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Guadalupe Speaks Oral History Project

Interview with: Henry Dolcini

Interviewed by: Cameron Islas

(affiliation) _____

Edited by: Janet Crabaugh

Date: Dec. 5, 2003

Location: _____

City/State: Santa Maria, CA

Project: Guadalupe Speaks

Subjects discussed:

Dolcini Famiy History

Pearl Harbor

Japanese Internment

Southern Pacific Train Wreck

Guadalupe, CA

Central Coast, CA

Number of pages: 26

Restrictions on use: _____

About the Guadalupe Speaks Project

Guadalupe Speaks is an oral history project that is part of California Stories, a multiyear initiative designed to strengthen communities and connect Californians by uncovering personal and community stories that help document multicultural communities in present day California. California Stories is funded by the California Council for the Humanities.

In 2003, the Guadalupe Speaks project began recording and transcribing oral histories of the residents of Guadalupe. The stories reflect the history and culture of the town, capturing the residents' impressions of their community. The stories represent the multicultural backgrounds of the residents including Swiss-Italian, Portuguese, Filipino, Chumash, Mexican, Chinese, and Japanese ancestry.

Situated approximately ten miles west of Santa Maria on historic Highway 1 on the border of Santa Barbara & San Luis Obispo counties, the City of Guadalupe was founded in 1843 as one of the earliest communities on the Central Coast. In 2003, the city has a population of 5,700, mixed with long-time and native residents, recent retirees from outside the county, and a large Latino population.

Guadalupe was once the principal agricultural center of northern Santa Barbara County, at one time providing one-third of all lettuce grown in California. Although it is still primarily an agricultural community, the crops have changed to include broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and other vegetables. However, Guadalupe is no longer the central distribution point for the area, and communities such as Santa Maria have surpassed it in growth by almost 2,000 percent. Guadalupe has remained at a standstill, much as it was 50 years ago, while the rest of the Central Coast has grown at an astounding pace.

Today, Guadalupe is a town poised between its past and its future. In 2003, the inaugural year of the Guadalupe Speaks project the small town is on the cusp of modernization and large-scale development. Through the Guadalupe Speaks project, the community will be able to document its history and unique, multicultural way of life.

Using the Guadalupe Speaks Oral Histories

First Transcription - Guadalupe Speaks, Henry Dolcini Interview

Interviewed by: Cameron Islas

Date: December 5, 2003

At: Santa Maria, CA

Transcribed and Edited by Janet Crabaugh

Note: Microphone failed to catch interviewer's voice so wording of questions is lost. Solution is to either put questions as assumed in [brackets]: or possibly change format to a straight narration by Mr. Dolcini.

Islas: [Where were you born?]

Dolcini: There was no hospital in Guadalupe so I had to be either born at the house or born in Santa Maria. Guadalupe wasn't much smaller than it is now, really. It was about 2500 or so then, and it's a little bit bigger now, but not much. There's never been a hospital there. There's always been one doctor in town.

Islas: What was your [muffled]

Dolcini: My grandfather was Swiss-Italian; my father was born in Guadalupe, actually up in the hills back of Point Sal; my grandmother was Irish for the most part, on my father's side; on my mother's side my grandfather was a Dana so he was English and Spanish; and I got some French from my grandmother, so I'm a lot of things. The name is Swiss-Italian.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: My father was born there in 1885. His father had immigrated there in about 1840, so my family's been there a long long time.

Islas: What was your father's [muffled]

Dolcini: He was a dairyman. He had two dairies at the foot of Point Sal Mountain.

Islas: What [muffled]

Dolcini: He was trampled by a team of horses outside Guadalupe. The horses bolted and he was jerked off the seat and fell right behind the horses. They backed up and trampled him. They put him back on the wagon he was driving to take him back to Guadalupe, back home, but he died before they even started. He was fairly young at the time - he was only in his mid-forties. I have the newspaper with his obituary.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: She sold the dairy and I guess she got enough money to live the rest of her life from them. I don't remember that she ever did anything as far as work. She was left with six little kids. The oldest was maybe 12 or 13. She was widowed at a young age, she wasn't even 30.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: It was somewhere in the lower half or middle, I'm not sure, where he fell.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: No - they all were.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes. He was in World War I. He went to France and Normandy, and when he came back he stayed there.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: He worked for the Gas Company (PG&E); he worked as a depot agent; and he worked for about 30 years as a Postal Clerk in the Post Office and finally retired from there. Those are the major jobs that he held. I don't know what else [there was].

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: About 1935. He married her in Nipomo - the little Catholic Church in Nipomo. The Church building is still there, across the street from Jocko's, if you know where Jocko's is. I think the church is a flower shop now, or a wedding chapel or something. Huge big wedding - 500 people probably - because her family were Danas and there's a million of them! The Captain had 21 children, five generations back of me.

Islas: How many children did he [your father] have?

Dolcini: Two - just my sister and I. I'm older.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes. We always got along very well. We were only 18 months apart. We always got along, never fought like some siblings do. Now I don't see her a whole lot. She lives here in Santa Maria and usually when I see her I run into her downtown. We call each other on the phone now and then - it's not that we don't get along, it's just that we have our own things that we do.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Well, kind of in the center, a block off the very center of the down town area. One block down from where the Far Western is.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I think the house was built about 1902. The whole square block of Guadalupe burned around the turn of the century and the house my grandmother was living in at that time burned with everything else. As if she didn't need more things to happen to her. She had lost her husband not too much before that, then she was without a house. The house that is there now was built of redwood - there's no termites so it's still pretty sound. It's an old two-story Victorian white house. My sister owns it now. I traded it to her on some property - I wanted something else. I owned half of it, half of everything in Guadalupe, so we made a swap. It's a pretty old house, built by my grandmother. I remember the family told me that when it was built, the house, tank house, a water tank, the well, a windmill – it all cost about $2000. The whole thing.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I moved across the street. My aunt really had that house. My father's sister. So we moved across the street when I was about five or six. I remember moving but I just remember bits and pieces about it. At the time the house we moved into was a little two-bedroom house. They built a room on the back with a bathroom and that was my room when I got a little bit older. Then it was a three-bedroom house. It's still there. I sold it some thirty years ago.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes. The jail was behind it. There was a slough - a swamp - with an open water pool with cattails, and the jail was on the other side of that. I could have thrown a rock from my back yard and hit the jail, it was that close. They'd put drunks in there at night and I'd hear them yelling -it was just a little square jail. It's still there.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes, two blocks. My mother taught there. I remember that when my sister reached third grade, my mother started teaching. Before that she stayed home to raise us. But even when she was teaching school, it was only two blocks away from the house. My father worked at the Post Office, which was two blocks away in the opposite direction. Everything was close.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Guadalupe Joint Union School. It was in the building that's now the City Hall and the Police Department and Fire Department - all the city offices. When I went there it was the grammar school. It went from kindergarten to the eighth grade. There was no junior high school.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: It was fine. I liked it. There was a lake next to it so I'd run home every night after I got off school and grab my fishing pole. Just about every night I'd go fishing in the lake, mostly with the Japanese boys that taught me how to fish after they had come back from the concentration camps. Most of my friends were Japanese. They were good fishermen and they taught me everything about fishing. That's how I got to like it - my father was not a fisherman ever, even when he was young. He was a hunter when he was young but he didn't really hunt until later when he got way up into his seventies. Then he used to hunt quail with me a little bit. Before that he didn't. I guess it was born in me - I liked it from the time I was old enough to do it. He bought me guns and I had a gun cabinet in my bedroom with ammunition and everything from the time I was about 12. I could go hunting whenever I wanted. I was

trusted with all that, and never had a problem. Years ago that was the way it was.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Oh, yes. I killed a deer in the river my first year - right down back of own. I walked down the river, it was for the most part dry riverbed, it had a lot of dry brushy areas, willows. There were doves that came there in the migration, and out on the other side on the sand dunes where it was brushy I'd get quail and rabbits - around there, a lot of it I could ride my bike to, before I could drive.

Islas: How old were you when Pearl Harbor happened.

Dolcini: I was about five, I guess. I was born in 1937 and that happened in '41. I was just barely five.

Islas: What do you remember?

Dolcini: I remember my folks sitting around the radio in the living room, talking about it - they were very somber-faced, and it was a very big deal. But it didn't really make too much of an impact on me, at that age. A little later, when they took all the Japanese to the concentration camps I definitely remember that. The busses were all lined up down our street. My father worked in the Post Office. It was a small town and there was no mail delivery so there were boxes, and everybody had to come into town to get the mail. My father knew everybody in town, and everybody knew him and liked him. When the Japanese were leaving they all brought a present to my father and came up on the porch of the big white house. The whole end of the porch was full of tea sets and Japanese dolls in the big glass cases, and all kinds of things - just about every one brought him something and came up on the porch to shake hands with him. The women were all crying - well, they had been

uprooted and sent away from their homes, so they didn't like it too much. They could take one suitcase, and that was it.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I remember it - it didn't make much of an impact because I was just five - just a little kid. I really didn't know what was happening, but I remember it.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I don't know - at that time, it was the thing to do, the people believed in it. The President came out with it - and it was partly for their protection, too. There was a lot of animosity against the Japanese even though a lot of them were citizens. But, still, they stood out - they were easier to tell than Germans (at the time we were also at war with Germany). The German people in America, there wasn't a difference, unless they had a very thick German accent. You couldn't tell them from anybody else. But the Japanese you could, because of their distinctive look. There were people who wanted to kill all of them - there were kooks around. So partly for their own protection they were sent away. Also, some [people] thought there were spies - there were a few. They just sent them all to concentration camps.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes, the FBI came the first night, right after Pearl Harbor, Sunday night, and they had some rooms in the hotel downtown. They came over to get my father, to ask him where some of these people lived. They had a list of names they wanted to pick up. [The people on the list] were those who had ties to Japan. They were older men who were for the most part people who were from Japan - born in Japan. Whether or not they were Japanese spies…it was

thought they might be. So they came and got my father who worked in the Post Office and knew everybody and where everybody lived, and they would ask him where so-and-so lived and then they'd go out there and pick him up. They brought them all in, and they had several rooms where they had these people. My father went in, and he was talking to them because they were friends of his. He did his duty by telling them (FBI) where they lived because if he didn't, somebody else would have.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I was in about the fourth or fifth grade, so that would make me about 12?

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Maybe ten or eleven, when they came back from the camps. That was the end of the war.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: No too much. I remember them coming back and being in school. I remember one of them was kind of angry at the whole thing, and he said something about the flag, and spit on the American flag, and a bunch of the older boys beat him up. I remember that happening, just barely. For the most part, they were fine and about six of them and I became very good friends. To this day I know some of them who are around here and they are still friends. They were accepted for what they were, for the most part, except for that one incident. I don't even remember who it was but I remember it happening. When the older boys beat him up somebody said something about it and the teachers, they went along with it! They said, "OK, he did that and what they did was OK. We're not going to punish them for beating him up." Things were different then. We

had been at war, and they attacked us. Things were thought of a little different. Now, fifty, sixty years later you look back in retrospect and people say "Oh, we shouldn't have dropped the bomb" - but dropping the bomb saved millions of lives on both sides, really.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: For the most part I don't think it changed things at all. Except that some of the Japanese lost everything they had, property and all. People around there picked it up for a song. The ones that were smart enough and had enough money had attorneys and people who were honest to manage their property. When they came back they started right back up - Minami and some of the big farmers - are still big farmers to this day and are very wealthy. They had enough foresight to set up a trust so that their property could be managed, and they also picked honest people to do it. There were people who were dishonest who said "We'll manage things for you," and they stole everything they had. And they had a lot. That was the impact it had on Guadalupe. Other than that it really didn't have a great impact. Those people who were taken out: when they came back people who were friends of theirs were still friends of theirs. They weren't the ones who attacked us. It's just that their ethnic background was Japanese, but that was as far as it went.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: A lot of Mexican farm workers lived around there, and there has always been a lot of Swiss in this valley. They're Swiss-Italians but everybody just called them Swiss. They still do, unless they have Italian last names. Switzerland is divided into three parts: German, French and Italian. There are no Swiss, just Swiss. Although they all refer to themselves as just Swiss. There were a lot of Chinese there too at that time. There was a fair- sized China Town. They

had a lot of restaurants. Years ago they had a lot of gambling and opium dens and all kinds of things in Guadalupe.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes. When they built the railroad bridge, my father was about five or six at that time. He was born in 1885. They brought Coolie laborers in from China to build the railroad. To build that bridge they had seven camps of Coolies with 100 in each camp, so they had 700 Chinese working on the railroad in there and building the bridge. My grandfather, being a dairyman, would deliver milk out to these labor camps. My father would ride along on the wagon - there were no cars at that time, cars hadn't even been invented yet, and he remembered the labor camps. They cooked at the camps, and they used to tell about this one cook coming out and asking, "You likee lailload pie?" He'd give them an apple pie to eat on the way back on the wagon. My dad was only five or six at the time.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Oh, yes, we had just about every ethnic background and nationality in that one neighborhood. Across the street on the corner was my aunt, who worked in the Post Office, next door to her were the people who owned the only drug store in town, and next was a Filipino man who worked in the fields as a lettuce packer, married to a white girl. Next to them was a poor Mexican family that worked in the fields and they had not much at all. Next door to them was a very poor white family from Oklahoma or Arkansas who had probably come out here during the Dust Bowl, during the Depression. They had a whole bunch of little kids running around in tattered clothes. Next door to them was a very wealthy Japanese family who were farmers, big farmers. They owned one of the great big farms around there, and still do. Next door to them

was the only doctor in town. Across the street were the people who owned the waterworks for the city of Guadalupe. Then there was an open lot with a house trailer on it, with a family I don't remember much about. They were white. Next door to them was another very poor Mexican family that worked in the fields. Next door to them was a family who was the brother-in-law of the doctor, and he taught at the high school here in town. Then our house, and next was a house we had and rented out to the only black family in town. That was the block I grew up on. So I could hardly be prejudiced against anybody because everything was in that one block. The whole town was like that. Not as really diverse as where I grew up - it was really a mixed block, where I grew up.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I don't know. I thought that was the way it was supposed to be, that was the way I grew up. Nobody ever said anything bad about anybody because they were of some different ethnic group. If they were a rotten person, they were a rotten person because that was the way they were. Not because of their heritage.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Here in Santa Maria, at Santa Maria High, which is just down the street about three blocks from here.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: That was the only high school in the whole valley. They bused them in from all over this whole valley to Santa Maria High School. There was no other high school.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: My graduating class was around 400, and there were probably 1500 kids in that high school. It was big because it was the only one.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: No. I think they bus to the Getty High School now, which wasn't even thought of when I went to school. I think that's where Guadalupe buses to now.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: No. It was all right. It was only nine miles and one of the teachers lived right next door to me so about half the time I drove with him. He'd ride the bus, too, sometimes, but he'd drive a lot of times, and every time he drove he'd be backing out of his driveway about the time I was going out to get on the bus and he'd usually motion me over and I'd ride to school with him. DeGasperis. His son is a lawyer still, has an office here in town. He lives up in Shell Beach but has an office here.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes, it wasn't Amtrak at the time, it was Southern Pacific Railroad. Amtrak came along way later. The train wreck happened about three blocks from the house. That was about the time during the transition between diesel and steam. There were still steam engines running on the railroad. They were phasing in the diesels. This wreck was between a diesel and a steam engine.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: The steam engine, a big Mallett engine, which is a huge engine, weighed hundreds of tons, was backing into a siding and the lights were green. The lights were switched over for the main line, but

the front of the engine and the cowcatcher were hanging over a little into the main line. The diesel, a big four section diesel with probably a hundred cars behind it, came through town about fifty or sixty miles an hour - he was barrelling through town - and clipped the [steam] engine on the front. When that happened the diesel went up in the air, all four sections. Two of them landed on top of a house. The people in the house had just gone into the back bedroom and shut off the lights. This was about 9 or 9:30. People went to bed early then. This diesel landed on the front part of the house and they crawled out the window. Nobody was hurt, everybody was fine. Very lucky. Then everything caught fire because of the diesel fuel.

Behind the diesels were three or four boxcars that were empty. They just crumpled up in a ball about probably the length of one box car or so. There was a hobo in one of them, and he ended up in a corner that was still somewhat intact, unhurt. They didn't find him for two days or so - he was in there, though, and unhurt. When they got him out he was dehydrated and scared and hungry, but completely unhurt. Either the engineer or fireman broke I think a collarbone and a leg; one of them got a bad concussion; but nobody died. Behind the boxcars that crumpled up was about seven or eight loaded boxcars. They jumped the track, but they stayed mainly intact. They were loaded probably with vegetables.

Behind them was six or eight flatcars that nothing on them. They just flew like playing cards all over the place. One of them - a fellow was saying goodnight to his girlfriend at her house, which was right next to the railroad tracks. The street went right up to the tracks, parallel to them. He was saying goodnight to her and it scooped up their car and threw it up on the neighbor's porch,

upside down. He got a broken leg out of it, she didn't get hurt at all. Then the flatcar kept on going and went across the porch of one of the houses, through the living room, and ended up at the back side of the kitchen. The people who lived there had just turned off the lights and gone in the back bedroom. Again, if they had been in the living room they would have all been killed. So nobody was hurt except for the boyfriend of this girl, who got a broken leg.

It was a big deal. I remember when they hit it sounded like and felt like an explosion because it shook the whole end of the town there. My sister and I were home alone, my parents were at a dinner at the American Legion Hall which was only two blocks from the house - across from the Post Office. They left us alone because they were right there in case we needed them. I was either a Freshman or Sophomore in high school, I don't remember which. We ran out in the front yard and looked around. We could see a big glow coming from up that way - at first I thought it was a gas station explosion, because nothing else would explode in that town. No factories - there were vegetable sheds, but there's nothing to blow up there. I looked at this big glow in the sky because there was a big fire up there - I ran up one street parallel until I could see train laying all over the place. My folks came right home and my father and I went up to see what happened - everybody in town just about came out to look at the wreck. It was a big deal.

It took over two weeks to get the whole thing cleaned up. It took four days to build a track around the wreck so they could get service going again, because that was the Southern Pacific main line up and down the coast. There was no other way to get trains

up and down the coast of California so for about four days there was no service at all for cargo or passengers either. Then they built a track around the wreck and the trains had to come to that point - it was all temporary, on a temporary roadbed - they had to stop and then go abut two miles an hour, led by somebody on foot, around the wreck. Then they could take off again on the other side. It was that way for two weeks or so before they built the track. It was heavy gauge railroad. The tracks weighed 120 pounds a foot - huge rail - they were bent like you wouldn't believe, twisted like pretzels from the wreck.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Oh, no. Every day people would go up there if they didn't have to work, and watch them pick up all this stuff. This big Mallett steam engine was so big that the only crane big enough to pick it up and put it back on the tracks - it didn't get knocked clear over, it got knocked kind of sideways and off the track - but it was so heavy it didn't go over. They had to pick it up and put it back on the track and the only crane big enough was in Erie Pennsylvania. I remember that. They had to wait until [the crane] got there before they could pick up the engine. When they started picking it up, I was there. It was after school and I had gone up to watch, and there was a big steam crane and it started chugging away. They had all these steel cables on it. When everything got all tightened up and they were just starting to pick it up, the hook that they had on the cable snapped, and a piece of hook that weighed probably 60 or 70 pounds flew across and just missed a guy who was standing there - one of the workmen - and buried itself in the ground right beside him. It if had hit him, at the height it was, it would have taken the top half of his body off, I mean completely off! It missed him by about three feet. It was close.

Side Two of Tape

Islas: And it was two weeks before it was cleaned up?

Dolcini: Yes, it was at least two weeks.

Side Two of Tape

Islas: And it was two weeks before it was cleaned up?

Dolcini: Yes, it was at least two weeks before they built the tracks straight through, and then they still had the tracks to clean up. Houses - one house was completely gone, the one the engine landed on. There was nothing left after the fire. The one that the flat car went through, I don't remember if they tore it down and built another one or what. It was pretty bad off too. This was because flat cars just sit on the wheels - they call them trucks - they're not anchored down - the weight just holds them down. They'll never come off unless something major happens. These flat cars, from the impact, just jumped right off the trucks and all these big trucks just piled up in one spot. They probably weigh I would say two tons apiece, at least - the set of four wheels and the axels and other stuff - maybe more than than, I'm not sure. They just all piled up in a big pile. When the flat cars jumped off, the trucks just kept going and a lot of them were in one place, all stacked up. This big flat car - they're about eight feet wide and fifty feet long - that's what went through the house. They're steel and wood, the bed of them is partly wood, and the edges that puts them together is steel, so they'd weigh four or five or six tons probably. Everything is heavy.

Islas: Other than that, were there any other events...

Dolcini: Well, nothing like that, nothing that big. I was old enough to remember it vividly - 14 or so.

Islas: When did you graduate from high school?

Dolcini: 1955.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes. From the time I started as a senior in high school I worked in a service station and garage there in town. I went to Hancock College. I went for a year. Then I quit and worked in a packing shed for a year to make some money to buy a car and different things. Then I was working as an apprentice carpenter for one of the construction companies here in town. Then things got slow and I got laid off. Then I joined the Navy. I had just turned 21. The draft was breathing down my neck and I knew it - the draft was still active at that time - so I joined the Navy. While I was in boot camp I got a draft notice! If I had been drafted into the Army it would have been for two years. In the Navy I had to go in for four, but that was fine. I would rather have been in the Navy. I liked the ocean, always liked it. Then I found out that they had very good schools, so I went through electronics school in San Francisco at Treasure Island. From the training school I got at ET school I went to three or four schools in the four years. They'd send me to school for two or three weeks or a month and a half...smaller schools. From that training I got out and went to work for Northrup Corporation, which is what I did for the rest of my working life. So being in the Navy really paid off for me. Gave me a profession so that I could get a good job. I was a test engineer for Northrup for 32 years.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Oh - that was Point Sal Packers. I don't think it's there anymore. I don't think that Point Sal by that name is even there anymore. Half the building is still there. They don't pack anymore like they used to. They used to haul everything in. They'd harvest and put it in big basket trucks, bring it into the sheds, and re-wash it and refresh it and trim it, then pack it in crates and load in into either freight cars or trucks. Now, they pack everything in a shed, so they save one step, and load it on trucks and bring it into cooling plant, which is just a huge icebox. Some of the vegetables that will take it, like celery, broccoli and cauliflower, they have a big cooling tower where they put stacks of crates in and run ice water - it has pieces of ice in it, like sleet, if you've ever been in a sleet storm. It's just icy cold water. They run it through the crates to cool them, take all the heat out of them, then put them in these great big regrigerated rooms. They keep them there until the trucks come in. Almost everything goes by truck - nothing goes by railroad anymore. They load the trucks and the trucks have their own refrigeration. They go to market from there.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: That was a car loader - I was loading freight cars. Celery mostly. But we did broccoli and cauliflower and cabbage - different things if they came in. But for the most part we did celery. We did a lot of celery.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: And trucks too, at that time. But a lot of stuff went by railroad.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Yes - it was a service station and it was a garage and a body shop.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: It was Charley Shiroma (?) Service. He's still alive, in his 80s now. He lives out in Guadalupe.

Islas: What did you do there?

Dolcini: A little bit of everything. I worked as a mechanic, pumped gas, I sanded the cars after the body work was done, in between the painting. I did just whatever needed to be done that I could do.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Here? Well, I was gone at least 35 years. I came back in 1992, I think, after I retired. All that time I lived down south in Orange County for the most part. I lived in Riverside County for awhile. I would come back to visit here, because my mother was still here, and my sister was here.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Well, I have a lot of friends that live over there. I belong to the American Legion Post in Guadalupe, because I know everybody. I joined the post here but they weren't very friendly. I knew some of them. The guys out in Guadalupe said "Why don't you join our Post? You know everybody." So I went to one meeting, and they were right, I did know everybody. So I transferred there. So that tie I have there. I know a lot of people who still live there. But I have no relatives that live there.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Some of them. Not a lot of them. There are some that I grew up with.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Well, I don't know. It's a small town and a small area. There are people that won't move away from where they were born. They're afraid to go out on their own and move away, so they just stay around here and take whatever job they can find. A lot of them don't make too much money, but that's not important to them. My retirement is more than a lot of people who stayed around here have ever made. All I have to do is sign the check - I don't even have to work for it. I did work for it though, for many years.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I started collecting pictures of all this area around here - Santa Maria, Guadalupe and everything around here, about six or eight years ago. I always knew something about the history of Guadalupe and the history of the valley, and I remember a lot of the buildings from the 50s that are gone now. I got a couple of pictures, then thought "This is a good thing so I'll see how many I can get." So now I have quite a few pictures of things that are gone. Some are still there, some have changed what they're for, and some have been changed radically in their design, the front of the buildings. I'm trying to get as many as I can. Anytime I can get a new picture from somebody I can scan it and blow it up and keep it.

Islas: Are you a car [inaudible]

Dolcini: Oh, yeah. I had all kinds of old Fords - just about every one there was, from 29 to about 1940. I had at least one of almost every year in there.

Islas: How did you get them?

Dolcini: Oh, I'd buy them from people around here. Some of them I'd pick up for five or six dollars and they wouldn't be running...I picked up a

36 coupe for five dollars, it was sitting out behind the gas station and mice were living in the upholstery - grass was growing up all around it. I towed it home, and on the way home I let the clutch out to see if it was frozen and it turned over, so I worked on it for three days and sold it for $350. [Laughs] And I got it for five dollars! I did that with a lot of them. I sure wish I still had some of the old ones. I had a 33 three-window coupe that was just beautiful. But I got offered enough money for it that I sold it. I'd love to have it today, they're rare. This one that I have here is not one of the rarer bodies - there were a lot of them. But for $1500 I'm not going to pass it up - they're worth a lot more than that. I could sell it for ten [thousand] right now, without touching it.

[Break]

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Well, I can't remember anything else that I have. If I found any I would keep them - but I don't remember anything else I have other than pictures. I have a lot of pictures. Johnny Perry is the one that has a lot of stuff. You have to go by his auto parts place, it's like a museum. He's even got an adobe brick off the original Guadalupe adobe. In the original adobe from the Guadalupe Rancho that was the original land grant for that area many many years ago, there was two adobes there. They got bulldozed. Of course, now that would never happen, but it did. Somebody owned the land they were on and he wanted to build something, so he just went in with the bulldozer and scraped them up, loaded them into a dump truck, and took them away and buried them. These were the original two houses in Guadalupe, build in seventeen something. I remember playing around them when I was a kid. One of them had a family living in it and the other one no one was living in. It was in ruins. I left here in 1958 when I went into the Navy and sometime between

then and 1975 or so they were bulldozed. I wasn't here so I don't know the year. Johnny Perry has a little museum there - there is a museum also, but Johnny has one of the big adobe bricks. They're about, oh, two feet long and ten inches wide or so. That's what the houses were made of. He's the only one that has even a brick left. Not even the museum in town has that.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: No, I don't think so, it was a nice little town growing up. There was a lot more services and things when I grew up there. Grocery stores, and things like that. There's one grocery store left. But there were three or four when I was growing up, and there was a lot more: the theater showed movies every day just about, and now it's not even in operation anymore. The building is still there -

Islas: Where was that at?

Dolcini: It's on Guadalupe Street, the main street, and it's oh, maybe a quarter of a mile south where the main street bends - where you're coming up from the cemetery, where it makes a right hand bend. If you look on the right, it's right there. Right around the corner from where it bends to the right.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: No, I don't know. Lots of old Westerns. We used to go every Saturday to the movies. My folks would give me a quarter, and for a quarter I could get in and get a Coke and a bag of popcorn. It was fifteen cents for the movie and a nickel for the popcorn and a nickel for the Coke. They usually had two old "B" Westerns and a serial, and cartoons, and everything. You could go all afternoon.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Well, I'm really kind of away from there. I don't really have the interest that some of the people who live there do. I'd like to see it built up a little bit. There's nothing to bring people there, other than the farm labor around here and most of those people just want a place to live and have no ties other than that to the community. A lot of them don't care what happens - a lot of them are from Mexico, some of them are illegal, even, so they are just looking for a place to live that's reasonable, that's cheap. Now with modern automobiles everybody comes here [Santa Maria] to shop because it's fifteen minutes away. When I grew up it was more of a big deal to go nine miles. In fact, as I told you with my folks living and working so close, our car came out of the garage on Sunday to go to my grandmother's over in Nipomo for Sunday dinner. That's usually the only time it came out of the garage. The rest of the time it stayed.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Sure, I rode my bicycle. I'd ride down to the other end of town, which was almost a mile down, clear down to where the cemetery is, in that end. I had friends that lived down in that area, so I'd ride my bicycle down to play with them, but as far as cars, no, our car didn't come ouit of the garage. We had a 1941 Buick that was fairly new...we had an old Dodge before that but I don't remember much about it. But I remember the Buick quite well. My father bought it from one of the Japanese who was being taken to the camp. He had just bought it brand new and it had two or three hundred miles on it when they had to go to the camp. We had that for a long time. Once in awhile we'd have a doctor's appointment or something in Santa Maria, but that was very rare.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Oh, sure. I do. I liked it. The reason I don't live there now is because the weather difference between here in Santa Maria and Guadalupe is markedly different. When the fog comes in in the afternoon by four or four-thirty, Guadalupe is damp, cold, all fogged-in. It doesn't get like that here in Santa Maria until eight o'clock at night maybe, or eight-thirty. It's quite a bit warmer here. It's damp over there. If you go into the houses over there and look at the north wall of the houses, there's mold on most of them. It's not because people are dirty, it's just because of the damp and the cold. In fact it'll do that here, too. This house, before I retired, I had the house here and I didn't want to rent it out. I'd come up here on weekends and stay. The rest of the week it was damp and the north wall right here in the dining room behind the drapes, was discolored so I looked and it was all moldy. That's the north wall. So I got some bleach and mixed half-and-half Clorox or Purex, in water and washed it. Then I repainted it all. Then I left the heater on at 55 or 60 in the house, and that was enough to keep the mold from growing. Now that I'm living in it, it won't do it. Guadalupe is a lot worse than here because of that. That's why I'm not living there now, because of the weather.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: I don't know - there's a lot of people around now who don't remember the train wreck, probably, and some of that stuff. Some of them were too young - I'm sure that the old-timers who lived around there, I guess I would qualify as one of them, would remember things like that. Like I said, we had a lot more Chinese living there then. I don't know if there are any now - we had a little Chinatown down there, several Chinese restaurants and things. There is still one I think.

Islas: - - -

Dolcini: Oh, from "The Ten Commandments." The Ten Commandments, the original, was made in 1923 out in the sand dunes out of Guadalupe. They had all the great big Sphinxes and the Pyramids - when they got done with the movie, they just buried everything out in the sand dunes, and they're still there. They've been talking about a project to dig them up, to see what's under there, but nobody has ever done it. That's another thing, Johnny Perry has a big paw from one of the Sphinxes in his little museum there. It's an auto parts house, it's not a museum, but he's got a lot of the old stuff. And I've traded pictures with him, so a lot of the pictures he had I got copies and if I had different pictures I'd give them to him, so some things are in there. I know right where they are, in the sand dunes, but anymore they have rules about walking around out there, you might step on some plant or something. I don't fully agree with all the stuff that goes on. I would like to be able to drive by four-wheel drive down on the beach and fish, which wouldn't hurt anything below the tide line, but they won't let anybody go down there because they think you might step on some bird nest or something. They protect this snowy plover that's around here. They say they're endangered. I don't think they're endangered because there are places where there are thousands of them. Especially if you go down on Baja. But they won't let us drive even on the beach, and really that wouldn't hurt anything. I think that if they don't want you driving on their bird nests, make a very strict rule about driving above the tide line so that it would let us go fishing. Because I'd love to go fishing down on Mussel Rock which is three miles down in the soft sand. I'm not in shape to walk down there anymore. We used to drive down there all the time, and camp down there when I was a kid. But now they won't even let us

do that. Make the rules so strict and make the fines so big that if anyone drove away from the tide line nobody would want to do it, and let us drive down there. Arrest them if they break the rules. But they won't do it. We used to have free run of all the sand dunes when I was a kid, and we had dune buggies and we went all over down there, just looking around and fishing and whatever. We'd go all back in the dunes, too, back then. Things were different then, I guess. But there were no rules against any of that. But now they are. You might run over some endangered - quote, endangered - plant or bird nest or whatever. That's how I feel about the sand dunes and the beaches. They're there for the people as far as I'm concerned. Why not let us use them? We wouldn't hurt anything by driving along the beach to go fishing, because above the tide line - from the water to the high tide line nothing can stay there anyway. It gets washed out every day or at least every week or so when the real high tides come. Now, even if you're walking along fishing, if you walk up 50 feet from the water, and you're still within the high tide line, they go bananas. Fine you and throw you in jail and all kinds of things. Which makes no sense at all, I don't think.

Islas: Well, I think we're about finished - I haven't anything left to ask.

Dolcini: No - I can't think of anything else. I hope I gave you something.

Islas: Thank you.

Tape Ends