

W. Allan Kelly Oral History Interview

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Interview with: W. Allan Kelly
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SSG: You were discussing the boundaries of the grant land. Who owned the land north of Basswood, which was outside the grant land, from the time the Mission San Luis Rey lost its land and they began to divide it up. Was this land part of an Oceanside Rancho?

WAK: No. There was no Oceanside Rancho. The next rancho to the north was Rancho Santa Margarita. There was activity between ranchos as the mission lost control and disappeared. It was laid out in a sectioned system and became U. S. government land.

SSG: That was vacant land, so people could go in and homestead?

WAK: Yes.

SSG: And that's how they got the land to build the original areas of Carlsbad?

WAK: Yes, most of Carlsbad is just outside of the land grant. If you look at a U. S. Geological Survey topographical map of the area you will find that the survey section lines ended at the grant boundaries. Sometimes they used their imaginations and continued a line across the grant and sometimes they didn't. There were a number of grant lands, such as the Guajome and Agua Hedionda. Through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Mexicans who owned them before the war maintained these land grants. The Agua Hedionda grant land boundary line ran from the north side of the open side of Agua Hedionda Lagoon out to a place along Basswood where the tennis courts are today at the El Camino Country Club. The line then went east just about to the front door of the Tri-City Hospital, almost to Emerald Drive. It then turned south and if you know where to look, you can still see that back boundary line in the way the subdivision houses are positioned on the hillside. The boundary line then went to where the Unitarian Church is today in Vista, and then a short distance west of the west end of the Carlsbad Raceway. Finally, the line went down to Alga Road, the east-west boundary of the land, and continued to the ocean just south of the sewer treatment plant.

SSG: If the boundary lines went as far south as Alga Road, then Los Kiotes (Quiotes) Ranch would have been just south of the Agua Hedionda boundary. They homesteaded that land. Do you know what happened to that land, how was it divided up?

WAK: I'm not sure of the title, but I guess the wife of Mathew Kelly, Sr. lived there for a number of years after he died. She must have died about 1910; my father remembered her.

SSG: That would have been his grandmother.

WAK: Yes. They changed the Homestead Laws, expanded them really, from 160 acres in desert land to a whole 640 square-mile section of the survey. The Kiotes was a section just outside of the Agua Hedionda boundary. When government surveys meet non-government property such as a grant you end up with a bunch of government parcels. These parcels were all along the eastern boundary of the Agua Hedionda grant. Where the Bressi property ends and where the houses begin, that was the grant boundary. The Kellys took up some properties outside of the grant. Matthew took up his 640 (square miles) and to the north; Charles Kelly had a timber culture. By planting trees you could prove up property so he planted eucalyptus. Most of the raceway was Charles's. Charles was Matthew's son and my grandfather. North of that the Squires family, my grandmother's family, took up property outside the grant and that went on up to Vista. You can still see some great big old eucalyptus trees on the property that they took up. Along Agua Hedionda creek at the left boundary of the grant all the way to the Shadow Ridge area, Robert Kelly had a Mexican named Julio prove up some land along both sides of the creek. I don't know how much Robert paid him for this.

SSG: So the nine brothers and sisters, Matthew's children divided the grant but then there was all this additional land that the nine added to the homestead?

WAK: Yes, the borders of the grant were pretty much taken up by Kellys. J.W. Squires took up some outside the grant. His sister, Livinia Squires was my grandmother. Then there were people related by marriage; the Irwins took up the parcel in the Shadow Ridge area where Lupine Hills Drive is. Charles Kelly's wife was a member of the Irwin family.

SSG: The original Matthew's parcel was divided up among his nine children?

WAK: No, I think they sold it.

SSG: So the parcel was still intact when Carrillo bought it?

WAK: Yes, although it had been sold to someone else before he bought it.

SSG: I wonder who lived there in the interim?

WAK: The house was pretty much abandoned, it was falling down. When I was a little kid Carrillo was re-building it. Our family went over there and Carrillo showed us around. He pointed to a wall and said, "That's the only part of the old Kelly house that's left". Matthew's house was adobe. A two-story adobe was very unusual. He saved some of the old house but not very much as it was falling down.

SSG: Well, it was old when he bought it.

WAK: Yes, built around 1860 or so. I think my grandfather was born up in Placerville. ^(William) They weren't up there very long. The whole Kelly family came from the Isle of Man. They landed in New Orleans in 1842. They went up the river and spent some time in various locations. Then around 1850 Matthew came west to the gold fields. He was a blacksmith. He made his money blacksmithing instead of digging for gold.

SSG: His wife was born in the United States, where?

WAK: I have it in the family book. I can bring it to you along with the family tree.

SSG: Yes, and then I can make copies.

Showing pictures in Allan's album take up the remainder of the tape. The camera goes in and out of focus. The pictures are mostly outdoor scenes of ranch life, branding, thrashing, harvesting. Allan explains the locations and identifies the people and equipment.