

Laguna Woods History Center
Community Oral History Project
Recording Log

NARRATOR: Lee Bevilacqua

INTERVIEWER: Jennifer Keil

VIDEOGRAPHER: Cindy Keil

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ABSTRACT: An interview with Lee Bevilacqua who shared about her early career in New York, New Jersey, and eventual move to California. She worked for Mobay, which was a Monsanto and Bayer company. As a resident of Leisure World, she became an active volunteer. She supported The New Owners' Orientation Program, World on Film, Channel 6, and the History Center. As a Board of Trustee of the History Center, she has been essential to the organization's newspaper digitization project that was completed in 2017. She will turn 100 this year. Lee shared her thoughts about this milestone.

00:00:00 **Opening**

JK: We're here at the Laguna Woods History Center. It's April 1st, 2017. Lee Bevilacqua is here with us. My first question for you is can you please share about being born in New York in 1917?

LB: Do I...?

JK: Would you please share about being born in New York in the year 1917?

LB: Oh! Yes, I love New York City. My parents really were from Italy. They were immigrants and they landed in New York City. And that's how I was born there, but I didn't live there very long. I moved...subsequently they moved to New Jersey...

Keywords: New York; Italy; New Jersey; Italian; school; New York City; war; WWII

00:03:08 **Marine Corps**

It seemed like a smaller unit. That's why I joined it. And I worked with...in Quantico with the commandant there, doing various jobs. One of my last jobs I liked very much is when we were mustering out soldiers when they were coming back from the war from Iwo Jima and so forth, yes...

Keywords: Marine Corps; unit; Quantico; ration; war; commandant; job

00:04:42 **Career: Mobay, A Monsanto Bay Company**

JK: Neat. And then eventually you worked for Mobay, a Monsanto Bay company in the 50s.

LB: Yes.

JK: So, would you share about your various positions in this company?

LB: Well, I...Mobay was a company that was...it was Monsanto and Bayer. They called it **Bayer Mobay**. I started typing there and then I went to be a secretary. And then I was transferred to their executive offices in Pittsburgh to be a buyer. So, I bought chemicals for making dyed stuff[s] and things like that, yeah...

Keywords: Mobay; Monsanto; Bayer; 50s; Senior Center; TV 6; secretary; Pittsburgh; California; buyer; 1984

00:07:45 **Leisure World**

LB: I knew nothing about it. This gentleman and I decided to ride around and look at places to buy. And we decided to look at this place and we bought a place together here, yes.

JK: And where did you move first? Where did you move to? Which community in...?

LB: Right here.

JK: Just exactly...okay.

LB: Yes, it's the only place I lived in California...

Keywords: Leisure World; community; California; Ross Cortese; Rossmoor Corporation; New Jersey; sister; brother; pastimes; needlepoint; Bridge; Film Club

00:11:50 **TV 6 and Programming**

LB: Well, it was really not very...

JK: 15 years.

LB: I'd go once a week and I would go Monday and I would find out who was going to be at...there on Tuesday, you know, and take all that. And then write, you know, how when you see these people on TV they have a sheet of paper in front of them. And that's what I did, I just typed that up. I enjoyed working there and then...

Keywords: TV 6; Rob Merritt; Paul Ortiz; Channel 6; Senior Center; Saddle Club; Equestrian Center; Kiwanis Club; Meals on Wheels

00:15:31 **World on Film picture**

JK: Ebell, membership chair for World on Film. So, a lot of different groups and then New Owners' Orientation Program. Would you share about your contributions to the New Owners' Program?

LB: What?

JK: The New Owners' Orientation Program. Would you share about what your contributions were there?

LB: Really I don't think I contributed there, no.

JK: No, just maybe some things here and there. Okay. The most significant thing, of course, has been your work here at The History Center. So, would you share about your involvement joining as a trustee and your role here at The History Center?

Keywords: Ebell; World on Film; membership chair; New Owners' Program; orientation

00:16:11 **Laguna Woods History Center**

LB: Well, I started here at...taking telephone messages and so forth. And then I got involved with doing the clubs' storage which was each year sending out bills to the various clubs. We had about, I think about 200 clubs here. And we would sell...I would send out invoices for them to pay up. And it was quite, it was a job because a lot of them didn't pay up quickly. And you had to make calls and things like that. So, that took up a lot of time, yes. I'd start in the end of January, be about 4 months before you'd get it all done. But, we would get...

Keywords: Laguna Woods History Center; clubs; 200; historians; archive

00:18:38 **Digitization Project**

LB: The digitizing that we're doing now?

JK: Can you share about that?

LB: Yes, we're doing that. I do it twice a week and I understand that we only have about two years left to do, which is great...

Keywords: digitizing; The Globe; newspaper; Myra Neben; interview

00:19:56 **Leisure Worlder of the Month**

JK: Will you share about that honor? So, of course, you were...that's a remarkable accomplishment. So, March 1st, 2006 we found that you were the...

LB: Oh, was it March 1st, 2006?

00:20:54 **TV 6 photo**

00:21:20 **Leisure Worlder of the Month photo**

Keywords: Leisure Worlder of the Month; 2006; ceremony; Bob Ring; honor; roses; Worker Bee; Rob Merritt; TV 6; articles; archive; Golden Rain; Earl Donaldson; Assemblyman DeVore; Community Building

00:23:07 **Cityhood**

LB: Yes. We...a group of us got together and we made calls during the evening because that was the time that you could get people at home, 6 and 7, 8 o'clock. And we would call and...telling them about...

JK: Like maybe El Toro Base a bit...about El Toro Base and the airport issue. Is it about this or...?

LB: No, nothing to do with El Toro Base, no.

JK: No, okay.

LB: It was everything to promote cityhood...

Keywords: Bob Ring; El Toro Base; cityhood; city hall; community; 2000; politics; Laguna Woods Village; 2005; anniversary; The History Center

00:25:51 **50th Anniversary**

LB: Yeah.

JK: And The History Center had the book issued and celebrations followed. How did you celebrate this with your community for the 50th anniversary?

LB: I know.

JK: Yeah.

LB: I don't know how I said...

JK: Did you do maybe the book signing events? Were you present for those when...with Bob Ring and others?

LB: Well, when I sat at the desk there, I would promote the book. And try to sell as many as I could, you know...

Keywords: Anniversary; 50th; book; History Center; Bob Ring; celebration; community; clubs; presidents; Dean Dixon

00:27:39 **The Future of the History Center**

LB: I think they've gone a long way, really. They're really on top of everything. I don't know how to say this, but I've gone to other History Centers and they were in very poor condition. Not as up-to-date as this is. And Dean has done a lot more to bring this up-to-date...

Keywords: History Center; sponsors; Dean Dixon; future; archive; artifacts; digitize; Bob Ring; Myra Neben; travel; retire; California; climate; Ross Cortese

00:33:40

Clubs

LB: Yes.

JK: Do you know if there's any change with that?

LB: No, I don't think there's more...there's some of the going by the wayside because the younger people come in and not interested in some of those other clubs. I was trying to think, we had a Women's Club and that went by the wayside. No, I don't think it's...they're changing because now that we're having young boomers come in, they've changed a lot which is good. Then we have the Computer Club which is great. So, it really changes with...yeah...

Keywords: clubs; Women's Club; Computer Club; Video Club; gardens; survey; Boomers; Tennis Club; History Center; Channel 6; news; advertise; orientation; projects

00:38:31

Turning 100

LB: Well, I'm just shocked! I've lived a very busy life. I went to high school and worked after school as an usherette in a theater and just seemed to be busy all the time. And I think that's contributing to my age because I never thought about age at all. And suddenly I'm 99 and I'm shocked! Well, when I look back I really think it's...has to do with a lot of keeping your mind busy. I do puzzles every day, crossword puzzles. So, I think that helps a lot. And then...oh, I know a thing that helped a lot here is that I used to walk everywhere I went. I'm not an exercise buff, but I try to walk all the time. I think walking is a great thing...

Keywords: age; 99; 100; exercise; health; Italian; immigrants; diet; dishes; Angelina; high school; heritage; German; technology