

UC Davis

Recent Work

Title

SBOH-6, Mary Spilman Crane

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1z0044sn>

Author

Oral History Project, Sutter Buttes

Publication Date

2006-02-24

SBOH-6, Mary Spilman Crane
Interviewer: Alison Kootstra
February 24, 2006

10:00-11:30 a.m.

-Ok Mary. When and where were you born?

I was born in Marysville, CA in 1923.

-And how long has your family lived in the Marysville/Sutter Buttes area?

My family came in the 1870s to Sutter County and settled in the Live Oak area. And my husband's family came here, to this ranch, in 1852. So they've been here a long time.

-Yeah, is this your husband's famil-

This is my husband's family ranch up here.

-And do you know how he came, his family came about to own this ranch?

Yes, they homesteaded it, or they did not pay for any of the land. Whatever they, they had come from Ohio and spent two winters in Iowa and then they came to Marysville in the late forties, 1840s, and then they came here in '52 and this land was granted in some manner and this is how they got it and they got around 1250 acres. And it was here, this ranch that I have is, was part of that parcel.

-OK. So how did you meet your husband-

Went to high school together.

-To high school? In Li-

Live Oak.

-When you got married and moved onto the land here, is this the same, did they still have the original-

No-

-acreage?

No, this was a parcel of land that was left by the original owners to her daughter who was my husband's grandmother. And she was left this land in eighteen, approximately 1882. She lived on it, raised her family here, and my husband, Jim Spilman was raised here also.

-How did they use the land?

They farmed it. First they farmed it to grain, they had to clear it, it was in oak trees. Live oak and (clears throat) white oak I think. And then they cleared it and farmed it to grain and then in the late 1800s, turn of the century, almonds. They started raising almonds here, and the very first varieties were planted in this area and it's still an almond orchard.

-So you and your husband raised almonds as well or how-

Yeah, he's deceased. And so I, yes I have almonds and I lease it to my son who was a school teacher for twenty-seven years and he came home to farm. (Laughing). So he's gonna farm here now.

-What was it like farming almonds when you first were married?

Well, it was much different than it is now. It was, almonds, ranching, any ranching now is so different than what it was fifty, sixty years ago. It was a difficult job, but now everything's mechanized; sprinkler systems, you know, harvest is so much simpler, everything is moved along with mechanization which started in late 1950s/1960s. Farming began to change.

- So your husband inherited this land from his mother?

Oh, no we bought it.

-Oh, you bought it from-

He and I bought it from his mother after his father passed away. We bought this ranch, 160 acres and it was the part that his grandmother had inherited and she left it to her children and my husband's father bought the other two out so he and his wife owned it. And then after he passed away Jim and I bought it from his mother.

-And do you still own the 160 acres current-

Yes.

-So I heard that your family sold some of the land, of the original acreage, up in the Buttes. Who did you sell that to? Do you remember, who did they sell that to?

That wasn't really. I think you're referring to Peace Valley?

-Um hmm.

Ok. That really wasn't my husband's family other than his great grandmother was Aaron Pugh's third wife and she lived there for twenty-seven years, up in Peace Valley. She is not buried there. She's buried with her first husband in Marysville. She, when she married Aaron Pugh, he

kept his property separate and she kept her property separate. And so she did not inherit or have any of his land nor did he ever have any of hers. Two separate parcels. So as far as this family having anything to do with Peace Valley or selling it anything, they didn't. She, Mary Fairlee was her name, and she kept everything separate. And she became quite a wealthy woman because she was leasing it out to the local farmers and things. And the records show that when they built the church she made a donation in her name and he made, Aaron Pugh made a donation in his name. So their banking was separate which is an unusual thing for that time.

-So, I'm having trouble getting this straight in my head. So your husband's parents had this acreage that you own now and then their-

And his mother, my husband's father's mother had inherited it from her mother, Mary Fairlee. Mary Fairlee Pugh. And then Jim and I bought it in probably the late sixties or mid-sixties, something like that. Some time in that time slot. And then he passed away in '76 and I've owned it since then.

-And have you leased it to your son the whole -

No

-time? No?

No I ran it myself for a while and then I leased it to another farmer and then Jim came home about ten years ago.

-Are there other Spilmans in the Buttes that still own other plots of land?

There are no Spilmans; there is a small parcel that is still owned by one of the ancestors of the original, actually two parcels. But neither one of the people live here, but there are, besides this parcel there's two other very small parcels that are still in the family.

-Do you recall their names?

Yeah, Dorothy Coates, from Yuba City, she owns the share that her mother inherited. And then, Dorothy's cousin, which I don't recall his name, he owns a part of it. And that was the part that Nettie, his sister Nettie, inherited. And those two parcels are still in the family.

-So the Spilmans were the family that originally came from Idaho to the Buttes.

Fairlee was the family.

-Fairlee was the family. Ok.

-So when did the Spilmans first?

The Spilmans came about the same time. They settled up north of here a couple of miles and I honestly don't know much about their history. They were farmers. They had quite acreage up there. He became a state assemblyman in the 1800s sometime, but none of their land was kept in the family. Bell Fairlee, who owned this, the daughter that owned this, married Bruce Spilman and he was a local blacksmith, in the old town of Pennington. The old town of Pennington had, I believe, two blacksmiths' shops, had a hotel, had a grocery store, they had numerous things. And he was a blacksmith.

-You live in the Buttes here year round?

Oh, yeah.

-Yeah? Do you have water problems? Problems with water rights? Are you under water districting with Live Oak?

No. I have in my orchards, I have four deep wells and we pump our water.

-How are you involved with Middle Mountain Foundation?

Just interested in it, a member of the, whatever, you know. I'm just a member of Middle Mountain and interested in it and support it as much as I can. Enjoy their hikes. At least once a year or maybe a lot more often. But very supportive of it and of the idea of keeping it from being disturbed more than it is.

-How do you feel about Middle Mountain and how they are addressing development?

Very difficult question. I think Middle Mountain is doing a good job. How long they can continue it I don't know. As land becomes more desirable, particularly this land, it might be difficult. I just don't know, I feel very good about the state owning Peace Valley cause I think they will take care of it. I would hate to see a hundred houses up there. If the state, you know, has a chance to buy more land close to Peace Valley I think it would be a great thing, but, you know, this is a very personal, my personal thoughts and a lot of land owners don't feel that way. I just would like to have the Buttes protected from this development that's taking place all around us.

-Why do you think that the land owners are maybe a little distrustful of State Parks?

I don't know if they're distrustful or not. I think they are just, they just want the original land owners to own it. And you know, whether it's in our time or some other time these things change and it will change. And so this is why I really like the state to own it. Because I feel that perhaps it won't change as much and I (cough) I had the privilege of visiting a lot of state parks and national parks and it's a wonderful thing for people to have these parks to go to. So, this is not a very popular belief with a lot of people.

-Have you encountered any problems with the State Parks land that borders you, with trespassers or-

No.

-Do you, you said you were a part of Middle Mountain in that you supported them, do you remember when Middle Mountain was first created in the Sutter Buttes?

Yeah, kind of. I wasn't, you know, just remember hearing about it and you know how these things. And years ago I took hikes with some of the fellows that were leading it then and aren't now and I got aquatinted with Walt Anderson years ago through Middle Mountain and it's always been, I thought, a very desirable thing for the Buttes.

-How much maintenance does your land take? You own almond orchards, do you own any uncultivated lands as well?

Yeah, there's a small hill in the back that goes up to the Buttes.

-And does it take a lot of maintenance to keep it clear of fire danger?

No.

-What structures are built on your land? You have your house here.

I have three homes. The old house was built in 18, about 1880 by Jim's grandmother when she, her mother gave her this little parcel, she built her house when she got married to Spilman. And then in '47 we built this house and I purchased the house next door ten or fifteen years ago.

-What kind of, what were your earliest memories about the Buttes? You said you lived in Live Oak.

Lived in Live Oak. Coming on a picnic every spring. We'd have a picnic out at Dow Grove, which they don't call it Dow Grove any longer. But the whole community would come on this picnic so this was a great thing and then we'd have friends, the Sexton family, that lived up in the Buttes and we visited them several times in the spring and would hike in the Buttes and picnic again the families would.

-Did your family socialize with other people besides the Sextons in the Buttes?

Oh, the Spellmans and the Bowers. My family, my mother and dad, were both born in Live Oak so they had life-long friends in this whole area.

-Do you have other childhood memories of the Buttes?

Just, you know, riding our bicycles out to the Buttes, Campfire Girls, hiking in the Buttes, picking wildflowers, things like that. Just mostly a fun thing to do.

-How have you seen the Buttes change since then?

Well, the only change that really isn't very, you know, gravel pits. A bunch of them down here. A lot of valleys have been planted now to orchards, a number of the valleys that used to be just pasture and that's about the biggest change actually. Along the edges of the Buttes houses have been built, families have built houses, homes for themselves. But the Buttes have not really changed that much, I don't think.

-What kind of wild life do you see in the Buttes?

We have deer, we have turkeys, lots of raccoons. That's about it I think.

-Do you see a lot of them down here by your house?

Not too many by the house, but I walk up by the trail around my land and about two miles and I walk that and often I see the turkeys and the deer. There are a lot of deer. They come up from the wetlands I think, come through the orchards.

-Do you remember when pigs were introduced to the Buttes?

Don't remember when they were introduced, but we've had our problems with them. We haven't recently, they're staying the Buttes for the last few years, but they do root up your orchards. There are permits to hunt them. My son does. Try to keep them out of the orchard and he puts electric fence around parts of the orchard where they come in. He's been very successful keeping them out for a couple of years now.

-Do you remember any specific stories about encounters with pigs?

No I've never had an encounter with a bunch of pigs. Never have. I really haven't. (Laughter).

-They stay in their own little area.

Yeah. (Laughter).

-So, you mentioned that you thought Middle Mountain was doing a good job.

Yes.

-How do you feel about the opposition they're getting from people who want to develop?

You know, I'm really not that familiar with the opposition. I really am not that familiar with it. I was glad to see that the, just out of Sutter City, that that was voted down simply because of the sewage and all this sort of thing, it would have been a problem. And I don't know how much that went into the Buttes. I don't know. I really haven't talked to too many people that are interested in developing the Buttes.

-Would you consider selling your land to a developer if they asked?

The land here in the Buttes? No, I don't think so. Not at this time. I have land in other areas I certainly might think about. But no, personally, I want to live here. That's kind of important to me.

-Family connections?

[Nods]

-Being from Live Oak how have you seen that neighborhood change?

Well, I'll tell you what. I gave a talk on that just two weeks ago to the historical society. I began the development of Live Oak in 1855 when it started and I brought it up to date to what it will be when this development finishes. It will be twenty-five hundred acres is what they plan to have in Live Oak and its an amazing story. Growing up there it was just a tiny, tiny community. Maybe there were two hundred houses maybe a little more, maybe not that many. Some of them didn't have electricity. I grew up there in the twenties and thirties. And then in the late thirties Live Oak began to change as all little farm communities did when the Great Depression, people were leaving and coming west and the Dust Bowl. It was just a very unfortunate way that Live Oak changed because they just opened up streets, they had no sewage, they had no, you know, just dirt streets and everybody had to have their own well and water was just a mess. And then in '47, 1947, Live Oak became incorporated it kinda started to do planning then and have a water system and a sewer systems and to do the things that needed to be done. In the meantime Live Oak had grown from, you know, when I grew up there were probably three or four hundred people at the most. And they had doubled or tripled in size in just the later thirties, latter part of the thirties, early forties, that was a very unfortunate type of development I think. Now they have some planning going and they have some lovely developments going and the area that they hope to develop. I think they can, in ten or fifteen years, can have a very nice community again, but they still have that terrible part of Live Oak they have to deal with. How do you do that? How do you do it? These are all homes that people have. Take a trip through Live Oak some time it just is a shocker. And yet, all round it, with these developments they're lovely homes they're putting in, they're lovely homes. And I met with the planning commissioner for an hour and he gave me maps and things, you know, plans they have. It can, it will be a very nice thing, but they still have the problem of downtown and this area that's so close to the downtown, the heart of it. I don't know what they're going to do. It's a mess.

-Do you have an opinion on what you think they should do?

Well, no. Not really, because I know it's a difficult thing everyone, you know, you go through these most undesirable streets, these houses are terrible, but you have to remember somebody, this is their home. So what are you going to do about it? I just don't know what you do about these kinda things.

-Do you think that's part of the feeling of land owners in the Buttes and maybe their resistance to selling?

Nothing, nothing like that. They want it because it's theirs. And it's a thing of private property and they've had it all these years and they're going to keep it. And you know, that's fine, and that's what they're going to do, but you only keep your land as long as you're on it, when you're going it's somebody else's, that's all there is to it.

-So, do you think that, how do you think people who, as you say in the Buttes, want to keep their land because it's their land, do you think they view conservation issues on their land?

What do you mean conservation issues?

-Well, some of the land owners are trying to put together conservation easements with the government to keep their land in the conditions that they are. So no development and trying not to significantly change the environment.

Well, I'm all in favor of that. I think that's a great thing. I just don't know how long you can do that, maybe for fifty years. Can you do that for a hundred years? Can you come back a hundred years from now and the Buttes are going to be like they are because of this act that they did now? Everything changes. Particularly as the world population is increasing so fast, so many more people coming to our part of the country, our part of the state, because it's a desirable place to live. Then you got all these things that are going to be a big push for these people that don't want change. And I'm a person that don't want, I don't want change, but I think it's going to be a difficult thing, and sometimes you have to step back and say "Well who am I to say that they can't have something as good as I have?" This is not a very popular argument. (Laughing) I thought that that's what it will come to. Do you think so?

-I think so. I think it's a difficult situation and that-

Very difficult.

-It's something that we all have to think about carefully and make good decisions.

And, you know, if we can make good decisions for ten, or twenty, or thirty, or forty years or more (..) it will certainly give peace of mind to the people that are here now. And who even really knows what their, what the next generation or the next generation really wants to do?

-So, what do you think the State Parks' role will be in helping make decisions for the Sutter Buttes?

Depends how, how well the state park manages this. (...) You know, there's so many people that have so many negative feelings now about the State Park being in there that I think that it's going to take a number of years for people to change their mind at all, and you know that you have my generation that if they're negative they're NEGATIVE. They're not going to change their mind, but the thing is, they're not going to be here forever either. So, this is why I think if the state does a good job and they have the money in the years ahead to continue to purchase and, I think it's a thing that the State Parks someday will be a much larger park in the Buttes than it is now.

-How does that make you feel for the future?

Oh, it's fine with me, I mean, you know, when you get this age you're looking at what I want now and you know it's not going to last forever. You better be realistic about this. Land changes, I mean, look around, look at Yuba City. It's not going to stay like it is. But if it stayed for the next twenty years, you know, I'd be very happy. I wouldn't be here to see it, but I'd be very happy about that. But it won't, you know, things change.

-Do you know anything about the rock walls that run through the Buttes?

Well, just a little bit. Most of them were built with the help of the Chinese and the railroads had used Chinese labor and in 1870s and late '60s they were finishing their jobs of laying their tracks, and so there were many, many Chinese looking for work and they helped clear the oak trees and they helped build the fences for the families. The little hill that I have is all bordered by rock fences and I have an absolute FIT when someone takes a rock off my fence (laughing) somewhere. But, you know, they've been there for years. Actually, there was quite a Chinese population in this area because they did build these fences and they did help clear this land and in 1878 they took up the first little account of how many people were in Live Oak, the little community of Live Oak. There were 100 white people and twenty-five Chinese. And even when I was a kid I remember where the Chinese lived, they lived in one little part of Live Oak. There were fewer and fewer of them, but there was a big Chinese population in this area simply because there was a lot of work for them to do. They built the rock fences but they also had a big part in clearing the oak trees and they had, before they had, I'm getting sidetracked-

-Oh, no that's fine-

Before the hydraulic mining effected the rivers so much there were steam flat-bed boats that they shipped on and one of them was named the "Larkin" and this one made a trip up to Live Oak (clears throat) Live Oak station which was right on the Feather River and this is what they loaded, they loaded wood and then they would bring it down the wagon trail from, oh, about three miles in which later became Pennington Road wagon trail. But anyway, this is why they were able to do this, was the Chinese labor that helped them so much and the big timbers and the big timbers went to the mines and all the smaller wood, well it was a source of energy in those days, that was the source of energy so clearing wood and clearing the oak trees was how farmers made enough to finally get into farming, by selling wood. And they did it with the help of the Chinese people. I kinda got sidetracked there.

-No, that's fine. It's all interesting stuff related to the Buttes. Is there still a Chinese community in the area?

Not to my knowledge. No.

-How were Chinese relations with the rest of Live Oak when you wer-

When I was a kid I did, you know there weren't any of these prejudice thoughts and all this stuff, I didn't know anything about that, I really didn't know. I think it was fine probably, I don't know.

-When you first moved from Live Oak into the Sutter Buttes did you live in the family hous-

No.

-You lived in this one?

We built this house in '47, 1947.

-And how was that move for you?

It was fine. I had left Live Oak in '43 went to collage, I was in the Navy a couple of years and then after the war we were married and Jim came home to farm with his father and so this is where we lived, we built a house here.

-Did you enjoy farming when you were first mar-

(Overlapping) Oh yeah.

-Yeah? Tell me about what you remember about that.

Very difficult. Certainly didn't have any money and farming was difficult, long hours. When we first came to this ranch there was not a well on it so it was a year or so before, it was dry-land farming which is just a terrible way to farm (laughter). It was all a very difficult thing, but as the years went by Jim expanded his operation, leasing other orchards and things got better, equipment got better and management, all kinds of things, farming became a very good way of life, but right at first it was difficult. It always had been, always had been.

(...)

-I think our tapes are going to run out in a minute.

TAPE CHANGE

-Did you always have horses when you lived up here?

My daughter has always had a horse, yes. She's had a horse since she's been seven or eight years old, she's ridden. She rides now in the Buttes all the time up at the Dean Ranch. Are you familiar with that?

-A little bit.

Yeah. She rides every weekend up there with the owner, Margit, and Shirley. And Shirley still, at ninety-two or three, what ever she is, rides with them now and then, it's amazing. (laughing) Jan says she goes to sleep now and then, you got to stay pretty close to her when she's on her horse (laughter). Turn that off! (laughing). But any way, Jan's really great friends with these people and rides up there.

-That sounds like fun.

Yeah, she loves it.

-So, how many children do you have?

Two

-Two?

Um hum. A son who's at home farming now and my daughter who's, she works for the Sacramento City School District as a resource specialist.

-And you're keeping her horse for her?

No. The horse lives on the ranch with me (laughter).

-Do you have any other animals?

Um hum, I have a burro we adopted two years, three years ago, Pedro. (laughing). He, when they trail ride he goes and the past year he can have, I think, it's thirty pounds for so many hours or so. This next summer when they take him he can have seventy pounds on him. But he's pretty independent, Pedro is. (laughter)

-So, who takes him on trail rides in the Buttes?

Janet, my daughter-

-Janet your daughter.

And Margit Sands, the daughter of Shirley. So, yeah.

-Is your daughter at all involved with the hikes that Margit gives sometimes?

Um hum. She used to be much more involved than she is now, but she is more involved in taking care of the cattle for Margit now and so she hasn't been on as many hikes, but yes she's been a guide.

-Is she active at all with Middle Mountain or with the State Park, is she involved?

You know, not as much as she'd like to be simply because she's busy in Sacramento. But, she's good friends of the park ranger and his wife, Tim and Dorothy, and sees them, you know, sees them, and rides actually, Dorothy rides with them a lot. We're going into Peace Valley on the next hike (clears throat) as a family. My sister-in-law, Jim's sister, is coming over and she remembers being up there with her grandmother and she remembers where the summer, she explains it as a cave type of a thing where the cool air would come out of the Buttes, it was somewhere towards the xxxxxxx. But anyway, she remembers a lot of things, so she is coming over and we're all going to go on this hike in Peace Valley and she's anxious to see where the home site is now, it was, you know, she remembers it, the home being there and things like this and Cemetery Hill and these sort of things. She was up there a lot when she was a little kid, she remembers it from then.

-And you're going up with them to Peace Valley?

Um hum. There'll be five of this family going, my son, my daughter, my sister-in-law and brother-in-law, so and I think Tim and Dorothy are going to lead it, Davis, the park ranger and his wife. <Tim and Dorothy Davis> So, I went with Walt Anderson a year ago and I gave a talk on the history of the cemetery (clears throat) there were probably twenty or so and they seemed to be very interested in it, you know. So, anyway.

-And what can you tell me about the history of the cemetery?

Well, I wish I had my notes here, I could tell you just about anything you want to know, I really did some research on it and I have them put away. I knew last night I should have gotten them out.

-That's ok. Can I get a copy of them another time?

Yeah, I'll get some. Well, anyway it talks about Aaron Pugh and about his family. He was born in at, I think, in Ohio, and he came out. His sister, however, had come out and lived in Peace Valley before he was which is a little known thing. She's buried up there with her husband and then Aaron came out and settled there and he came before 1849 because he was a member of the '49ers and this is a very, for those days, a very elite thing and they had to, they had proof that they were Californian before 1849 and he had that and that was a, a believe the club, or fraternity, that the original member, who was Aaron, he could pass it down one time, his membership, one time to a son. Well he didn't have a son so that membership was never passed down, but he was very proud to be a member of the '49ers, so he was here before that and by the time he died he had the twenty-one, twenty-two hundred acres and had never purchased any of it, it was all grants.

-Wow.

And, you know, I think he had, and I don't know where these papers are, I think there are on some of the dates through the years there's actually three different presidents that have signed some of the deeds that he had to the land, but that's the way much of the land was gotten, people did not, you know, they were not charged for it. Anyway, he lived up there, his first wife is

buried there and his second wife. He raised a daughter and she, Betty, married a Hogeboom and lived up probably a mile from me and she's buried in the North Butte cemetery. (clears throat) And then she was the same age as some of the children of Mary Fairlee, his third wife, course these were adult children by the time she married, you know, but they were all very close friends, very close friends. So, during Mary's life she had, I think, eight children of her own and I think eight step-children. (laughter) So there were A LOT of Farlees, they called it Fairlee then, they call it Farlee now and there's still lots of Farlees around. (laughing) Anyway, but, getting back to Aaron. Anyway, he raised sheep and had a few cattle and there's two small valleys up there that he more or less farmed. Did as much as they could in those days at farming and he was a very social fellow. He was one of the local fellows that started the Masonic lodge here in North, North Butte Masonic Lodge is the name of it. It's in Gridley now but it was started here in Pennington. He also started early Farm Bureau and he, he was on the committee to build the first school here. The school at first was in back of the old cemetery and then they built the school right next door store in the 1880s or so. He was instrumental in that and when they built the church he and Mary, they were very active in that, so they were very social. This was actually a full community almost a full-service community because there were, there really weren't any roads in and out of it that were decent to travel on. And the reason that his area didn't keep developing is because the train, the Southern Pacific, the more-or-less parent company of that that, Oregon something or other, laid the tracks over there (motioning out the window towards Live Oak) and so of course the people went to where the transportation was and that's why Live Oak then started to grow is when the tracks were laid there and the Pennington just kinda, and then it burned, most of the buildings burned, but anyway, Aaron Pugh was very active in just about everything that was going on.

-You said that the buildings burned? When did the buildings burn?

You know, I don't know, but there was a hotel, a blacksmith's shop and a store and I don't know what year that was and I need to find out more about that, I don't know. (coughing) There's still all the lots are still, the old town of Pennington is still here and it's still in lots and the fellow that surveyed it, laid it out, his name was Pennington and so he named the town after himself (laughter). So anyway, he was an early surveyor in the county and he did a lot of, he surveyed the whole town of Live Oak. When he surveyed that out he, was in 1876, he had done this out here and, anyway they got him to come in there. And he surveyed six streets that would run North and South and he, they named those 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and then he surveyed out just three streets that would run East and West and, mind you this was the original town of Live Oak, they were A, B and C.

-I saw that coming in.

Did you? (laughter) Anyway, and so, of course he had already named this town after himself so they couldn't do that but the wagon road, they called it, was the main thing, the main road, and he named it Pennington Road (laughing), so he left his mark wherever he set a little town or wherever he surveyed and so that's how Pennington Road was named (laughing). He lived right up here on the corner, he and his wife and they adopted this girl, and I don't know exactly where they got her, but anyway, she lived all her life out here, she was just, you know, they were, they were all very friend- very close friends with these people and they called her Aunt Betty for

some reason but that was Pennington's daughter that, that I don't know when he adopted her when he and his wife did. So, what are we talking about here? I got sidetracked (laughter).

-It's OK. Are the people who live in the Buttes still a close community?

No I don't think they are-

-No?

I really don't think they are. You know, the only ones I really know are Schnabels, you know, from the Dean Ranch, and people that live around the Buttes, Powell's down here. Richard, he has the old Powell ranch. Not close at all, no most of the people aren't and they might be over on the West side, or the other side but they certainly aren't here.

-Why do you think that is?

Well, I think this side is mostly been developed into orchards and through the generations it's been sold and everything and it's very few of the original families on this side of the Buttes any longer. This family, or the Spilman Ranch, is probably one of the longest ones, that family of some of the original family is still on. It's just, you know, people come in, no they're not close at all on this side. So, I don't know how they are on the rest.

-Do you have any other-

(Chirping noise)

That's my clock.

-Ah

(Chirping noise again)

Eleven o'clock probably.

(Chirping noise a third time)

-If it's going, here. (Noise from moving tape recorder) Do you have any other memories about how the Buttes have changed since you started living here when you got married? Any other stories that you'd like to tell?

You know, I've never, and I've lived out here all these years, really never been involved in the Buttes until Middle Mountain came along, other than it was just, for me, a wonderful place to live, this ranch, I love this place out here. But, I suppose when you're young and you're busy and everything you never think about, I mean this is just where you live and this is what you do and it's almost like it's disassociated from the Buttes, or all that we're hearing about the Buttes

now and this interest in the Buttes and everything its just like it was a whole different time maybe. Does that make any sense to you?

-I think so. So when Middle Mountain came in how did they approach you?

You know, I don't really remember. It just seems like I've been interested in it and, what was it twenty, twenty-five years ago, something like that, I think the first time I really, you know I'd heard about it and I thought, they had these hikes, I was interested in that and we were having company for the weekend and, Ray and I were, and I asked him if he thought it would be good entertainment, take them on a hike and he thought it would be great and it was a wonderful hike. And Ira Heinrich was the leader and he was terrific. He's no longer with Middle Mountain, but I think from that time on it really kinda opened my eyes more to Middle Mountain, the purpose of it and all that kind of everything and I certainly was aware of it before that but not active or anything, but and I think that anybody that takes a hike with Middle Mountain and has a very, you know, successful day can't help but feel just like all of us felt that were on that hike that day. It's just a very special place. It REALLY is. And this hike that we took with our friends, it was in the springtime and it was just beautiful.

-How do you think the State Parks should handle visitors? Middle Mountain gives hikes, should the State Park give hikes too when they open to the public? How do you think they should allow public access to the land?

You know the environment is so fragile up there they cannot open it up for everyone to go. It's something that has to be monitored very closely. Middle Mountain does such a good job they might want to have Middle Mountain do it and yet, some of the rangers do a beautiful job too, maybe they. I think it just has to be a very limited thing. There's just no way they can open it up without, you know, there'd be too much damage to it I think. So, hopefully. And this is another thing that's controversial, they take our state taxes and they buy a park so why can't people go there? I have heard that from so many people. But if you understand the environment in the Buttes you CANNOT allow the public to be there all the time, YOU CANNOT, you have to limit this thing, you have to limit the amount of people that are there. And this is, of course, going to be very difficult. Very difficult.

-Your son is farming here, how does he feel about Middle Mountain and the State Park?

Well, he was gone for so many years he's not, I think he's interested in it and, you know. You know, I really don't know. I really don't know how he feels about it, I think he feels it's fine. He's busy farming, doing his thing, you know how that goes.

-Yeah, yeah. Do you have any, or do you know of any stories about, folk tales about the Buttes?

No, I really don't.

-No?

No.

-Anything about the Native Americans that used to live here?

No. I don't, unfortunately. My husband used to tell about his grandmother, you know, she grew up here, and would play with the Indian kids when they'd come in the fall to harvest the acorns and live here for awhile. They're all kinds of really nice stories, but, you know, I didn't pay that much attention, unfortunately. So, I don't, I don't really know.

-You mentioned that you had met Walt Anderson. Do you remember when that was?

Oh gosh, that's been years ago since he's been active on this. No I don't know when it was, I've been on a number of hikes with him.

-And what were your impressions?

Oh, he's just, he's just the top of the line as a guide and as a person in this setting that I knew him in, he's absolutely wonderful.

-Do you have any memories that you'd like to add?

(long pause)

(Interviewee Shakes head)

-No? (long pause) Well I think we have covered a lot of ground.

Good. I hope I've been some help.