

Interview with Louise Carpenter Williams and Delene Schutte Stromberg

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Interviewer: Natalie Vermilyea

Transcriber: Dee Morning

NV: This is the first of several interviews conducted by the Carlsbad Historical Society. We're seated in an office of the old Magee House on Beech Avenue in Carlsbad. It was constructed by Samuel Smith in 1880. In the first of these interviews we will be talking to Louise Carpenter Williams and Delene Schutte Stromberg, both of whom were born in Carlsbad, grew up here and still reside in the city. I'm Natalie Vermilyea asking these questions. Ladies, you were both born in Carlsbad, grew up and received your elementary education here. Louise, where was your family home?

Williams: On Laguna where Roosevelt comes into Laguna. I lived there until I was around nine years old and then moved to the corner of Roosevelt and Elm.

NV: Roosevelt and Laguna. Could that be the old Carpenter house that is still there?

Williams: No, it's where Roosevelt comes into Buena Vista Gardens. It was an old storehouse. I have pictures; I don't know if you want them now.

NV: Well, what we want to do is put all these pictures on camera.

Williams: The little side building is where I lived.

Stromberg: I lived also on Laguna, on the east where the retirement village is now.

NV: Did you grow up there?

Stromberg: Yes, I lived there till I married.

NV: Tell us something about your early family, your roots; were they from another state or another country?

Stromberg: Well, my grandfather and grandmother came from Nebraska. He had a lumberyard there. He sold it and brought some lumber out here and built a house that turned out to be the Twin Inns. After he built the home, he went back and got the family and brought them out here.

NV: Where was that?

Stromberg: Columbus.

NV: Louise, what about your roots? Where did your family come from to Carlsbad?

Williams: My mother was born in Alabama. She came here when she was three. However, Grandmother and Grandfather are from Germany. My father was born in Oceanside. His father came in 1907 to Carlsbad and purchased 33 acres of farmland. Grandmother was from the Ortega family. I don't know how far back it goes. There's the Ortega Highway and General Ortega. I had an epaulet with gold fringe from his uniform which I've turned over to one of my cousins.

NV: They came to Carlsbad for business reasons, right?

Williams: My Grandfather Kreutzkamp was always traveling around the country. He would go and find a new place, then write to Grandma and she'd pack up the family and move. When she got to Carlsbad she told him this is the last time I'm ever moving. If you want to go someplace else, you go by yourself. (laughter) She'd had about 15 children so it was a little bit of a chore moving the family.

NV; So originally both families were of German origin. Delene, your mother comes from the Reece family, right?

Stromberg: Yes she was born in Iowa. I don't know where her father was born. My grandmother and grandfather come here from Nebraska. He had a general store in

Oceanside and after he died, my mother went to live with her aunt who lived in Carlsbad. She went to Los Angeles to Normal School to become a teacher. Then she came to teach in the Carlsbad School

NV: The original school? I think I've seen in the records that it was built in 1902. Is your family connected by bloodlines or marriage to any of the other pioneer families around here?

Stromberg: Well, Louise and I have mutual cousins.

Williams: There were four (Kreutzkamp) sisters. Two of them married Carpenter brothers and two married Schutte brothers. Blood no, but we're all family.

NV: Any other relatives around here, cousins or any thing?

Williams: Oh yes, on the Carpenter side I have cousins – third cousins. There's Rudy Carpenter who had the \_\_\_\_\_ garage in North Carlsbad. His sons still have it.

NV: How about Harold Carpenter, are you related to him?

Williams: Yes, his father and my father were first cousins. But my grandfather Carpenter, I don't know any relatives of his. He was from Missouri. I really don't know any of that family.

NV: So then some do still live in this area?

Williams: Yes

NV: (Turns to Stromberg) And your family had a brother who lived in Escondido, right?

Stromberg: Well, my mother had a brother that lived in Escondido and he lived in Carlsbad for a while. He was postmaster here. Then he moved to Escondido.

NV: Do you know what time that would have been?

Stromberg: It must have been before 1900, 1898, somewhere around there.

NV: When your families came to Carlsbad this was generally an agricultural area, wasn't it? Did your families do any farming?

Stromberg: Yes, my grandfather bought 400 acres in Carlsbad and most of it was east of Highland and he bought a lot of the lots in town.

NV: He must have been pretty much involved in real estate then.

Stromberg: No, not really. He just bought it to farm.

NV: Then he did a lot of building?

Stromberg: The Twin Inns is the only thing he built really – for his home.

NV: Both of you grew up in Carlsbad. What did young people do in those days? What was your social life, if you want to talk about it (laughter) Did the church organize any activities?

Williams: Not when I was growing up, we didn't even have a church here. We went to the mission for church. We just had so many cousins around, that was our main entertainment.. Going to the beach and as I got older, going dancing.

NV: And did you go to Oceanside to dance?

Williams: No – San Marcos. There was a little old store sitting on the corner and it (dancing) was upstairs. They still have it (the building) there.

NV: Did the school organize any activities?

Stromberg: No. We never had anything like that at all.

NV: In other words, young people mostly had activities that centered around families?

Stromberg: We went to the beach a lot.

Williams: We just about lived at the beach all summer. Our summers were much better then.

Stromberg: When I was real small they had dances at the schoolhouse just about every Saturday night. The whole town would go. There weren't many people here then.

NV: How many people were here when you were in grammar school?

Stromberg: Well, there were eight people graduating when I did.

NV: Of course we had no high school in Carlsbad so you went to Oceanside. How did you get over there?

Williams: Bus. The bus picked up as far south as Del Mar, out to Vista and as far north as the county line.

NV: Did many people in those days travel by horse and buggy or horseback?

Williams: I didn't, did you Delene?

Stromberg: Not horseback. We had a horse and buggy for a long time. My father bought a car around 1920.

Williams: I don't remember going by horse and buggy.

NV: How did you get to Oceanside?

Williams: We had a car.

NV: Did you ever ride the train?

Stromberg: No, but my sister was quite a bit older than I and she went to high school on the train.

NV: How did the depression affect Carlsbad?

Williams: Fortunately my father had a job all through the depression. He worked for the water company for 33 years. We didn't have very much, but nobody else did either.

. It didn't show up in school because we wore uniforms.

NV: Did the school cut back on activities?

Stromberg: No. They still put on little plays and things with the children.

NV: And then in the 40's when the war came on I suppose everyone was effected by that. Did you have people in the service?

Stromberg: I didn't, no,

Williams: At that time Leo went into the marines but it was at the tail end of it.

NV: Well, this has been real nice. Is there anything else you want to talk about or add to this before we start showing the pictures? \_\_\_\_\_ do you have any questions.

You were born in Oceanside too -- of course much later.

Male Voice: What about the beaches? Did they have lifeguards?

Williams/Stromberg: Noooo

Male Voice: Was it pretty much open or did you go down where the old hotel used to be?

Williams: Oh, the whole terrain along the ocean is so entirely different. It used to be all sloping. You could just walk right down anywhere you wanted to. When the war started there were only about 3000 people in Carlsbad.

NV: That's a good point Louise because when we came here there were around 3500 and that was in 1942 and now we have 62,500 and 40 square miles of terrain so the expansion was terrific after the war.

Stromberg: When you asked about the service I forgot to mention that my husband was in the Navy.

NV: Before we get to the pictures, was there any big event that you can remember?

Williams: This is an event that I'll always remember. As a small child on Labor Day we would all get in the car and park on Carlsbad Boulevard and watch the traffic go by. Remember that Delene, remember how crowded it was with all the cars parked? That, and the Fourth of July. We always went to Oceanside. Those were the two big events of the year.

NV: Do you remember when the first hotel burned down?

Williams: Oh that was before my time. It was before your time too wasn't it Delene?

Stromberg: Oh yes.

(General discussion between the three women about when the first hotel might have been build)

NV: When we first got here in 1942 the Carlsbad Hotel was the only place guests could stay, right?

Williams: There was a hotel downtown on the corner of State and Grand.

NV: Oh yes, that's right. When was that built?

Williams: Oh somewhere around 1930 I think.

Stromberg: I think it was around 1930. Mr. Chase built that. He was Mrs.

McClellan's father

NV: He did quite a bit of building

Williams: One of the other big events were the dances at The Carlsbad Hotel, now the Lutheran Home.

NV: They had that nice ballroom. All in all Carlsbad was a nice place to grow up and to raise children. We didn't have any problems with drugs or any thing like that. Well let's get into these pictures now.

(Williams shows one picture – farm field, her father on tractor)

Williams: (reading) In 1907 my Grandfather Frank Carpenter purchased 33 acres bounded by Magnolia, Jefferson, Tamarack and Adams on which he grew peas, beans and lettuce. She adds: My uncle farmed where car country is now. He didn't own it, but he farmed it.

(NV decides to show the pictures at another session as they are running out of time)

NV: Thank you for your valuable contribution to the folklore and history of our city.