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**Transcript of DARE Interview (1968): St. Helena, California; Primary Informant
CA097 (Tape 0114-S1)**

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INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English, tape zero one one four, side one.

5 FIELDWORKER: This is [beep] in Saint Helena, California, January, nineteen sixty-eight. I am recording two informants on two separate tapes. This is side one of the first tape. My informant is William W. [beep], aged eighty-three, whose residence is located beside the old bale mill, five miles northwest of Saint Helena.

10 INFORMANT: Uh, this house, in which I was born eighty-three years ago, is within forty feet of the highway, highway twenty-nine, uh, some three miles north of Saint Helena. And the reason it's so close to the highway is, um, reflects the early conditions in this valley. The pioneer who built this house in eighteen forty-nine, among his other occupations, was a blacksmith. And, he had a blacksmith's shop across the, what was then the county road. As near as possible, and he had his house as near as possible to the county road. Now, this county road was practically the center of life of Napa Valley for many years, and was the only road that ran the length of the valley at that time. [cough] And, uh, uh, as I remember, my early years as a boy, the, uh, what
15 went on the highway, the county road up and down, was one of the main interests of our lives. Um, I might describe how the county road looked, we'll say up until, um, nineteen hundred. It was a dirt road, um, dusty in summer, and muddy in winter. The, um, effort of everybody who traveled on the road was either to keep from being dusted, or else to keep from getting mud on him, either in or out of the, what we called the wagon. Um, the road was also full of ruts, so
20 that when you, um, went along in your wagon you, uh, more or less bounced up and down at intervals. The, um, number of wagons that went by on the road was always a source of interest, uh, I mean the, the variety of wagons, because there were a great many, varie-, a great, a great variety of wagons, as we called them. Um, there were probably the, um, the, the most, um, use, used, and uh, one of the, um, best forms of wagon was the spring wagon, which is rather high,
25 you have to get up to it on a step, and it had a brake, and it was used for two horses, and had two seats, wide seats, so that six people could be conveniently, uh, uh, carried in the wagon. Uh, we had such a spring wagon, and, uh, uh, we used to use it frequently, uh, for various purposes. Uh, then, uh, the next most useful, uh, wagon would be a cart, uh, two-wheeled cart.

Uh, in our case, we had a rather large cart with very good springs so that, um, it was rather easy
30 riding. And if you wanted to go to Saint Helena, which was three miles and took a half an hour,
uh, we usually used the cart. But, if for any reason we wanted, um, to bring home, um, bundles
or boxes, we took the spring wagon. Um, then, uh, the surrey, we also used because, um, we
could, it had two seats, and, um, could con-, uh, contain a number of people, and, uh, also it c-,
you could, you bring back bundles and boxes, boxes in it. So, um, the three, uh, uh, types of
35 vehicle which we used the most was the, spring wagon, the cart, and the surrey. Th-then there
was also, um, uh, if you, um, had, um, if you were a person of some, um, means, you usually
had what was called a phaeton, which was a low, uh, uh, buggy for one horse, ah, with a top, so
that, um, it could be protected, you could be protected from the weather. And usually, um,
ladies used this. Um, my mother did not care to drive very much, but when she did drive, she
40 used a phaeton to go to Saint Helena, and back again. Uh, now, uh, in those days, uh, your
prestige, uh, social prestige, depended somewhat on the kind of horses and carriages that you
had just as it, uh, depends nowad-, uh, nowadays on the automobile. And, uh, uh, if y-you, uh,
were prominent, uh, socially, uh, if you had fine horses, and fast horses. The horses that could,
um, uh, outdistance the other carriages and wagons on the, on the highway. Um, uh, since, uh,
45 it was very dusty in summer, and, uh, the wind was with you, you went along in a cloud of dust.
Ah, if you, uh, if the wind was against you, uh, the, uh, wagon or carriage in front of you, which
c-, churned up the dust, would give you the dust. [laugh] So, uh, just as, uh, nowadays, you
want to pass the automobile in front of you, so in the old days you wanted to pass the carriage
in front of you, uh, largely to get out of the dust that was, uh, being carried in your direction.
50 Uh, so that, um, the fast horse, and the good-looking horse, and the good-looking carriage or
wagon, was, um, uh, the mark of social prominence. Uh, [cough], uh, my father was an
excellent driver, and, um, he enjoyed driving, and did it very well. Uh, sometimes in the spring
wagon he would hitch up four horses, uh, and take us on long drives. I remember once, uh, that
we went around, um, up over Howell Mountain, uh, from Saint Helena down into Pope Valley,
55 and then up around, uh, Aetna Springs, up through the Oat Hill Mine region, and down into
Calistoga, on what is, uh, was called the Oat Hill Mine Road, which is now no longer in use. I was
a boy about ten or twelve, and I think it took us about four hours to, um, make this fifteen mile,
uh, trip, perhaps longer than that. And, uh, uh, I have a very vivid recollection of the four horses
and going along up and down over the hills, uh, some of them very steep. Um, my mother
60 wouldn't go on such expeditions, uh, she was afraid of, um, of be, being carried over the cliff or
something of the kind, so, um, uh, she would remain at home, while why, my father enjoyed
such trips. We also would, uh, make a trip from, um, where we live up into the Lake County. Uh,
[cough], um, I remember once we went up to the, um, um, Mirabel Quicksilver Mine, which was
then full s-, full operation. There was four horses, and, um, we went down in the mine, and
65 looked all around, and as a boy of ten or twelve, it was very interesting to me. Uh, I might add
that the Mirabel Mine is no longer in operation. Uh, the, um, then, uh, I might tell you
something about how it was in the wintertime, when the road was full of mud. Um, the wheels,
of course, of the, of the carriage or wagon would throw up the mud so that, uh, um, if you were
in a, the phaeton or buggy or the, um, surrey, you had side curtains that you put on, both on

70 the, on the phaeton and on the, uh, surrey so as to keep the uh, mud, uh, from coming in from the wheels. But there was another way in which the mud entered, and that was from the horses' hoofs, so that you always, you had a dashboard, which was not altogether effective, so that, you used to, we used to have a leather, uh, um, leather apron, which was spread over us, like a, like a blanket. uh, on the front seat, so that the mud, which came in, would get onto this
75 leather apron, and not get onto you. Um, then, uh, the, um, the, uh, uh, means by which people, um, uh, uh, obviated dust was to wear a duster. Eh, women and men both wore a linen duster. Uh, tha-, and the women covered their heads with a, um, uh, some sort of, um, covering, uh, and tied it under their chins, and then cover themselves up with a duster to keep out the dust. And, uh, my father had a duster too, uh, uh, as, as my mother. That was a, a very
80 necessary precaution if you wanted to preserve your clothes. Of course, if you were, um, a farmer, and didn't care about dust or mud, uh, you didn't have to do those things. Um, um, then, uh, how, uh, how do you, how did we, uh, how did we keep warm in those days? We had neither gas nor electricity. Well, uh, everything was heated by wood fires. And in this large house, which has about fourteen rooms, of which, um, in which there were at least, um, two
85 fireplaces, and two s-, and three stoves, uh, these were all, uh, heated by wood, wood. Uh, the, uh, kitchen stove or range used a great deal of wood. Uh, we had, um, Chinese servants. We had, uh, Hing, our cook, uh, was here when I was born, and he remained for thirty years, and alm-, almost up to the point when I was married. Um, he was a very efficient person. Eh, not only was he a cook, but he, he did the housework. Eh, originally, he even made the butter, and,
90 uh, skimmed the milk. Uh, later on, um, he omitted that function, but he'd iron the clothes, for the family, did the washing and ironed the clothes, and, uh, was a man of uh, all talents. Uh, uh, doing things which, uh, uh, doing a kind of work which, uh, would be inconceivable nowadays. Uh, then we usually had a, uh, another Chinaman to work in the garden. A gardener, uh, who, um, uh, usually was not too good. The Chinese are not particularly good as gardeners. Uh, then,
95 uh, we had, um, uh, working the ranch, which was at that time a, uh, a winemaking operation, with vineyards of about a hundred acres or more, and we also had grain fields. Um, well the, most of the workers were Italians, who, um, usually came out from, uh, Italy, and, uh, worked in the vineyards and, uh, on the ranch. Uh, my father had, um, been in Europe quite a while as a young uh, boy and youth, and could speak Italian quite fluently, so that, um, he got along with
100 the Italian laborers very well. we had a, um, uh, uh, the head, the heh, the, um, he muh, might been called the superintendent, of, of the ranch, uh, a Swiss Italian named, uh, uh, Pete [beep], uh, who was here for oh, twenty-five or thirty years. And, um, a very efficient, uh, man, was a good, good cellar man, as well as a good vineyard man. And, uh, his descendants have now, um, he left, he left, uh, He saved his money and bought land, and his descendants are now very well
105 off, and, and quite prominent in, uh, socially. Um, just the same thing happened to many other Italians who came out here as laborers bought land, uh, saved their money and bought land, and, uh, became prosperous, and, um, are now very, um, uh, prominent in the, uh, uh, social and economic life of the valley. Um, when, um, my father first came here in eighteen seventy-one, and, uh, uh, took over the ranch, and began operations, the there were, were coming into
110 the valley, uh, uh, numbers of French and Germans. Mostly men of means and education, who

were coming out to, um, open up vineyards. And, um, uh, wine cellars. So that, and, uh, since my father had gone to school in Germany, and, uh, could speak German fluently and French also, uh, he got along very well, uh, with the population of Napa Valley, and, uh, enjoyed it very much. Um, uh, the Beringer family came out just a couple of years after my father arrived. And

115 he was great friends with both, um, Frederick and Jacob Beringer, the two founders of the Beringer Brothers winery, and, um, uh, for years, um, I, I knew all of the Beringer children. Uh, they were about my age, and I used to play with them. Um, I believe that two of the girls are still alive. Uh, one is older than I am, and one is younger. And, um, then there, um, the, um, there was the Krug family. Uh, whom, uh, we knew intimately. And, one of my earliest

120 recollections as having, uh, as hearing Mr. Charles Krug here in this house talking German with my father. Uh, and Mr. Krug had a very resonant voice. Penetrating voice, so that, um, he could be heard all over the house. And, as a child I used to wonder what he was saying because, uh, of course, I did not understand German. But, since he, um, seemed to be very vehement in what he was saying it seemed to me that what he said was quite important. And, uh, huh, that's

125 a very vivid memory of mine. And we used to go and visit the Krugs a great deal. Uh, there ey, uh, the Krugs, um, uh, Mr. and Mrs. Krug, um, have three daughters and a son. They were, uh, they would all be older than I, of course, um, uh, they would be, uh, almost another generation ahead of me. But, um, I remember them very well, they were all attractive girls, very lively. And, uh, they were always having parties. Uh, I remember an Easter that they gave, in which they

130 made nests and had Easter eggs in them. And, uh, they gave me a nest. I can remember that very well, with three or four brilliantly colored eggs. And, uh, since, uh, the sense of color is one of my strongest, uh, instincts, I even remember the colors of the, um, of those, Easter eggs. One was lavender and one was lemon yellow, which, uh, both of which are pleasing to me very much. Uh, uh, I remember Mrs. Krug quite distinctly. Uh, she was a large woman, dark, fine,

135 fine features. And, also with a very clear mellow voice. Uh, one day, um, when I was there, I, I was in the, their chicken yard, and I used to have a habit of chasing the chickens in order to see them fly. Uh, which was not appreciated by everybody. And, uh, Mrs. Krug saw me and called me out, in order to keep me from, um, chasing the chickens, she, there was a swing, there, when she, she swu-, would swing me in the swing. My father came along and said, "What are you doing that for?" "Oh," she said, "I have to keep this boy from chasing my chickens." Well,

140 that, [laugh] the, that was uh, uh one of the little incidents uh, the child will remember, I suppose all of his life. I couldn't have been more than four or five years old at the time. Then, um, there was, um, another, um, uh, family in early days, which, uh, was at that time prominent, was Mr. Tiburcio Parrot. Uh, who had that big house, uh, which, uh, is on Spring

145 Mountain Road. Uh, to the left as you go up by the lower reservoir. The house is still there. Uh, uh, he belonged to that very wealthy family in San Francisco, uh, the John Parrot family. Uh, uh, John Parrot had been a consul at one of the Mexican towns, and had married a Mexican woman, and had come up to San Francisco in the early days, and invested his money very wisely in real estate, and made a great deal of money. And, uh, this, uh, Tiburcio Parrot was the

150 son of, uh, Mi-, uh, John Parrot, and, uh, his Mexican wife, uh, uh, I s-, I should say probably Spanish wife. And, uh, uh, he was a, a man, who, um, looked exactly like, uh, the pictures of

the, uh, uh, uh, Havana cigar, or the man with the, uh, uh, hat and, uh, a beard, and a chin beard and moustache. He was a, a very flamboyant person, Mr. Parrot was, uh, very likeable, very generous. Uh, he didn't do anything. He had a, as I was told, a thousand dollars a month
155 income. And, uh, all he did was to b-build a big house and have a large garden. He was very fond of flowers of all kinds. Uh, he had, um, a whole acre of roses, which he, he used to plow, like a vineyard. And, uh, he had a beautiful, um, hot house, filled with all kinds of tropical plants. Uh, and I, uh, being, uh, naturally, uh, very much interested in plants and flowers, from my earliest years, and I still am, uh, I used to love to go into that greenhouse. and, uh, wander
160 around. [cough] My mother was also very fond of plants and flowers. It was very congenial of Mr. Parrot on that account. And, uh, we have now in our gardens some of the plants that we got from his garden. Uh, especially a fern, which I call the Parrot fern, because I've never seen it anywhere else. Uh, uh, Mr. Parrot and my father were very congenial, and, uh, we, uh, there was a back and forth, a good deal of visiting Uh, and, uh, it was too bad when Mr. Parrot died.
165 He died when I was a boy about ten years old. But I remember very well all the circumstances and how sorry people were. Uh, about his, uh, his death. And, um, what a loss it was to the community. Um, I could go on, and telling about, uh, various people. Um, perhaps, um, perhaps I should return to the labor conditions in the valley. Uh, the smaller farmers, of course, um, did their own work, did their own plowing. But they nearly always had somebody to help. Uh, a
170 man very seldom, uh, did the place, did, uh, did all the work by himself, he had somebody else around. And in the larger, uh, the larger ranches, uh, the, uh, at first the labor was Chinese, and, um, later on, it was, um, uh, Italian. Uh, now, um, huh, however, um, when the great picking came along, um, Chinese came in from below, would pick the grapes. And, uh, um, I can remember very well, up until the time oh, I must have been fifteen or more, we still had the
175 Chinese picking the grapes. Uh, one of the, uh, customs they had that interested me, was that they would take a gourd along with them, and either have tea in it or something else, wine, possibly. And they would drink out of this gourd, I remember that very well. Uh, the, um, then, uh, we had on the place, uh, wood choppers. We have a great m-, uh, forest on our, uh, land, and, uh, since this house needed a great deal of wood, uh, one of the, um, necessities was to
180 have uh, a wood chopper who could chop the wood. And, we had a Chinese named Sing, who was here for at least twenty three, twenty or twenty-five years, uh, and lived in a little cabin up near the woods. And when the Chinese, uh, grape pickers came along uh, they'd all crowd into this cabin. One wun, one room, I suppose in bunks, and, uh, um, live there quite happily. Uh, and, uh, Sing would live there un, all year around. Uh, the, I remember the chimney of this, uh,
185 little cabin was made out of kerosene cans. One on top of another. I have a picture of it somewhere. Uh, which may turn up someday. Uh, and, uh, uh, Sing would, uh, cut the wood and pile it up uh, and, uh, then he w-, at the end of the month or two months, he would come and tell my father what, how much, uh, uh, work he had done, and he would be paid by the cord. And, my father never questioned him, as to his accuracy because he was honest. And he
190 was paid, uh, uh, according to his own statement. Um, the wood that we used in the, in the, in the fireplace in the parlor or sitting room uh, was two foot wood, sometimes three feet. Uh, of course, in the stoves, it had to be shorter, not more than twelve inches. Uh, the kind of wood

we used, uh, around here, before the fireplace, it would be a mixture of fir, which made a fine crackling sound, and, uh, was, um, uh, very fragrant, uh, mixed up with manzanita and
195 madrone. Uh, which were very hot, and made a very hot fire. Uh, with, and also with oak. Tho-, those four trees, oak, fir, madrone and manzanita. Of course, the oak, um, lasted longer, and, uh, the, w-what you might call the back log in the fire was usually oak. Then, uh, the, um, fir would be placed in front of the oak, and then the manzanita and madrone would be placed on top of that. And it made a very s-, fine crackling fire. I can, uh, even smell it now, after all these
200 years. Um, the um, and, uh, the wood used in the kitchen stove was the combination of uh, oak, madrone and manzanita, which made an excellent combination. Um, one of the things, eh, which is peculiar to this ranch is that we did not cut the trees down, except here and there for wood, and the canyon behind, uh, my house, is still intact. Uh, the trees have never been cut, and, uh, are in a s- primeval condition. Uh, in, down on, on, in the fields below, in the valley, uh,
205 the, uh, we, uh, left the oak trees. Everyone said to my father, "Well, uh, you can't raise uh, grain with a lot of oak trees around." But, we did, and the oak trees are still there, uh, I'm glad to say, although we no longer own that part of the, uh, of the ranch. Uh, the, uh, [cough] opposite to the old mill, eh, on a sort of short sloping, uh, land, which, uh, sloped down toward Napa River, there was originally a rather thick growth of buckeyes and oaks. And along the
210 creek a thick, um, fringe of alders and maples, with here and there ash and willow. Uh, uh, but by some chance, the, uh, two acres across the highway from the Bale Mill uh, were obtained by the pioneer Kellogg, and when the, uh, when, uh, his property passed to our family those two acres were still there, and, uh, the trees in it had never been cut. Uh, the, uh, growth of buckeye bare to the, the trees are very old they're, they are, I've never been, as I said, have
215 never been cut, eh, is quite, um, uh, unusual. Um, I think probably they're as large as any buckeyes in California. And there's a b-, a rather, uh, uh, beautiful growth of oak trees among them. Um, it occurred to me some years ago that my father and mother ought to have some memorial, and, so I gave, um, this, uh, grove, uh, of some two acres or more, uh, to the Nature Conservancy, an organization which, um, uh, uh, aims to preserve, uh, uh, nature in its pristine
220 state. Uh, both, uh, for its looks and for study, uh, of natural sciences. And, uh, uh, this I accomplished last year. Uh, the, uh, two, the, t-, the, uh, buckeye grove is now eh, uh, uh, owned by the Nature Conservancy, and, uh, there is a stone on a plaque uh, there stating that, uh, it is a memorial to my father and mother. I, um, look back on this as great satisfaction.
[noise]

225 FIELDWORKER: This is the end of side one. Mr. [beep] continues on side two.