

## Ida Westree Oral History Interview

Interview with Mrs. Ida (Ede) Westree  
Date of Interview: September 1, 1995  
Venue: Mrs. Westree's home in Carlsbad  
Interviewer: Susan Schnebelen Gutierrez  
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Date of Transcription: May 9, 2003

IW: Our family came to Carlsbad in 1948, at which time it was a rather small community of 7,200 people. As for agriculture, there were mostly 5-acre avocado orchards. Evidently back in the 1920s some enterprising person went through here talking about 5 acres and independence. You know, 5 acres of avocados and you can live independently for the rest of your life. Unfortunately, it didn't work out quite that way, but there were a lot of these small avocado farms all around. There was some truck farming going on by the Mexican people. The Pedley brothers were growing Birds of Paradise. They had two large plantings, one was on Park Drive and, I think, Magnolia Avenue. Aside from that, there was practically no agriculture to speak of in Carlsbad. There were lots of wide-open spaces. My husband was interested for a number of years in growing macadamia nuts.

SSG: Had he been a farmer before?

IW: He grew up on a farm in Iowa but he left there. I met him when he was a salesman in Chicago. He had visited California after leaving the farm, and in Chicago he kept talking about going back to California. Eventually, we packed up and moved out here. We took our time looking around and bought 5 acres of land in Rancho Santa Fe for \$2,500.

SSG: I hope you kept that land!

IW: Well, we did until we bought land up here in Carlsbad where we wanted to settle. So, we sold the 5 acres in Rancho Santa Fe for \$3,900 and made a profit of \$1,400, which we thought was wonderful in about 1951-2. We went together with an uncle and two cousins and bought 3 acres of land on what is now Las Flores Drive. At

that time, it was called County Road; there were three County Roads in Carlsbad so it was a little bit confusing. We grew delphiniums and other flowers while we were getting the soil prepared. Then my husband finally got enough macadamia nuts and planted rows and rows of them to grow into trees. In the meantime, we petitioned the [San Diego County] Board of Supervisors to give our street a name so people could find us. The board said, "Okay, what do you want to call it?" As we were growing flowers there, we said, "Let's call it Las Flores Drive," and that's how the street got its name.

SSG: That's neat.

IW: In the meantime, our little nuts started coming up and had to be transplanted. There is now a macadamia orchard on the corner of Las Flores Drive and the Interstate-5 freeway. There was no freeway in those days. We eventually sold a lot of our seedlings for nursery stock and also proceeded to grow the macadamia orchards for ourselves. Other people were discovering what a wonderful place Carlsbad was and started moving in here, and agriculture was more or less forced out.

SSG: I think it kind of started and stopped. They grew berries in the 1920's.

IW: Yes. But by the time we came here in the 1940s, no one was trying to grow berries on a large scale.

SSG: I think it was a lot of small things that people tried to start up and didn't.

IW: Yes, people were always trying to get established in one thing or another. They were not always successful.

SSG: So how did your macadamia nut business go?

IW: We did quite well. We then took out a state nursery license, and we were growing and selling little macadamia nut trees. We sold thousands and thousands of macadamia nut seedlings that are now planted all around Southern California. Our own trees grew, and the orchard still stands at the corner of Las Flores Drive. Mr. Vosper bought it from me. After my husband died, I tried to keep it for a while, but it was just way too much work for me. Mr. Vosper kept it as an orchard. We were selling

selling nuts as our trees were producing them. We were selling nuts right there at the property as well as the little trees. It was a growing business. Of course, one of the problems with agriculture in Southern California, especially along the coast, is that the price of land has become so astronomical that you can no longer afford to grow anything. I think the Ecke's [Paul Ecke] got horticultural zoning for their property. Gradually, all the land along the coast here has been sold for residential or commercial property. So, agriculture has been forced out.

SSG: Yes, it's all gone to Fallbrook. How many years did it take for your trees to mature and produce nuts?

IW: Well, they begin producing when they are about 5 years old. In the first place you plant the nut, which is the seed. Then you wait for that to sprout. When it gets to be about a finger-size seedling, you take wood [scion wood] from an already producing macadamia tree and graft it onto the seedling. Otherwise, the tree may or may not bear fruit. So you graft on a piece of scion wood, and when that starts to grow you cut off the original seedling and let the tree grow from the grafted piece. In this way you produce a variety tree, and you're about 98% sure to get nuts. From the time of the graft to first production of nuts is about 5 years, although you won't get many at first. But if you just take ordinary orchard care of your trees, you will have mature trees at about 10 years. From then on you can anticipate getting anywhere from 80 to 100 lbs. or more from a tree per year, and macadamia nuts get \$.29 lb. just off the tree. I guess avocados are doing pretty good right now, but I can remember when avocados were bringing \$.06 lb. So, a macadamia orchard paid well.

SSG: Does it take more water?

IW: They take the same amount of water as avocados. There again, something that hurts agriculture is the cost of water, it's always going up. In order to grow anything here, you had to have a pretty good return to make it profitable, or else you had to have a job on the side, so you could write off the orchard.

SSG: Are macadamia trees frost sensitive?

IW: They will take down to about 27 degrees F. for short periods of time. If you get a freeze one night, it may not harm the trees. But if you have a week, the young tender tips are going to freeze. They may die back. We knew of people who lost their entire orchards when the temperature went down to the low 20s and stayed there for quite awhile.

SSG: Were you nervous when your husband decided to go into growing, rather than being a salesperson?

IW: Was I upset? Oh no, he was so dedicated about it he influenced me, too. In fact, I was out there working in the orchards. He had a job on the side working at the old Carlsbad Hotel, and he got them to plant some beautiful, big begonia. He would work there a couple of hours a day, and then he would come home and take care of the orchard, watering and pulling weeds. This may sound ridiculous, but I really enjoyed crawling around on my knees pulling weeds. There was something satisfying to me about it.

SSG: What kind of background did you have that would have prepared you for this?

IW: Nothing. I was a city girl. I was born and grew up in Chicago and attended school there. I took a business course in office work and then worked in an office in Chicago. It was nothing to do with farming whatsoever.

SSG: Have you had children?

IW: I had one daughter. My husband's farming genes were transferred over to her because she loves gardening. She lives in San Francisco. She has a lovely garden, but she also took a course in landscape management, believe it or not. She is an environmental biologist, actually. She loves to putter in the garden, so some of it rubbed off on her.

SSG: Did you eat your macadamia nuts, yourself?

IW: You could crack them and eat them. Most people think of macadamia nuts as coming in a jar. Those are the ones that have usually been imported from Hawaii, and they have been cooked in coconut oil and salt. If you ever ate the plain macadamia nut

as it comes out of the shell, I think you might grow to like it much better than the salted, roasted kind.

SSG: How did you prepare yours? What did you use them in?

IW: We used to eat them out of the shell. We used to crack them and spread them out on pans. Then with just the pilot light on in the gas oven, we would let them dry out over night. The next day, we would bag them or put them in the refrigerator. If we wanted to roast them, we could do this with a little butter on top of the stove. We very seldom ever salted them. I see now in the stores sometimes garlic-flavored macadamia nuts. To me, that is a sin. Why in the world would you want to garlic flavor a macadamia nut, which has a wonderful flavor of its own?

SSG: Did you put them in cakes?

IW: Oh yeah, we chopped them up. You can use macadamia nuts in the same way you use any other nut. You can eat them raw or roasted. You can use them in cooking. There are several cookbooks put out about macadamia nuts.

SSG: What was your favorite way to eat them?

IW: My favorite way to eat them was just raw. I also chopped and scattered them over ice cream.

SSG: What was your favorite recipe to prepare them?

IW: Well, I kind of liked them chocolate dipped. Just melt cooking chocolate in a double boiler and start dipping macadamia nuts in it. A chocolate-dipped macadamia nut is out of this world! White chocolate flavored with strawberry or lemon and colored a little bit makes a real luxury item.

SSG: Where can you get just plain macadamia nuts now?

IW: There are several growers in Fallbrook. There is also a co-op. The growers got together and formed a co-op several years ago. The co-op pays them for nuts in the shell and then ships them to various distributors. There's a place up in San Francisco that buys them by the ton. Health food stores like them. Colonel Willard was one of the early pioneers in macadamia nuts; his place has been sold to a General Simlik

over in Vista. Jim and Barbara Russell have a place in Fallbrook. Bruce and Beth Kramer have a place in Vista. If I want some nuts, especially at Christmas when I'm making up little goodies and shipping nuts to friends and family, I get them from General Simlik or Jim Russell. Just the plain nutmeat from the growers is \$9.00 lb., but if you go to a store at the mall, they charge \$16.00 lb.

SSG: What's the difference between Hawaiian-grown and California-grown macadamia nuts?

IW: Actually as far as flavor is concerned, nothing. It's just that Hawaii got a head start. The nut comes from the Queensland area of Australia. At one time, it was called the Queensland nut. I visited Queensland's coastal rainforests in 1982. They showed us trees that were rumored to be 300 years old and still producing nuts. So the macadamia is a long-lived tree. Avocados, on the other hand, always decline when they get to be about 20-25 years old.

SSG: So you must constantly replenish your orchard?

IW: You must cut off trees and graft new varieties. Avocados trees are also susceptible to a number of diseases. The macadamia, so far, has been very fortunate in not having a disease or pest of any kind.

SSG: How long did you actually work your orchard?

IW: Well, we bought the ground in 1948. I guess we started planting in 1949 or 1950. I left there in 1978. So, for 28 years we worked the orchard.

SSG: What was the reason you decided to move to Carlsbad instead of staying in Rancho Santa Fe?

IW: We were renting a small place in San Diego. We didn't have a house in Rancho Santa Fe. On the 5 acres we owned in Rancho Santa Fe, irrigation was inconvenient for us because in those days the water was only available on certain days and you had to be there to water your orchards. So, we got tired of running back and forth from San Diego to water the crops. When the Carlsbad property became available, we

thought it was the kind of place we'd want to live and we could also grow the kinds of things we wanted.

My husband was born on a farm and I guess the farm never got out of the boy because he still wanted to grow things. He wanted to grow something that not everyone else was growing, so that he wouldn't face a lot of competition. If you were a truck farmer and there were too many zucchinis, you could lose your crop for lack of a market. Macadamia nuts always brought a good return. We also had a shrub fruit called Arciola (Logan berry), which has a high Vitamin C content. They resemble a boysenberry and are a little tart but very good. There were many people interested in health food, and they seemed to find out where these things were being produced. People would come from a wide area to our place for this fruit. We didn't even need to wholesale them, although we did use Freda's Finest, a produce provider from Los Angeles, for a while. She also came to us for macadamia nuts.

SSG: What kinds of things were happening in Carlsbad when you first moved here?

IW: Carlsbad wasn't a city. We were under the direction of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. Anything that we wanted to do, we had to go to the Board of Supervisors. There was no Fire Department; we depended on the Forestry Service or the Oceanside Fire Department. We also depended on the Sheriff's Deputies for police protection. A fire along the coast over near the Army and Navy Academy changed things. A man's house caught on fire and he called the Forest Rangers who happened to be on another call. So the Oceanside Fire Department responded. Well, that man decided that we should become part of the city of Oceanside in order to get fire and police protection. He circulated a petition to have Carlsbad annexed by Oceanside. Oceanside said they were very interested in it, but that they only wanted that part of Carlsbad that runs along the coast. They didn't care about anything west of 101. They said that they didn't care about the agricultural areas; they only wanted the coastal strip including the gas and electric company and the area that is now called Terramar.

Of course, the rest of Carlsbad immediately rose up in arms and said, "No way!" So they had an election to determine whether or not that strip could become part of Oceanside. Only the people in Carlsbad were allowed to vote, and it was overwhelmingly defeated. Then there was a movement by some people in Carlsbad to become incorporated as a city on our own. Of course, everyone laughed at us: "What are you going to do? You don't have any tax base, or anything like that." Well, that probably was true in those days. The gas and electric company was about all we had. And look what has happened to Carlsbad!

We had really dedicated people back in the beginning. A council of five was formed. Lena Sutton was the only woman on it. She was in charge of gathering all the information about water rights. Each one of them took a part. Dewey McClellan was an early real estate man here and sold us our property. Colonel Gronseth was retired from the Army. Colonel Ed Hagen became the City Clerk, and that man served for many years without drawing one cent in salary. General Rogers was instrumental in getting the City Council to work through the San Diego County Water Authority to get Colorado River water into Carlsbad. You know all our water was coming from the San Luis River Basin, and it was drying up because of the demand on it. And there was also the problem of salt-water intrusion into the wells.

We had to have a City Hall. We had a small library jammed full of books, still under the jurisdiction of the San Diego County Library System, on the corner of Carlsbad Village Drive and State Street. At that time, St. Patrick's Catholic Church decided to build a new sanctuary, and the old church was moved across the street to Harding Street. The county took the front half of the old building for a library, and the back half became the City Hall. So where Harding Center is now, that was the first City Hall, except it was on the other side of the street then. The City Clerk and the Police Department were there. When they decided that they need more room, they bought an old house on Pio Pico for a City Hall. They were able to use the rooms for various departments, and this was the first City Hall where we could actually have a meeting. Up to then, it was get four chairs and go to it. The Fire Department was a volunteer department, and they had a garage somewhere in an alley.



SSG: Is think they were behind the Twin Inns?

IW: Yes, that's right. Bob Hartman and all the men who were interested became volunteer firemen. They would tear out to the fire when an alarm would go off. We had one official paid policeman, Max Palkowski. He had a volunteer police force of both men and women. We had eight or nine men and about five women.

SSG: That seems unusual for the time!

IW: Those were the good old days. People seemed to be community-minded: what was good for the community; was good for them. We had some wonderful people in those days.

The library had a series of women who would come in and serve as librarians. One day my daughter and I walked in, and there was a strange woman sitting there. She was introduced to us as Georgina Cole. The thought went through my mind, "I wonder how long she'll last?" I thought she might last six months, maybe a year. Georgina was one of the best things that ever happened to Carlsbad. She formed a group called, The Friends of the Library. We used to help in that little building, really doing the same thing we do now, trying to do everything we can to make the library function better.

SSG: Where was the jail?

IW: Well, they would arrest them and take them down to San Diego. Then they would get out on bail. By the time the police had gotten back up here, so had the prisoner. Bob Hartman decided that we needed more than a volunteer Fire Department. He got the city to consent to establish a Fire Department. He was our first Fire Chief, but he mostly had volunteer firemen.

SSG: I read an oral history by a man who was a volunteer fireman as a teenager. He was talking about putting out fires and how one day they set a woman's fence on fire instead.

IW: If you wanted to get rid of an old building, you could call the Fire Department. They would burn it down under controlled conditions just for the practice.

SSG: I guess that's what they were supposed to do, but the controlled fire became uncontrolled! In this case, they not only burned her fence down, but also got her laundry, which was drying on a line, all dirty. So they had to wash her laundry, too!

IW: Back in those days, they would have an annual Fire Department Ball to raise funds for hoses and other equipment. There was a warehouse downtown near the railroad tracks. I think it was a Wonder Bread distribution warehouse. They would clear it all out and have the ball there. That was one of the most raucous events of the year. Well, they were just noisy and loud and having fun. They would have a band and dancing, and it would start about 9:00 p.m. and go on until the wee, small hours.

IW: When Bob Hartman was Fire Chief, he and the fireman used to make a beautiful Christmas scene every year. At that time before they widened the I-5, the Fire Station faced out onto Pio Pico and it was very visible from the freeway. The firemen would raise the doors, put the engines in the back, and set up the Christmas scene in the station.

SSG: Where was the Fire Station?

IW: It was on Pio Pico between Carlsbad Village Drive and Laguna. The station spread out quite a ways, so they would have an absolutely gorgeous Christmas scene in there. People driving by on the freeway would get off at Las Flores and come back. We had more out-of-town visitors come to see Carlsbad's winter scene. Then they moved it over to Carlsbad Village Drive, where it was no longer visible. When Bob Hartman retired, the new Fire Chief wasn't that keen about doing it. People used to come off the highway the same way that they do now for the flower fields. We'd be stupid to let those fields get away from us.

SSG: Yes.

IW: People served on committees as volunteers. The Parks and Recreation Committee tried to control what kind of street planning was going on. You had to get permission for the kind of trees you planted on your property, especially along the parkways. There are trees that are good trees. They didn't want trees that would shed

leaves all over the neighborhood. People volunteered for practically all those sorts of jobs.

SSG: Quite a difference today.

IW: Oh yes, what's in it for me, today. I'm proud of the fact that The Friends of the Library has remained so unpolitical, you might say.

SSG: You were a member of that organization?

IW: Oh yes, I'd like to think that I helped get the darned thing started. Back in those days we had what was called a coordinating council. Every club was asked to send a representative to a monthly meeting. Various groups, such as the Lions Club, the Catholic Altar Society, and the PTA, would come. We were trying to coordinate the activities of the town so that there weren't, say, two events planned for the same night or within the same week. At one meeting somebody said, "Why don't we do something about getting our own library?" I was chairman of the council at the time, and I appointed a committee to study the feasibility of setting up Carlsbad's own public library. We found out that 7 cents of every dollar of our property tax revenues was going to support the San Diego County Library System, which in turn would supply us with books. Georgina suggested that we keep those 7 cents on the dollar right here in Carlsbad. Why send it to the county and maybe only get 3 cents of it back. That's when we decided that we would petition San Diego County and the City of Carlsbad to set up our own Carlsbad City Library. The county wasn't too happy about it, but they realized that this was what the citizens wanted.

SSG: I have a couple of questions. Georgina was not from Carlsbad, originally?

IW: No, she came from Pennsylvania.

SSG: She moved to Carlsbad from Pennsylvania?

IW: I have no idea how come she and her husband, Dick, came to Carlsbad, but Georgina became involved in community activities right after they moved here.

SSG: The library is fantastic. I work at the library, and it is one of the most outstanding in Southern California.

IW: It is recognized as such. When I was President of the Friends, I attended a meeting in Los Angeles of various Friends groups. We were talking about our respective libraries, and a man from the Long Beach group told us that they had made \$2,000 on their Book Fair. I didn't tell him that the Book Fair Georgina started in Carlsbad had just made \$7,000. Comparing Carlsbad to Long Beach! I didn't want to deflate him so I didn't say a word about how Carlsbad had done that year at their Book Fair. I was surprised that people up there had heard of the Carlsbad Library.

SSG: Everybody has heard of the Carlsbad Library. I work at the library on a part-time basis as a substitute for circulation. I used to work all the time, but now I'd rather do this. People come all the way from Orange County to get cards for our library.

IW: I have been a Tuesday volunteer at the library ever since the beginning. I was shocked at the amount of informational material available at the front desk. I have friends from all over the San Diego area that come to this library.

SSG: I would estimate that Carlsbad's citizens are greatly outnumbered by people from other cities using the library. I sometimes wonder if non-Carlsbad members shouldn't pay for their cards.

IW: I know libraries are supposed to be free, but why should the citizens of Carlsbad who pay the taxes support a library for people from other cities?

SSG: I've had people from Encinitas in the library who were incensed that our library was so nice and theirs was so small.

IW: Because Encinitas didn't get off their duffs and build one! I remember when Carlsbad decided to build a library after having been in the old St. Patrick's Church building for a while. We had a bond issue, and we had the plans drawn up for the new library. It was called the Taj Mahal. I remember the City Council saying, "Why do we need a Taj Mahal in Carlsbad?" The bond issue won overwhelmingly in the election because the people supported it. It is a fantastic library.

SSG: And now look at it: it's too small! Tell me about the day the new library was opened.

IW: The day the new library was completed and ready for occupancy was on a Sunday. We were moving boxes and boxes of books that had been put into storage because they had no place for them in the little old library. The big day arrived and everyone in town turned out. The Boy Scouts came out and worked. A troop of Marines came down from Camp Pendleton to help move the really big boxes. All the Friends of the Library were involved, and the women of the town provided lunch for all these workers. They had a huge potluck, and everybody worked to get the books into the new library. It was a community effort and a community achievement. People back in those days volunteered. They were interested in their community and they worked for the community.

SSG: Were they open for business the next day on Monday?

IW: No. They weren't able to open until Wednesday because all of the books that had been in storage had to be fumigated. When they finally opened up on Wednesday, I guess there was a long line to get in.

SSG: I bet. Were the librarians volunteers or did they get paid?

IW: Originally, Georgina was the librarian and she got paid. I think that she had one or two women who came in to work a few hours a week. Then I think they got to the point where they could afford to pay a librarian. I think Julie Almack was the first other librarian to get paid.

IW: I wish I could remember the name of that man who started making oral histories for Carlsbad on videotape. I went down to the library one night and acted as the interviewer; I interviewed Mr. Brokenshire, who was the pastor of the old Carlsbad Union Church. That's all supposed to be on tape at the library.

SSG: I know. They can't find it. I worked in media services in June. I found a lot of tapes that they didn't know they had. I found an interview with Dr. Walter Glines, and one with the Kentners, too.

IW: Oh yes, Dr. Glines was the old school superintendent.

SSG: You were a member of the Board of Trustees for Carlsbad's schools for many years. How did that come about?

IW: In 1952, my daughter was about in the third grade. Dr. Glines was the superintendent. He came to a PTA meeting I was attending. He said that he would like three ladies from the PTA to come and sit in on School Board meetings: Bring problems, listen to what the board decides, and report back to the PTA to encourage cooperation among the PTA, the school, and the board. So I was one of the people appointed to a committee of three. I was very faithful when I took on a commitment, and it eventually evolved that I was the only member of the three who kept going to the board meetings.

Well, Tad Pahl was on the board at the time and he decided to resign. We were under the San Diego County Board of Education at the time, and he asked them to appoint someone. Dr. Glines said, "Mrs. Westree has been attending board meetings, and she's familiar with the work. We would like to have her on the board." I was appointed to the board in 1952. When my term was up, I ran for election and every time I ran I got re-elected. Finally, in 1972, 19 years later I decided I had had it. I was just recovering from a serious surgery at that time. So I said, "I'm not going to run." I served for 19 years on the school board and never received one cent. Of course, none of the board members did. I was the only one who had that length of service. The men on the board would come and go. Someone said if I had run for re-election, I probably would have won. But there comes a time when you probably should realize it's time to step down and let somebody else do the job. But we never got paid; we did it as volunteers. The City Council never got paid, either. Now they get paid. I think the City Clerk and the City Treasurer eventually got paid. The Chief of Police and the Fire Chief got paid, but the rest were all volunteers for quite a number of years.

SSG: So was the city kind of shut down during the day and in the evening you could get hold of people to do your jobs?

IW: Well, Max Palkowski was Police Chief, and he had a little cubbyhole back in the Library/City Hall building. The Fire Chief had a desk back there somewhere, too. If

there was an emergency that had to be handled, they were there. If there were a fire, then you would go down to the garage behind the Twin Inns and ring the bell and all the volunteer firemen would come. Johnnie McKaig was the barber at that time.

SSG: He still is!

IW: If he was shaving a customer, he'd take off his apron and the customer would have to wait while Johnnie went to the fire. And the same was true of the police, if Max needed some policemen to take a drunk down to San Diego.

SSG: Johnnie McKaig is going to write his own book. He's going to write a history of Carlsbad.

IW: He designed the city seal. [Seal designed by Major Albert F. Rinehart; Mr. McKaig made the mosaic copy that hangs in City Hall.]

SSG: You know, I don't think it's written down anywhere that he did that.

IW: That should be recorded. He did all that tile work, too. He tried to put everything that was being grown in Carlsbad in the horn of plenty side of the seal. He put in one little brown macadamia nut!

SSG: I'll have to look at that; no one ever explained that to me. I'm going to interview him, and I'll have him explain to me everything that's on that seal. So, if the city doesn't make a record, I'll make one for the Historical Society.

IW: I can't understand that there is so little interest in the history of Carlsbad. It's fantastic what has happened in this community.

SSG: It is. You see the recent split in the community over the Lego business, and then look back, and see that there was a split over city incorporation. Carlsbad seems to have a history of people who don't want things to be done.

IW: I'll tell you. When it comes to Carlsbad, we fight among ourselves. But let a city like Oceanside try to take something away from us, and we rise up against them. That's how we incorporated.

The same thing happened in the schools. We had the Carlsbad Elementary Schools and the Oceanside Elementary Schools, and there was one overlapping Oceanside-Carlsbad High School District that took in both communities. The joint high school district had a board of trustees: three members from Oceanside, two from Carlsbad. We, in Carlsbad, decided that we wanted to have our own school district, kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Finally, we had to appear before the California Board of Education in Los Angeles. Ron Packard, who is now our congressman, was president of our school board at the time. To this day, it infuriates me to think of it: Tom Braden, who was publisher of the Oceanside Union-Blade back in those days, was on the California Board of Education, and he was against Carlsbad having its own school district.

SSG: What was his reason?

IW: I don't know, but he did not favor separating the school district. In fact, he wanted Carlsbad schools to be part of the Oceanside system. We were on the Board's agenda for 11:00 a.m. and we weren't heard until after the lunch break at 1:30 p.m. In the meantime, the Oceanside Blade-Tribune came out at 12:00 p.m. and said, "School District Denied." It was pre-arranged that they were going to vote it down.

SSG: But they didn't.

IW: Yes, they did. Then later on the San Diego County Board of Education came to the Jefferson School for a meeting with the Carlsbad and Oceanside School Boards: three tables with the County at the head table, and Carlsbad and Oceanside facing each other at the other two tables. I can still see this in my mind. The room was packed with Carlsbad supporters. The five on our board were: Paul Swirzsky, Ron Packard, Ralph Palmer, Allan Kelly, and me. We had to get up and present reasons for why we wanted our separate school district and Oceanside was to explain why they didn't want us to. Well, the Oceanside Board of Education said that they really didn't care. They were satisfied with their school district. It was okay with them if Carlsbad wanted to join them or not. We explained to the County Board of Education why we wanted our own school district, how it was physically and psychologically



better for us. They finally agreed that we could have an election. We had to go, however, to a California Board of Education meeting in San Diego. Ron Packard, who was president of our board, had to make a presentation, and so the State Board also agreed to let us have an election. I think 80 or 90 percent of Carlsbad voters went to the polls. About 20 percent of Oceanside voters voted; they didn't care. So we won overwhelmingly for our own school district [June 2, 1970].

SSG: Your primary reason for unification was so that the kids could stay in Carlsbad?

IW: We were tired of having to ask permission of three Oceanside board members before we could do anything, because they outnumbered us three to two. They were agreeable enough: they weren't against us. It was the State Board of Education that was against us.

SSG: There were three entities: a five member Oceanside-Carlsbad High School Board; a five member Carlsbad Elementary School Board; and a five member Oceanside Elementary School Board. You belonged to the Carlsbad Elementary School Board. Who was on the Oceanside-Carlsbad High School Board?

IW: Gardner Bernard, Russell Gross, Joe Cochran. I can't remember the rest.

SSG: Once you won the election, the State Board couldn't deny your request to have your own K-12 district.

IW: That's right. Originally, they denied us the right to have the election: then the County Board agreed, and so we made another presentation to the State Board. The second time, they agreed to let us have the election. The County Board of Education was really in our favor, but the superintendent, Cecil Hardesty, wasn't as strong as the State Board.

SSG: The owner of the Oceanside Blade-Tribune didn't cause you trouble in San Diego?

IW: No. He was off the State Board by the time we made the San Diego presentation.

He was the big stumbling block in the whole thing, and when he left the board we had a better chance.

SSG: This has been great Mrs. Westree.

IW: I've enjoyed it. It's like reliving my history.