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The Majors Family and Santa Cruz County Dairying

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**Abstract:**

Majors' paternal grandmother was a member of the Castro family which held a number of land grants in Santa Cruz County during the Mexican Period. His paternal grandfather was Joseph Ladd Majors, one of the earliest Americans to settle in the Santa Cruz area. Mr. Majors mentions some interesting details about the history of his family, but the bulk of the manuscript deals with his experiences as a rancher and dairyman. He discusses the dairy industry that prospered along the northern Santa Cruz County coast between 1860 and 1930, the cheesemaking process used on his ranch and the ranch's subsequent conversion to raising beef cattle, relates a number of stories concerning the origin of county place names on the North Coast and in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and discusses turn-of-the-century teaming and quarrying. An unexpected topic was covered when Majors announced that he had learned the art of oil-divining. A chapter of the manuscript is devoted to his demonstration of his witching technique.

**Supporting material:**

Majors full audio

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THOMAS EARL MAJORS

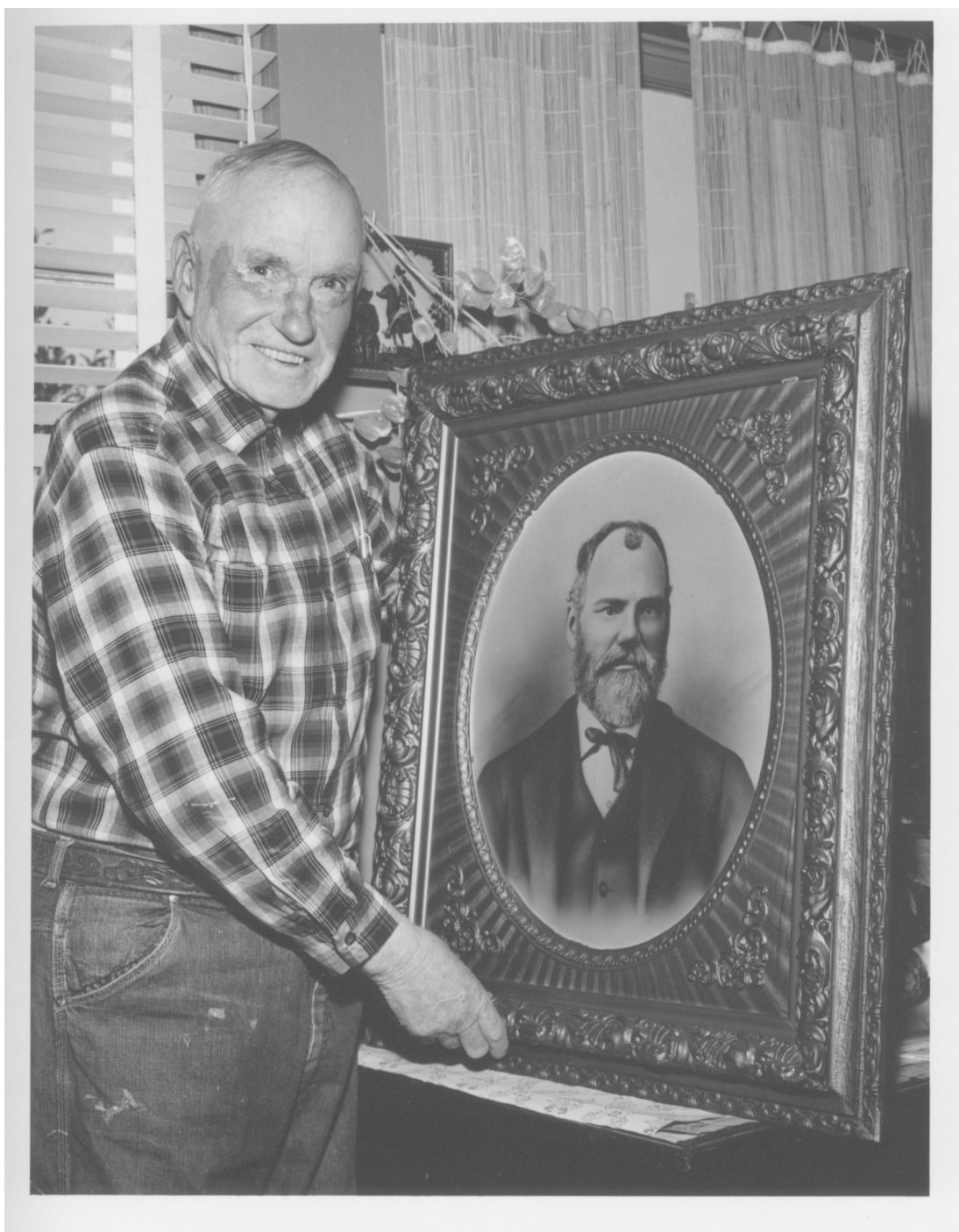
THE MAJORS FAMILY

AND

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY DAIRYING

An Interview Conducted By  
Elizabeth Spedding Calciano

Santa Cruz 1965



Thomas Earl Majors  
Holding a Picture of his Father  
Joseph Robert Joaquin Majors  
May 15, 1964

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## INTRODUCTION

Thomas Earl Majors has a double claim to the attention of the Regional History Project, for both his work and his family are of historical interest. Mr. Majors was born in this county in 1875 and has spent his years here as a teamster, dairyman, and cattle rancher. He is well familiar with the story of the once flourishing coastal dairy industry and is able to relate with equal ease family tales of California's Mexican period.

Mr. Majors' family heritage is impressive. It traces back to the earliest days of white settlement in the county. His paternal grandmother was Maria de los Angeles Castro Majors. She was the granddaughter of Isidro Castro who came to this area with the de Anza party in 1776. Several members of the Castro family held considerable amounts of land in the Monterey Bay area during the time of the Mexican rule, Maria's brother Rafael was granted Rancho Aptos in 1833; the same year her sister Martina was granted Rancho Soquel and in 1844 Martina received the massive Soquel Augmentation grant. In 1839 Maria herself, along with two of her sisters, Candida and Jacinta, were granted the 12,000 acre Rancho Refugio, which extended along the coast to the north of Santa Cruz. Although the grant was later divided and sold, the land which Mr. Majors and his brother Joseph purchased in 1917 is located on the old Rancho Refugio property that

had once belonged to his grandmother.

Mr. Majors' paternal grandfather, Joseph Ladd Majors, was among the early "foreigners" (i.e. non-Spanish whites) to settle in this area. Born near Nashville, Tennessee, in 1804, he came over the Santa Fe trail with Captain Issac Graham and others in 1834. According to Bancroft, he settled in Santa Cruz county in 1835; Mr. Majors states the date as 1832. After his marriage to Maria Castro he was naturalized as a Mexican citizen and became an important man in the small community of Santa Cruz. In 1846 he was elected the first American Alcalde of the city.

Mr. Majors gives some interesting details about the history of his family, but the bulk of this interview concerns his experiences as a rancher and dairyman. He is able to give us much pertinent information concerning the coastal dairy industry which prospered in the decades prior to 1930. For years cheesemaking was widespread along the coast between Santa Cruz and Ano Nuevo Point. Twice a week Majors Brothers Full Cream Cheese was shipped to San Francisco. Mr. Majors explains in detail the process he and his brother used to make the rich and rather firm cheese. In 1925 Mr. Majors

switched to selling milk. Increased government regulations coupled with the competition from large dairy concerns had made cheese production unprofitable. By 1933 virtually all the coastal dairy farms had switched to milk production. After selling milk for five or six years, Mr. Majors converted his ranch to beef cattle. He and his grandson presently own about 80 head. Mr. Majors briefly discusses the problems involved in cattle raising.

An unexpected topic was covered when Mr. Majors announced that he presently spends a fair amount of his time oil-divining. He gave the interviewer a complete demonstration of his witching technique. Since witching is an art long associated with the West, it seemed appropriate to include it in the present manuscript.

In the latter part of this book Mr. Majors discusses the Santa Cruz of earlier days. He relates a number of interesting stories concerning the origin of county place names and discusses turn-of-the-century teaming and quarrying.

The interviews took place on March 25 and April 20, 1964, at the Majors' home. We sat out on the side porch which overlooks the farmyard and old dairy barns. The sounds of chickens and birds filtered through the porch windows and the bakery truck honked its presence. On the hills rising behind the house one could see an occasional Hereford grazing. As we talked about his life on the ranch, Mr. Majors would casually point out the landmarks with which he is so familiar. He talked easily in the presence of the microphone, and a portion of the

tape is preserved in the Regional History Project Office for those who might wish to listen to the conversation. After some editing by the interviewer, the manuscript was returned to Mr. Majors for his editing and approval. The frontispiece and the view of the Majors' ranch were taken by Vester Dick.

This manuscript is part of a collection of interviews on the history of Santa Cruz County which have been conducted by the Regional History Project. The Project is under the administrative supervision of Donald T. Clark, University Librarian.

Elizabeth Spedding Calciano

January 18, 1965  
Regional History Project  
University Library  
University of California, Santa Cruz

THE MAJORS FAMILY

Calciano: What year were you born?

Majors: 1875.

Calciano: So you're 88 years old. What month were you born in?

Majors: Twenty-third day of June. If I live to the  
twenty-third of this coming June, I'll be 89.

Joseph Ladd Majors

Calciano: Your grandfather was the Joseph Majors who came here  
originally, wasn't he?

Majors: Joseph Ladd Majors, yes. He came here in 1832; he  
crossed the Plains in an oxteam. He came out with  
Captain Graham. You know Graham Hill, going out toward  
Felton? Graham took up that property there in the  
early days -- it was government property then, I  
suppose. And so the name Graham Hill was after Captain  
Graham.

Calciano: Why did your grandfather come out?

Majors: Well, he came out here from Tennessee, and like other  
people he tried to find a better place to live, I  
suppose.

Calciano: Not very many people came here at that time, though.

Majors: No, he came here and he married my grandmother in 1838. My father was the first child born to them. He was born in 1840.

Calciano: What was his name?

Majors: His name was Joaquin Majors, Joseph Robert Joaquin Majors. He was the first boy they had. They had a family of four sons and four daughters -- eight children in the family.

Calciano: One book I read said that they had nineteen children and another said they had twenty-two children.

Majors: Well, they might have had more. I only remember there was Joaquin, Johnny, Robert, and Joe. They were the boys. Then there was Dicyann, Mary, Sarah, and Duvickas.

Calciano: How do you spell that?

Majors: I don't know. There were four girls and four boys, as far as I know. Of course if there were more, I wouldn't know.

Calciano: What did your grandfather do out here?

Majors: Well, he took up property. He had that property known now as Escalona Heights. He farmed and ranched and raised cattle and horses. He was the first mayor ever elected in Santa Cruz.



Calciano: Oh, really?

majors: Yes, everybody spoke Spanish in those days. In Spanish he was called an Alcalde. That was the same as the mayor. He built the first flour mill ever built in Santa Cruz County, about 1840; it run to about 1860. People used to bring their wheat on burros from over in the old town of Santa Clara, in Santa Clara County, you know. Over the hills, over the trails to get the wheat ground, He would take part of the flour for his pay. There was very little money in those days. Then they'd go back with their winter supply of flour. All the way over the hills. Just think, they had to come over all them little trails, packing a sack of wheat on each side of their burro. You see how people had to do to get along?

Calciano: Would he sell his share of the wheat in town here?

Majors: No, see he'd use it, you know. He didn't take too much, just enough. He had quite a lot of Indian boys working for him.

Calciano: Where did he get the power to run his mill?

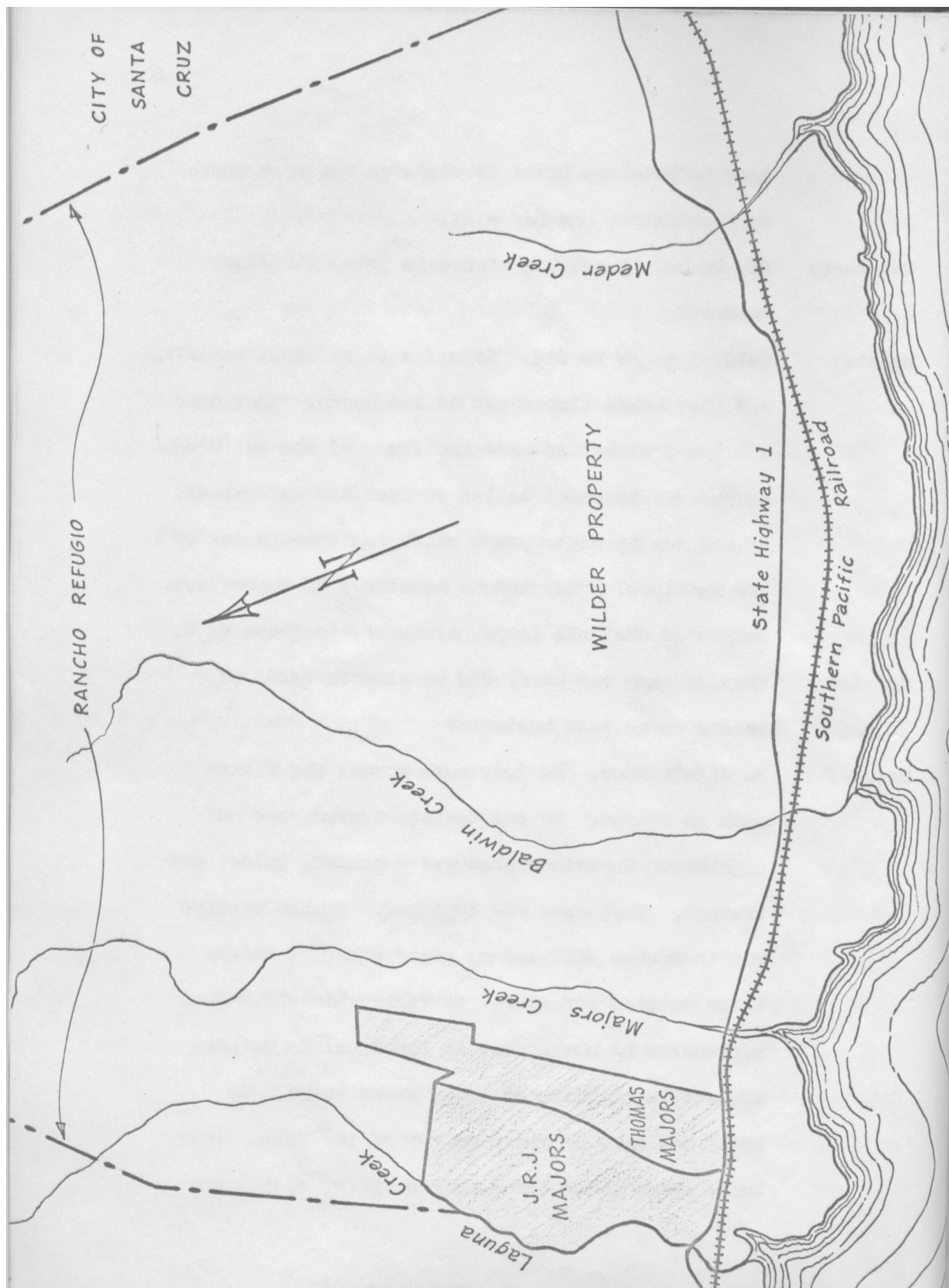
Majors: Well, he run it with a waterwheel off the stream that runs by Escalona Heights. Fred McPherson's home on Escalona Drive is right on the spot where my grandfather had his mill.

Calciano: Did he have great big stones to grind the flour between?

Majors: Well, I guess he did. It was a three story building, and they hewed timber out of the woods. They used all hewed timber to make the frame of the building. He run a waterwheel called an overshot waterwheel. It was run by water power which run through one of the machines. They had no machinery in those days. They used coal-oil lamps, lanterns, in those days.

Calciano: When he came out here, did he plan to farm, or intend to go into business?

Majors: He didn't know. He just came across the Plains with an oxtteam. He and Captain Graham came out together. Captain Graham was a hunter, guide, and trapper. They came out together. Graham settled out in Graham Hill and my grandfather, I think, first settled out in Scotts Valley himself. Then afterwards he moved down to the Escalona Heights property with fifty or sixty acres there, He built his home up there on top of the hill. He built a big house there, lived there, and raised up his family.



Maria de los Angeles Majors

Calciano: Is this area here part of his original land too? Land he got from his wife?

Majors: Well, my grandmother did own this property at one time. There were three Castro sisters; my grandmother owned this property that I'm living on here. She owned from Laguna Creek to Majors Springs. This spring was named after my grandfather. And the other sister owned from Majors Creek down to Meder Creek. The third sister owned from Meder Creek (that's on the Wilder Ranch) down to the city line, or Moore's Creek. The three sisters owned Spanish grants from the ocean, I don't know how wide, to about five miles back. Three Spanish grants. My grandmother owned this grant here, and then later on, I guess, after my grandfather died, she sold it to a man by the name of Gurshee. Then Gurshee sold the ranch to James Enright of San Jose, The Enright's held it for quite a while. Then James Enright died and the property fell into the hands of Margaret D. Enright, his wife. She sold it to the Majors brothers -- me Tom Majors, and my brother, Joe Majors. We bought the ranch in 1918, I think. A little over a 1,008 acres here, but we sold part of it.

Calciano: When did your grandfather die?

Majors: He died about 1864, as near as I can remember. I don't remember it; he died before I was born. I wasn't born until 1875.

Calciano: But your grandmother lived quite a while? She lived until 1903 before she died.

Calciano: What was her name?

Majors: Her name was Maria de Los Angeles Majors.

Calciano: One of her sisters became a nun, didn't she? And another married a Russian by the name of Bolchoff?

Majors: Yes, one married a Russian by the name of Bolchoff. That's right. I think the one who married Bolchoff had the Wilder Ranch. That was the Wilder Ranch, you know, where the Wilders are now. Bolchoff, he was a Russian Jew. (Laughter) He was a smart guy. Then he sold it. I don't know who he sold it to; I don't have much recollection of that. The other sisters, they sold out their holdings, both of them. And my grandmother lived alone in a little house by herself until 1903 before she died.

Calciano: Where did she live?

Majors: She lived up there right where the flour mill was, just in a little house right on the upper side of the street on Escalona Heights, on Escalona Drive there.

Right across the street from where Fred McPherson has his big home.

Calciano: Is it still standing?

Majors: I don't think so. I think it's been torn down.

McPherson lives on the property there now.

Calciano: She never married again then?

Majors: Oh, no. She was quite an elderly lady.

Calciano: How old was her youngest child when her husband died?

Majors: The youngest boy? Joaquin, my father, he was the oldest of the four boys. Robert, Johnny, and Joseph. I guess Joseph was the youngest boy of the four boys. And Sarah she married a man by the name of Dodero, Joe Dodero, not Dondero, but Joe Dodero. They used to call him "Tamale Joe." He used to make baked tamales and sell them. (Laughter) He baked tamales and sold them all around town.

Calciano: Was she the oldest sister or not?

Majors: No, she was the youngest sister of the four girls.

Calciano: Was she younger than the youngest boy?

Majors: Yes, I think she was, she was about the youngest one.

Calciano: What happened to the other girls?

Majors: Well, Mary, she married a man by the name of Green, Jasper Green, and they raised a big family.

Calciano: Here, in this area?

Majors: They were up around Pescadero, I think. And then Joe Majors, he moved out to Watsonville. He lived in Green Valley. He had a ranch down there. I think his wife's first name, I don't know what her last name was, but her first name was Duvickas. Isn't that a funny name? That could be Spanish I guess.

Calciano: It's really different. (Laughter)

Joseph Robert Joaquin Majors

Calciano: Your father was the oldest boy. Did he help his father on the ranch, or what did he do?

Majors: Oh yes, he worked what he could, I guess, See I wasn't born you know. Then my father, he married an Irish girl. Yes, I'm half Irish myself.

Calciano: What was her name?

Majors: Her name before she married my father was Buckley.

Calciano: Did you have a lot of brothers and sisters?

Majors: Yes, I had four brothers, and there was two sisters. There was William, Henry, Joseph, and Tom. I'm Tom; I'm the youngest. I'm the only boy that's left. Mary, she married a man by the name of Dakan. You ever hear of George Dakan, the dentist in Santa Cruz? Well I'm his uncle; his mother was my sister, and she married a man by the name of Dakan. And then Katie, she was the

youngest girl; she was two years younger than me.

Katie is still alive; she's living down in Tulare City with her son down there, with her son and daughter-in-law. George Dakan's father, Elmer Dakan, was Sheriff Dakan of Santa Cruz at one time.

Robert Majors, Deputy Sheriff

Calciano: Oh really? Wasn't one of your uncles a sheriff also?

majors: Yes, Bob Majors was deputy sheriff too.

Calciano: Was he killed when he ...

Majors: Yes, he got killed. He got into a fight with a desperado. He shot and killed the desperado, but he got shot in the groin. Then later the doctors were trying to take the bullet out of his leg, but they couldn't take it out so they amputated his leg. In those days they didn't have means to saving so he bled to death; he died on the operating table.

Calciano: Oh dear! How old was he then?

Majors: Oh, I would say about 50 or 55 years old.

Calciano: What year was this?

Majors: Oh that was way back in, oh I would say about 1890.

That was just about the time he died. He got into a fight with a man by the name of Harris, Jim Harris. Harris pulled a gun on him and tried to kill him. My uncle pushed Harris's gun down (he thought the man



wanted to fight), and when he pushed it down, Harris shot him in the groin. My uncle, he was quick with his gun, and he pulled out his pistol, and he put five shots into Harris. Harris started to fall to the floor with the first shot and my uncle put four shots into his heart and one in his breast bone. When Harris hit the ground he had five shots in him.

Calciano: My goodness!

Majors: Harris dropped his gun on the floor. My uncle kicked the gun out onto the sidewalk and went out and got the rig and drove home.

Calciano: Oh my!

Majors: Yes. He lived about a year or a year and a half after he had that fight. Oh yes, he lived quite a while. He'd probably have lived a long time longer, but the doctors didn't seem to understand very well. They started to amputate his leg and they bled him to death.

Calciano: What a shame. What happened to his widow?

Majors: Well, she lived along quite a while, and later years she took sick and she died. Older age you know, she passed away. He had a family; he had quite a few children. They're about all dead and gone. They were my first cousins.

Calciano: About how many children did they have?

Majors: Oh they had about six I think, six children, two girls and I think four boys.

J. R. Joaquin Majors, cont.

Calciano: Well, getting back to your father, what did he do most of his life? Where did he work?

Major: Well, my father was a rancher in the last years of his life. He lived on this ranch here with my brother and I. We took care of him. He used to ride a horse, and when he was way up around 75 years old he could ride a horse just like a young man. Yes, he was a good rider.

Calciano: Where did he live during the years he was raising your family?

Majors: Well, he lived back up on the Laguna Ranch there, back up here in what we call the Yellow Bank Ranch. He lived on that ranch for quite a while. That's where he raised us boys up, William, Henry, Joseph, and myself.

Calciano: Was it called the Yellow Bank Ranch then?

Majors: It was the Yellow Bank Ranch, yes. That was owned by the Coast Dairy and Land Company. Recardo Mattel and Jeremiah Respini were the two big bosses on the ranch at that time. They were Swiss, Swiss dairymen, and

they made butter. People all along this coast made butter and cheese. They didn't have any artichokes or sprouts in those days -- all butter and cheese.

Calciano: Your father didn't own that ranch, did he?

Majors: No, he leased a part of the ranch from them.

Calciano: Did he make butter, milk, and cheese too?

Majors: Yes, he run a little ranch and had a few cattle. Lots of quail, deer, and rabbits. Us kids used to live on that most of the time because meat was so scarce.

(Laughter)

Calciano: Did you get into town much when you were a child?

Majors: Didn't, not too much. My father would drive his own team, and we'd go pretty slow into town. It'd take us about two and a half hours to get to town, up and down the hills you know. Oh yes, take all day to go downtown. We'd put the horses in the livery stable; the man would feed them some hay; we'd go and do our shopping, and then we'd go into a restaurant and get something to eat. Then we'd go and get our team, and pay the livery stable man for feeding the horses, and then get our stuff and drive home. Take us about two and a half hours to get home.

Calciano: Oh my. About how often would you go into town?

Majors: Oh, maybe a couple times a month -- it all depended on

what happened, you know. Maybe sometimes not that much. Not too often. We used to get a pretty good supply of food when we went in, you know. Had to.

Calciano: Did you children stock up on candy when you went in?

Majors: Well, we didn't get too much candy. We got plenty of bread and butter coffee and tea. We were pretty lucky -- we had milk to drink. We had cows, of course, so we had plenty of milk. We made our own butter. Everybody then had to use lanterns. We used lanterns and coal-oil lamps, you know, and every summer we had to pack the water out of the creek; if we didn't there was no water. We always lived by a little stream of water. We lived back up in the hills there. My old auntie was living there. Her husband died. Auntie Dicyann -- she took care of Joe and I when we were little. We had a little bench and two or three buckets. My old auntie would say, "Hey, hey, Tommy, those buckets are empty. Get down to the creek." I'd have to go down to the creek and get on my knees and fill up the buckets. I'd bring them up, one on each side, and set them on the bench so we'd have the water supply right near to the sink.

Thomas Earl Majors

Calciano: Does anybody live up here with you?

Majors: Yes, my wife is here.

Calciano: How many children did you have?

Majors: Well, when I married Mrs. Majors she was a widow with two girls and I had a son. And then we got married and we raised one girl. We had three daughters, Pauline, Enid, and Evelyn, and then I have a son named Earl who is living down in Laguna.

Calciano: When did you marry?

Majors: I've been married to this lady for 45 years now.

Calciano: Oh my.

Majors: She's a very nice lady. She's a German girl. My grandfather was of English descent. My father was half English and half Spanish, and my mother was Irish. My mother's name was Buckley.

Calciano: Was she a native of Santa Cruz?

Majors: No, she came here from Ireland.

Calciano: Oh, she did.

Majors: She had coal black hair and blue eyes.

Calciano: How pretty.

Majors: So a fellow says, "You know what I think you are?" I said, "No." He says, "That makes you a Slavonian."  
(Laughter) Making fun of me. I built this house here. I built this house just forty years ago. Side porch, kitchen, dining room, front room, and three big, nice bedrooms.

Calciano: Oh my.

Majors: Oh yes. It's a well built house. It has a solid foundation and two walls on the outside, double walls. In those days the lumber was cheap. Dan Cochran got \$7.50 a day, and the two helpers, who were good men too, got \$3.50 a day each. You know when I got the house built, I was indebted to these men \$650, and I had spent all my money; I didn't have any money to pay them. But I was carrying an insurance policy. I had what they called a paid-up policy with the New York Life. A man came driving into the yard and he said, "How do you do?" I said, "How do you do." He says, "Is your name Tom Majors?" I says, "Yes." "Well," he says, "I got a paid-up policy here for you and a check for you for \$675." (Laughter) I got enough money to pay these fellows off. Wasn't that funny. I was lucky.

Calciano: You certainly were. (Laughter)

Majors: Yes, I paid them off.

Calciano: You run beef cattle now, don't you?

Majors: Yes. That grandson of mine, he does about all the work, because I can't work like a young man.

Calciano: What's his name?

Majors: Richard Stephen Burns, a fine boy.

Buying the Ranch

Calciano: You said that your grandmother once owned this land, but sold it. When did you and your brother buy it back?

Majors: We bought the ranch in 1917 for \$50,000. All we had was \$7,000 between us -- he had \$4,000 and I had \$3,000. We went into old man Jeter, the President of the Santa Cruz County bank there. We told him, "Now Mr. Jeter, the Enright ranch is going to be sold. It's a little over a thousand acres and they want \$50,000 cash." "How much money you fellows got?" I said, "\$7,000." You know, I can hear him laughing yet, "Ha, Ha, Ha. I never heard such a thing! Want to buy a \$50,000 ranch and only got \$7,000." Well my brother got up and he started out, but I said, "Wait and sit down, and let me talk to him." Joe sat dawn. I said,

"Mr. Jeter, Joe and I are two good ranchers. We understand cattle, and I think we can make it pay out." I said, "If we fail, you'll have the ranch and our \$7,000, and you know that that ranch is worth more money than that." "Come back in three days. I'll let you know." So we came back in three days. He talked to the bank directors and they agreed to loan us \$43,000. So then a piece came out in the papers, "The Majors brothers purchased the Margaret D. Enright ranch, a little over a thousand acres, one of the largest land deals consummated in Santa Cruz County in a long, long time. And they paid cash for it." (Laughter) Well, we paid them with the bank's money!

Calciano: Real tycoons! Did it take long to get it into a paying proposition?

Majors: Well, it went along. We sold the timber off the ranch; got \$9,000 for the timber. And then there was something else we got, and we turned that over to the bank. And then we got the mortgage down to \$26,000. Joe was married and I was single, then I got married. But our two wives didn't get along very good; they got a fussin' with each other. They got kind of mad at each other. So I said to my brother, "The best thing we can do is divide the ranch." So he took that side





The Thomas Majors Ranch  
On Highway 1  
(5500 coast Road)

- A. Storage shed
- B. Tom Majors' House
- C. Old milk house, since converted to a residence
- D. Milk storehouse
- E. Milk barn

and I took this side. We divided the ranch, and that left us with \$13,000 apiece to pay off; it was \$26,000 we owed and each one of us assumed half the mortgage. And I sold my share down over on the coast to two Italian people. Joe sold his share along the coast for 418,000. I waited a couple of years longer and I sold my half down there for \$36,000; I got twice as much as he did.

Calciano: Boy! That was just a part of the ranch though?

Majors: Yes, just down below the railroad tracks. I kept all the upper part of it. I still own quite a lot of property yet.

Calciano: Did you sell the part down here to sprout growers?

Majors: Yes, yes, the sprout growers; they're all along the coast here.

#### THE DAIRY

##### Milking

Majors: When I first came to work on this place we had to carry lanterns around and milk the cows. I got \$25 a month and my board, and I was up at 4:30 in the morning and worked until 6:30 in the night.

Calciano: Goodness. Was that when you were working for someone else?

Majors: Working for the Enright people, for the people who

owned the property. My brother was the foreman. There was five of us that milked the cows, by hand you know. Each one had to milk 25 cows twice a day, and then do work on the outside too.

Calciano: What time would you start milking?

Majors: Oh, about 4:30 or a quarter to five in the morning. And about 7:30 we'd be done and the milk would go into the dairy house then to make the cheese. They put the milk into big vats.

#### Cheese Making

Calciano: How big were the vats?

Majors: Well, about twelve feet long and about four feet wide. And to make the cheese, you know, you heat the milk up to about 72 degrees.

Calciano: Did you use a thermometer to tell the temperature?

Majors: Oh yes, we were putting a thermometer in the vat all the time. We had to have that, you know. When we read the thermometer it would run, say, 68 degrees. Then we'd let it stand for five, six, or ten minutes more and then read it. If it had run up to 70, we'd leave it alone. We let it sit a few minutes longer and then tried it again. If it had run up to 72 we still left

it alone. We let it stay a little longer. We'd look at it again and if it still stayed at 72, all right, we put the fire out and put the rennet and coloring in. The rennet is something to coagulate, or thicken, the milk, see. You stir it in nicely and let it stand for about thirty minutes. It'll all thicken up, just like clabber you know, but it's sweet. Then you've got big, long cheese knives with thin blades.

Calciano: Many blades on one knife?

Majors: Yes, long blades, You cut it across, then you cut it lengthwise. That way you got a lot of little squares.

Calciano: Why did they cut it if they were going to stir it again?

Majors: They cut it into little blocks to make curd; you need curd, you know. Then they'd start cooking it. It takes about an hour and a half to get it cooked. You cook it slowly and keep stirring it. When you get up to about 102 degrees Fahrenheit, shut your fire off and let it stand a little while. It's hot you know. Grab a bit in your hand and squeeze it. If it stays in a lug, cook it a little longer. Then grab it again in a little while, and when you open your hand up like that and it pops up, fine, then run your whey off then. Open the drain up and put a little screen against the opening

so the cheese won't get out; just the water and whey goes out. The whey went out and we had hogs down across there by the coast. There was no railroad then. There's a beach down there called Piggy Beach where my brother used to go. People wonder why it's called Piggy Beach. We had about sixty or seventy great big sows, you know, with little baby pigs with them. Each one had five or six pigs. They'd go run clear down to the ocean there and root in the sand and get these sand fleas. My brother would go down there and run the whey from the vats into the troughs for them, and then he'd go down there and start hollering to them; he'd call them. He'd go, "chooe, chooe, chooe," and the sows would hear him you know, and they'd come, "oink, oink, oink." They'd all come running with the little ones running behind, squealing and crying. So they named it Piggy Beach. (Laughter) After they run the whey off, they'd stir it and cool it all down and get it down to a certain temperature. Then they'd put salt in. They'd get a big pan of salt for maybe 250 or 300 pounds of cheese in this big long vat, Then they'd put the cheese into these round cheese hoops, about 25 pounds to each cheese, and put it in under a press and squeeze it down. The next day they'd take it out, and

put it in the curing rooms on the shelves, and put sort of a buttery grease on one. side. They'd rub it, rub the mold off, turn it over and rub it, and turn it over again, every day. We kept a fire going in the curing room all the time. We kept the cheese three weeks and then shipped them to the wholesale market in San Francisco. We hauled them down to the steamer Gypsy in Santa Cruz. The old steamer Gypsy; she used to come into Cowell's Wharf on Wednesdays and Saturdays, twice a week, to haul butter and cheese to the big wholesale markets in San Francisco.

Calciano: You could use Cowell's Wharf to ship out butter and cheese?

Majors: Yes. We had to pay a certain amount.

Calciano: What type of cheese did you make? What did it taste like?

Majors: Well it was nice. We called it California Full Cream Cheese. Majors Brothers that's what we called the cheese. Fellows used to kid us. They'd say if we kept that name off it we could sell it. (Laughter)

Calciano: California Cream Cheese.

Majors: California Full Cream Cheese by Majors Brothers.

Calciano: That was after the Enrights had sold to you then?

Majors: Yes, after we bought it. We bought and took it over then.

Calciano: What kind of cattle did you have for dairy cattle?

Majors: Holstein.

Calciano: Are they the black and white?

Majors: Black and white, yes. A lot of people run Jerseys and Guernseys. The Jerseys and Guernseys produce a little bit richer milk, but the Holsteins produce a larger quantity of milk; they produce lots of milk. They are heavy producers, and they're nice. I made cheese here for a long time. That's a trade I've learned. It's quite a trick you know. You can't tell people how to make cheese. I could tell people to do this and do that, but you could make a mistake. If you don't do just right, you'll spoil the whole vat. You've got to be very careful, and the milk's got to be perfectly sweet when you heat it up. If the milk is just a little bit sour, or you cook it too high, it's no good. If you don't cook high enough, it ain't good. When you cook the milk up in a vat you try it out after you have cut it all up, you know. You put your hand in there and get hold of a bunch of that curd and squeeze it up like that, squeeze the whey out. If it

stays in a lump, it ain't cooked enough. If it flies out of your hand when you open your fist, it's all right.

Calciano: It jumps back?

Majors: It jumps out. Then it's time to run the whey off, but don't run the whey off until it does that. That's one of the little secrets of learning and knowing how. Never pour the rennet in until the milk has done heating. If you do, you'll spoil the whole vat of milk. Those are little secrets you've got to learn, and you see, I've told you something that would help you if you ever learned to be a cheesemaker. I don't think you will.

Calciano: I doubt it. I'd love to see it done.

Majors: Yes, well that's some of the little secrets.

Calciano: Where did you get the rennet you used?

Majors: We bought it from San Francisco.

Calciano: From a slaughterhouse?

Majors: No, no, we bought it from a big wholesale house in San Francisco. We had to have coloring too, just a little coloring to make the cheese look a little bit yellow and rich looking. And you know what the coloring was made from? From carrots. They had that kind of yellow



color to them. And do you know what the rennet is made from? The calf's stomach.

Calciano: That's what I've read.

Majors: Yes, little baby young calves. They take the little stomachs of a little baby calf, and someway they extract something out of it and make rennet. And this rennet will thicken the milk.

Calciano: How much rennet would you use for a big tub of cheese?

Majors: A vat, a big vat of milk? Oh, don't take very much. It'd take, I would say, a small cupful.

Calciano: And that's for how many pounds of cheese?

Majors: Oh, let's see, 250, 300 pounds I guess. Well I wouldn't say that much, about 200 pounds of cheese. It took nine and a half pounds of milk to make one pound of cheese.

Calciano: Oh my.

Majors: Yes, nine and a half pounds of milk. You know milk weighs about, I don't know what it weighs, but it must weigh about eight and a half to nine pounds to a gallon. It takes about a gallon of milk to make a pound of cheese.

Calciano: Was the rennet expensive?

Majors: Well yes, it cost quite a little bit. Not too awfully

expensive. We used to buy several gallons of it at a time, you know. And then the coloring, we bought that and put a little bit of coloring in.

Calciano: What was your power supply? Did you build a generator for electricity?

Majors: Well, no. We had to use wood to heat the milk. We had coal-oil lamps and lanterns; we'd go out early in the morning, packing a lantern. We'd hang it on a post somewhere, and we'd look for our cows and milk them. Everybody had a lantern every day.

Calciano: How much money did you get for a pound of cheese?

Majors: Well for a pound of cheese we got eleven, twelve cents; if we got thirteen cents, boy we were happy. But a lot of times, ten, eleven cents was about the price. Now it's fifty and sixty cents.

### Selling Milk

Calciano: When did you stop making cheese here?

Majors: Oh about 1925, I would say. After we divided the ranch, I commenced selling the milk.

Calciano: Oh just the milk, after ...

Majors: Sold the milk in cans, yes. About 1925.

Calciano: Why did you stop making cheese?

Majors: Well, we stopped because there was big factories; they were kind of cutting in, and the state was sending men around to inspect our dairy house. We were making good cheese, nice full cream cheese, but they were paying these inspectors, near as I can figure out, to pick at us, to make us kind of disgusted. "That hasn't got enough acid." "That's got too much acid." They'd try out the cheese, you know. And another thing, we had a chance to sell the milk in cans and make more money out of just selling the milk right out, because it cost money, you know, to manufacture the milk into the cheese. It took extra help and extra work shipping and everything. They would just come here (we would put the milk in cans) and they'd grab it and take it away and be done. We made more money selling the sweet milk than we did selling the cheese.

Calciano: Whom did you sell the milk to?

Majors: It went over to a company in Salinas. Some big outfit over there.

Calciano: Did they pick it up once a day, or twice a day?

Majors: They picked it up every morning. We got paid once every month. It paid us better.

The Dairy Herd

Calciano: How many milk cows did you have?

Majors: We had about 75 head of cows; it took about 75 cows.

Calciano: About how much milk would you get from each cow?

Majors: Well, a cow should average about four gallons; we used to get about 300 gallons of milk a day.

Calciano: Oh my.

Majors: Yes. Two milkings, you know. A good cow would average around two gallons of milk per milking, and two milkings in the day would be four gallons. If they produced four gallons they would pay you pretty good. If they got down to three gallons or less, then the cow would just about pay her way. With feed and everything, you know, she couldn't make much money unless you got at least 3 3/4 or four gallons. A four-gallon-a-day cow was a good cow.

Calciano: Did you keep records on each cow?

Majors: Well, we kept them pretty well; close as and as near as we could,

Calciano: What would you do with a cow that started only producing two and a half or three

Majors: Well, if she didn't total, we'd dry her up; we'd sell her. Sell her off for beef, get rid of her. We had to you know, if the cow didn't pay. We wanted to keep all

good paying cows.

Calciano: Would a cow usually give less milk as it grew older?

Major: Well a cow would. They say if she would come in when she was about three years old, she would commence paying pretty good. When a good cow got to be about eight or nine years old, well she was pretty well milked out; she was a pretty good cow then, but if you kept them too long, ten or eleven years, then they'd go down; they weren't so good any longer. About eight, nine years is as old as kept them; once in a while it'd go up to ten years maybe, then we'd sell them.

Calciano: How long do cows live normally?

Majors: Oh, I guess they could live eighteen, twenty years. You see when you milk them, you pull them down pretty heavy. Oh, I would say that when a cow got to be about ten or twelve years old she was an old cow.

Calciano: Would they make very good meat when they were so old?

Majors: Oh, well not as good as young animals or steers. No, they would make good boiling beef, or something like that; you might say they made second-class meat. The strength and energy from all the time she'd been producing milk would take a lot of the vitality away from the cow.

Calciano: Does a cow have to have a calf before she starts

producing milk?

Majors: Oh well; yes; it should. A cow would milk about eight, nine months. If we milked her nine months, then she could rest; she should rest about three months without being milked. She should have at least three months rest every year.

Calciano: Can she be milked while she's carrying a calf?

Majors: Oh yes; you may milk them then, but when they get along pretty well towards calving time you dry her right up. Milk her once a day for a little while, and then go along and after that milk her every other day; finally her bag would dry up. Turn her out to pasture and let her go until she could give birth to a calf and start producing milk.

Calciano: I see. You'd breed her while you were still milking her?

Majors: Yes, oh yes. It takes nine months from the time a cow is bred to the time she has her calf.

Calciano: How old would they be when you bred them for the first time?

Majors: Well, they should be at least two or two and a half years old.

Calciano: Did you keep a lot of the calves to raise, or did you buy your cows?

Majors: We kept some of the heifers; they had some nice heifers. We would keep the calves from the best milk producing cows; but sometimes you get fooled. We had one cow I remember, she used to produce eleven gallons of milk a day so we kept her calf. We thought we were so lucky to get a calf from that wonderful cow. And when that calf got to be a cow, she only produced about two and a half or three gallons. (Laughter) She wasn't good at all; she was nothing like her mother.

Calciano: How many bulls did you keep?

Majors: We kept about two, I think, two or three; mostly about two bulls would be enough.

Calciano: What did you do with the male calves?

Majors: Well; we'd sell them. Calves were cheap then; we'd sell them off to the fellows that buy them. They sell them to people who raise them. For the ones we didn't want to keep we'd get anywhere from a dollar and a half to two and a half a piece.

Calciano: Oh no!

Majors: Oh yes. Oh yes; we didn't get very much for them. They'd be maybe anywhere from three, four days to a week old.

Calciano: Well, would they turn them into steers or ...

Majors: Well, they'd buy them, you know; and they'd take them

down someplace. If they were pretty good, they'd slaughter them and make veal out of them, or else they'd keep them a little while. Fellows would buy them and get them in good shape, fatten them up a little bit, and make veal calves out of them.

Calciano: Let's see, you quit cheese-making about 1925. How long did you produce milk?

Majors: We were on the ranch in 1917, and then we divided the ranch in 1925. We produced milk, oh gosh, I guess for about five, six years. I don't know. I would say about five or six years we produced milk; and then after that we turned the ranch into a stock ranch, into a beef cattle ranch.

Calciano: Did that pay better?

Majors: Well, it's not so much work. I don't know if it paid any better, but it's less work you know, and I was not so young. If you have to hire everything done in the dairy business, there isn't too much in it for you. Taking care of cattle, like beef cattle now; why my grandson and I, we work together and we go 50-50 you know. He's a big strapping young fellow, and he does the biggest part of the work. I don't do too much. I help him; little as I can. We make pretty well; we don't make a big fortune.



The D. D. Wilder Dairy

Calciano: Did you ever make any butter?

Majors: Well, we made butter for a little while, yes, but not too much. Mostly cheese. Some of the dairies did make butter, like the Wilder's and the Yellow Bank and several dairies along the coast, but we always made cheese.

Calciano: Several of the other dairies along here made cheese also; didn't they?

Majors: Oh yes, the Scaroni Ranch, Joe Scaroni and Pia Scaroni, they made cheese. And the Filippini Ranch, Jim Filippini, he made cheese up at the Scotts Creek plant. And there was another place they called Agua Puerca. That's a Spanish name. Do you know what Agua Puerca means? Dirty water. (Laughter) *Agua* is water and *puerca* is dirty. The water was always kind of a little riley, you know. It never did clear up. A nice little stream of water run through where the dairy was, so they named it the Agua Puerca Ranch.

Calciano: Who owned that?

Majors: The Coast Dairy and Land Company owned it. Then old D. D. Wilder run the Wilder Ranch. That was a big dairy. They had all of fourteen men milking the cows there.

Calciano: The Wilder family still runs the ranch, doesn't it?

Majors: Young Delos -- he's the grandson of old D. D. Wilder.

See there was Melvin Wilder and Delos Wilder and

Pearly -- they were some of the head men there. Delos

and Melvin were the sons of old D. D. Wilder.

Calciano: Did you know old D. D.?

Majors: Yes I knew him.

Calciano: What was he like?

Majors: Well, he was an old man. He was an old white-headed

fellow. A great dairyman and a wonderful man with

cattle. He was a first-class dairyman. He made the

finest butter; he shipped it to San Francisco to the

wholesale houses there. Some of the best houses in the

city bought D. D. Wilder's butter.

Calciano: Oh really?

Majors: Oh yes, he made wonderful butter.

Calciano: How did he make butter?

Majors: Well, they would run it through separators and extract

the cream from the milk, and then let it set until it

turned a little bit sour. Then they churned it; they

put it in a big churn that went over and over and

over; and the cream turned into butter and then the

buttermilk came from the cream. It's just like the whey coming from the cheese. You see they extracted all the butter out of the cream, and then they put a little coloring in it too, you know, and then they run the whey all off. Then they put in water and washed the butter. They churned it again and they washed it all nice and clean. They have what they call a butter washer. They put the butter in a big thing and rolled it over and over and over in a big roller. And then they salted it. They know about how much salt.

Calciano: Why would they put salt in it?

Majors: Well, to give it a better flavor. It tasted flat you know.

Calciano: They don't use very much though?

Majors: No, not too much; they got to be very careful about that. They'd salt it and then roll it over. And then after it cooled down they put it in molds, little square blocks you know. Then they wrapped it with a thing of paper, regular butter paper; and put it in boxes to ship it in. They shipped it to San Francisco.

Calciano: How much would they get for a pound of butter?

Majors: Oh, I wouldn't know now, but prices were all cheaper then, you know. But they made better butter and better cheese then than they do now. I would say more

wholesome anyhow. More rich flavored.

Calciano: Why was Wilder's butter better than that of other dairies? Was it the way he made it; or what?

Majors: Well, I don't know.

Calciano: Were his cows better?

Majors: Well it seems as though they got nice cream. And I think it was better than the butter that they have nowadays. Of course the butter is good too; now, but I always liked the other better. They made nice cheese, too.

Calciano: What kind of cheese did they make?

Majors: They made the full cream cheese.

#### Cheese Production around Monterey Bay

Calciano: Did all the dairies make cream cheese?

Majors: Yes, all of them along the coast here.

Calciano: Why didn't they make cheddar and other kinds?

Majors: Well, they never done that. They made that jack cheese and cheddar cheese over in Monterey County, more or less. Different places. But on this coast everybody made full cream cheese.

Calciano: Is it like the cream cheese we get now?

Majors: Well, pretty near like it, but still different. Oh,

they make nice cheese now; they make this jack cheese and cheddar cheese; but I don't see any more of the big round cheese, about that big around and several inches thick. I don't see it anymore.

Calciano: Did the cream cheese used to be made in big round wheels too?

Majors: Yes, kind of like a slab you know. Eat a piece and cut another one out. But of course cheese is very rich you know; you don't want to eat too much of it.

Calciano: Was the cream cheese used for spreading on crackers, as people do now?

Majors: No, no; you couldn't spread it; you'd have to just eat it by itself. It was a little too firm, you know.

Calciano: So it was a little firmer than the present-day cream cheese.

Majors: Oh yes. You'd just have to eat it by itself. You could eat it all with bread, you know.

Calciano: It tasted a little different than the Monterey Jack though?

Majors: Oh yes. The Monterey Jack cheese is a good cheese.

Calciano: How do they get it to taste the way it does? What do they do differently?

Majors: I really don't know exactly how they make Monterey Jack; to be honest with you; but I guess they cooked

the milk a little higher. They heated the milk a little more, and run the whey off quicker and, well, then they'd have a cheese that was kind of softer. It was softer than the cheese that we made; Ours was a little more firm.

Calciano: Oh, firmer than Monterey Jack?

Majors: Monterey Jack was kind of a soft cheese.

Calciano: Rather spongy?

Majors: Yes, but it was good cheese though; it was nice cheese if you liked it soft. We used to haul our cheese down to old Cowell's warehouse, load it on the old steamer Gypsy, and ship it to San Francisco Wednesday's and Saturday's. The old boat would make the trip two days a week. Two trips a week from Santa Cruz to San Francisco. It hauled not only cheese, but a lot of other things. Cowell owned the wharf; it was Cowell's wharf and Cowell's warehouse. You had to pay kind of a charge to ship it down there.

#### Dairy Workers

Calciano: Did you have several employees when you were making cheese?

Majors: Yes. There was about five of us here on the ranch. My brother and I were making cheese here together and we had three or four men.

Calciano: Were they foreign people? Immigrants?

Majors: Well, yes, they were Italians, and Portuguese too. But most of them were good milkers. They could all talk English pretty good.

Calciano: I heard somewhere that there was a milker's strike once because the dairymen were asking some of the immigrant workers to milk not only in the morning and again at night; but also to work in the hay fields during the day. It made a 16 hour day.

Majors: Well, they had that later on, after I quit making cheese. Saturday and Sunday they'd have to get somebody else to help them. You see when I went to work here, I worked every day; Saturdays and Sundays, and all. I never had no day off. The only time you'd get a day off is when you'd get somebody else to take your place for a day or two, unless you got sick or something. But when you go to work at a dairy, you've got to work Sundays and all.

Calciano: Yes, I guess you can't quit on Sunday.

Majors: The cows always got to be milked, every day. Cows get used to a certain man. Each man had his own string of cows to milk.

Calciano: Oh really?

Majors: Yes. They get used to you, you know. If a stranger

came to milk that cow that you'd been milking; she'd start kicking him. She don't want him around because she has got used to you. Oh they don't like it. They get very emotional, you know.

Calciano: What did they think of the new milking machines when they came in?

Majors: Well, they didn't like it very much. It's quite a trick to handle those things you know. You mustn't let them hang on the cow too long; because if they suck too long on the cow, they suck blood from her. It ain't good you know. You've got to watch that very carefully. You've got to feel the cow's udder to see if there might be milk in one section. They call it stripping. You've got to take the machine off and then strip her so that very little is left. There might be milk in one part of the udder that the machine didn't get. If you let that go for a while, the cow will dry up. She'll dry up or the milk will thicken and will come out in little pieces. The cow will get what is called mastitis. That's due to not milking the cow clean.

Calciano: Back in the days when you were dairying, was there much sanitary protection?

Majors: Oh yes. They watched all the time. Inspectors came



around. They got pretty tough, you know. That was one of the reasons why they drove all the littler dairymen like me and my brother, out of the cheesemaking business. Then we went to selling milk. We made more money selling milk, and it was easier for us. Of course a lot of these big cheese factories, they would buy the milk from these small places and make the cheese themselves. In that way they had a chance to kind of control the market. Just like today, you wonder why the price of beef has dropped down. Of course to people like you or anybody else buying it in a butcher shop, beef is still high. But they're buying beef cheaper now than they used to. I know we used to get 24, 26, 28 cents a pound for our animals that we sold in the sales yards. The last one we sold for 24 cents at the highest, and it went down to 24 cents for some of them. Foreign meat is coming in from Australia and other places and lowering the price of beef in California and all over the United States. Foreign beef is coming in here; they can sell it cheaper than we can produce it here and still make money out of it.

#### BEEF CATTLE

Calciano: How many cows do you have now?

Majors: Oh, we've got about 80 head.

Calciano: Does that include little calves?

Majors: Yes, calves and all. I guess about 90 head. Every two days you go up there and see another new calf.

Calciano: Oh really?

Majors: Sometimes you'll see two of them laying down and their mothers will be way off eating grass somewhere. They'll get up and they'll start to run to their mothers. They'll come as hard as they can run with their tails waving. They just try to out-run each other; it would make you laugh to see them. Each calf knows where his mama is and Mama; she won't let another calf nurse on her at all.

Calciano: She won't?

Majors: Oh no, she wants her own calf. Every one knows her own calf.

Calciano: If the mother gets killed, will nobody else take care of her calf?

Majors: Well, if she is killed, that's too bad for the poor little calf. We've got to watch out for it all the time.

Calciano: How many cows do you sell each year?

Majors: Oh, let's see. The last sale we made we sold about 32 head, and about ten days ago we sold seven head. Oh,

we sell a lot of them - about 55 or 56 head a year.

Calciano: How old does a cow have to be before you sell it?

Majors: Well, you can sell calves, you know, when they weigh about 450 to six or seven hundred pounds. They're considered veal calves, nice young calves. You can very tender meat out of calves at that time. A big steer, of course, weighs eight or nine hundred pounds and maybe a thousand pounds. Well, in a good fresh condition they'd bring 24 or 25 cents a pound.

Calciano: Do you buy the cows you feed and then sell?

Majors: Well, we bought a lot of them when we started in. We bought quite a few, but we raise them now. When we get a nice heifer, we don't get rid of it. We get rid of the little steers, and once in a while we'll get a heifer that don't look too good so we'll sell her off too. But we keep a bunch of heifers all the time.

Calciano: To give calves?

Majors: Yes. We let them grow up until they get big, and then we breed them and they give calves.

Calciano: How many calves are born each year?

Majors: Oh, I would say each one of those cows, nearly every one of them, has a calf. Every once in a while one will have two calves. We have two or three sets of twins every year.

Calciano: About how many calves would you get each year?

Majors: Oh, I would say, well we'd get 50 or 60 calves.

Calciano: Oh, really? That many?

Majors: Yes, about 60 maybe, or 65, something like that.

Calciano: And the little male calves, do you turn them into  
steers right at first?

Majors: Yes, we turn them into steers before we sell them.

Calciano: How old are they when you do that?

Majors: Well I would say it's best to do it when they're not  
too old, when they're about a month or a month and a  
half old. Whenever you change them there's the old  
way, same way with branding, you should always wait  
till the dark of the moon. That's an old ranch's way.

Calciano: Oh really?

Majors: Don't never brand them or alter them when the moon is  
full; wait until the dark of the moon. The animal  
feels better and gets over it better. And if you brand  
the calves in the full moon, as the calf gets older  
the brand gets bigger and leaves a big scab on his hip  
there where you branded him. But if you brand him in  
the dark of the moon, the brand stays the same size no  
matter how big the animal gets. The brand don't grow  
then.

Calciano: I wonder why that is?

Majors: Well that's an old Spanish law; always brand and alter cattle in the dark of the moon.

Calciano: Very interesting. How many bulls do you have now?

Majors: We've got one bull. His name is Geronimo. (Laughter) He's a nice big, gentle bull. You can put your arms around his neck and pet him -- and he likes it too. He likes to have you pet him. He comes walking along up to you, this great big fellow. People get scared to death and start running. I say, "Don't run away from him. He wants you to pet him." (Laughter) He's a good-natured bull.

Calciano: What kind of bull is he?

Majors: He's a Hereford.

Calciano: Are all your cattle Hereford stock then?

Majors: Yes, they're all Hereford; they're pretty nice looking animals too.

Calciano: A Hereford is a beef cow, never dairy?

Majors: No, they're beef cattle.

Calciano: When you sell the cattle, do you sell them to people who corn-feed them, or do you sell right to the slaughterhouse?

Majors: Well some die, but I think they corn-feed them. I

think they kind of put them into feeding lots afterwards.

Calciano: Fatten them up a little?

Majors: Yes.

Calciano: You don't have any barns any more, do you? The cows stay out all the time, don't they?

Majors: Yes, we lane them out. We have barns here but we put hay in them. They're to supply hay when the going gets rough; we haul a little hay out then.

Calciano: What months do you need to feed them hay?

Majors: Well along in the cold months; I'd say December and January.

Calciano: But the grass is pretty green then.

Majors: Well, but it's awful short then; there's only that much. Right now the grass is coming on pretty good, but we're crying for rain; we want rain now.

Calciano: That's right. One thing I was wondering, was there any butchering done in this area?

Majors: No, you see the Walti-Schilling butcher shop is down here. Walti and Schilling are both dead and gone now. I don't know who owns that big slaughterhouse now.

Calciano: When you sell your cattle, do you sell them up in San Francisco?

Majors: No. We sell it to the Salinas Sales Yard, and we sell

it to two or three other sales yards over there. But we sell most of it to J. M. English and Company. We sell mostly to two different yards.

#### OIL DIVINING

Majors: So you're working for this big outfit? (The University)

Calciano: That's right.

Majors: Well by gollys, that's pretty good. Yes sir, I just read in the paper where Santa Cruz will be -- now she's got about 23 or 24,000 people in Santa Cruz; they claim that it won't be many years and she'll be up to 60,000 people, coming in from. all over. The old Cowell estate. Old Henry Cowell -- he was the man that bought all that property. He had two sons, Harry Cowell and Ernest Cowell. He used to haul bitumen... I used to work with my cousin; I worked driving a team. We were hauling bituminous rock off of their mine. We used to weigh the rock and haul it down to the cars, load it on cars, ship it to different places, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Los Angeles, all over.

Calciano: Where did you get the rock?

Majors: Well, that was off of the Cowell's quarry, the Cowell

estate. He had lots of rock, lots of bitumen. My ranch is full of bituminous rock, too. And I have oil on my ranch.

Calciano: Oh really!

Majors: Oh, yes. Do you know what's going to happen here on the coast? The Shell Oil Company has leased eight or nine thousand acres right here clear on up to Gazos Creek; they're going to drill for oil there.

Calciano: Who'd they lease it from?

Majors: From the Coast Dairy and Land Company. They're a bunch of Swiss people. The biggest part of them are back in Switzerland.

Calciano: And you think there is oil on your ranch?

Majors: Oh yes. I have an instrument that I can show you --I'd like to show it to you, and you can see it operating. I have it in the back room here. I show it to lots of fellows when it operates, but they go away and tell their friends, "You know that fellow Tom Majors up the coast? Well that damned old fool, he's crazy."

(Laughter) Just because I got that instrument you know. An oil man gave it to me. He gave this to me, and I didn't pay any attention to it. I've had it pretty near two years. I throwed it down in the back



room and left it there. About six months later my wife and I went down to visit her brother in Los Angeles, and we were there eight or nine days with him. When it comes Sunday night her brother said, "How about all of us going to church this evening, Sunday evening." So I said, "All right. If you're satisfied, and the rest of them are, I'll go." So we went to this church, and there was a lady minister there. After the services were over (I was sitting pretty well up to the front from the rest of them), we started to go out and she said, "Wait a minute. I want to talk to you." She meant me, you know. I said, "All right, if you want to talk, what do you want to talk about?" She says, "You're a stranger here," and I says, "Yes, I'm a stranger in Los Angeles." She says, "You live way north." (It's about 400 miles from here to Los Angeles.) I says, "Yes, I do." She says, "You live on a ranch." I says, "Yes, I live on a ranch." "You live not far from the ocean." I says, "That's right." She says, "You live not far from a stream of water." Well, Laguna Creek is right down ahead of us here, and she said everything quite correctly. I said to her, "How do you know I live on a ranch?" and she says, "I can see cattle, beef cattle, all around you." And then she

said, "By the way, I can see a lot of dark rock on your place, and that is oil-bearing rock." She says, "You get someone to bore down 3,300 feet. You'll go through three hard stratas of rock and you'll bring in a gusher of high grade oil." So then I tried this instrument out, and it's cooperated exactly with what she told me. I'll show you what it'll do. I told her that different men have bored for oil here. "Well," she says, "They go down, but they don't go down deep enough. They hit the first hard strata and then quit, down about a thousand feet." And they did. Three different companies bored here, and they all quit. But now I'll get that rod.

Calciano: What church was it?

Majors: I don't know. I only went there that time. Now, whatever this thing does, it does it itself. I don't do it. And you know that lady minister told me it would go through three different stratas of hard rock and then it would hit oil? Now this cooperates exactly with what she told me. After I went down there I came home and tired it out, and it worked exactly with what she said, so I went right down and saw her again. It will go up and down 75 times and then stop for a

little while when it's going through the first hard strata. Then it will go up and down 85 times and stop again when it's going through the second hard strata of rock. Then when it's through the second one it will go up and down 112 times and stop again.

Calciano: Oh, my.

Majors: Then after it goes through the third hard strata, it commences to go back and forth. I got on a bus and went right down there, and I found that lady and told her what I had done...She said, "Mister, when it moves that way, it's oil."

Calciano: What is the thing called?

Majors: A divining rod.

Calciano: Let me describe it for the tape. It's about three feet long, isn't it?

Majors: Yes, yes.

Calciano: And what kind of metal is it?

Majors: That's copper metal.

Calciano: It's a thin copper rod, about three feet long, and has a lump of something on the end of the rod. The lump is covered with black tape.

Majors: It's got a little bottle of oil and something else in there. I won't tell anyone.

Calciano: Where do you do this? Where do you hold it?

Majors: I can make it go right down through the floor.

Calciano: Oh, it doesn't matter if it's in the house?

Majors: No, no. Now the only thing is, when I'm counting, you just keep quiet. And when the thing gets swinging, if you put your hand on my shoulder anywhere, it'll stop. The reason I want to tell you this is that whatever it does, I don't do it; it does it itself. I've let dozens of fellows try, and it won't work for them. And I said to the lady minister, "Well, why won't it work for other people?" She says, "There are very, very few people a thing like that will work for, and you happen to be one."

Calciano: You said an oil man gave it to you?

Majors: Yes.

Calciano: Just one more question: Each time it goes up and down, does that represent ten feet or something?

Majors: Well, I don't know how much it represents; I really



Thomas Majors Divining Oil

don't know that; but it will go up and down 75 times and stop. And then it will go up and down 85 times and stop again; then it will go up and down 112 times and stop again, all going up and down. And then when it goes through the third hard strata it will commence to go sideways.

Calciano: And then I can touch your shoulder?

Majors: If you touch me it will stop immediately.

Calciano: It will? Then I shouldn't touch you at all?

Majors: Well, (laughter). Now let's see: One, two, three ..... 72, 73, 74, 75. [Ed: see Note]\* Now she's going through that hard strata of rock. Next time she'll go 85 times. She's going through hard strata rock.

Calciano: It takes quite a while.

Majors: Now you see those people that drilled here, the TCO Company way back in 1893, the Three Counties Oil Company, they drilled later on, and then there was another outfit several years ago; they're the ones that gave this to me. They drilled down a thousand and three feet, but they was looking for water. One, two, three ... 82, 83, 84, 85. Now it's time to stop; it's

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\*Note: Each number represents a completed vertical bob. The end of the rod swung through a distance of about three feet. The rod was

going through the second hard strata of rock. When it gets through this one, it's very apt to go 112 times.

Calciano: Is this strata as thick as the other?

Majors: Well, the longer it takes, the thicker the strata. I don't know. To get an accurate count of this, a person should have a watch and time it, you see. See how long it takes. You could get it that way. Now it's going through the second hard strata, and when it gets through this one, this next time, it's very apt to go up and down 112 times, But if it goes up and down, that means, well, that's water, but if it swings sideways -- that's oil.

Calciano: That's oil?

Majors: And then down below I found that if I hung on after it goes through this first layer of oil, it'll go up and down I don't know, 45, 55, 85 times, And then there's another layer of oil underneath that, down deeper.

Calciano: Oh, really?

Majors: Oh, that second one is bigger than the first one. This county is lousy with oil, but it's deep.

Calciano: Expensive to get out?

Majors: People don't go down deep enough to get it out. I've

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virtually motionless when penetrating the various hard strata.

been telling different ones, but the report I get is that Tom Majors is crazy. But Tom Majors is not crazy. Now isn't it wonderful that I can do this?

Calciano: Have you ever done water witching?

Majors: Yes, I can find water. You know that Mystery Spot up around back of Glen Canyon there? You've heard of it?

Calciano: Yes.

Majors: I went through there. They say a lot of fellows was there and it didn't bother them at all. I was staggering all over; they had to grab me, Oh, it worked terrible on me.

Calciano: Oh, boy.

Majors: Yes. I don't know -- there's something about me.

Calciano: You're sensitive.

Majors: Oh, well, gosh, I couldn't hardly get through that. It affected me terrible. It's going through a pretty long, hard strata of rock. One, two, three, four ..... 109, 110, 111, 112 times. Now it goes through this next strata; it's going through the third hard strata of rock. We're down about 3,500 feet when we get through this.

Calciano: Have you tried it on other parts of your ranch?

Majors: Yes. The ranch is lousy with oil up here. Three



different layers I found up there in some places, but the second one is the biggest. Oh, my, my, my, there's a wealth of oil in this county. I'll tell you more when we're done.

Calciano: All right. Does it make any difference if you're standing up on one of the hills? Does it have to bob more times to get down through the first layer if you're standing at a higher elevation?

Majors: No, it works there too. It pays no attention to this floor; it goes right through anything, so I can discover what there is down there. I talked to a water-well driller, and he said, "No man know what's down below." And I says, "I can tell you." And he commenced to tell me I was crazy. Then I give it to fellows, and they commence to swing it themselves. Anybody can swing that rod, and I says, "But I don't do it; it does it itself." Now you see, we're going through the third hard strata now, and it's very hard. If it starts going sideways, it's oil. There she goes, look, see her? Now I'm not doing that.

Calciano: You aren't?

Majors: No, I'm not.

Calciano: Look at it go! My goodness! Look at it go!

Majors: (Laughter) Don't touch me, let's see how long it goes.

Calciano: All right. It swings so quickly!

Majors: I can't hardly hold it.

Calciano: It's swinging about 250 times a minute!

Majors: It wears your hands off. Well, now, if you want to you can put your hand on my shoulder and it will stop it immediately, but let's see how long it goes.

Calciano: All right, go ahead.

Majors: I'm not doing this at all, The only thing is, I wanted to show you that I'm not doing this; it's doing it itself. It'll stop pretty soon. There. Now I'll hold it again. We'll try it and see if it gets through the next one.

Calciano: Okay.

Majors: It went through that first layer of oil. Now it should go up and down again. I don't know how many times it will do this, but it will be different from the first. We're down past 3,500 feet now. One, two, three ... 43, 44, 45 times. It's different; it's past this first layer of oil and went 45 times. Now it's going through a hard strata; when it gets into the next layer of oil and it gets a swinging, you put your hand on my shoulder and it, will stop.

Calciano: Okay. What would happen if I touched the rod?

Majors: Well, I wouldn't know. You see when you put your hand on my shoulder you break the contact between me and what's down below.

Calciano: Oh.

Majors: It'll start pretty soon. It went 45 times. I don't know how many times it will go this time.

Calciano: How many layers of hard rock are there before the next oil?

Majors: Three.

Calciano: Three again?

Majors: That'd be three again. It's going through one now. It's a pretty big one too. It's taking a long time,

Calciano: It certainly is.

Majors: But you'd be surprised what there is down in the bowels of the earth. One, two, three, four ..... 83, 84, 85. Forty-five and 85. Now it's going through the second hard strata. I tried this out up on that Cowell property, and there's oil up there too.

Calciano: Oh, there is?

Majors: Oh, yes. It won't work where there's no oil.

Calciano: Have you been on the University part of the Cowell property?

Majors: Oh, yes, I've been all over it.

Calciano: Did you try it on that part? Is there oil on that part?

Majors: I didn't try it down below there, no. I didn't, to be honest with you. I tried it way up in the back. And some places there was nothing, and some places it was there. When I get this done I'll tell you some more.

Calciano: Okay. My, this is a big layer also.

Majors: Yes, and people don't know what's in this county. This county is rich with oil. And I tell them that and they go out and talk and say, "That fellow Majors has got an old divining rod up there and the damned old fool is crazy."

Calciano: When was the first time you ever witched for water?

Majors: I've witched for water, and I'll tell you about water, too.

Calciano: Oh, good.

Majors: They nearly run short of water here in Santa Cruz, and with people coming in they've got to have more water to supply them.

Calciano: Yes.

Majors: Say, it's going through some long, hard strata. Look at that. That's the second one, see?

Calciano: Yes. When it bounces up and down high, that's soft

dirt that it's digging. Is that right?

Majors: Yes. It's going through the hard, solid hard rock. One, two, three, four 93, 94, 95. Forty-five, 85, and 95. Now it's going through the third hard strata of rock, Now it's very apt to, this time, to commence to swing sideways after it gets through this one. Forty-five, 85, and 95; you see they are all different from the others. The other went 75, 85, and 112. That goes to show you that as it went down deeper, it's a little bit different. Yes, if that professor wants me to come down there on Cowell's property, I'll show him what I can do down there for him. I don't know what he's got there. Now it's going through the third hard strata; if she starts to go sideways, it's oil. This is wonderful though, it will go right down through the floor of your house. It's really amazing that a person can do that, Now I never knew I could do it until I went down and saw that clairvoyant woman. I think the second pool of oil is bigger than the first one. There's one below this one yet, another one, but this is the biggest one.

Calciano: Oh there it goes! Oh my! Now, should I touch your shoulder sometime?

Majors: Yes, put your hand on my shoulder.

Calciano: It stopped instantly.

Majors: That goes to show you that I'm not doing it. When you put your hand on my shoulder, you broke the contact between me and what's down below. And I tell people that, and they say, "Anybody can do that," but it does that itself. If it works, it's doing it, not me. It's smart to let somebody else dig the oil. You get twelve barrels out of every hundred. Let the other fellow do the work.

Calciano: Sure.

Majors: Three dollars for half a barrel. There's oil on the Wilder's ranch; I tried it out down there.

Calciano: They have drilled there, haven't they?

Majors: Yes, brought in a little bit, but they drilled in the wrong place. I told Delos about this, and he's anxious to have them come down there. He wants to get somebody to drill down. There. Now let me see if it'll work for me again. It'll start right up again. See that?

Calciano: Oh, it starts right away.

Majors: Way back in 1880 they drilled for oil up on what we called the I. L. Thurber ranch. It's now owned by Frank Blake and adjoins the Cowell property right up next to the bitumen mines. Way back in 1830 they put a hole down there. I don't know, it was about seven or

eight hundred feet or so. I took this thing up there and tried it out, but it went down deeper, and it indicated oil there. But they didn't go down deep enough to get it. The old casing is there in the ground yet. Now this is 1964. It's about 80, 85 years ago. The first well that was ever drilled in this county, and the casing is there in the ground. Oh, what I wanted to tell you, it come to me now. You know those fellows said they brought in a 500 barrel well up there in Boulder Creek. I should say it was some time ago, maybe a year ago, not hardly that long, that I took this up there to find out, but it didn't work. No. I says, "You fellows ain't got nothing here." They were trying to sell shares of stock; they said that they brought in the oil. This will not work where there is no oil.

Calciano: How long ago was this?

Majors: Well, about six months ago. But they were drilling again up on another place on Deer Creek, and I went up there and tried it out and it works on Deer Creek. And the second man, I didn't see the head boss, but the second fellow came over and says, "Who are you?" I told him who I was, and he says, "What do you want here?" I says, "I just came up here to see your rig

here." I says, "I'm a rancher and have a ranch up the coast from Santa Cruz, and I know I got oil on my ranch." I said, "I'd like to try my instrument out here." "Well," he says, "go ahead and try it out," so he went back to work. And it indicated oil there, down about 3,500 feet. So he came back and my grandson and I started to get back in the car to go away, and he says, "What did you find?" I says, "How deep are you going to go down?" He says, "We expect to hit oil at 2,600 feet." I said, "You're crazy as hell. You have to go 3,500 feet to get it," (Laughter) I said, "That's what that instrument says." So I don't know, they're still a drilling up there; I hope they bring it in.

#### THE ORIGIN OF LOCAL PLACE NAMES

##### Pescadero and Pigeon Point

Calciano: You told me how Piggy Beach got its name. I wonder if there are other place names you could tell me about?

Majors: You know how Pescadero got to be named Pescadero?

Calciano: No, how?

Majors: Well, they used to catch lots of fish near there in the early days, and in Spanish a fisherman is a



pescador. There was lots of fish in that Pescadero Creek; it was wonderful, so they named it pescado, Pescadero. And then Pigeon Point you know -- lots of people say, "Oh, there must have been a lots of pigeons." Ho, no, that wasn't it. There was a boat called the Carrier Pigeon that was going to San Francisco up the coast, and she run on a reef there and was wrecked there at that point. She run on a shoal there and she got wrecked. So they named it Pigeon Point after the wreck of that boat.

Calciano: About when did she wreck?

Majors: Oh that was way back many years ago; I don't know exactly. My father told me about it; he knew about it. And she had a big load of barrels of whiskey, and the barrels come floating ashore. The ranchers would go down there and pick up a barrel of whiskey and they all used to have parties; they all used to get drunk on it all. (Laughter) They'd pull a barrel in and they each one would divide it up, you know, put it in jugs and demijohns. Then they'd have a cook who'd make dinner, and then they'd have a big party there and drink too much whiskey. (Laughter)

Calciano: Where had the boat been coming from?

Majors: It had come from somewhere else; I don't know where it

started. It was going up the coast to San Francisco.

Calciano: What boats used to come into Santa Cruz?

Majors: Oh, the old steamer Gypsy, you know, that used to come in at Cowell's Wharf there. Oh, there was different boats used to come in there. You know they made a big mistake, the councilmen in Santa Cruz. The state, or even the government, would have given them quite a little money if they were to run a jetty, a rock jetty, out from that Lighthouse Point there. They could have got quite a *little* money from the government to run a jetty out there and make a big, deep inland harbor there that would have been safe; but the councilmen said no. Charlie Canfield, I remember him, he said there'd be a lot of seaweed coming in down there, and that would be bad. Now, what are they doing down there at Twin Lakes? They're building that great big jetty out there, and they got all kinds of boats in there. It's going to be a wonderful place out there someday.

Calciano: That could have been up here?

Majors: I wish it could have been here in Santa Cruz. They could have kept the business in Santa Cruz that they're going to take down there; yes, too bad. Those fellows didn't think quite enough ahead.

Calciano: What year was it that they could have done this?

Majors: Oh, it was about 25 or 30 years ago. Yes, it was a long time ago. Charlie Canfield, yes, he was one of the tops of them there. Some of them wanted it, but then they voted it down. They shouldn't of done that; they should not have done it.

Calciano: Did you know Canfield?

Majors: Old Charlie Canfield? Yes, he used to carry insurance on my property. Laurence Canfield is his son you know, Canfield and Son. They were there on Pacific Avenue. I knew them well. Charlie was a nice old man.

#### Local Streams

Calciano: Who was Meder Creek named after?

Majors: A man by the name of Meder. This side of Wilder's is a place called the Meder Ranch. Meder lived there. He was an old-timer here.

Calciano: Did he ranch then?

Majors: He ranched. Nearly everybody ranched then, you know. They had to ranch; they had to get along.

Calciano: Did you ever know him or not?

Majors: No, no, he was here before my time.

Calciano: What's the word Laguna mean or come from?

Majors: Laguna? Well there was a big lagoon down here, see.

And years ago the people used to travel up and down the coast on horseback. Scott's Creek was known in Spanish as El Jarro. It was the Tin Cup ranch. They had a little post there with a little tin cup hanging on a nail on the post. People used to stop there and get a drink of water, so they named it the Tin Cup ranch. The Tin Cup river. And then up at Waddell Creek, that was known as Las Trancas. That means "bars" in Spanish, Las Trancas, They had a pair of bars there.

Calciano: I wondered if you could tell me about Greyhound Rock?

Majors: Greyhound Rock -- that's right up here this side of Waddell. They kind of dedicated that just not long ago. Well, it's a big long rock and looks like a hound, you know.

Calciano: There's a little creek up the coast a bit, called Last Chance Creek.

Majors: Last Chance, that's a tributary of the Waddell Creek I think, Well, people lived up in there years ago, An old family lived in there, the Purdy family, and old man Sims lived up in there, and David Post. Post used to go to town and get drunk once in a while. He called his ranch Sluggard Ranch. He used to say, "I'm going to live one week there and a whole month in Santa

Cruz." Out there he had quails and rabbits and venison, and vegetables the whole time. They had plenty to eat. But one time he told me, "I came to town one day on a friendly visit," (he'd usually get a few drinks here, you know) "but," he says, "I was arrested by a Swede," (and I remember that his name was Joe Harveston) "locked up by a Spaniard," (that was Enoch Alzina; I remember him. Alzina locked him up in jail.) "and," he said, "while I was in jail, I was fed by a Chinaman, and the next day I was tried before an Irish judge."

Calciano: Oh my goodness. (Laughter) That was Santa Cruz!

Majors: Yes, he was arrested by a Swede, locked up by a Spaniard, fed by a Chinaman, and tried before an Irish judge.

Calciano: Well did he live on Last Chance Creek?

Majors: Well, he lived up on Sluggard's Ranch not very far from Last Chance.

Calciano: You don't know how it got the name Last Chance though?

Majors: Well, no I don't. But I guess it was a last chance to make a living. (Laughter) Then there was Scott's Creek you know and Purdy Creek, and Waddell Creek. A man by the name of Waddell lived there. He got bit by a bear

in there. And then out at Glenwood there was Charlie Martin. He lived to be an old timer there. And then there was Mountain Charlie, My grandfather was with a bunch of fellows going to San Francisco on horseback and Mountain Charlie got bit by a bear and he was almost dead. It broke his skull in. My grandfather stayed there, and they sent a man to San Jose to get a doctor. The doctor came down on horseback and they worked on him. They put a silver plate on his head, and they saved his life. It was years ago, but just think of that. Old Charlie McKierman. They got a road up there that they still call the Mountain Charlie Road. I've been over it; it's kind of an old road in there. You've been around Glenwood haven't you?

Calciano: Yes.

Majors: Gee, but that was lively little place at one time. Now it's all dead. Trees growing up all around you know.

Calciano: How come it was so lively for awhile?

Majors: Well, they had the train come through there; they had the station there you know, and there was Herb Martin, Billy Martin, and Ned Martin. Three different Martins were there. Billy Martin run a big store there, and they had a nice station there, and they had quite a business. They had a schoolhouse there, and a

schoolteacher. Oh yes, it was quite a place, but now it's all dead; there's nothing there. Everything changes. They changed the road over on the other side of the hill.

Calciano: That's right. Another name I wondered about was Baldwin Creek.

Majors: That's down below here. Baldwin Creek, that was old L. K. Baldwin who bought that place, then he turned it over to his nephew, Fred Baldwin. And then somebody bought it from Fred Baldwin, and Joe Scaroni owns it now.

Calciano: There used to be a Baldwin Dairy didn't there?

Majors: Yes, Baldwin Dairy. Fred Baldwin run the dairy,

#### Ice Cream Grade

Calciano: I wanted to ask you about Ice Cream Grade. How did it get its name?

Majors: You know people up in Bonny Doon used to have to drive way up around and down the Empire Grade, so they wanted to cut across the canyon and cut off a whole lot of distance, you know. So they went to the county and the county told them no, But the county said if they would put a fair little road through there, maybe

it could get the Councilmen, the Supervisors here, to agree to put a county road through there. Maybe they could get them to put a road through there, but that they just can't go in there and build a road where there is no road at all. So the people in Bonny Doon all got together and they gave little ice cream socials you know, little gatherings. Everybody would come, and if you wanted a dish of ice cream it would cost you ten cents. And if it was a man and his wife and his children he might buy three or four dishes, you know, and you might spend fifty cents or seventy-five cents, You might even spend a dollar. Well they had those socials quite often, and the people that took care of it, they worked for nothing. Everyone worked together, you know, and the money was all saved. They saved and saved. Finally they got a bunch of fellows to work together and they put a nice little road around through there. They got a surveyor to survey the line and get it through, and they put just a small temporary road through there. So then the county took it over and built a good road. And because they made the money out of selling ice cream, they called it the Ice Cream Grade.

Calciano: Oh, isn't that something. I always wondered.



Smith Grade

Calciano: What about Toll House Creek?

Majors: Well, I guess they charged toll for people to go through. They named the creek after that I guess. Oh, there's, a lot of words they got like that. Now you take the Smith Grade. John Smith cut a crater through that canyon down through there. There was a teacher who lived up there at his house. He boarded this teacher, and he had to cut a trail up on the edge of Bonny Doon there, down through to where the schoolhouse is, the Bald Mountain School. He cut a trail, and he furnished her with a horse. She had to ride horseback down the hill. They used to tie the horse out in back and feed him there.

Calciano: Where is the school?

Majors: Bald Mountain school.

Calciano: Is it in the base of Bald Mountain?

Majors: No, it's in the Bald Mountain district.

Calciano: Well, what street is it on?

Majors: It was on the old Smith Grade Road.

Calciano: I see.

Majors: And John Smith boarded the teacher, so he cut that trail through there. The teacher's name was Miss

Lapham, Mary Lapham. She rode that horse down through there and taught us kids.

Calciano: Was it a one-room school?

Majors: Yes, the Bald Mountain School. There was another teacher there when I was going to school. I was the first boy in the outer schools (the elementary district, you know) the first boy in the county to get a diploma.

Calciano: Oh my goodness,

Majors: Yes, I got it here, Old J. W. Linscott, he was the father of Maynard Linscott, the retired dentist. Well, J. W. Linscott was the county superintendent of schools. He stood up there and made a talk. He said, "This boy here is the first boy in the county to get an outside diploma."

Calciano: Outside the city?

Majors: Yes, outside the city.

Calciano: Your brother didn't then?

Majors: He quit before and didn't go through the whole ninth year; I went through the whole ninth year, and that was all the schooling I got. I kind of wanted to go to college but, well, my folks didn't have money enough to send me, and I had to go to work. But anyway, I got

along and made a living.

Calciano: Did you have to talk your folks into letting you have your ninth year? Since other boys didn't go nine years, I wondered if there was a lot of pressure for you to go to work after you had finished six or seven years?

Majors: Oh no. My poor old aunt, she was a wonderful woman... My father's sister. She raised me and my brother Joe. She took care of us since my mother died young. My mother died when I was two years of age, and I had to work hard all my life. Do you know how much I'm worth in property?

Calciano: How much?

Majors: Well, I figure I wouldn't take \$200,000 for it. Property is worth money. I own ten houses. Now this house here I had built way back in 1928. There was an old Enright building here. The people who owned this before. They owned a building here, but I tore it all down and I built this one in here. It was an old three-story building, fourteen rooms. It was an old-timer. Well, now I own this building and that building and the building up here, that's three, then I own three down the road, that's six, and one up in the back of the ranch, that's seven, and I own three

houses in town.

Calciano: Well!

Majors: Well this property, this ranch, is going to be worth a lot of money some day. I figure the oil business in bituminous rock up back here is tremendous. It has been estimated that there is between seven and eight million tons of that bituminous rock, that black rock.

Calciano: How come you've never had it mined out?

Majors: Well, they did mine a lot of it, but of course it cost quite a little to mine it, and someday they'll be mining it again. It makes wonderful macadamized roads you know, good roads.

Calciano: Yes, it does.

#### Liddell Creek -- Santa Cruz's Water Supply

Calciano: Getting back to place names, I was wondering who Liddell Creek was named after?

Majors: Liddell. Liddell is right here. It comes down from the Bonny Doon country. That's where the cement company is having a big time; they want to move up a new quarry there and the Bonny Doon people is fighting them. They claim that their blasting and noise and one thing and another will make it bad for them in Bonny Doon. It's not too far away from the Bonny Doon people, and

they're been having quite a lot of trouble in town over it. You've probably read about it. But anyhow, the Liddell Creek water is what they bring across over to the pipe in the Laguna Creek. The Laguna Creek has got kind of low so they have brought water over from the Liddell to mix in with the. Laguna Creek pipe. You see they have a pipe here coming out of the Laguna Creek. It's about that big around.

Calciano: How big?

Majors: About twenty-two inches across. Well, you know a pipe of that size can carry a lot of water. And that pipe supplies the biggest part of the water of the city of Santa Cruz.

Calciano: Oh really?

Majors: Yes, nice water too. It's good water. It comes right out of the mountain springs up there.

Calciano: Who was Mr. Liddell?

Majors: Liddell. A man by the name of Bob Liddell used to run a sawmill in there one time. He cut lumber in there so they named the creek Liddell Creek. You know, there was a ranch up in San Mateo County called the Whalebone Ranch.

Calciano: Oh really?

Majors: Old Ed Pickerman lived there years ago. Big whales

used to come in there. One died or got shot and he rolled in there, so there were a lot of big whalebones on the beach there. Do you know what Palo Alto means?

Calciano: Tall tree isn't it?

Majors: Yes, tall tree.

Calciano: Do you speak Spanish?

Majors: Some, not too much. I used to speak it pretty good. I used to haul wood down to my old grandmother when I lived up here in the hills. They had wood; they didn't have no gas or electricity; they had coal-oil lamps and lanterns. I used to haul her some wood, you know. Poor old lady, she lived up there on Escalona Street where my grandfather had his mill. And she wanted the wood to be dry too, so she could burn it nice in her stove, When the wood was a little green she would look at the wood, she was pretty smart, and she used to say to me, "Hay que tome lea verde." That means "You got green wood." Verde is green you know. She said, "Es muy malo, lea verde." She had an old black horse; she used to go to church every Sunday. She had a black horse she called Prieto (it means "black" in Spanish) and she'd get into the buggy and talk to him in Spanish. She'd start to go to church and she'd say, "Anda, Prieto," that is "Go on, Blackie." He knew.

She'd talk Spanish to him.

### TEAMING

#### Six-Horse Team

Calciano: You mentioned earlier that you used to drive a team and did some of your driving for the Cowell firm. What years was it that you hauled wood for them?

Majors: Oh, way back in 1890, I would say. I hauled a couple of years. I worked for my cousin because I came to work on this ranch here in 1897. I came to work on the 27th day of September, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven. I was going on 22 years old at that time. I was handling five to six horses every day at the place I worked. They had two horses here on this ranch. It was known as the Margaret D. Enright Ranch then. Her son was the boss, Joe Enright. He was an old-timer. My brother was the foreman there. He said to my brother, "I see you got another man." (We had come down from breakfast after we had the cows milked.) "Yes, sir, this is my brother Tom." The boss says, "What are you going to do with him today?" Well, he says, "I'm going to let him take the two horses and the wagon and start him towards the woods up in the canyon. I'm going to start him hauling my wood out of there." The boss

said, "Anybody going with him?" My brother said, "No."  
Joe Enright said, "You think you can trust him with  
those two horses?" Well, my brother says, "He's been  
handling six; he ought to handle two!" (Laughter)  
Well, he didn't know, he didn't know.

Calciano: I'll bet it takes a lot of skill to handle a six-horse  
team.

Majors: Oh yes, it's a lost art. You've got to make them all  
pull together to haul petroleum or wood, or what  
you're hauling. You've got to train your horses so  
that the leaders start first. The second ones are  
called the "swingers," and the ones by the wheel are  
the "wheelers." Leaders, mergers, and wheelers -- two,  
two, and two. Every horse has got a name. When you  
speak to them, you've got to call them out by name.  
They'll learn their names. The leaders would take a  
little start; then the swingers would come in, then  
the wheelers. Then they all get down together. But it  
takes an art to handle them that way, you know.

Calciano: Does each one have a rein that you hold?

Majors: Well, I just had the leaders and the wheelers. The  
swingers had to follow along there.

Calciano: They had no choice.



Majors: Of course lots of fellows used to have only one rein. They'd holler "Gee" and "Haw", you know. "Gee is "go to the right." "Haw" would be "go to the left." Just a quick jerk and they'd go to the right; with a steady pull they'd go to the left. That was just the leaders you know. Horses are pretty intelligent, but you've got to learn to kind of like the horses. Pet them when they work hard for you. Walk along and pet them a little bit and rub their necks you know. They like that. But some fellows were mean to the horses. It's a good thing they don't work horses anymore.

Calciano: How did you learn how to drive horses?

Majors: Oh, I learned it when I was a boy. I learned plowing and harrowing the ground. At first I learned to drive two, then I got four, and finally I got so that I could drive six horses. When I was 22 years old I was a good teamster. I used to work for this man who had a lot of horses. Then I came to this ranch here. We had 14 horses -two saddle horses and twelve work horses. I was the head teamster. Nowadays I'd be afraid to go around horses. But whenever you go up to a horse, you want to speak to him. Walk up to his head and pet him a little bit. Let him know you're around. If you go up and slap him on his hind, he's liable to kick you.

Yes, the old Cowell Ranch. By golly, I used to haul the petroleum down there and weigh it on those scales. I went through there not long ago and saw the old place where we used to weigh the petroleum.

Calciano: Where's that? Right at the gate?

Majors: Right at the gate there -- a little bit off to the side there. That's where we used to weigh our petroleum. Guide your wagon on you know, You weigh your empty wagon so much, and then when you weigh the load it would be so much, and then you take the weight of the wagon off of the load and you got the amount you want.

Calciano: How was the petroleum shipped?

Majors: We'd put it on cars and ship it to San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento and all.

Calciano: Was it pretty liquidy?

Majors: No, no, no, it was as hard as a rock.

Calciano: The petroleum was rock?

Majors: The petroleum rock, yes. That rock is all oil bearing rock. On my place here there is millions of tons of that.

Calciano: Oh. I didn't know that petroleum rock was truly rock.

Majors: It's rock, yes. Bituminous rock. And they heated it and spread it out and made streets with it. Those dark

colored streets are of bituminous rock.

Oxteam

Calciano: Did you ever drive oxen?

Majors: No, but I've been around teams, Cowell had a half a dozen big teams hauling wood into his lime kiln. And he had all Portuguese oxteam drivers, you know. They would a holler "Gee" and "Haw" to them and the oxen used to mind them. They'd go along and they'd have a long stick and a little brad on the end of it, a little piece of nail. That's the way they used to do. They didn't used to tap them, they used to punch them to make them get along.

Calciano: Did that hurt them?

Majors: Oh yes. And they used to holler at the cattle. I remember one old Portugee fellow, he got stuck in a mudhole, and he started hollering at his cattle. He had eight head, four yokes, two animals to a yoke. And he'd holler, "Whoa, whoa back, Jack, whoa back Jack, come here Jolly, get in there Joe!" (Laughter) That's the way they used to holler at them.

Calciano: What is an ox? Is it a cow, or is it different?

Majors: Well, it's an animal that's been altered. It's a bull that's been altered see. They take good care of them though. Oh, those steers are smart; they trained them

all to work together you know. You'd be surprised. One fellow had one steer that was an extra wheeler. He'd get on him and ride him sometimes. He had a light little saddle on him and he'd ride that steer. But most of the time he'd sit up in the wagon you know, and he'd holler "Gee" and "Haw" to them. They'd have trained leaders; they were smart. And of course whatever way the leaders went, the others had to follow. They were hooked together, fastened to that one big chain. And they had to carry yokes on their necks. They'd pull against them yokes; I don't know how they could do it. But it's a terrible thing for them to be hooked on. How they used to make them poor old animals crawl. Hauling big loads of wood out of the canyons, and then the wagons had brakes; they had brakes along the side. They'd be walking going down the hill see, and the driver would pull on the brake, and if the wagon went a going too fast the animals would start running, and they'd run just as fast as they could run.

Calciano: To get out of the way?

Majors: To get away, get away from the wagon. Then, of course, the teamster had to put the brake on to kind of slack it up a little bit.

Horse Races

Calciano: Did you do much horseback riding?

Majors: Oh, yes. And you know what the name of Front Street was years ago? Willow Street -- it had willow trees on both sides.

Calciano: Oh really?

Majors: Oh yes, willow trees. And fellows used to ride for pleasure at the upper plaza, right there opposite the post office there. Everybody on horseback would run races from there clear down Pacific Avenue, down against the hill down there. And you know how much they used to run races on horseback for? Fifty cents a race. (Laughter) Money was scarce; we didn't have much money then. They run fifty cents a race. Whoever got ahead could get the money. They'd go down that street just as hard as they could run, and that was the recreation, the pleasure they had. There were a lot of good horseback riders. You know, everybody had a reata then, for throwing and lassoing. The fellows would ride around and meet a great big bear standing up, you know. One fellow would throw a rope around his neck, and of course the bear was strong; he could pull the horse up to him. But a fellow would get on the other

side, and he'd throw it around his way. So one boy would pull this way and one the other way, and the bear couldn't do nothing. (Laughter) That's the way they used to lasso them.

Calciano: What a sport! Where did you get your blacksmithing done?

Majors: Well, at different places in town. There was lots of blacksmith shops and horseshoeing. We'd get our horses shod you know. There was a good many livery stables. Everybody had horses in those days, you know. They traveled by horses; they didn't know what an automobile was. Horses were tied all along the streets.

Calciano: There were a lot of saloons in Santa Cruz, weren't there?

Majors: Oh there was lots of them.

Calciano: We have an 1885 map of Santa Cruz that shows where the livery stables were and the grocery stores, and about every fourth building says "saloon." Were there that many?

Majors: Oh, yes. They used to say that Boulder Creek was about two-thirds saloons.

Calciano: Oh really! Were they for the people who worked in the woods?

Majors: Worked in the woods, you know, and cutting the timber, raising different crops, and one thing and another, yes.

Calciano: Well, how could that many saloons be supported?

Majors: All of the fellows, you know, would make a little money, and they'd go in there and spend their money. And seeing the saloons, I can't see how they did myself.

#### COUNTY CITIZENS

##### Vincent Locatelli

Calciano: Speaking of Boulder Creek, the Locatelli family settled there quite a while back, didn't they?

Majors: Oh yes, Locatelli was in Boulder Creek. George and his brother Vince have one of the biggest stores in Boulder Creek. George and Vince and, oh, there's a bunch of those fellows. They're old-time, the Locatellis. Old Joe Locatelli, he used to haul wood out of the canyon. He lived over around Doyle Gulch, and he had a ranch in there. I knew him a long time. He used to haul wood off of our place, timber.

#### County Board of Supervisors

Calciano: Vince Locatelli is a supervisor. Do you know any of the other members of the County Board of Supervisors?

Majors: Oh yes.

Calciano: Who's the councilman from this area?

Majors: Russ McCallie.

Calciano: Oh, McCallie.

Majors: McCallie. This is the Seaside District. Locatelli is in the Boulder Creek District up there. And then there's Robert Burton you know.

Calciano: Do you know him?

Majors: Oh yes, I know him very well.

Calciano: What's he like?

Majors: He's a nice old man, but he's getting a little too old for that job. Yes, he should get out of it. I ran for Supervisor of this district myself, but ...

Calciano: Oh you did?

Majors: Oh, I got nearly a thousand votes, but well, on account of my age a lot of them said, "Oh no, we don't want old Tom. We don't want to elect him. He's too old for that job." Well, they was really right, but I guess I could have done as good as a lot of them.

Calciano: When was this?

Majors: Oh, this was way back about ten or twelve years ago. Well, I done pretty well; I got a lot of votes.

Calciano: Hulda McLean was a supervisor, wasn't she?



Majors: Yes, she was a nice lady. She was a very nice lady, but she got to the point where, I don't know. This fellow McCallie come in, a lone candidate; people didn't even know him. He beat her in the primary!

Calciano: How'd he do it? Were people dissatisfied or what?

Majors: Oh, I don't know; he seemed like a pretty nice kind of a chap. I voted for him. Well, McLean, she was a nice lady, but one time I was pulling for a guy that was working against her, and she came to see me. She jumped all over me. She says, "I want you to quit pulling for that other guy; somebody told me you were working for him." "Well," I said, "people have a right to vote as they like." I says, "You can't tell me what to do." Yes, I said that that's the privilege. Like you want to vote for somebody and I vote for somebody else.

Calciano: Her district covered all along the coast up here?

Majors: Yes.

Fred Pfyffer

Calciano: A while ago you mentioned that much of the land along this coast was owned by the Coast Dairy and Land Company.

Majors: That's right.

Calciano: You said that the owners lived in Switzerland. Do they have some people living over here who run the business?

Majors: Well, yes, they have a man here taking care of it. I think that Fred Pfyffer has charge of it now. You've heard of Pfyffer, haven't you? I remember when he came here. He came here from Switzerland. He worked on the Yellow Bank Dairy milking caws, and my old daddy brought him out into town. But he worked there milking cows just for a living, and then he finally got around. He got to buying and selling and working on getting over in the Valley and getting a place. Today he could write his amount in seven figures -- up to a million, He's a millionaire right now.

Calciano: Is he an old man, or young?

Majors: Well, he ain't too young; he's getting along in years, but he's still active. He's still taking care of his business. They call them the Pfyffer Brothers. You probably notice them now and then?

Calciano: I think the University is letting the Pfyffer Brothers put cows on their land, and they're on the Cowell land too.

Majors: Oh yes, Fred Pfyffer got that up there, that's right.

That land up there was Cowell's, Henry Cowell. I remember Henry Cowell and Harry Cowell and Ernest Cowell. I remember they used to haul wood in there when I was a young fellow. They hauled wood in there and they shoved their eight-foot wood into them kilns and cooked that rock up and made lime out of it.

### The Cowell Family

Calciano: Did you know old Henry Cowell?

Majors': Yes, I knew him, but of course he's dead and gone now. Henry Cowell was the old man, the old boss. And then there was Ernest Cowell and Harry Cowell. Harry and Ernest Cowell were the two sons.

Calciano: What was old Henry like? The old man?

Majors: Well, he was a big man, with a big beard you know. He was a very conservative man, and a man with few words when you done any business with him. I know because my older brother opened up the bitumen mines for Cowell. My brother Henry went to see Mr. Cowell. Henry was a good miner; he understood the rock, you know, and handling it, blasting it out of the quarry. And old man Cowell said to my brother, "Before we do business," he says, "my name is Henry Cowell. What's

your name?" (Laughter) He was a very stern man. That old man was all business, too.

Calciano: I heard he never wanted his children to marry. Is that right?

Majors: Well, I don't know, I don't think they ever did have any children that I knew of. I think there was two girls who lived in San Francisco, two sisters. I never did see them, so I don't know.

Calciano: Yes, they never married.

Majors: No. But anyhow, I don't think that Harry got married, If he did I never heard of any children.

Calciano: No, he didn't either. Ernest married though, didn't he?

Majors: Yes, Ernest, I think, was married, Yes, but he was very stern; he was more like his father. Harry Cowell was a very friendly kind of a man, you know; he'd laugh and joke with you, but Ernest was all business. He'd look at you and growl "Good morning." (Laughter) Didn't somebody shoot one of them or something?

Calciano: That was the old father who was shot back in 1903.

Majors: Well, poor old man. I knew one of them got shot. Poor old man Cowell. He once says to me, "I was going up to one of my ranches and I met a man fishing on the

stream," (I don't know where it was), and he says,  
"that dirty sucker ordered me off of my own ranch."  
(Laughter)

Calciano: When was, this?

Majors: I don't know, but he ordered Cowell off of his own ranch.

Calciano: Well, so Ernest ran the ranch for a while. Was he a big man, or not?

Majors: Well, he was a pretty big, husky man. He was a very well-built man, a very stern kind of a man, The Cowells were friendly to a certain extent, to some people they knew, but otherwise they were kind of distant, you know, and reserved. They picked friends, but not too many.

Calciano: Old Harry Cowell was down here off and on for a good number of years, wasn't he? He used to ride around the ranch a lot.

Majors: Oh yes, yes. Finally he got to be pretty old and he had to have a horse and buggy.

Calciano: You said you hauled lime for the Cowells?

Majors: Well Cowell hauled lime; I hauled wood to the lime kilns, the old Adam's lime kilns. I worked for my cousin. We used to haul wood down to the lime kilns from up in the old acorn canyon. And the Portuguese!

He had a lot of Portuguese working for him, and they'd all be talking and laughing while they were pushing the wood into the kilns to cook up the rock. They were talking and Laughing and smoking their cigarettes. Pretty soon Ernest Cowell would come riding along up on his horse, you know, and a fellow down below would keep watching for the fellows. There'd be one fellow here, and another further on. There was a Portugee at every kiln, maybe five or six kilns. And they were all talking and laughing and having a good time. The fellow down below would see Cowell coming and he'd say to the rest of them in Spanish, "Hay viene el patron!" That means, "Here comes the boss." (Laughter)

Calciano: They all started working then! (Laughter)

Majors: The Portuguese would come out from the old country and someone would say, "Where are you going to work? Where are you going?" "I'm going to work for Mr. Cow'WELL'." "I'm going to work for Mr. Cow'WELL'." They got thirty dollars a month and their board. They'd give them plenty to eat, and they had a good place to sleep. They got a dollar a day and their board. (Laughter)

Calciano: I guess it was hard work too.

Majors: Oh yes. Old Harry Cowell, not Harry so much, but Ernest Cowell, he'd walk right down there among them

sometimes, and he'd commence grabbing some wood and pushing it in there. He wanted to set an example for them. He'd work for a half an hour like the dickens, you know.

Calciano: Really show them, right?

Majors: Yes, he wanted to set an example to show them how to work.

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