'd like to step back a little bit and ask you what you did with five boys when they would come home from school?

REAVES: (She laughs.) That's a good question! We had fun. They were different ages. My husband was a wonderful father to all of them, and he managed to keep them busy for much of the time. He'd send for different courses by mail, such as fly tying, and leather craft work, and various things . . . they just loved it. Taxidermy work. In fact, our poor chickens suffered when they tied flies. The three were all in Scouting. Ted always believed in the three C's -- communication, cooperation, companionship.

SNYDER: Was there a Boy Scout troop out here?

REAVES: Oh, yes, in fact my husband at one time was a Scoutmaster. Bob, Ron and Lloyd were the main ones that were interested in Scouting. Bob attained rank as Eagle Scout. Also, we had Emergency Service Corps during the war, of which Ted organized. Later, Bob went into Sea Scouts before he went into the service. Ron and Lloyd almost made Eagle Scout, but they had other interests that took them away from their Scouting.

SNYDER: Irma, you mentioned an Emergency Service Corps. What's that?

REAVES: Well, that's what my husband organized during World War II. There were quite a number of boys that joined. It was to teach them to be able to climb ladders and hand-over-hand to pull themselves up tall trees on a rope without using their legs (and various techniques needed in case of a disaster). I remember there was Charles Palmtag and Ed Hall . . . oh, I can't remember . . . there were quite a few of them that joined. They used to come out here at the ranch to practice.

SNYDER: O.K. I remember that Ron went to Hartnell and drove the bus. Did he graduate from there?

REAVES: Yes, he graduated from Hartnell. Both he and wife-to-be graduated from Hartnell. He and JoAnn Beilby were married. I can't recall the exact date that they were married.

Then, little Judy was born April 1, 1954. They had been married in March of 1953.

SNYDER: Where did they live? In this area?

REAVES: They had a little house in town before Ron went east. He was sent to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and studied specified electronics for Uncle Sam. His wife and little Judy were there with him. Later on, he was stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It was there that he delivered his little son on September 28, 1955. They called him Randal Theodore . . . "Randy" for short.

SNYDER: When did Ron come back to California?

REAVES: Ron and his family returned home in February of 1956 when Randy was about five months old. Ron was going back to college. He had studied two years of forestry at Hartnell, but now his interest was in electronics. He was going back to college to study electronics. However, Semicon offered him a job. It was a big decision for him to make. He asked us for our views on it. We advised him that was one decision he had to make for himself. So, I guess it was the right thing because he got in on 'the ground floor' in the Semicon plant.

He worked for Semicon, when Leo Cronin was the manager, for a couple of years. Then Mr. Cronin and Mas Sugimoto and Ron started a plant of their own on Freedom Boulevard, which they called Spectra-Mat Electronics. They manufactured components, mainly. Ron was, and still is, Vice President of that organization. They outgrew that plant, and, then, Spectra-Mat built a larger plant out on Highway 1, near Airport Boulevard. It is there at the present time, and they have expanded several times.

SNYDER: You were talking about Ron and his wife. Did they have any more children?

REAVES: No, they just had the two. They later on became divorced. After several years, Ron married another wonderful person, Donna Brown. Both daughters-in-law are very dear to us. Ron has five grandchildren.

SNYDER: What about Bob? I assume that he attended Watsonville High School.

REAVES: Yes. After he graduated from the eighth grade at the age of thirteen, he entered high school. He went through four years of high school and graduated at the age of seventeen.

Before entering the service in 1944, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service. He was relief man on the lookouts in the Santa Lucia, Los Padres Forest, until he was eighteen years old at which time he entered the service.

Bob trained at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in instrumental survey, and he served his country in the Philippines, in the Battle of Northern Luzon. The training period was very short before they sent the boys overseas, being that they had men on two fronts at that time.

SNYDER: Did he marry?

REAVES: Yes. Bob returned home in August of 1946, and he then enrolled at Cal Poly to study aeronautical engineering. He met a girl that he became very much in love with. In August of 1947 he married Janet Balvin from South Dakota.

Bob resumed his studies at Cal Poly at that time. His wife lived there with him. It was there that Bob and Janet had their first child. As of now, Bob and Janet have ten children.

After graduating from Cal Poly with high honors, he worked with the State Division of Forestry as Assistant Forest Ranger and Foreman. They bought their first home on Arthur Road at that time, in Watsonville.

In 1957, Bob went to work for Lockheed in Santa Clara as a design engineer for missiles and so forth. While working full days at Lockheed, he attended San Jose State University at night. He got his degree after four hard years of study at night, and working days, and graduated with great honors of distinction.

After sixteen years with Lockheed, he felt that he was working for destruction . . . which was against his belief. It took him two or three years before he decided to quit Lockheed, as when he quit, that would cut off his total income for his family. At that time, he had six children at home. It was a real hard decision to make. In fact, he called his family together and they talked it over and that was the decision they came to. Jan, his wife, is such a wonderful person and very supportive

and she deserved a great deal of credit. She stayed home and took care of the children. At that time she couldn't work outside of the home.

Bob is now a writer and lecturer. In fact, he lectures all over the world in colleges and universities . . . lecturing against nuclear war and for nuclear disarmament and peace.

SNYDER: How did he manage financially when he quit Lockheed?

REAVES: Well, it really wasn't easy. He did little odd jobs here and there and did some mechanical work. In fact, he still does mechanical work for his family and for his friends without charge. He thought he would work for the City, but they wouldn't hire him because he was over-qualified.

They had to give up a lot of their luxuries, you might call them, and lead a different life. Janet was a very good person. She could make a dish out of nothing practically . . . she set a real good table. She managed beautifully. There was a television special about Bob's life and about the life he had lived before, when he was working for Lockheed, and had a real good income. They managed . . . they managed beautifully. Soon, he began getting an income from his writing.

SNYDER: Do you remember the names of those grandchildren?

REAVES: Oh, yes. I wouldn't dare forget them! The first one is Creston Gary, the second one is Jane Lorene, the third . . . James Theodore, the fourth . . . Daniel Joseph, the fifth Kathleen Rose, the sixth Terri Jean, the seventh Mary Susan, the eighth Diane Marie, the ninth Nancy Joy, and the tenth Mark Steven.

SNYDER: Now, has your son received some recognition that you would like to speak about?

REAVES: Well, yes. He received the Martin Luther King award a couple of years ago. He has published several books. One of his books was a best-seller, about two years ago in Japan. He has two more on the press now. His present book is First Strike.

Going back to the children . . . his children are now grown. Their ages span from thirty-six to fourteen years. So, Janet resumed her studies and is now teaching.

SNYDER: What about Bob? Does he have grandchildren?

REAVES: Yes, he does. Besides their own ten children, they have eleven grandchildren. You know, time marches on!

SNYDER: Now, I would like to go back to Ted, your husband. Where did he work when you moved out here to Green Valley and had the five boys?

REAVES: Well, Ted drove a gasoline truck for Associated Oil Company for awhile and also Seaside for several years. Then in 1942, '43 and part of 1944 he worked for the U.S. Forest Service at Big Sur and was patrolman and ranger. These were war years and very critical years. He patrolled the coast road by car and the beach and trails on horseback. He serviced the lookouts and the AWS stations, which are airplane watch stations, with a horse and packmule. The roads weren't sufficient for the jeeps to get up to these tall lookouts at that time.

SNYDER: Did you go down there with him?

REAVES: Yes, the whole family went down. In fact, we took our chickens and our goat with us and our dog, and our canary and our cat! (She laughs.)

SNYDER: What happened here at this house? Was it empty?

REAVES: This house was empty while we were down there, yes. Our quarters were just off of the Coast Highway -- Highway 1.

SNYDER: What was the name of that station?

REAVES: It was just the Big Sur U.S. Forest Service Guard Station.

SNYDER: How long was he there?

REAVES: He was there almost three years -- '42, '43 and part of '44. We had a small house there where Ted validated deer tags and issued permits.

He also had to ride the trails. Sometimes I would go with him on horseback and it was lots of fun. We also swam the gorges there at Big Sur.

SNYDER: What did he do, then, when he left the Forest Service?

REAVES: I was going to tell you that there were several Japanese subs that had been sighted down on the coast while he was down there.

SNYDER: Did he actually see any, or was this hearsay?

REAVES: No, he saw some, and the children and I also thought we saw a couple. We used to come home every two or three weeks to take care of the yard. During the summer we would can fruit. I would stay up until one or two o'clock in the morning and can fruit. We would pick up soldier boys from Fort Ord and bring them to Watsonville and pick them up on the way back . . . which we wouldn't dare do today. It's sad that you can't. Those were enjoyable years in the great outdoors.

SNYDER: Why did he leave the Forest Service?

REAVES: Well, Ron and Lloyd were with us there. Also, the other little ones, and my mother. During the first year that he was there, I came home with the children. It was so lonesome without Ted. He worked with packmules in the wintertime carrying lumber and equipment up to Ventana Mountain to build the lookout up there. When he found out how I felt, he decided that he had better stay home during the winter.

However, the next spring, the ranger from King City wanted Ted to come back again. This was in 1943. Ted said, "Well, you talk to my wife." Ted loved that work so much so I consented to go back. At that time we only had two boys. We just had Lloyd with us besides our own. (My mother was with us also.) They went to school down there. The school was located almost next door to the guard station. The teacher was Mabel Kenyon, wife of the park ranger, Bill Kenyon.

It was fun down there. We went to campfires each night. All we had to do was slide down the embankment behind our guard station to get to the park.

SNYDER: Then you came back here?

REAVES: Yes, we came back here to the Green Valley ranch, and Ted went to work for the State Division of Forestry, whose headquarters was in Felton. It was nearer home, and he was home practically every night, except during fire season. He was foreman at

Corralitos for a couple of years. Then, he took the dispatcher's test and accepted a job in Visalia in 1952. That consisted of dispatching the fire trucks and equipment to fires . . . many were in Tulare County . . . setting up fire camps and various things. In 1954, he decided to leave the forestry work entirely.

SNYDER: What did he do then?

REAVES: Well, we decided it was time to take a vacation. At that time, we took a two-month trip to the east coast and visited with our family. JoAnne, Skip, and Judy were at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. We bought a little camp trailer. We took the northern route and returned the southern route. We visited all the places of interest that we had ever thought of seeing. We covered 10,000 miles and 33 states. We took many slides and pictures. The autumn colors were just beautiful in the East. This is a trip I shall never forget . . . so many beautiful places to see and scenery right here in our own country. In fact, when we came home, the next morning there was a double rainbow across the sky.

SNYDER: When you came back here from your trip, what did you and Ted do?

REAVES: After we returned, Ted studied real estate, and he worked for E.A. Hall Realties before accepting a job in San Jose as manager of a real estate office.

At that time, I had started practical nursing. I had nursed off and on voluntarily for years. In fact, I had worked with Dr. Eiskamp when he first came to Watsonville and helped him deliver babies in their homes and so forth.

I specialed (did private nursing) at the Watsonville Hospital for awhile . . . that was on Montecito Avenue . . . until we went to San Jose. Then, I followed Ted over there, and I worked at O'Connor Hospital and San Jose Hospital, as well as in smaller ones. Also, I took home cases.

In 1962, we moved to Ben Lomond and built our home there. There, Ted managed Assemblyman Glen Coolidge's real estate office for two years. Then he opened his own office on Portola Drive in Santa Cruz.

In Santa Cruz, I nursed mostly in private homes.

Ted retired from real estate in 1970, and we moved back to our ranch in Green Valley -- our five and one-half acres. He had a big garden in what we called 'the lower forty.' He also had a two-acre home orchard to care for. And I retired from nursing in 1972.

God has been good to us. He blessed us with two wonderful sons, three wonderful daughters-in-law, thirteen grandchildren and sixteen precious great-grandchildren. Also nieces and nephews. Our life has been full -- some heartaches, but much joy and love.

I also want to add a line about my dear husband:

(She begins to sing.) "Oh, my man I love him so; he'll never know . . ." and so the song goes. I could search the universe, but I could never find another husband with as much love and compassion and understanding as I have experienced with these fifty-four years with Ted. Of course, we had our ups and downs and our ins and outs, but our love is rooted so deeply that my injured feelings or grievances soon disappeared. Being that I have worn my feelings on my sleeve all my life makes me more susceptible to heartaches. The kindness and love that Ted bestowed upon me and my family before our marriage has followed him throughout these years. Ted has his heart and door open to everyone -- humans as well as animals. He was so good to my dear little mother who lived with us for fifteen years. When Charles Herbert became crippled with arthritis, Ted welcomed him into our home for a long period of time. Little three-year-old Lorraine made her home with us when she was deserted by her parents. Our three little nephews were welcomed into our household when their dad and mother separated and they had no other place to go. After four years, their dad remarried and the two youngest ones lived with their dad and his wife. Lloyd, the eldest had cried to stay with us. We raised him as our own. He left home when he was married at the age of twenty-one. Two of my uncles lived in our home with us for several years. So you see, I speak the truth when I say Ted has a heart of gold. Oh, yes, also his dear mother and step-dad made their home with us for almost a year during the Depression. When God made Ted, He threw away the mold.

Ted used to tease me by saying, "When I married you, Honey, I married the whole family!"

(END OF SIDE B OF TAPE)

Address 1184 Green Valley Rd.
 City, State Watsonville, CA
 Date June, 1986

Person No. 1 on this chart is the same person as No. _____ on chart No. _____.

Chart No. _____

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b. Date of Birth
 p.b. Place of Birth
 m. Date of Marriage
 p.m. Place of Marriage
 d. Date of Death
 p.d. Place of Death

4 Laust Jergen OGKSEN

b. _____ (Father of No. 2)
 p.b. _____
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

2 Jim L. OKSEN* (Jens Lassen Ogsen)

b. 27 Dec 1867 (Father of No. 1)
 p.b. Schleswig-Holstein DENMARK
 m. 1 Jan 1898
 p.m. _____
 d. Nov 1924
 p.d. Watsonville, CA (bur. Pioneer Cem.)

5 Ansine Marie SCHMIDT

b. _____ (Mother of No. 2)
 p.b. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

1 Irma OKSEN Alridge Reaves

b. 15 Jan 1906
 p.b. Watsonville, CA
 m. see below
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

(1) Creston E. ALDRIDGE

b. 19 Sept 1905
 Watsonville, CA
 (Browns Valley)
 m. 14 Jan 1925
 d. 20 July 1928

(2) Earl T. REAVES

b. 7 Nov 1906
 Crumstown, IN
 m. 25 Oct 1930

*Jim OKSEN

arr. US 1884
 arr. P.V. soon after

3 Emma I. SCHANBACHER

b. 10 Mar 1875 (Mother of No. 1)
 p.b. San Francisco, CA
 d. Nov 1948
 p.d. Watsonville, CA (bur. Pioneer Cem.)
 arr. Watsonville at 6 months

7 Fredericka Katrina BUOB

b. 13 April 1848 (Mother of No. 3)
 p.b. Stuttgart, GERMANY
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

b. _____ Spouse of No. 1.
 p.b. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

(2) m. Carl KUEHNIS
 b. SWITZERLAND
 d. c 1900

8

b. _____ (Father of No. 4. Cont. on chart No. _____)

p.b. _____
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

9

b. _____ (Mother of No. 4. Cont. on chart No. _____)

p.b. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

10 Jens Peter SCHMIDT

b. _____ (Father of No. 5. Cont. on chart No. _____)

p.b. Starbeck, DENMARK
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

11 Tobina NOGARD

b. _____ (Mother of No. 5. Cont. on chart No. _____)

p.b. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

12

b. _____ (Father of No. 6. Cont. on chart No. _____)

p.b. _____
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

13

b. _____ (Mother of No. 6. Cont. on chart No. _____)

p.b. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

14

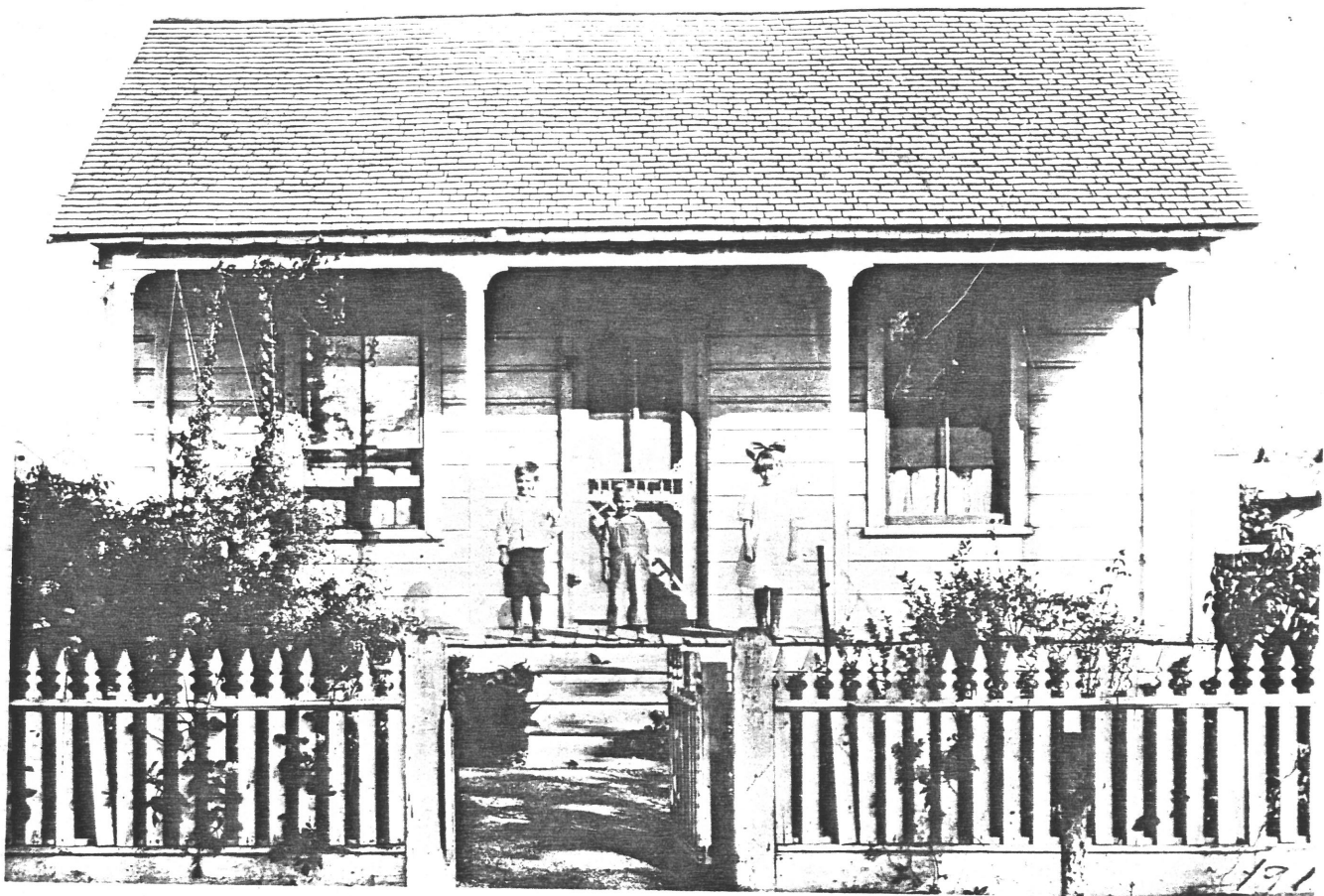
b. _____ (Father of No. 7. Cont. on chart No. _____)

p.b. _____
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

15

b. _____ (Mother of No. 7. Cont. on chart No. _____)

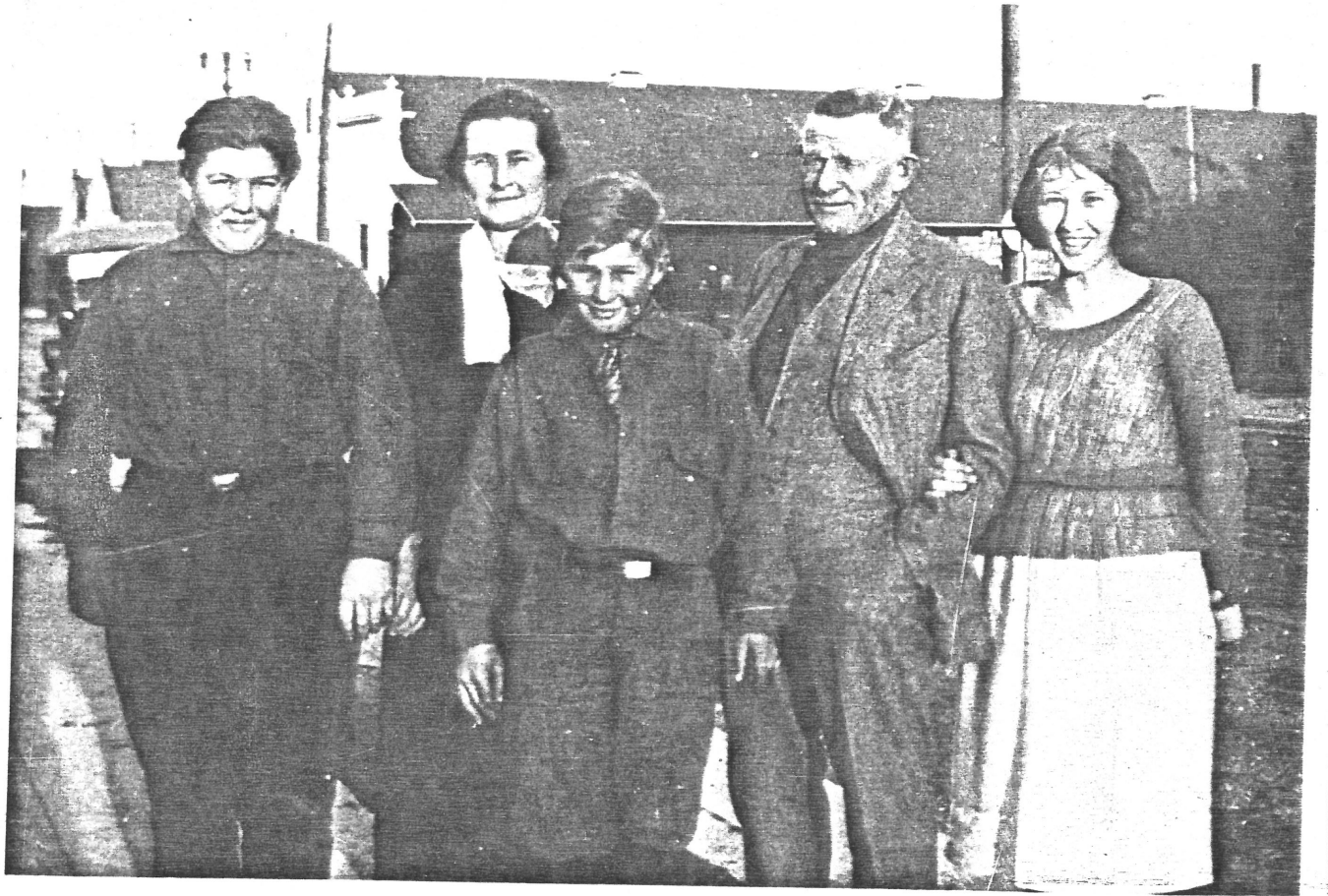
p.b. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____



James, Lloyd and Irma Oksen, 232 First Street, Watsonville, California, 1913



Great uncle Fred Schanbacher and Bobby Aldridge on Locust St., across from
the Tuttles,]928



James, Emma (mother), Lloyd, James (father) and Irma Oksen, Watsonville, 1924

