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Agricultural History

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Ray L. Travers: Three Generations of Apple Farming in Watsonville, California 1875-1977

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Early Family History

Knaster: I am at Ray Travers' controlled atmospheric storage plant in Watsonville and today is April 6, 1977. When and where were you born?

Travers: I was born in 1921 right here in Watsonville on Rodriguez Street.

Knaster: Had your family come from Portugal, or had they already been residents of the United States?

Travers: My grandparents on my father's side both came from the Azores. My grandmother was about sixteen years old, and my grandfather about twenty or twenty-one when they came to Boston.

Knaster: Do you remember what year that was?

Travers: 1875 or so. They came to the West, California, here in Watsonville near Green Valley seven miles from Watsonville, in 1876.

Knaster: Oh, they were really early comers to the area.

Travers: They didn't know each other until they met in Boston. You talk about young children today traveling and taking off . . . here they took off from an island to this great continent, met in Boston, married, and came to California because they had a distant relative living in Green Valley. That's where they settled.

Knaster: Do you know whether they came to the United States individually, with family, or as a group?

Travers: This I don't know. Probably in a group. I think without any family. Just with friends . . .

Knaster: Do you know how they got here?

Travers: They came by train, they tell me.

Knaster: Do you know what work they were involved in in the Azores? Were their families in farming?

Travers: The Azores have very little farming. They tell me most of the country is very rocky. There's a few cattle and sheep. Mostly it's a fishing area.

Knaster: Do you know why they came to the United States?

Travers: Because the islands are so poor and it was so hard to take care of the people there. People are leaving there even today because the island's overpopulated. They were looking for a better way of life.

Knaster: Someone recently mentioned to me that there are new immigrants to Watsonville from the Azores. Is this true?

Travers: Yes, there's a lot of Portuguese people in Watsonville from the Azores.

Knaster: Well that was quite a trip to make in those days. Was your family in fishing at that time?

Travers: Right, in the islands. On my mother's side, my grandfather came from the Azore Islands. He settled in Monterey. He was a whaler when he first came to this country as a young man and he even slept in that whaling house that they have over there in Monterey. My mother's mother was born in what is New Monterey today. So she was here long before that.

Knaster: When they came to Watsonville did they get involved in apples?

Travers: Yes. When they settled seven miles from Watsonville out in the Green Valley district, they came there because they had a distant relative that lived up there. They bought a little piece of ground there. And then, as time went on they bought another twenty-five acres more or less until they accumulated about two hundred acres. It was never surveyed or anything until Grandma Travers passed away and it was given to one of the daughters in the family. They planted apple trees when they first arrived here. I think they were one of the first to plant apple trees in that area.

Knaster: That must have been in the 1870s?

Travers: That's right.

Knaster: That's when apples first started around here, wasn't it?

Travers: Right. So they were one of the first. They raised a family of thirteen children.

Knaster: Was it unusual for a woman to inherit the land?

Travers: The daughter in this case? No, because . . . all the other children went out and left the family, and went into business. This one daughter and her husband stayed and took care of the farm, and grandma lived with them. So as grandma passed away, all the family thought it was all but fair that she inherit the land.

Knaster: When did she die?

Travers: Something like thirty-five years ago now.

Knaster: What did they know about agriculture? They just bought the land.

Travers: They just bought the land because they had a friend there, and they were so poor they couldn't buy any land near the city of Watsonville. At that time, those foothills were nothing but brush and timber and redwood trees, and you could buy land for a few dollars an acre. That's how they got started. They didn't even have water in their house, but a neighbor that had a little house up there said, "Build your house near mine, so you can use my water." They used to have to haul their water all the time from the neighbor's house to their house until finally they got their own wells.

Knaster: Were there other Portuguese people in the area at the time?

Travers: Yes.

Knaster: Was that neighbor Portuguese?

Travers: Yes. As I grew up as a young boy I knew a lot of Portuguese people in that neighborhood. Also a few Italians and a lot of Yugoslavian people.

Knaster: Did these various ethnic groups get along, or socialize with each other, or were they fairly separate?

Travers: I think they all got along very well . . . at least when I was a young boy and used to visit and play in the area. They all got along because we partied with the children in their homes and with the old folks and everything. They got along because they all had to get along for survival; one lady from one family, like my grandmother, used to go from house to house and help deliver babies, and this was very common so everyone got along great.

Knaster: Was there intermarriage in these various groups—Yugoslavians marrying Portuguese, or Portuguese marrying Italians . . .

Travers: For probably one generation I don't think there was too much, but shortly after that . . . like today there's all kinds of intermarriages. That's why in Watsonville here

everybody's related. (laughter) I was talking to a Portuguese girl . . . her husband's Yugoslavian and their kids married someone else . . . (laughter)

Apple Farming in the 1870s

Knaster: How did they learn how to farm apples?

Travers: This I do not know the history of. But I imagine they must have learned how to propagate their own trees at that time . . . which most of us don't do today. We just buy trees from nurseries that are already propagated. I think they brought with them the knowledge of raising grapes . . . 'cause they planted a lot of grapes and they made their own wine. I think that's quite customary of the Azore Islands people . . . making wine and growing grapes, and they had that kind of agricultural background.

Knaster: Did the apples grow without any kind of irrigation?

Travers: Well, the rain pattern might have been a little different at that time. But the way I look at it, you had plenty of moisture all the time, 'cause these people knew how to cultivate their soil. You'd till the soil quite often, or turn the soil, or drag it, cultivate it like we call it today. That seems to hold your moisture . . . brings the moisture from a certain depth up. That way they're getting by. Also you have to remember there was a lot of springs in the foothills and a lot of sources of water coming forth, where today we don't have so many springs 'cause our water table goes down lower.

Knaster: Did they grow other crops between the trees?

Travers: Yes. As I was a young boy I always remember when the trees were small that they were planting corn, pumpkins, things like that between their trees.

Knaster: Would you say they were basically self-sufficient then? They did not have to go into town to buy much food?

Travers: They always gone to town, 'cause I remember hearing them talk about . . . stories that it was an all-day trip with a horse and buggy into town and back home late . . . It was an all-day trip. But they were quite sufficient because they had chickens, pigs, cows, and vegetables of all types. But there's always something you have to go to town for.

Knaster: What equipment did they use in tending to the orchards?

Travers: All they had in those days was their horses and plows and the little drags . . . things like that.

Knaster: You said they had two hundred acres.

Travers: Right.

Knaster: That's a lot of trees.

Travers: Well, it wouldn't all be in trees. A lot of it would be in pasture. Some grapes, some brush land, some timber. They had sixty, seventy, eighty acres in trees.

Knaster: Who worked the orchard?

Travers: Mostly the family when you have thirteen children. Everybody worked the farm.

Knaster: The men and the women together? Everyone?

Travers: Everybody works yes. The women would pump water and go into the fields. I even heard stories where my father [as a youngster] had a cut on his head that wouldn't heal. One of the daughters was carrying him out to the field to his mother to be nursed, and the daughter dropped him and the cut opened again and it bled, and it really healed up perfect.

Knaster: She carried your father out to the orchard?

Travers: Yes. So you can see everybody's working in the fields. That's how they got by, you know.

Knaster: Well, in those days the farms were more family-oriented. Do you know if they ever had hired people work for them?

Travers: I don't think they hired people as we do today. I think the neighbors would all help each other.

Knaster: For the harvest?

Travers: They'd help one neighbor harvest. Then they'd go to another neighbor and help with the grapes, and the crops, and help kill the livestock. Then they'd have a nice barbecue or feast together in the evenings or after harvest.

Knaster: Where did they sell their apples?

Travers: I couldn't say. But I know they came into Watsonville, and from there were sold and shipped out.

Knaster: What kind of apples did they raise?

Travers: There used to be a lot of Bellflower trees, and Newtowns, the green trees; those were some of the apples I know they had.

Knaster: I understand now basically there are two main kinds—the Pippin and the Red Delicious.

Travers: That's true.

Knaster: There used to be many, many varieties.

Travers: Many varieties. Yeah, Baldwins, Spitzenbergs . . .

Knaster: What happened to these varieties, do you know?

Travers: They became less popular, due to probably, like the Red Delicious becoming very popular through advertising from Washington state. These newer apples yielded better, more tonnage and were more profitable, so the other varieties faded out. Some of them don't get good color like the Red Delicious, and Bellflower bruised very easy, so consequently they left better apples coming in.

The Portuguese Community

Knaster: Do you know much about the Portuguese community in Watsonville, whether they continued to follow customs from the old country, whether they had special holidays or traditions that they followed?

Travers: They still do today. One of their big customs they have, they have the religious custom, honoring one of the saints in the Catholic Church. In the Azore Islands or in Portugal they used to give food to the poor people, so they still do this today, and once a year they have a church ceremony and a parade, they elect their own queen, and their dance, and then they give a a free barbecue and a special bread. This tradition is still carried on today.

Knaster: When does that take place?

Travers: Generally if I can recall right, in the spring of the year, every little Portuguese community in California has this festival and they do it on different weekends in different cities. All the cities from here, from Santa Cruz, Monterey, Hollister, back into the Central Valley, Modesto, Los Baños . . . all these communities carry this on today.

Knaster: There are so many Portuguese here . . .

Travers: Oh, yes. A lot of Portuguese people went into the dairy business in the Central Valley around Los Baños and Newman, Modesto, places like that.

Knaster: Were they mostly from the Azores or from the mainland?

Travers: No, most of the Portuguese people in California came from the Azore Islands, and then a lot of them went to the fishing communities in San Pedro, in the Los Angeles area.

Knaster: Did the Portuguese community of the Watsonville area stay in pretty close communication with the Portuguese of Monterey?

Travers: Only that you had relatives in a certain area. Of course, communication was very difficult in the early times, but they used to have these festivals and they went from city to city. It was a great event to see their friends.

Knaster: Is it true that the Portuguese in Monterey mostly went into fishing?

Travers: Yes, I would say so. As fishing became more difficult they'd go into some other business of being caretakers or gardeners or any type of work they could find.

Knaster: What do you remember in your grandmother's home that was distinctly Portuguese, maybe clothing or food preparation?

Travers: Yes, the foods. The Portuguese people during the winter months would kill pigs to get the pork lard. This would be their food for the coming season, the coming year, when they would get the lard from the pig they would also make a smoked sausage out of the pork called linguica. Nowadays we preserve it in a freezer, or eat it fresh but they preserved it by putting about an inch layer of lard over it, and that would make it airtight, and then they'd put it in a big crock. Whenever they wanted some linguica they'd go dip down in this crock of lard with a spoon and bring up some linguica, some meat and then take it in and cook it . . . Of course, then when they killed a pig they always made a blood sausage, which if someone tells me about a blood sausage I hesitate in even thinking about eating it, but here you grow up with this heritage and background in the family and you love it, you wait for them to make this blood sausage. It was a big feast, so I remember the food well. Of course they always have beans and potatoes which we always love because they're seasoned just the way your palate would like them.

Knaster: Was Portuguese spoken at home?

Travers: All the family and everybody spoke it. My father and mother could speak it but they didn't speak it unless company came and the reason for that was we were Ameri-

cans and you're supposed to learn English, which I'm very sorry for today. Most of my cousins learned it through their father and mother.

Knaster: It's a beautiful language.

Travers: It is, it is. Yes, it's a sad language when you're in Portugal, the singing of the sad songs and everything. I feel bad that I never learned it with my family, but I think it's important that you can learn every language you can when you're young.

Knaster: So your father was born on that farm?

Travers: Right, along with twelve other brothers and sisters.

Knaster: Where was your mother born?

Travers: My mother was born in Monterey.

Knaster: She was also from a Portuguese family?

Travers: Right. Her father came from the Azore Islands and her mother was born in New Monterey.

Travers Family Farming from the 1920s to the 1950s

Knaster: When your parents got together did they go into farming?

Travers: No, when they were first married my dad was already in the farming business on his own.

Knaster: In this area?

Travers: Right. He had just come out of World War I at that time. He bought an old Fordson tractor. They didn't have rubber tires like they have today, but big iron wheels with spikes on them. I remember watching them when I was a little kid. They were very difficult to start on a cold morning; they had to build a fire underneath them to get the oil and everything warmed up before they would start.

He started out by doing some custom work for some other growers at that time, working their soil with these tractors, and then pretty soon he got into a little packing business, and then he got into raising lettuce. My dad was one of the first to raise lettuce in the valley and then he went in partners with Mr. [Kyuzaburo "Harry" (H.K.)] Sakata at that time. They were both raising lettuce.

Knaster: Was this in the 1920s?

Travers: This would be in the twenties, right. I remember him talking about the lettuce and apples, and they were taking care of me at the same time all this packing was going on. They called up a friend of theirs, a broker in Los Angeles, and said, "We have some lettuce for you," and the guy said, "What does it look like?" He'd never seen lettuce before.

Knaster: What kind of lettuce was grown then?

Travers: Well, as far as I know at that time they used to grow what we call head lettuce. What you'd call the iceberg lettuce, but it was a different variety, more tender, probably a little sweeter and everything than we're growing today.

Knaster: It probably had more flavor; today it's just straight water.

Travers: That's right, and it's a tougher fiber now than it was at that time.

Knaster: How large an operation did they have together?

Travers: Together they built up a real large operation. Until 1939, Mr. Sakata and my father were in a lettuce business and my dad was in an apple business with his brother. In 1939, on Friday, the 13th, believe it or not, a fire destroyed the apple packing shed. Then my dad sold out to Mr. Sakata, who carried on the lettuce business, which his family and sons and grandsons are carrying on today in this valley.

Knaster: Where was this packing shed located?

Travers: That packing shed started out in this very spot where you are sitting right now. It was all destroyed by fire in this location, in '39. Then they moved a little south just a half block down here and built another shed, Travers and Sakata did.

Knaster: Did your father have a large orchard?

Travers: Yes, he farmed about 130 acres. And one time I remember on a rainy day when you didn't have much to do in those days like you do now, and my dad was counting how many pieces of land he farmed, I will never forget it, 'cause it impressed me, and I think he counted twenty-seven separate pieces of land he was farming.

Knaster: Oh, so the orchard wasn't all in one place . . .

Travers: In one spot? No, there was this lettuce and different things that he was farming. I remember, as a young man my dad told me, "I never want you to do the things I've done in business." It didn't register why he said that, you know, but I can see looking back, it's just too much headache, borrowing money, and worrying, and everything. It takes a lot out of a person to pioneer.

Knaster: But did you take over the business? is that what happened?

Travers: Well, then after it was destroyed by fire in '39, and went into World War II. After I returned home we started to rebuild in a small way and we built it up to what it is today.

Knaster: Were you doing that alone, or with your brothers . . .

Travers: I have no brothers and sisters. My father and I started it. My father passed away about five or six years afterwards, so he's been gone over twenty-some years. My mother left this earth about two years after he passed away. I was an only child.

Knaster: Were you always involved in your father's business, always helping him out, since you were a child?

Travers: Yes, I really was, and I used to tell my dad I was never gonna do what he did, but he was a very wise man so he didn't push it. He just sat back and let me get into it very easily. I remember one time, however, he really got me into the business. He had a tomato field that was all ready to harvest, just needed one irrigation, and he sold it to me very reasonable. So I harvested tomatoes and the market was very good. I made quite a sum of money on it. I got very interested in farming (laughter) so my dad really, what you say, conned me into it. So from then on I'd say, "Hey Pop, let's go into farming. I like this business."

Knaster: Well, it's fortunate that you started with a very good experience. What kind of work did you do? Did you harvest apples, or did you mostly work on the financial end?

Travers: No, I worked in the fields. We worked the tractors, and we used to spray. You see the big sprayers going by today, blowing air out, and blowing spray. In those days we did it with a hose, with a hand gun about two feet long in our hands, and we'd go and spray every limb in the tree and walk around the tree and then move ahead and do

the next tree. We'd have maybe 150 feet of hose, dragging that through on the spray machine, it was either pulled with a tractor or on a truck.

Knaster: What kind of spray did you use?

Travers: In those days they used a lot of lead spray to kill worms and also they used sulphur. Those seemed to be the main sprays and some oil.

Knaster: Was there ever any controversy over what kind of spray you used? Did people protest the sprays?

Travers: No, no.

Knaster: You didn't feel any ill effects from that spray?

Travers: No. Of course lead is poisonous, if you got too much of it. Of course it was diluted in the water, and it's not as strong, and you wouldn't want to eat it, but, in those days we didn't know the danger of these things.

Knaster: How many kinds of apples were you growing then?

Travers: In those times the two main varieties again were Newtowns, Pippins, and also the Delicious, but I still remember some of the old varieties, like the Bellflower and the Spitzenberg, and the Baldwins. There were many different varieties.

Knaster: What kind of market were you dealing with?

Travers: At one time in this valley when I was a child they used to export a lot of apples into China and the Far East, and they liked their apples. They liked the Pearmain apple that used to be raised here. It was a very small apple and we used to pick it very green, but it had a big market in China. A lot of those apples were packed and there are still a few of those trees around, but they're generally used for processing fruit nowadays. They also shipped a lot of small green apples into London. That was a big export market, all wrapped up in boxes and tied with wire. Then also a lot of dried fruit went into different parts of Europe, Germany. They used to have here in Watsonville an apple exhibit like they have at the fair today, with a lot of different exhibits.

Knaster: The Apple Annual?

Travers: That's right, you know all about that. That was always very characteristic of Watsonville.

Knaster: How has that market changed?

Travers: There is some export market going out of the United States, out of Washington state and the Eastern states, but not too much export leaves out of Watsonville any more.

Knaster: So basically the apples here stay here in California.

Travers: I would say maybe in the fresh market twenty-five percent might leave California. Of course in processing after it's canned or sliced or frozen then it finds its way all over the United States.

Knaster: Are you still running an orchard now?

Travers: Yes.

Knaster: Is it the same orchard that you had all these years?

Travers: It's one of the main ranches my father and mother had.

Knaster: How many acres do you have?

Travers: Oh, we farm about 250 acres.

Knaster: All apples.

Travers: All apples now.

Knaster: Did you go to school here in Watsonville?

Travers: Yes I started in the grammar school here. . . well, if you want to know my schooling, I was born in Watsonville on Rodriguez Street and when I was four years old we moved out on Riverside Road, at that time five miles from Watsonville, where my

father was raising strawberries. He had one hundred acres and ten Japanese families. Each family had ten acres at that time.

Knaster: Oh, tenant farmers.

Travers: Right. So I grew up there and went to the grammar school out there for my first grade. I could speak Japanese better than I could English at that time, with all my playmates.

Knaster: Do you still know Japanese?

Travers: No, I'm sorry I lost that. That was a real shame. And then my dad got more involved in business and packing in town and then we moved back to town when I was about seven years old. I went to the Moreland Notre Dame Academy, the Catholic school here in town. Then I went to a boy's high school in Santa Cruz, and then I finished up my last year here at Watsonville High School.

Knaster: Do you remember ever studying any material related to agriculture and apples, or did you basically get your knowledge of the whole business by being in it through personal experience?

Travers: It was all personal experience.

Knaster: I was curious because in a place like Watsonville where agriculture is the prime industry I wondered whether the focus in school might be oriented . . .

Land Prices

Travers: No, I don't think they had any subjects like that. This came later in our educational system. But to show you the value of lands—I remember on a weekend going over [to Monterey] and riding around with my grandparents and my father. My grandfather told my dad, he says, "Manuel, when I first came to this country I could have bought all this land around here (which was probably the Carmel hills today and I was just a little kid sitting in the car) for a dollar an acre."

Knaster: Oh, wow!

Travers: And my father said, "Frank, why didn't you?" He says, "I didn't have the dollar." (laughter) I've heard that many times from a lot of people that came to this county. So you can see how prices have come since then.

Knaster: Oh, everything is just skyrocketing around here, the whole county.

Travers: Yes, right.

Knaster: Did you ever work at anything else or were you always involved in the apple industry?

Travers: No, I've always been working in the farming end of it, driving trucks, tractors and growing things, except when I went to college one year, and then to the army infantry during World War II.

Knaster: Where did you go to college?

Travers: St. Mary's College, up near Moraga, behind the hills in Oakland there.

Farm Labor and Ethnic Groups

Knaster: I was curious about the labor that you used in those days in the twenties and thirties for the apples. You had about two hundred acres at that time and didn't have a family of thirteen children to do the work. What kind of workers did you have?

Travers: As I recall at that time there was a lot of Filipino people.

Knaster: Any Portuguese?

Travers: In the late twenties and thirties, yes. Of course there were the Japanese people in the late twenties.

Knaster: Do you have any recollection of the early twenties?

Travers: No, I would be too young to make a quote on that. I remember the Japanese and the Filipino people very strongly in the late twenties and thirties.

Knaster: Did they work together or were they there at different times?

Travers: They were in the valley together.

Knaster: And they worked in the orchards together?

Travers: The Japanese people worked more in the row crops. The Filipino people worked in the orchards. That's what they were brought here for. Like I say, you had a lot of local people that worked the orchards in those years or people that were coming through. Later a lot of the Filipino people went into the orchards, and there were some Chinese people of course here in the twenties. A lot of them went on to jobs in hotels and restaurants and other business too. And then when the Okies from the dust bowl came in the thirties from Oklahoma you had a great migration of people came through there that worked the farms also, and then you had a lot of help then in the orchards and everywhere. Of course today there's people from Mexico now who are taking the place of Filipinos.

Knaster: How did you get workers to come to the orchard? Did you go out and recruit them, or did you deal with a labor contractor?

Travers: Oh, from the forties on you had some labor contractors, true, but before that time there were just plenty of people looking for work.

Knaster: So people would just drive up to the orchard . . .

Travers: Right.

Knaster: . . . look for work, you didn't have to deal with anyone . . .

Travers: They'd stop at one farmer and they'd say, "No, I have plenty of help but so-and-so is looking for help," and this is the way it generally worked out.

Knaster: Did growers in those days have to provide any facilities for the workers, or did they basically take care of themselves?

Travers: They basically took care of themselves, but once in a while if you had some facilities naturally it was nice to have them on the ranch. I know when I hear the story when I was just born in the early 1920s my mother used to feed a couple of workers and cook for them and they had a place for them to sleep. So you can see how everybody worked very closely and got along and everything.

Old Style Apple Storage

Knaster: How did you store apples in those days, or was there a need to store them?

Travers: As I recall a lot of apples were stored under the tall redwood trees out there in the foothills where they were raised. They were put in boxes that held about forty pounds of apples and there they were stacked and kept cool.

Knaster: For how long would they stay out there?

Travers: Oh, this I can't say. I think they used to say they'd keep them pretty good until Christmas time in December or so.

Knaster: Having been harvested in August and September?

Travers: Right. September and October. They used to harvest apples then too all the way into November. And now by the first of November, we're all through harvesting, but in those days they used to pick them in November, even in December.

Knaster: Why was that?

Travers: Oh, because the apples would get more yellow and no one seemed to mind. Today they want them green; they don't want a Newtown yellow. They probably want them harder too, and more crisp . . . So in those days they'd probably mellow and had more sugar in them but they keep them that way. I know some fellow that had a cooler place because he had a deeper canyon and the sun didn't hit it and the apples would keep better. So that was the way of preserving fruit. 'Cause they didn't have too many cold storages. Later on they found the necessity for building cold storages like you see in the valley today.

Knaster: When did that happen?

Travers: Oh a lot of those cold storages were built in the 1930s.

Knaster: Didn't the moisture affect the apples that were stored under the redwood trees?

Travers: Oh, I guess it would to a certain extent, but not enough to bother me 'cause the rain that would come wouldn't be a direct rain, 'cause they'd put them right in the middle of the whole clump of trees, so they had some protection.

Knaster: How were they boxed?

Travers: They were put in wooden boxes that would hold about forty pounds of fruit.

Knaster: Was it totally sealed or was it like the kind you have now with slats?

Travers: No, there were solid sides and the tops weren't sealed at all, were just stacked that way.

Knaster: Were the apples all piled in or were layers made—were they individually wrapped?

Travers: No, the apples were just loose in the box and the boxes were stacked on top of each other.

Knaster: Were they shipped that way too?

Travers: No. When they shipped them any distance at all in those days they wrapped every apple with paper, and tried to put some paper padding on the top and bottom, put

a lid on them, nailed the lid down. If it was being exported and going a long distance they'd even put a wire around all the sides and tops on each end of the box so the wire would hold the lumber together better. Shook, we used to call it.

Knaster: Shook?

Travers: The lumber that made the box is called shook. I don't know where it arrived from or anything, but it was called shook. It was cheap lumber.

Knaster: When did you start cold storage yourself for the apples?

Travers: Oh, well Apple Growers Cold Storage is next door to us today; my dad started that with a group of men in the thirties.

Knaster: So it was kind of a community thing . . .

Travers: That was a community thing, right, which was very much needed. It was very difficult to get enough money together to get it started.

Knaster: So a whole bunch of growers got together and started it in the thirties?

Travers: And then my dad and I started our own cold storage on this side in 1948.

Knaster: What was that storage like? Could you describe the process from when you picked the apples all the way to storing them?

Travers: At that time fruit was still being picked in these boxes made out of shook that hold about forty pounds of fruit, and that's the way the apples were put on the trucks and hauled into town, and then hand-stacked into cold storages to about twenty feet high. Men would get on one row of boxes on the floor and made sort of a pyramid and passed the apples up to each other until they got it all stacked. Then they'd move the pyramid out and stack again. Of course that was a lot of work and a lot of relaying of all of the boxes. Then they got belt conveyors. The man on the floor would put the box on the belt conveyor and take it up fifteen feet or so and then men up there would take it off and stack it.

Knaster: When did that come in?

Travers: Oh, that was probably in the forties. After World War II people started to use pallets and fork lift trucks; the lift truck became very popular during the war, so they adapted it to these boxes. They'd set about fifty boxes on a pallet and stack them that way up to about twenty feet high, and they stored them that way for a long time. Then after the pallet came what we call the bin. The bin is generally a plywood container that's made about two feet deep and that would hold about twenty-four to thirty of these boxes that we used to put forty pounds of fruit in a box. Those bins would hold about twenty to thirty of those boxes. A lift truck would pick up that whole bin and stack those bins to a height of seven or eight bins high, which would be twenty to twenty-four feet high, and that's how they store all this fruit in cold storage.

While stacking fruit this way at the same time they used to cool the fruit with refrigeration coils. They found out later by circulating the air it was a little better because the fruits used to give off this ripening gas, ethylene gas, so then they'd get these fans to circulate air, and then they came along with a salt brine blower which kept the coil free of ice. We would never have to defrost it. The movement of air cools the fruit fast which is much better for keeping it, 'cause you get the temperature in the fruit down cool. The quicker you can do that the better the fruit keeps. So you can do it in twenty-four, forty-eight hours. It would be for the fruit to keep. So that's how they improved on their cold storage and their handling of the fruit.

Knaster: How long would the apples be stored under these conditions?

Travers: Well, they'd store them for six, seven, eight, nine months, but they would also have a lot of problems of the fruit breaking down, with internal browning and some bitter pit, which is a culture developed generally out in the orchard, but the browning would come in the cold storage and rot and decay . . .

Knaster: And so even keeping the apples cold didn't completely keep them fresh?

Travers: It helped some, but you still had your problems.

Knaster: Were they basically trying to keep the apples from the previous harvest to the next harvest so that there would be enough apples all year?

Travers: No, that would be impossible; you couldn't keep them that long. You'd have too much loss, so that wouldn't pay. You'd lose too many of them.

The Development of Controlled Atmosphere Storage

Knaster: Well, we have apples all year round. Where do we get the apples in between?

Travers: Well, we used to have apples all year round, but they still use a lot of them. Today you have a good apple all year round because it comes from a processing we called controlled atmosphere storage. We were the first ones to have controlled atmosphere west of the Mississippi.

Knaster: I understand you were the first person on the west coast to introduce controlled atmosphere storage.

Travers: Right. Controlled atmosphere storage was around for a long time. It started in England. At that time it was in England for about twenty-five years and it had been on the eastern coast and they stored McIntosh apples quite successfully with it for about fifteen years.

Knaster: Do you know how it got started in England, who started it, or when?

Travers: Yes, two gentlemen by the name of Kid and West started it. Of course we modified it in a little different way, but they're the ones who did the original research and got it started.

Knaster: When was that?

Travers: Oh, let's see, about fifty years ago now or more, yes, it started.

Knaster: Then someone brought it to the East Coast from England?

Travers: Right. Some of the McIntosh apple growers started to use it and it was very successful.

Knaster: How had you heard about it?

Travers: We read about it in articles, how they kept their McIntosh apples that way. We had a problem here of keeping our Newtown Pippins. Like I told you they get internal breakdown or browning in them, and then that browning occurs because the apple won't take the cool, that's one apple we store at thirty-six degrees, one of the few apples in all the world that you store at thirty-six degrees. The rest are all stored at thirty-two, thirty-one degrees. Thirty-one will not freeze the apple if it has enough sugar in it. But if you could store the green apple, the Newtown Pippin at forty, it probably wouldn't get the internal browning, That was too high a temperature and it would get too yellow and too much decay, so they settle for thirty-six. One day I was talking to a friend of mine at Gerber Baby Food's research department, and I said, "Why can't we do this on a Newtown Pippin like they do on a McIntosh?" So he talked to his people at Gerber Baby Food and then they wanted to see if they could keep an apple for one year. Picked the apple in September and keep it till next June so they could blend it with their apricot pack, a fresh

apple with their apricot pack for their baby food. So with their research people and our facilities we made the first controlled atmosphere room on the West Coast that held 18,000 boxes.

Knaster: When did this take place?

Travers: 1956.

Knaster: What led up to your decision to use this process here? How did you get involved as the person to bring it to the West Coast? No one else picked it up?

Travers: When I talked to the Gerber people, they were talking to their research people, and it was a great project for them especially since it would be of benefit to them. So we started writing to people in the East, some of the professors that did some research in the universities on it, we wrote to them. We gathered all the information we could, how they were doing it, but no work ever been done on a Newtown Pippin apple, so we had to use a different concentrate of carbon dioxide gas and oxygen because different apples take a different percentage. When they say use percentage of gas, we don't insert any gas or insert anything into the refrigeration room. The first thing you have to do is build an airtight room. Then when you put the apple in this airtight room the apple breathes just like you and I do, breathes in oxygen and gives off its own carbon dioxide gas. As it breathes in the oxygen it'll take the oxygen down and we take it down to about three percent oxygen in the room. You and I are breathing twenty-one percent, take it down to three and then it gives off its own carbon dioxide gas. On a green apple we generally keep it about

seven percent carbon dioxide. On a red apple we keep it two or three percent. We maintain that just by scrubbing the air that's in the room with a water scrubber.

Knaster: How do you do that?

Travers: Well, we have water that sprays over our coil. As the air is going through the coil to pick up the refrigeration, the water picks up the carbon dioxide gas that gets saturated. We let that water come out of the room by gravity and then we have a pump that picks it up and aerates it, like you're taking a shower at home, comes out of a shower head and aerates the carbon dioxide gas out of the water and uses that cold water right over again. It works very well on a Newtown Pippin at forty degrees temperature in a room.

So you have three things working for you—the refrigeration, the low oxygen and the high carbon dioxide gas all preserving the fruit. It puts the fruit into a state of suspended animation which is why we call them the sleeping apples. Everybody thinks that's kind of a joke but truthfully they are actually sleeping, their respiration almost stopped.

Knaster: Does this mean that they can be stored for a much longer period of time?

Travers: You can store an apple for a whole year that way and a lot of pie people do; they still have a nice fresh apple to make pies with before the new crop comes. That's why on the fresh market you see nice, crisp, juicy apples today.

Knaster: You really showed a lot of foresight in deciding to get into controlled atmosphere storage when the people were using what they had without thought of doing something else.

Travers: That was a lot of fun, thank you. It's nice to think that you can preserve fruit that long and feed people longer. Since then though a lot of this controlled atmosphere storage is here in our valley, it's in Washington state, and it's all over now.

Knaster: Did you have any difficulties bringing that about? Was there resistance on the part of growers or storage people around here?

Travers: No, you show people and they'll do anything, once you show them. I grew up believing you help your neighbor and other people and everybody works together. So when we opened our first room we invited all the growers and cold storage and packing people to come and see what happened to the fruit and they were amazed. They couldn't believe it. Some were skeptical; they watched us carry on for a couple of more years and after that everybody caught on and they had to have it.

Knaster: Were there difficulties in gaining acceptance for this kind of storage?

Travers: No, there weren't any difficulties, if you do everything right. It's very important that you harvest your fruit at the right time, you don't want it to get too ripe. You need good refrigeration; you put the fruit into a room within three or four days and seal the room up. You don't try to fill your room up and take two weeks to do it; you have to do

everything fast. You have to get the oxygen down in a hurry, in three or four days, but if you do everything right there's no problem and there's no difficulties, just beautiful for the fruit.

Knaster: How is the process different than the one you described to me of the first cold storage plant that they had here, in terms of bringing all the apples in and stacking them up? Do you use different equipment now or do you use different kinds of boxes?

Travers: Well, we still use the big bin, and those other type of cold storage. I described to you how it had a blower coil that improved that type of storage a lot. We're still using that. Our refrigeration probably is just as modern for both storages, the same type of storage, only you have the airtight room when you're controlling the atmosphere.

Knaster: How did the introduction of controlled atmosphere storage change your labor needs?

Travers: Probably didn't change the labor needs too much. It made us do everything a little faster, which we should have been doing anyway, 'cause the quicker you put your fruit or vegetables under refrigeration the better it is, but the C.A. storage it was more important. We call it C.A. storage. It didn't save any labor but it gave us a longer period to market our fruit. So you didn't need more people working for you or less people, it stayed about the same. You pack longer, but you pack maybe later instead of earlier, and prolong your packing.

Knaster: Did it change the work day at all? Did people, instead of working an eight-hour day have to work ten, twelve hours because of the necessity for being so fast?

Travers: Oh no, I don't think so because we came along with lift trucks and vans and everything, good fast trucks for transportation, so it probably didn't make us work any longer.

Knaster: Did it change the cost of storage?

Travers: Yes, that does change. It makes the cost go up considerably. When I say it didn't take any more labor it does take a special kind of man to take the readings of the room. This should be done every day, and twice a day while you're filling your rooms. That's how you get your right percentage of your oxygen and carbon dioxide gas. So there is an extra man involved, but he's more of a technical man that knows what he's doing.

Knaster: What would you say is the difference between then and now?

Travers: Generally you can figure it costs about twice as much to store that way because of the investment to make an airtight room. You have more pumps, more to maintain, more to watch, putting on airtight doors and taking them off.

Knaster: How many C.A. storage plants are around here?

Travers: Offhand, I'd probably have to say there's fifteen to eighteen of them.

Knaster: Are they usually run just as a storage plant by someone who's specifically into storage, or are they owned by growers?

Travers: Both. Some growers have their own; some commercial storages have that.

Knaster: So it must have increased the price of apples on the market?

Travers: Right. But at that time you wouldn't mind it because it's an off-season where you're getting a good apple. The cost carries on very easily. Today we're getting so many controlled atmospheres all over the nation that it doesn't warrant sometimes the extra cost. But you still got a good apple. Otherwise you wouldn't be able to sell it at all.

Knaster: So it makes up for the difference. How many tons of apples do you store?

Travers: Oh, in our cold storage we store about 5,000 tons.

Knaster: And that's for about a year period? Or it gradually decreases over the months?

Travers: Yes. If it was all full at one time that's what it would hold, and then it decreases as you ship them out and it all depends on how fast you ship them.

Knaster: Do you ship by train, by truck?

Travers: Most everything is shipped by trucks.

Knaster: Do you store only your own apples, or do you store for other growers as well?

Travers: We store our own apples.

Knaster: Who picks your apples?

Travers: Mostly local people here.

Knaster: Are they Mexican-Americans?

Travers: All Mexican-Americans.

Knaster: Are they unionized?

Travers: Some of the ranches are unionized and some aren't. Our ranches are all unionized.

Knaster: Do you remember any time when there were strikes or difficulties with workers because union people came in and tried to organize them?

Travers: Oh, just when I was a child in the lettuce I've seen some of the big strikes at that time, but I was so young I didn't know why they were having their strikes at that time.

Knaster: Could this storage process be used for other foods as well or is it only suitable for apples?

Travers: Controlled atmosphere adapts itself to pears. Very good for pears. For peaches, no. It would improve all types of fruits and vegetables, but in most cases it wouldn't even be feasible because, like strawberries you don't hold them, you got fresh ones being picked every day and celery and lettuce. But it's a natural for apples . . .

Knaster: Have any other innovative methods in storage come up since C.A. was introduced in the business?

Travers: No, I would say that's the latest great revolutionary thing that's taken place. But now when they ship strawberries they insert maybe some carbon dioxide gas or pull vacuums on them and change them. Atmosphere in a container that makes them keep better while they're shipping them.

Knaster: Do you have any needs that could be satisfied by a new method, anything that you could think of?

Travers: Anything new that would improve? No, only that you keep good refrigeration and keep your fruit cool rapidly and hold your good temperatures.

Women in Farming

Knaster: Do you have women work for you as well as men?

Travers: Yes, in the packing house mostly all the sorters in there are women.

Knaster: Who does the picking?

Travers: Mostly all men do the picking. But probably more women sorting the apples here in the plant.

Knaster: What do you know about any women ranchers around here? I heard about two women, somebody just told me, Ella Thurwachter . . .

Travers: Ella Thurwachter, yes, on Beach Road?

Knaster: Right here . . you know that farm here on Beach Road?

Travers: Yes, yes.

Knaster: Did you know her?

Travers: Well, I knew her, yes through my dad and we used to visit her, but I was a young child. I remember her very well. She lived to be quite an elderly woman. I forget her age when she passed away. But her house is still down there and some of her garden's still there. Her garden had some trees that remind me of a cypress tree, sort of a cypress tree, and she had her name carved on them and someone, a relative or a friend carved an American flag and a star, and those carvings are still down there today. Yes, she's a real legend of the valley. Too bad I don't know more about her.

Knaster: Did she grow apples?

Travers: No, I don't think so. This area down here in the Beach Road at one time had a few apples in it, I understand, but it gave way for lettuce and strawberries. It was too foggy and cold probably to raise your better apples.

Knaster: Do you know of any other women in the apple business who have operated their own ranches?

Travers: Yes, not actually working on them but they operate them. We had a family here, the Berina family. They were on Riverside Road. There were two daughters in that family. One of them carries on their business yet today of farming. She doesn't actually work in the fields. Her name is Mary Ann Radovich, and of course her husband now helps in most of it, but she carried on for a long time and did an excellent job.

Knaster: In general would you say that most of the agriculture around here is done by men?

Travers: Oh, yes definitely.

Knaster: Do men and women work together in the orchards? I know you say that the women do the sorting and the men do the picking. Do they have different wages for their different tasks?

Travers: When the women do the sorting they do it in the packing house, not out in the fields. Most of the men do the picking, but once in a while some women come and want to work and actually you put them on.

Knaster: Is there a standard rate that everyone gets, or are they paid differently?

Travers: In the orchards when they pick their fruit it's done on a piecework basis generally. And some hourly work, but most of it's by one of those big bins containers.

Knaster: What about the sorting?

Travers: The sorting, that's all done in the packing house, on conveyors, on belts, and on machinery.

Knaster: Are those people paid by the hour?

Travers: They're paid by the hour, right.

Knaster: I'm curious if you have any photographs that I could look at.

Travers: I don't have too many photographs; the only one I have up here on the wall that was taken in 1933.

Knaster: Is that the old plant?

Travers: That's the old plant and the people that used to work in it. Mr. Sakata's in that picture, and my father and mother and myself in 1933, and all the people that used to help them. I know most all of those people there when I was a little kid, I used to run around and talk to them all.

Knaster: Do you remember any funny incidents, or any humorous times in the apple business?

Travers: That's a good question, you're gonna make me think on that. There's always a lot of humorous times. I must tell you that I remember when they used to haul some apples by horse and wagon to town, that was done for quite a while. I guess that must have stopped probably about twenty years ago; there was a couple of them around for a while.

Knaster: That's not long ago.

Travers: No, there was just a couple going but before there used to be all horses and wagons, yes, and of course a lot of humorous things. Kids could climb the wagons and try to get apples so the man would always throw them some. One little humorous story I remember when they used to have the annual apple festival, my dad put some dried fruit in it, and they made a beautiful package and won a blue ribbon. So my dad told his foreman to put that box to the side. He said, "I want to see how that fruit keeps." So they did. The following year when it came fair time again they pulled out the box and the fruit was excellent. It was sulphured and put away and it was beautifully packed. So my

dad told them to take the fruit out of that box and put it in a new box and put it back in the fair. So they won another blue ribbon on it.

Knaster: (laughter) Oh, you're kidding. It had been a year!

Travers: (laughter) From the year before. Afterwards when they gathered in the evening they talked to the judges and everybody and told the judge what had happened. He said, "I thought you people might try that. I marked the box to see if I could find anything." "No, no, we put it in a new box." (laughter)

Knaster: What would you say has been the most difficult aspect for you in the apple industry?

Travers: Well, if you like work, nothing's hard about it, it just takes a lot of time, and long hours, and you're never through with your work. It's very interesting. But you have to be on everything. You have to be on your spraying; you have to be on your pruning; you have to be on your moisture conservation. And your big thing, naturally is your harvest, getting your fruit harvested at the right time, and getting it out of the fields at the right time into cold storage and into the markets. So that's where the tension is put on, right there.

Knaster: At harvest time.

Travers: That's the hardest time. Every crop has its harvest time.

Knaster: What has been the most enjoyable aspect of the business? What do you like most about growing apples?

Travers: I like to grow a tree. Yes, even today I love to plant a young tree and I don't get too much time to stay on the ranch and prune it day in and day out, but I just love to go out and show the men how to prune it and take care of it. I just love to watch a new orchard grow.

Knaster: Do you know all phases of apple growing?

Travers: I'd better. (laughter) I hope I do.

Dwarf Apple Trees

Knaster: Have you converted over to new dwarf apple varieties?

Travers: Oh yes indeed.

Knaster: All of your trees?

Travers: No, we can't convert that fast because if you did it would be too costly to start with, and second, it would cut off all your income because you wouldn't have any apples producing for you and you couldn't afford to sit without any income for five or six years. So you do in your trees that are the oldest by not giving the best production, you try to take those out little by little and replace them with the semi-dwarfs.

Knaster: Out of your several hundred acres how many are still in standard trees?

Travers: Oh half.

Knaster: And half are the dwarfs?

Travers: Right.

Knaster: Do you really prefer the dwarfs?

Travers: At this point I'd say definitely yes, that's the only way to go. We don't know if we'll run into any culture practices. We haven't gone through a lot of wet winters with them yet. So if they hold up like they were expected to be it's the only way to grow. Because you're going to have a smaller tree and the help won't get so tired harvesting the fruit. They'll be happier. They'll make more money. Less bruising, easier on the fruit, smaller equipment to work the fruit so you can see then the trend is that way.

Family Life

Knaster: Would you tell me about your family?

Travers: I have a girl and two sons. My girl is twenty-seven; my sons are twenty-two and sixteen.

Knaster: Are they interested in apples?

Travers: No, they're not interested in my business.

Knaster: So it doesn't look like it's going to be what happened between you and your father.

Travers: Well not so far and I'm thinking to see what to do when I have to cross that bridge.

Knaster: So your kids are interested in other things?

Travers: Right. Sometimes those things happen. Of course, you never know. Sometimes a daughter can bring home a man that would like this kind of work, who knows.

Knaster: Or maybe she becomes interested.

Travers: Yes, she might yet, too.

Knaster: Do they know anything about growing apples?

Travers: The young boy kind of likes to learn agriculture and trees. My daughter likes outdoor life. She might like it. She's studying to be a teacher right now. She might change, you never know.

Knaster: Did you marry a woman of Portuguese descent?

Travers: No I didn't.

Knaster: So after a few generations that's not an issue anymore.

Travers: No. Those were issues a long time ago. Surprising. You can't imagine it. But they were. I don't think it holds true, very little today.

Knaster: Do you live here in town?

Travers: Yes.

Knaster: So you have to travel out to the orchards.

Travers: Right.

Knaster: Would you prefer to be near your trees?

Travers: When you asked if I live in town, I do live in the country, and I have an avocado grove around my house that I watch. From there I go to my orchards. Before I come here to the office a lot of times I go spend half a day on the ranch.

Knaster: Well, it's very beautiful here.

Travers: Oh yes, the whole valley is.

Knaster: I can see why you like it.

Travers: Oh, it's a beautiful valley. Myself I feel this way and last night I talked to a man who's forty years old and been in business in thirty-six nations and now he's come back here to settle down and he says this is the best spot in the world. He was born here but he says, "I never wanted to live here, but after I traveled the world so many times, I'm ready to settle down right here."

Knaster: That's very interesting.

Travers: Yes. It is a beautiful area and do you realize we have natural air conditioning throughout this whole Monterey Bay. Beautiful place to live.

Reflections on Pajaro Valley Farming

Knaster: You've got your fog. But there was something else I wanted to ask you. If someone were starting in the apple business today what would you recommend to that person after so many years of experience.

Travers: Well I'd recommend that he try and find some good ground, good soil, and good, level ground and not to get into the hills. Then plant his own orchard.

Knaster: Is there something wrong with the soil in the hills?

Travers: It's gonna cost you too much to farm an orchard in the hills.

Knaster: Is it richer soil?

Travers: The flatlands are richer. Always richer. They're deeper soils. Sometimes in the hills you get what we call hard pan. You get clay soils under the good soil and the good soil is very shallow. It's harder on your equipment, harder to spray; it has wet spots in it. It's just more of a struggle and as a consequence it's always gonna cost you more. Your trees might not do as well, need more irrigation, more everything. So in the flatlands you got everything going for you. But I would say start with a semi-dwarf orchard, a new orchard, and in five years you'll probably have some pretty good production going for you.

Knaster: Well, that sounds like pretty good advice.

Travers: You'd need a little money to get started, that's the sad part.

Knaster: Would you say that getting into the business these days is much more difficult than it was many years ago?

Travers: Everything's relative you know. It was hard then and it's hard now. With good hard work and wanting to do it, you can generally accomplish anything you want. I would say it's very difficult to go out and start out with a hundred acres, if a man didn't have much financial backing.

Knaster: You mean just for staying in for five years?

Travers: Right. So you'd need some good financial backing, and if not he could get a job with someone and maybe work into something and then work on a percentage, and someday be part of some ranch.

Knaster: Well, would you say you need much greater capital investment now in terms of equipment than there used to be?

Travers: Yes, because farms are larger. Like I say, everything's relative of course. I mean it was worth ten dollars before, it's worth twenty dollars today. The dollar just works that way. But you need more acreage, more tonnage, to make the money that you used to live on forty years ago.

The Growing Suburbanization of the Pajaro Valley

Knaster: Do you see farmland here being converted into housing developments?

Travers: Oh it's taking place all the time.

Knaster: Even though the soil is so good and this is such a wonderful growing area?

Travers: That's true. We have some of the best soil in the world, I read in a geography book when I was in grammar school. This Pajaro Valley down there near the river, that's some of the very fertile soil. I don't think you'll see houses built on that although you see a few things once in a while. But if you go on top of Hecker Pass and look down on this valley at night and see all the lights after you've lived here for forty or fifty years the con-

tour of lights all over the valley is something we never had before. Of course a lot of it's going into marginal soil but we are trying to preserve our very good fertile flatland in the valley.

Knaster: Well, what is happening? Do people suddenly lose out because of a bad harvest and then have to sell their farms, and then that's taken over by a developer? Is that what happens?

Travers: Well a lot of times if a person's land is near the city he's forced to sell out property because taxes get too high. If you have a piece of land near the city that someone sold and he might have got a large price for it, say \$20,000 an acre or so, and you're right next to him, that makes your land worth \$20,000 and you have to pay taxes on it when you want to farm it. That's a difficult problem.

Knaster: Is there any way that people in the community can do something about that?

Travers: Those things are set up by state law, they're not the community laws. It's just very, very difficult. The people have tried to do something about it by giving you a tent or saying that you are going to farm that land and like a tax break on it, but it's difficult to get. They're working on things like this, and this might come about.

Knaster: It seems to me that it would be to the advantage of the growers to be fairly cohesive and help one another out if someone is going under, to make sure that the land

stays in orchards and trees, rather than have a developer from San Jose come in here and put up condominiums.

Travers: Yes. But Meri, I have to tell you, you're going to find out, when you speak of growers, it's *very* difficult to get them together. In the state of California, the majority of the wealth comes from agriculture. I don't know the figure but it's a large percentage of the wealth of the state of California. Growers cannot even get together to support that wealth even. They just don't work together. They're too much individualists, and scattered all over, and they will not get together to preserve or do anything. It's a shame.

Knaster: Do you think it's the feeling of competition that does it?

Travers: Yes, I think it's the nature of a farmer, he's always been independent, but today he can't be independent, we've got so many laws on him that he has to change his way of thinking and it's hard for a lot of farmers and a lot of people. But the change is here.

Knaster: I would just hate to see the same thing happen here that happened in the Santa Clara Valley. The orchards were torn down and tract homes put up.

Travers: I agree with you, but where are we going to put the people? You go to a planning commission and you say, "I want to build a high-rise building here so people can live in a small complex with a drug store and a swimming pool and a tennis court." "Oh, you can't have a high rise building, that you'd spoil the looks at the hills." So where do these people go? They have to scatter out through the farmland. So, we have a planning

commission but nobody sets down and says this is the right thing to do. We have to come up with a good plan. They're trying. They're all trying. But where do you put the people?

Knaster: Have you seen a lot of farms disappearing in this area?

Travers: Oh yes. You can see it. It doesn't happen overnight but you can see it; I can see it in this valley. I can show you a lot of places in this valley that would be ideal for homes, but they're expensive because they don't have water or roads, but the land would adapt beautifully to homes because it's rolling hills. But it's expensive to get the roads in, the water in, so you have to make a water district. It's a big tax burden and a big expense for private enterprise, so it's not done. But we have to start thinking this way.

Knaster: Yes. I agree with you.

