

Laguna Woods History Center
Community Oral History Project
Transcript

NARRATOR: Evelyn Shopp
INTERVIEWER: Jennifer Keil
VIDEOGRAPHER: Cindy Keil
DATE: August 21st, 2016
LENGTH: 01:32:28
LOCATION: Freedom Village in Laguna Woods, CA
PROJECT: Laguna Woods History Center
VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/DRKjc6VYwng>

ABSTRACT: An oral history with the past president of the Leisure World Historical Society which is now the Laguna Woods History Center. Evelyn volunteered at Saddleback Community Hospital where she became The Associate president that conducted private fundraising for the organization. As a leader of the community, she was recognized as the Leisure Worlder of the Month in May 1988. As the president of the historical society, she helped them move to the current building location that is next to the library. She served at the historical society's newsletter Editor of *The Historian* in the 2000s and retired in 2007.

0:00:25 JK: We're here with Evelyn Shopp. It's August 21st, 2016 for the Laguna Woods History Project. We are conducting an oral histories with the community to record and protect the history center's history over time. And the first question I have for you is when you moved to Laguna Woods?

0:00:26 ES: We moved into our new condo on the first day of April of 1980.

0:00:35 JK: And what was, at that time it was, I know, called Leisure World.

0:00:39 ES: Yes, it was.

0:00:40 JK: What was it like at that time?

0:00:42 ES: Well, a little sparse. I had been working on the things across the EL Toro Road, but none of these shopping centers was developed. And all that housing, there was no

housing up that direction. They had just completed or working on, I can't remember which, the large units in Leisure World. There were a hundred and ten of those so they were called the hundred and ten group. And when we looked out of our back door you could see way down the hill and then up. I don't mean to wave my hands around you. And up the hill soon those trees, bushes, and stuff grew out. The whole thing changed within about five years.

0:01:40 JK: You had mentioned in our pre-interview some of the deer being present.

0:01:45 ES: Yes. They were on the side where it's now all, you know, Stater Brothers and all that stuff. But, that was bare and the deer would come down the hill early in the morning. Often when Bill went to the camera lab, he would see those deer walking around out there. And nothing to stop them. I don't think any of them ever got hit, but they came down.

0:02:13 JK: You mentioned when you moved here certain amenities coming later like shopping centers. Do you recall when the first commercial center called Alpha Beta opened?

0:02:27 ES: No, that had to be before that.

0:02:29 JK: Prior. Okay. So, by the time you moved here there were some amenities, shopping amenities for the residents.

0:02:37 ES: Yes.

0:02:38 JK: Okay.

0:02:38 ES: Laguna Hills Mall...

0:02:39 JK: Okay.

0:02:40 ES: ...was opened.

0:02:46 JK: And, you had mentioned Ross Cortese's work with USC Dr. Tracy Strevey of the plan of action. And to understand what seniors wanted. Would you share in detail what that was?

0:03:05 ES: Well, I don't know why Cortese chose to go to USC, but he did and...um...he wanted to know...he, you see, he already opened Seal Beach Leisure World. And they knew there were some things that should be corrected before they built another, a larger one. So, he wanted to find out what the seniors really wanted and so they set up this relationship with USC and Tracy was a person they talked with when we went there. And

from that he made some changes in the...in the construction of units in the kind of facilities that were available and by churches, that kind of thing.

- 0:03:54 JK: And do you think those things met the needs of the residents at that time? Did he really get a good vision?
- 0:04:01 ES: I think so. Yes, I'm sure that there are some things that could have been better. But at the time they were very, very appropriate.
- 0:04:13 JK: I want to journey back to the first time you even learned about Leisure World. I know your relatives had a connection to Clubhouse 3 from what I recall and Gate 11 that you had several residents who had lived here. Would you share their prior experiences and what you had learned from them about this community?
- 0:04:36 ES: Okay. I think Bill had relatives down in Gate 11. Those are the single houses. And they had been...had lived in Beverly Hills before they moved there. And she was a descendent of the Fillmore, present Fillmore, so she was, you know, a little stuck up. But they were very happy there. And so that was one...one reason that Bill knew about it. I knew about it because I had friends who had lived in Seal Beach Leisure World, which I did not like. He also had had relatives who lived there. But then some of the people that I had played bridge with prior to this, moved into the new Leisure World, the Laguna Hills one. So I've been coming down and playing bridge before I ever moved in. And knew that was the place that I... that would... we both knew it was the place we wanted to live.
- 0:05:40 JK: And at those moments how...how different was it? What years were you visiting?
- 0:05:48 ES: Well, you see, Leisure World opened in '64. So, my friends moved in probably in the early 70s.
- 0:05:59 JK: 70s. Okay.
- 0:06:01 ES: And his relatives also somewhere along there. So we had time to get it. Both of us had time to get acquainted with what it was like and what people liked and didn't like.
- 0:06:10 JK: What were the major differences from those early years to when you actually moved there?
- 0:06:015 ES: Oh, more crowded, more people, more clubs, more activities, more classes, more complaining. I guess that's just natural for any community. But, um, we...we were very happy from...with everything that was there, we came, so.
- 0:06:38 JK: And from the beginning in '64...um...what do you know about Ross' just overall vision? Just if you could summarize, those early years based on your own readings and research what do you think his main goal was?
- 0:06:56 ES: Well I suppose, to be honest, it was to make money. But, I think he really did care

about making an...an independent living community that would please people of older ages. His mother of course was over, so, a lot. And I think she moved in...into Gate 11 for a short time. I'm not sure about that, but I...I think his...his intentions were good. Now, there were some people who didn't think so. But...um...

0:07:34 JK: Do you think he and the corporation were successful in their endeavors?

0:07:38 ES: Yes.

0:07:40 JK: In what way?

0:07:42 ES: Well, he kept building more units and on the East Coast and various places, Northern California and so...um...

0:07:52 JK: And...

0:07:53 ES: It was a successful corporation, I think.

0:07:57 JK: And in what ways do you think Leisure World here was different from all the other goals that he had? Was there anything as far as amenities or the way...um...the community formed that you think was different and why you even preferred here versus Seal Beach? Were there any other markers that made this...

0:08:18 ES: Well...

0:08:18 JK: ...community unique?

0:08:20 ES: See, the only one that I can really compare with was the Seal Beach one, but there the units were smaller, they had less facilities for the community activities. There was a... well I shouldn't say that. It was a...for a lower income group than the next one. And, see...well, I was trying to think what I didn't like about it. I didn't like the layout. It was flat and blah. And of course our Leisure World was totally different. There's little bit of everything in it. I think maybe the level of the education of the people who moved into the Seal Beach Leisure World was quite different from what ours was.

0:09:32 JK: Any other noticeable demographic differences? Just based on your personal insight of this particular community? Is there any other striking differences?

0:09:45 ES: Well, that community was...all the housing was very much alike, strung out and long. And, to me, ours is more like a regular community, you know, with different kinds of units and different locales and different clubhouses. Well, of course, it's much larger than the Seal Beach one. They had only one clubhouse I think there.

- 0:10:15 JK: And would you share about your involvement with the clubhouses? Was there a particular activity that you become more involved with?
- 0:10:26 ES: Well, of course Bill was an amateur photographer so it was the first thing he did was start going to the camera club facility every morning. So, I had to find things to do every morning. And the first thing I did was enroll in a writing class with the Emeritus Institute. And I enrolled in several of those courses in that first couple of years. And he did also, but they all had to relate somehow to cameras. I started going to the hospital. Well, I told Bill I would not have anything to do with hospitals for...
and I didn't for six months. But after that I couldn't stay away. So, I started getting involved with them and you know, first the associates' board then to the foundation hospital board, and so forth.
- 0:11:24 JK: Would you kindly summarize your studies and early nursing career so that people will understand your involvement and hospitals and your urge to get involved, even though you told your husband you wouldn't at the time? Would you just summarize your general experiences please?
- 0:11:47 ES: Well. I...um...I wanted to be a...an OB nurse, a midwife. That was my goal, which lasted about as long as I was in school. But after that I knew that there were other things I wanted to do. So like, well eventually went back to Oklahoma and there was a polio epidemic at that time. Every year they had some kind of polio thing. The year before they had even more patients involved and had done a very poor job of taking care of them. But, anyway I went home I didn't know anything about polio, but I thought I was pretty smart, anyway. So, I thought, "Well I'm not settled down I'll go down to the university hospitals and see if I can get a job." Well, they fell all over me. And I said well you know I...I'm just...I just want to be a staff nurse for a while and see how it goes. So, I went to work at the crippled children's hospital which is a unit of the university hospitals. And, I was...I was hired as a staff nurse, but everybody in the whole place knew I had a master's degree. So, by the time the woman there got through telling them. Anyway, the head nurse on the unit orientated for a day and then she said, this was a Thursday I think. She said, "Well you know I'm going on vacation and leaving tomorrow." I go, "Oh, what am I supposed to do?" "Well, you're the only RN here. I guess you get the head nurse." So, I learned how to be a polio nurse very, very rapidly. And after a while, we were visited by a nurse from the Polio Foundation. And she was quite impressed with what we've been able to do and she told the doctor who was out here that...um...who she'd been trying to find a nurse for him to run his polio service which is a long, longtime polio thing for the county. And the National Foundation was going to pay the salary of that person and all that kind of stuff. And so she called him and she told him she found the right nurse, that he should get in touch with me. So, we started this back and forth conversation. And I said, "Fine." I said, "No, I'm not coming to California." And he said, "Why not?" And I said, "Because I'm not having those prune pickers call me an Okie. He laughed and I couldn't figure out what was so funny about it. Later on I found that his wife was from Oklahoma, but she never admitted it to anyone. You all are too young to understand why

this is so awful, but being an Okie was the worst thing that you could be. It could happen to you if you came to California. Anyway, one day when he called it was raining and I was in the hospital dining room having my lunch. And I was mad about something and so he, I don't remember what, so he called and he said, "Well, why don't you at least come out and see what it's all about." I said, "Oh, blah, blah, blah...okay, I'll come." So I came out and I had an uncle living in Gardena at the time and that uncle had been telling me from the time I finished nursing that I should come to California and not be messing around. Anyway, so I came out and I...I did like it. I thought this was something I could do and do well, and they were in the process of building a new hospital for, just for the post...post-polio patients. And at that time there were about 100 or so patients in the unit, long-term unit. And I knew that those patients were beginning to move within six or eight months period of time across the highway into a new hospital. So I said, "Okay...okay, I'll come." And I was to be a polio employed member of the Polio Foundation.

- 0:16:15 JK: Yes.
- 0:16:17 ES: Well, coming out, I was in an accident, a car accident, but that's neither here nor there. But anyway, I was in a hospital in Springfield, Illinois. So, my mother was with me, so we went up to my sister's to...for...I recuperated. And I called him and I said, "I'm not coming." He said, "Why aren't you coming?" "Because I've been in an accident and I can't use my arm and, blah, blah, blah. And he said, "I didn't hire you for your arm, I hired you for your brain. Now get yourself out here." So, I thought, "Okay, if he feels that way I guess I better go." So I...I did, what was the question originally?
- 0:16:58 JK: Well, I want to know, given your...you had quite a career in nursing and hospital work management level and just overseeing large staff members. And what was your feeling from your past experience, your past career coming to Laguna Woods and getting involved with their own system? What was your immediate sense of what the...the system was like and just how did you change it? Just what was your feeling of what this was like when you arrived?
- 0:17:33 ES: You mean this hospital or the system of how I do it?
- 0:17:36 JK: The system you came to, Laguna Woods. So, how...how different was it from other...?
- 0:17:42 ES: Well, it was a small hospital. You know, I've been in L.A. County...
- 0:17:46 JK: Right.
- 0:17:46 ES: ...for 20 years and that's a very large institution and we never had enough help and never had enough of anything. And I had to...uh...I had to be the boss of a lot of things.

- 0:18:01 JK: Sure.
- 0:18:01 ES: Including interns and residents, what have you. But, my impression of the hospital was that it was a nice little place like having one more to take care of, you know. The administrator was not very...the administrator had his problems. He didn't stay there very long. But, I thought, "Well, this is...this is a nice little hospital. It's a nice place to...to just, you know, take your time and do things.
- 0:18:41 JK: And how did you transform it while you were involved there? Were there any programs that you oversaw and changes that you made to its system?
- 0:18:49 ES: Well, remember I was only working as a member of the volunteers...
- 0:18:54 JK: Volunteers.
- 0:18:55 ES: ...and staff.
- 0:18:55 JK: Sure.
- 0:18:56 ES: And as a member of a hospital foundation board but, uh, at least I was able to give some information about new construction and how it works best for nursing purposes.
- 0:19:13 JK: Certainly.
- 0:19:14 ES: And some suggestions about how volunteers should be used that...that kind of thing. But, remember I was a volunteer.
- 0:19:26 JK: Right.
- 0:19:27 ES: I wasn't...I just...
- 0:19:27 JK: Quite a different position to have.
- 0:19:28 ES: Quite a different position.
- 0:19:30 JK: Right.
- 0:19:30 ES: I spent a lot of time there because I didn't get involved with visiting patients and delivering plants, and that kind of thing. And just being plain noisy.
- 0:19:43 JK: We want to highlight a certain quote you wrote in the 50th anniversary book about The Globe. You stated in August of 2007, "Our 'burnished gold symbol' lasted only five

years, but to many of us, it will forever be a symbol of a great community, built by a visionary developer.” Can you expand upon those thoughts that you had in 2007 about the globe?

- 0:20:14 ES: Well, let’s see, that was at the time they did away with it. I was...yes it was the symbol of the community. I had been down by...going to San Diego and down that way and had passed by and seen that globe, you know, a number of times. So, to me it was, it was Leisure World. And, uh, when...when they...it had been moved a couple of times and then was moved over across the highway off the grounds. And then they decided they had had their territory back that they didn't want the globe there. What did we want to do with it? So anyway, we brought it back and had it installed. And then, you know, it was good to have it back because to me it was Leisure World. Well, it was to everyone, I think. It really represented something to us. And when it was suddenly off and down without any, without anyone asking us what we thought, I guess we couldn't have done anything anyway. But, it was...it was quite a blow. Incidentally we spent about \$75,000 moving that globe because they had to cut it in two and had to move it at night, and all kinds of things and then re-install it.
- 0:21:51 JK: And what year did they re-install it at that point then?
- 0:21:55 ES: Well, that was...it hadn't been there very long. A couple of years...
- 0:21:58 JK: Okay.
- 0:21:59 ES: ...maybe. No, maybe a little longer than that. I don't know.
- 0:22:01 JK: Okay.
- 0:22:02 ES: But it wasn't very long.
- 0:22:04 JK: Right. Okay. Speaking of early history of the community, I want to ask you if you recall reading about the January 1967 plane crash. I know that shaped a lot of the way the community formed in opposition towards having there...the airport there. But, do you recall that moment in this community's history, the crash itself?
- 0:22:30 ES: I wasn't there. But yes, everyone talked about it.
- 0:22:34 JK: Okay.
- 0:22:34 ES: It was...it was really a very frightening thing I think to the residents, especially those in that particular part of Leisure World. But, and certainly opposition to expanding that airport which everyone was opposed to that. We, for a long time, held our board meetings over in Clubhouse Two, I guess. And the, uh, the planes would fly over. We'd have to

stop meetings while the planes flew over. And all we could think of was, “Well, what would it be like if it really had, you know, a...an international type of airport here not just a Marine Corps plane. And of course there was always a fear of a crash, another crash.

0:23:30 JK: Sure.

0:23:30 ES: People can't, can't get that out of their minds.

0:23:33 JK: How often would you get retirees from the El Toro Base to start living in your community be given its convenient access to...to that particular base? Was it often that you would hear people that would have served or been retired out of the military and they would move here? Was that a common...?

0:23:55 ES: No, they weren't...

0:23:55 JK: ...place for some people to live? No.

0:23:56 ES: No. Never. They are younger people...

0:23:58 JK: Younger. Okay.

0:23:59 ES: ...much younger. The only really active people that we had who had been at the base were Colonel and Skip Vance.

0:24:07 JK: Okay.

0:24:09 ES: And they, uh, they lived, I guess she's still living in Leisure World.

0:24:16 JK: I see. Fascinating. We want to shift our conversation to your role in the history center. So, I want to start from the beginning of when you even heard about the historic society forming and just its role, and you entering it. So, what did you hear about the community before getting involved?

0:24:43 ES: Well, I knew a Marian Fox, a nurse, who had been with the American Hospital Association as a liaison between hospital administration and nursing staff. Her office was in Chicago. When I, I had been in Chicago for some meetings and anyway I got to know Marian. So, she was living here. And when I came out we renewed our acquaintance and she started telling me about, we're both interested in genealogy and that was how it got started, really. So, she was telling me about this historical society. And I said, “Oh...” You know, so she talked and she talked and she talked and she was so enthusiastic about it. And...uh...so, I guess, maybe I'd been, we've been there about two years before I decided well I'll join and see what it's all about. And so, I knew some other people who were, who were members also. But she was the person who really talked me into it. I

think I came on the board in 1985. I'm not sure if it was '85 or '86. But I was recruited directly to come on as secretary. And I just assumed this, you know how you do, well I'll assume I'll be the secretary when I get there. Well, I had to be voted in to be the secretary, of course. But anyway, from that day on I was committed to the historical society.

0:26:23 JK: And what was the leadership like at the time? Who was involved those years?

0:26:28 ES: Well, Tracy Strevey was... was the first, had been the first president. Well, to go back a little wise, remember a Marjorie Jones had written a ten year history of the community. Now that was before there was any Leisure World society. So, she was never the archivist for the society. She was the archivist for the community. But, Bob got mixed with that sometimes. I think he wanted her to be credited for being the historical society for the historical... Anyway, she wrote this history and about three years later, so that would have been about thirteen years after it was organized, a group of eight people got together and decided that they would be a committee, an historical society type committee for the community. And then after they were there they organized and in September of 1977, I think, declared themselves as the historical society, but they were not incorporated in really one until a year or so later.

0:27:51 JK: And what was Tracy's vision like at that time? So, she was there in the early years on this committee?

0:27:59 ES: Tracy was, yes. And he was the first president. Tracy was a great thinker, an idea producer, but not a worker. And he stayed on the board until, I think, 1990. I think it was '90.

0:28:24 JK: And you had shared with us prior how the history center acquired its current buildings. So, would you share about its previous location and how the organization was able to get the new building.

0:28:39 ES: Yes, that's the whole thing I'd like to talk about.

0:28:42 JK: Yes.

0:28:44 ES: When I came on the board, the historical society had an office in the old administration building which was Clubhouse 1, I guess. And it was right across the hall from the radio from the radio and TV system. So, we got to know those people, but other than that it was a very isolated little, I think, a hundred eighty square feet. So then if three people and two desks were in there, you couldn't move around. It was a dingy little place and no place to go. And of course the GRF board only charged us \$70 a month, \$75 a month for it. And one member of our board was a member of the GRF board, Bob Dozier. And Bob thought this was absolutely ridiculous that they charged us, who were an approved historical society, money. But that took them a long time to change their minds and let us have it for free. But anyway, as the people were in there trying to do

scrapbooks and cut out papers and collect stuff, you know, you couldn't get in if you wanted to just go visit. So, there was a little bit this was here in this building there was a breezeway there. It was down here like this to another building and right in the middle of that breezeway there was a little bitty space that the camera club had originally used for a dark room. And they moved out when one of the other clubhouses was developed and they got space there. So, here was this little empty space. It was not as big as this dining room, it was about the size of that kitchen, just about that. So, we got that and they only charged us an extra \$25 for that. And so there just was no...no place to put anything. And the rent, the rent went from the original \$75 up to \$114. And we didn't, you know, we didn't have any money, just didn't have any money. But, along about the time to...about the time I came on board, a little bit before then, they had started soliciting businesses for money to build, or to do something for the historical society. And so they...everybody, you know, the board members were all enthusiastic about it and gone out and talked to businesses and eventually collected \$6,000. Well, everybody knew that \$6000 wasn't enough to do anything so they put it in a fund and called it the endowment fund. And ever since then there has been an endowment fund that has been specified for something very specific. But the original one was to go towards building. Then because that still wasn't enough space, we had to rent space. And so we had a space in storage over on the corner in Lake Forest, I think, there's a storage in there. And they rented storage, that was more money. So, you know, we were just spending money and spending money. In the meantime, the board also voted to make not just individual memberships available which were \$10 a month, \$10 a year, but to offer lifetime memberships for \$100 a year. And I think about I'm not sure about 60 or 70 people joined as life members. Well that's a good deal. I'm still a life member, you see. Anyway, then they decided that clubs should be made members, in effect, and businesses. So, they set up memberships for clubs and memberships for businesses and started, that was the only way we had of earning money at that time. Now I've forgotten what your original question was.

0:33:03 JK: So, just the acquisition of its current location.

0:33:07 ES: Okay.

0:33:07 JK: So, how, you've gone over how you raised the endowment fund. And so...

0:33:12 ES: So then...

0:33:13 JK: Okay.

0:33:15 ES: Everybody thought they knew how and where to build the building. Tracy was sure that the Saddleback College was going to build a building on our property because they had The Emeritus Institute there. And he was just sure that we would be given space in that building. So, no matter what came up, he was always sure that's what's going to happen. Well, somewhere along the line, I don't know just when this happened, but a Dorothy Segal, who was a resident, died and left in something over \$150,000 to the GRF. But with the understanding that it was to be used for some project for the community, so

that the GRF couldn't use it for their own running the normal business of the place. So that money was really in, what they called, a memorial fund, and it was held in trust for something to be built. Well, of course, sooner or later somebody in the historical society...and I think was an Irma Franklin who...and Virginia Holly/Hally who's the chief librarian at that time, they decided that they could build a building next to the library, that there was room there. Well, so they go out and they made it all up and drew up a plan, took it over to Bob Dozier who was on the GRF board and on our board, and he was kind of impressed. He thought, "Well, maybe this is worth doing something about it." So, they developed some more plans and brought it back to the historical society board suggesting that we ask that... that memorial fund be set aside for our building. Well, everybody agreed except Tracy. He said, "No, no, we're jumping the gun. They're going to build this building for the Saddleback College and we don't need this." So, we got dropped. And then, somebody along the way, and I think probably Bob Dozier just kept at it and said, "We need to...we need to have a plan. Something that really we can present when the time comes to raise money." So, the historical society paid a...I guess an architect to come in and do the original drawings for a building with the idea that it would be connected to the library. Well, we didn't get anywhere with that because, you know, nobody is going to give the money for anything. And the original plan was that the library was just like here and there was a...there was a paved area like this.

0:36:17 JK: Right.

0:36:18 ES: This was...so the historical society then was to go there. His paved area was to be enclosed and made into a waiting area for the library and the historical society. And so people could sit there and visit, and you know, and wait until...if they came up too early or whatever. Well, as they looked at plans that wouldn't work because the structure could not be connected directly to the library. Everybody thinks it's common woe, but it isn't.

0:36:48 JK: I see.

0:36:50 ES: Because of the...uh...earthquake regulations. Anyway, we went through that...study of that. And finally, GRF board agreed that we could have the money if we wanted to plan. And Tracy was no longer saying anything. And so, we then looked at what we would do. We knew that 160,000 wouldn't do very much so that we had to then start earning money and fast if we were going to build it. So, a couple of committees were appointed. One of them, I was present at that time, one of the persons who was most active in this was a Gene Concer (37:40). And we gave him the title of Director of Development and he went after big money. He thought that he would be able to get money from a foundation to build the building. But foundations don't give money to properties on a private property like that because it would never be the same as if it were somebody getting a director, you know, going through us. Anyway, so he couldn't get any foundation to be interested. So then he knew a couple of people that had money and he thought, "Well, that would be the way to go get somebody to give a large amount of money." So, he was friends with Mr. and Mrs. Don Davis, who were living over at The

Towers I think at that time. And he'd talked them into...he was...he wanted a diorama for the building, Gene did. So, he talked Don into the idea that...that we needed this thing. And that if we had a building to put it in that would just be great. So, he sold Don on the idea. So, they gave I think it was about a hundred and forty five thousand, but they did not want anybody to know that they were giving the money until the building was done. So, Gene and I and one other person, I've forgotten who it was now, put the money into a...an account. And we had all three sign it to get anything out and left it there. And, so then, you know that was a lot of money then, by the time we've counted the hundred sixty five thousand/ hundred forty-five or whatever it was. So then we were really, really active in trying to get money. And I...I must have signed a 1,000 letters, I don't know. Anyway, we wrote to all the members and we talked with them and we followed up with them. We did articles in the Leisure World News and we just did all kinds of things. We even had one of...one trip, a cruise to pay. I think we raised about \$10,000 on that cruise. But, then we had, you know, we did short one day trips and charged little monies and did everything we could think of and people started giving more. And then we set up a plan so that anyone that gave more than a hundred dollars would be recognized. Then we got a lot of little hundred dollars ones. When we...when we originally set this up and I was to be the overall chairman of fundraising that was in between being a president and being something else. Anyway, I said I would not do this unless every member of the board made a contribution because I just felt if we didn't support it we couldn't ask other people to support it. Well, all the three members of the board made their contribution and I finally paid for each of them to have their names put on the board because I couldn't stand not having it done. Anyway, we finally got a reasonable amount of money. We knew that the building was just one thing. Then we had to have all the inside stuff and that was expensive. So, anyway, we finally had the plans approved and started working on the building and that must have been about what '97...is that somewhere '97, '98.

- 0:42:05 JK: And how did the community react to all these plans? So, you're saying they're funding it. But, were there other thoughts that they shared with you while you're servicing as president about the vision of all these plans? What was the community's perception?
- 0:42:20 ES: The general, the general feeling was that it was a good thing to do and that we would need an historical society. Some of the businesses were very cooperative with this. The ambulance companies all gave, two of them tried to outdo each other in giving money.
- 0:42:43 JK: That's a good situation to have for fundraising.
- 0:42:47 ES: Yes, and then of course some of us gave larger, much larger amounts. Well, so then we...when we got started it was a year from the time that the first...the first spade went in until the building was finished and ready for occupancy. But, we couldn't, we weren't ready to go into it because it had all the inside stuff to do.
- 0:43:18 JK: Right. And with these original renderings, what I'm always marked...what's so

interesting about your space is the large archive design. So, was that always the way the space interior was designed was to have all that holdings for club members and organizations to store their memorabilia? Was that always the intention of the way it was laid out?

0:43:47 ES: Yes, it really was because remember we had only volunteers working. Well, we had one...one real archivist part before that, but we had no space to do anything. So, what we...and they had tried to get clubs to bring their things in because we thought that would bring in membership...

0:44:08 JK: Sure.

0:44:08 ES: ...for the clubs and they would store stuff. Plus no one expected people to bring in, you know, like this instead of like this.

0:44:15 JK: Right.

0:44:17 ES: Anyway, there were some changes made once the shelving started coming in.

0:44:22 JK: Okay.

0:44:22 ES: They made some changes, yes. And the ultraviolet lights were put in a couple of years after it opened. They didn't have enough money in the beginning. And...

0:44:35 JK: And your oversized scanner, I know, is...is a more recent purchase...

0:44:39 ES: Yeah, oh yes.

0:44:39 JK: ...to process newspapers and such.

0:44:41 ES: That's much a bit more recent.

0:44:43 JK: It seems to be an important priority is preservation for your society. You've done...just getting the building the way it's designed. It shows the importance of maintaining these records and how in tuned you are with other clubs...

0:45:01 ES: Yes.

0:45:01 JK: ...to bring them in and to work collaboratively.

0:45:05 ES: Yes.

- 0:45:06 JK: It's spatially, you see that that's the mission. And so it's great that you were there at the beginning to design and meet these goals for...for the organization. So, among all the other roles and responsibilities, the fundraising and managing this building, what were other goals that you had during your presidency for the organization?
- 0:45:32 ES: Well, I can tell you other things we did. I don't know, they just popped up and just went, "Oh." By and large, well let me just say a few things other than that. Somewhere along the way I had nothing else to do and did a little survey of who the people were who were on the board at that time. I don't know quite what year this was, there had been eighty board members on the historical society board only twenty-six of them had been women. And fifty of them had been old members of GRF with another fifteen who had been members of mutual boards. Now what had happened, I'm sorry to say, was that when a member of the GRF board could no longer serve somebody on our board would say, "Oh, he's just the man for us. We need him. He'll be...blah, blah, blah." And generally speaking you only wanted a title not...work. So, one of my goals was to see that we had real representation from the community not just from the GRF board. I didn't do anything, overt about it I guess, but I...that's one of my goals. Now we did do a number of things during my time, some of which I had real responsibility for development and some of which just sort of sprang up. But that's what I really would like to talk about, you know, are those kinds of things that we did. So, I got a whole page of those.
- 0:47:22 JK: Would you share some more about that then with us?
- 0:47:27 ES: Well let's see, where do I start? We did have a newsletter. And the newsletter at that time was, you know, just one of these little things that we do, but it did give information about what the society was doing and all about the fundraising and all that kind of stuff and it didn't...it didn't go out every month. I did...I did the newsletter that hadn't had one before and then we didn't have a really good one until Bob took up that job. Although, I certainly spent enough hours doing it along the way. That was not one of the things on my list though. I think, one of the things that I...well let's see, some of the things that we did that were very important followed by the way because they're no longer important - the role, responsibilities of the historical society have changed. But one of the first big things that we did was to take over the Leisure Worlder of the Month program. This program had been started by Ross Cortese in 1976 and the staff had, you know, the management had selected the people to be honored from the very beginning. Everyone had their picture made, they had a public ceremony and, you know, so forth. Then Ross got the home savings of San Diego, which had a bank where Farmers and Merchants Bank is, I think...I think that's where it was, to sponsor it. So, they paid for the expenses then for about four years with the historical society acting as a consultant to the group, but...and they selected the people. Home savings did not, home savings paid for it. Then home savings went belly up and suddenly there was no one to take care of the Leisure World monthly except the historical society. We did not have the money. So, the historical...they had to put this on hold for six months. There were no Leisure Worlders

of the Months during that time as everybody tried to think of how in the world we'd get back to it because it was a very popular program. Finally, someone gave anonymously enough money to get us back in operation. And so after that six months we were back doing that. Then this went on month after month after month and the historical society president appointed a secret committee. You were not supposed to discuss at any time for any reason who the selectees were because everybody could send in nominations, etc. But...the...we... the decision we made was that it would not be based on any one thing, that is the individual would not be honored simply because they were a member of the Methodist Church, you know, didn't make any difference. But if they were very active in and outside the organization like the Methodist Church and did things within the community, then they would be considered. There were some people who would...at all solicit all their friends to send in their names and all their information about them. And sometimes they were people who were totally inappropriate in terms of having done just one thing period...

0:51:44

JK: Sure.

0:51:45

ES: ...you know. Anyway, after a while...well, the committee had some major arguments. I was not a voting member, but I was on the committee. They had some major arguments about some of the nominees particularly GF board members that they didn't think had been appropriately doing their job. Anyway, big fights sometimes and sometimes people who...I thought should have been honored were held up because of fights within the...this committee. Anyway, after a while the committee, and this was after I was no longer present, the committee decided that they just did not have enough good candidates to do them every month. And so we went to doing them every...I think it was every three months. Anyway, in the meantime of course we've been incorporated and so this was now the Honoree of the Month and not Leisure Worlder of the Month.

0:53:01

JK: Right. Okay.

0:53:02

ES: It was the same thing, but we changed the title so that...and so this went on for quite some time. And then, I think, I don't know when they stopped doing it. I don't remember that now. But there just weren't enough candidates and peoples...the kind of people coming in were different from the kind that came in earlier on. And I say that...just... Well, here's an example of it. Early people coming in, they were large numbers of bridge players. They just had all kinds of bridge, bridge, bridge. People coming in the last few years didn't play bridge at all. They were a younger generation, they were not bridge players. That's true here also. So anyway, they...we just sort of went by the way, but it was a good program and we, I think, did a good job and did something for the community with that.

0:54:00

JK: And the history center now has entire holdings in their possession and they've been digitized. So, at that transition with funding is that when they acquired not only the program, but all the artifacts and photos and things? Or was that later for it to become

part of the holdings in the archive,
all the honoree information?

0:54:23 ES: Oh, all that was...it was there.

0:54:26 JK: Okay.

0:54:26 ES: But it just wasn't done in the same way.

0:54:28 JK: I see. So, you...you at that point, when the history center took over the program, received all the prior information and files for all the honorees? So, it was entirely in your possession, is that correct?

0:54:43 ES: Oh, yes.

0:54:44 JK: Okay.

0:54:44 ES: It was in my possession.

0:54:46 JK: Okay.

0:54:47 ES: It never left possession of the organization.

0:54:49 JK: Organization.

0:54:50 ES: The organization just changed.

0:54:51 JK: I see.

0:54:52 ES: The organization changed, it wasn't the program.

0:54:53 JK: Right. Right. A lot of change going through, but it's great because now part of the entire programs on your website. So, now all the honorees can be searched. And so, I was curious at what stage who, you know, you inquired all that information? So, if was latter or immediate. So, of course you were honored in June of '88. Would you share how you accepted this honor and how it felt to be recognized by your peers?

0:55:32 ES: Well, quite honestly I had been honored many times prior and, you know, from back being high school valedictorian and all the way up. And so, it didn't mean that much to me. In fact, I...I almost didn't even want to go to the ceremony. My husband didn't think I was very smart about that. Anyway, I guess I was glad we had the program. There's no question about that. And I think many of the people who were honored deserved it far more than I did because I was only doing hospital and historical society things really

within the community. Whereas there were some people who were golfers and volunteer here and doing this and that and on boards. I spent a lot of time and volunteering between the two organizations, but it wasn't as important to me as it was to a lot of people.

0:56:43 JK: Sure, but it definitely is a distinction among many people who live here to be honored at that level. I think it's quite truly an honor. I know you're an accomplished woman. So, it's worthy of mentioning that your peers acknowledged you in that manner. So, it's important.

0:57:06 ES: Well, okay I agree. I suppose if I had never been honored I would have felt insulted, but...

0:57:16 JK: Would you share with us the change from...in...in name of Leisure World and its incorporation in '99 to Laguna Woods? Would you share your personal perspective of all this transition?

0:57:35 ES: Well, I think, in a way I was sorry to see it happen, but it was inevitable that the change be made and it was right. I think Laguna Woods is alright for a name, but I never felt that we should be called Laguna Woods Village. Anyway, because there were...somehow the names didn't work out right because to me it was...we were Laguna Woods. We had been Laguna Hills and now we were Laguna Woods and to say Laguna Woods Village would have been like saying Laguna Hills Homes or something. I don't know, it just...but the change over was good, except then there were a lot more quarrelling among members of the community and the mutuals and everybody was fussing about something. I don't think that answers your question, but...

0:58:57 JK: It's definitely your personal perception of it. So, what the change meant to you. So, it's important to record. What was it like seeing all this change over time? So, now that you've moved here what else have you witnessed being a local resident...

0:59:18 ES: Over there?

0:59:18 JK: ...of the community?

0:59:22 ES: Well, you see I don't have very many contacts with them except with the historical society group. I think there's more unrest in the community than there's ever been. I don't know whether that's now settling down a little bit, but my friends here, who get *The Globe*, which replaced the old *Leisure World News*, tell me about what's going on. And I'm just glad I don't live there anymore because I would feel I had to get my nose in something and I'm too old for that.

- 1:00:05 JK: And of course you were involved with the 50th anniversary in 2014 and the writing of the book. Would you share about your perceptions of this important moment in the community's history and your involvement with the book itself?
- 1:00:24 ES: Well, the 50th anniversary book, I think, was very important to have it. It's very...it's very well done. But I don't know how valuable those things are. I had two copies and I gave one to the...to the library here. And there were a lot of people here who had lived in Laguna Woods, but you know they aren't that interested in what's going on there now. At least I don't...they all know they're fussing and fighting, but most of them are glad they're living here and not there. So, of course there were a lot of things between building the building and the 50th anniversary, so.
- 1:01:41 JK: Well, it's nice to have. I'll share with you as a researcher of your community, having a book is been a great reference point.
- 1:01:50 ES: Oh sure.
- 1:01:51 JK: It certainly will continue to aid future researchers to...to understand that change over time. And we certainly appreciate your contributions to the community because...or there wouldn't be anything to write about. So...
- 1:02:06 ES: Well.
- 1:02:06 JK: It was important to gather and make the history center was it is today. I want to ask about different leadership styles within the organization itself. So, eventually John Fuller and later Bob Ring would become involved and lead the organization. Would you mention anything worth noting about the way that they've managed the center and just different things that you've seen happen after you retired off as president?
- 1:02:40 ES: Well, John Fuller was a very nice, meek, seemed to be meek, man who just kept things on track. Never nothing new that I recalled happened during his tenure. Bob is an entirely different proposition.
- 1:03:10 JK: Total different experience.
- 1:03:11 ES: Totally, totally different.
- 1:03:12 JK: Right.
- 1:03:13 ES: Yes. There were people who...who felt that Bob didn't really represent the spirit of the community, but that wasn't true. He did...he was...he was great and spent hours and hours and hours and went out and got people that had not been involved, involved.

- 1:03:46 JK: Plus, his...I know his involvement with the newsletter, his passion to research and write things and bring the public knowledge of what's in the archive...
- 1:03:56 ES: Yes.
- 1:03:57 JK: ... is an important part of your operation is to showcase the history itself...
- 1:04:02 ES: Right.
- 1:04:02 JK: ...that you hold. So, I know everyone has a specific goal and gifting. So, but...uh, I just wanted to see your perceptions of leadership and even now we have a new leadership taking over. And so transitions with boards, how their goals evolve and meet the needs of the community.
- 1:04:25 ES: Well, it's...it's an entirely different board, different objectives...what we had. You know, we did a lot of things when I was president that nobody seems to remember and yet they were really important when we did them.
- 1:04:43 JK: So, the veterans project...would you share with us how that project developed?
And...
- 1:04:48 ES: Okay. One day, when I was volunteering in the historical society office as president, a gentleman that I knew from the camera club came in with a scrapbook that he had prepared that was about the war activities of he and a fellow veteran. They had served together through some of the real army things in France, not in France, but in Europe. And he said...as we talked about it and I really liked the thing and I wished that my husband had done something like that. Anyway, and he said, "You know, we ought to do something here in this community. This is the largest congregation of World War II veterans of any place in the country."
- 1:05:48 JK: Goodness.
- 1:05:50 ES: And I said, "Well, you're probably right." It is because, you know, there's a lot of people here and most of them are out of that age range. So, I thought about it for a while and I thought, "Well, maybe we should do something about it." So, I took it to the board and told them about the man coming in and his suggestion. And there were, I think, four members of the board had been...were vets in World War II. And they all very enthusiastic about it. And I said, "Well, we really ought to do something." All these people are here and nobody knows anything about them and blah, blah, you know. And so, we all agreed. Excuse me. Well, we all agreed that we should develop a committee using people from various organizations, the large organizations, get these people all together and talk about this project because we need the support of more than just the historical society. So we asked, I think, twelve of the larger organizations that had a

number of what we thought were probably World War II vets in them to supply a member of this committee to look into this project. Well, they all sent someone and they were all very enthusiastic. And so we decided, all right this is what we should do. One of the things we did decide, one of the men was not World War II, he was a Korean War or something else. And we all decided that we should do vets from World War II first because they were getting old. And, you know, weren't very many of them left anymore. Everybody agreed, so we started thinking about what needed to go into this survey and what we should do with it, etc., etc., developed a questionnaire that was to be distributed. And our original thought was simply to get the information together. There was no thought of doing anything beyond that. Well, so we...we had a computer guy come and look at our computers and see what he could set up so we could, you know, function alright with this questionnaire. Then we developed a questionnaire and started getting all these people coming in and signing up. Some of them, a lot of them didn't want...didn't want to give much information. They just wanted to be on the list. Finally, we found someone who would...who had some experience in this kind of thing. She came in as a volunteer and took over the project. Well, she learned that the Library of Congress had a project which was just under way. Now, we didn't know anything about this when we set up our project, nothing about it. So, here we'd had done all this work which didn't fit their...

1:08:59

JK: Right.

1:09:00

ES: ...their requirements from the Congress, Library of Congress. So, she went to visit the Library of Congress. She got all the information and she came back and we started, I don't know, she didn't get as much information as she should. Anyway, she decided that all we needed to do then was take pictures, do interviews and take pictures of these gentlemen that were.... And I say gentlemen because there were very few women. So, there was another organization, not the camera club, I can't think of the name of it, that was doing movies and that kind of stuff. I don't remember the name who got interested and said, well, they would take pictures and...if somebody would interview these people. So, we...some of our group set up as interviewers and got the...the kinds of questions they wanted to ask and all. And this group then would take the thing. Unfortunately, some of the interviewers were not very good interviewers and some of the camera club people were not very good.

1:10:22

JK: Right.

1:10:23

ES: And anyway, then the woman that was managing the project at the historical society got in a fight with a woman who was managing the movie partner thing. And those...those people tried to take over the project says...said she. Well, what really was true, they thought they could better select the ones that should be interviewed. We felt this was...we wanted...if we were only going to interview a few people, we wanted to select very select ones not just anybody for the interview. Well, anyway went through them not setting up to do interviews and then not being available when the time came and

not doing something. Some were poorly done, some of the interviews were not done well at all. But the people were very happy together. Even so, they got a copy of the tape. And a tape went into the historical society office along with everything we had. Well, after a time it was obvious that we had to change the whole thing...that it was a good idea and we did have a lot of information. But, it had to fit into the Library of Congress plan. But anyway, I think, we found that it was very, very rewarding to see how many of the veterans had never even talked about their war service and their families knew nothing about what they had done. And families were, you know, in tears when they heard what their person said at these interviews. So, I felt we had...even though it didn't work out well, we had done a very good starting project. And a lot of people were interested in, just a lot of them. Then, after...well anyway, we got into gear the way it should have been. Then, they started interviewing people beyond World War II. I think they may still, well no, the World War II ones are all gone there's no question about that. But...and then we had a man who had served in the Canadian army and somebody...oh, no they're going to do that one. Yes. But the committee agreed that he should be interviewed. He was alright, which was fine until someone who'd been in the German army...

- 1:12:59 JK: Oh, wow.
- 1:12:59 ES: ...wanted to be interviewed. And that didn't go over well at all.
- 1:13:05 JK: Did you conduct the interview?
- 1:13:07 ES: It was done. Yes.
- 1:13:10 JK: Is it still?
- 1:13:11 ES: I don't know what happened to her.
- 1:13:12 JK: Okay.
- 1:13:13 ES: Probably not, probably the Library of Congress didn't want it. I don't know, I don't know what...
- 1:13:18 JK: It's a challenging subject matter that it's still being dealt with...
- 1:13:23 ES: I'm sure. Yeah.
- 1:13:23 JK: ...sensitively. It's...understandably that your committee would have to deal with it the same way.
- 1:13:30 ES: Yes.

- 1:13:31 JK: And so you did more contemporary wars then? What would you say the last you did...? I would think, I've seen Vietnam mentioned in part of the collection.
- 1:13:43 ES: Well, probably those...well, maybe that was the first experience and maybe some of those Vietnam veterans have been in one of the other conflicts...
- 1:13:54 JK: Okay.
- 1:13:54 ES: ...prior to that. But, there's none since then, that's for sure.
- 1:14:01 JK: Okay. And so, I know the holdings are still with the history center and being made available. Do you think this project will ever be done again for more contemporary wars? Do you think the history center will take interest?
- 1:14:19 ES: I doubt it.
- 1:14:20 JK: Okay.
- 1:14:22 ES: I think World War II is really a very special kind of war. It involved so many people in so many parts of the world, you know, because like my husband was in the Navy and spent all of his time in the South Pacific. There are many of them who spent all their time in England or in other parts of Europe. And some who were, you know, battle of the this or that.
- 1:14:47 JK: Right.
- 1:14:48 ES: Some who did nothing but, uh, medical...but office work someplace. But, it was a wholesale war. And so...No, I don't think...I don't think there...there may be, but I doubt it.
- 1:15:02 JK: Okay. And you mentioned in your list the UCI survey. Was that how the list was distributed was to the university to find candidates or was that another project?
- 1:15:14 ES: The UCI study, no this is something entirely different.
- 1:15:18 JK: Its own thing. Okay.
- 1:15:21 ES: Originally USC...well, USC had a School of Gerontology. And that School of Gerontology used to be the Ethel Davis School, now it's some other kind of school. Anyway, they had set up a program for interviewing older people and finding out information about them. But it wasn't a very active program. I don't know whether they just wanted a few people or what, that they didn't have the help or what. Anyway,

it's...some of the people in Leisure World got involved with that, but not very many. Then UCI, which of course was a new medical school.

- 1:15:58 JK: Right, at this point.
- 1:16:00 ES: Yeah...decided to...well, didn't start a school, but it was to start a research program. And a lady who was in charge who wanted...who had gotten money, she had a grant, grant money to do a program to find out about older people. And this was Doctor...not **Kolehad**, I can't think of her name, starts with a "K"...K-A-W-A-I or something like Claudia. Anyway, she came out and she was over at the UCI campus. And she was trying to figure out how she could get involved with some community, but she knew about Leisure World of course. So, I think the university went to the GRF to see if they could get a mailing list for the community. And the GRF said, "No way, no way." They didn't give out that mailing list to anybody. So, she then...someone referred her to the historical society. She came over and talked to the board, told us about what they wanted to do and how important she thought she and many other people thought it would be to study a group as they grew older and find out what really went on. So, somehow we managed to get the GRF board to give us the mailing list and some of the information about this project went out under our names, but with a letter telling everybody what it was and who was going to get the information. And the question there that went with it then went back to UCI to this woman. Well, she of course was thrilled that we were able to help because it was a big project. And that project enrolled I think about, I'm not sure about this, but I think it was close to 800 people who signed up. They weren't all old, but since they lived in that community they...they took all their names and got the information on them. And as a...I may not be right about this, but I think as they reached the age of 80, then they started interviewing them and doing some follow up. The...then of course then that developed into the UCI 90 plus study. And my husband had...he had gotten into the study when he was 80. And so, when he was still there when he was 90. Well, I had signed up, but I was nine years younger than he was. So, it was a long time before I got into it. But, I think, you know, I think we really helped in getting that study underway.
- 1:19:08 JK: Fascinating.
- 1:19:08 ES: I think it's a really important study because it's the only group of a large group of people like that...that you could follow through for...well, followed two for years really. So, but anyway, getting GRF to give up their mailing list...
- 1:19:26 JK: Well, thank goodness that you were able to circumvent that...get the research taken care of.
- 1:19:31 ES: Yes, because I really think some of those studies are going to be very, very important.
- 1:19:35 JK: Absolutely.

- 1:19:36 ES: We're all getting so old, so fast.
- 1:19:40 JK: And our lifespans are being expanded so rapidly.
- 1:19:42 ES: Oh, yes.
- 1:19:42 JK: So, it's important information.
- 1:19:45 ES: Yes. Well, the 25 year book, of course, big deal 25 years, you know. And so the historical society's part of that celebration was...they promised to write a book. So, in order to write, to get a book they had to sign some backing. So, one of the members of our board was a manager at the Glendale Federal. And he didn't live in Leisure World, but he was on the board, anyway. So, he got a \$25,000 grant from Glendale Federal to back up the publication of the book. Now, they chose people who had been influential in the development of the community. Not all of them were Leisure World residents, some are, some weren't. Some were...some of it I thought was very good and some of it was very poor. But anyway, the book was created and we...then a lot of copies were sent out to historical societies and to colleges that had, or places that had, geriatric programs. And then they were sold of course and let's see, well they were \$15 I think, which was high price for a book at that time, that kind of a book. Anyway, that was another moneymaking thing. So, any money that was left over from that went into the back to the \$600,000 thing, that memorial fund endowment, that had been set aside. I think getting \$25,000 out of a company was not bad.
- 1:21:35 JK: Right.
- 1:21:35 ES: Of course Glendale Federal went out of business shortly after that. That, you know, I don't know whether anyone's mentioned that, but that was one of the interesting things about that community. There were more banks than anything else.
- 1:21:48 JK: Wow.
- 1:21:49 ES: Every corner had a bank and every one of them had some special thing that they offered to get people in.
- 1:21:55 JK: Sure.
- 1:21:58 ES: So...
- 1:22:01 JK: What do you want to share regarding updating equipment?
- 1:22:06 ES: Oh, well when we first got...we went through a lot of stuff before we ever got into a

building, you know. But anyway, the first board that had any computer people on it had four and all of them were Apple Macintosh users. There were no others on the board that had ever touched a computer, including me. So, we decided then all right, we...if we were going to get a computer we have to get one of those because those are the only guys that knew how to use anything. So, we did...we got one and I don't know how we ever managed to get it in that little, old office because they got it back in the corner. But when we went into a new building, then that kind of equipment had to be replaced. Anything that we had almost had to be replaced because it had been old and it wasn't, you know, wasn't up to date. So, there was a regular program for...for updating stuff. And that's how it went from one computer to I think we had four. And then, of course, the printers and all those kinds of things. There's been a constant movement toward upgrading the equipment that was available. It has to be in that kind of place, but that takes money, too. So...

- 1:23:33 JK: I'm surprised though of the early adoption of this technology and a historic society, too. Sometimes there's a resilient movement to...to not utilize technology always. So, I don't know why this is a trend, but I've seen it in other cases. And so, I think that's worth mentioning for sure the equipment that you were utilizing, the computer, in the early years of the organization. What kind of information were you storing and gathering on it at that point? Do you recall...?
- 1:24:07 ES: Well...
- 1:24:07 JK: ...the goals?
- 1:24:08 ES: ...the first kinds of things were membership...
- 1:24:11 JK: Sure.
- 1:24:11 ES: ...and the financials.
- 1:24:13 JK: Financials and such.
- 1:24:14 ES: And minutes and that kind of thing.
- 1:24:15 JK: Okay.
- 1:24:22 ES: The archive, we had the first archivist first officially appointed archivist, was a Clara Still. And Clara had been an archivist at the...for the School of Medicine at Stanford. And so, she knew something about it. But anyway, the man at our place who was most involved was Foster Sampson. And he and Claire just, had did not hit it off at all. She was a...she didn't think any much of Mac equipment. Anyway, that's one of the little things that we did.

- 1:25:14 JK: It's still a thing to this day, though. How Mac and versus PC. So, understandably that could be conversation then. But, I know the equipment has always been forward thinking, it's been modernized. Currently, there...made some investments with archive equipment and such. So, that's important to modernize and retain records. To perverse the future that way. It's been a good investment.
- 1:25:44 ES: Of course Bob was...Bob was the one that did that. He's the one that...
- 1:25:46 JK: Interesting.
- 1:25:47 ES: ...before that it was very...none of us were smart enough to move like Bob did, so. We did participate in any community thing that came along. They used to have festivals and parades within the community and Orange County things that our people went to. And most of them, you know, they really were interested, the volunteers got very interested and involved. I think the only volunteer, I'm not sure, but I think the only real volunteer that...from that early ages, uh, the woman is still doing it right now in the back.
- 1:26:31 JK: Okay.
- 1:26:35 ES: Her face is right in front of me, I can't think of her name. I'm glad the 90 Plus people aren't interviewing me right now.¹
- 1:26:49 JK: And you mentioned exhibits as well. We'll add it to the transcript as a footnote, her name, so don't worry. She will get credited for her years of contribution, so.
- 1:27:01 ES: Well, what's her name, Trish could give it to you.
- 1:27:06 JK: Trish. Okay.
- 1:27:06 ES: She can tell you who it was.
- 1:27:07 JK: That's the name that came to mind for asking, so. Okay.
- 1:27:10 ES: She's the one...
- 1:27:10 JK: I'll pursue that with her. And then, in terms of exhibits, I know you have at the moment display of the entire community in miniature.
- 1:27:21 ES: The diorama.

¹ Fran Lindberg served at the Archivist for the Laguna Woods History Center.

- 1:27:22 JK: The diorama. So, when did you acquire and store that in...onsite? I know that's one of the prized possessions.
- 1:27:28 ES: Well, that was a part...it had to be a part of the money that Don Davis gave us...
- 1:27:33 JK: Okay.
- 1:27:34 ES: ...remember
- 1:27:34 JK: Right.
- 1:27:35 ES: And so, that bid went out for that and I don't know what...it cost over \$25,000 I think to begin, something like that. Anyway, they came out and they took aerial pictures and all kinds of things you have to do. And that...it was ready to come into the building when the building opened.
- 1:28:02 JK: I think what's interesting from what I've witnessed is that when new residents are looking to move there, they visit your center...
- 1:28:09 ES: They can.
- 1:28:10 JK: ...and they see the diorama and they get a visual of what it physically looks like. But there's a chance for them to understand, I think, the change over time at the very beginning. But, that seems to be a critical role that you're playing as far as its growth. So, the fact that you're part of that experience is definitely a part of why, I think, it's grown so much is that they visually have a place to see it and gather and dialogue about these things. So, not all communities have a place like that to...to survey before moving.
- 1:28:49 ES: No.
- 1:28:50 JK: So, I think it's fascinating that you've...are still in fact tied to its growth, that the history center, the community itself that your...you have those tours taking place. So, and that's, you know, personal perception is, you know, the.... You've mentioned the growth, I don't know what the future plans look like, but certainly the center will be a place where you can learn about the future, what that might be...what, well, what other development might take place. But, in retrospect and looking forward now, what do you hope the history center to accomplish for the future?
- 1:29:33 ES: Well, I hope it will just keep on doing what it's doing and stay up to date and keeping the things, you know, where they are available to people. Because I think...I think more and more people will want to survey this or wants information from, as time goes on. They'll want to know what their grandparents did, what it was like when grandma lived there, you know, that kind of stuff. Plus, it's an interesting organization...relationship

with GRF, you know, that kind of stuff. I think that's very interesting and should be something that people look at for a long time.

- 1:30:19 JK: Certainly. Are there any other things you hope for the community to accomplish itself, by itself?
- 1:30:27 ES: I would say quit fighting.
- 1:30:29 JK: Sure. I know. Time will tell if they accomplish that, but it's...yeah.
- 1:30:40 ES: I don't suppose, well, I think it is worse than some other communities, yes.
- 1:30:45 JK: Sure.
- 1:30:46 ES: But, uh...
- 1:30:49 JK: Yeah.
- 1:30:50 ES: You know, I don't know if anyone told you, but right from the beginning there was a group that was anti-everything.
- 1:31:00 JK: That's, I think, the challenge of seeing a city being birthed and witnessing, you know, being so, I think, democratic and trying to consult everyone's opinions. So, which is a good thing.
- 1:31:11 ES: Yes, but...
- 1:31:12 JK: It's build a community that...that the residents enjoy and the amenities suit their needs, but the voice of that community is also heard in the negative. So, I think that's just kind of, in retrospect, that's just part of that natural dialogue. But, it's certainly an important part of Orange County history, it's to find what retirement communities could or should look like and some perceptions. And, we're thankful that you have been an essential part in the history center's legacy so that the future will know what that organization started as and have a vision of what to plan for the future. So, this conversation is very important for us to have. So, we thank you for your time and to conduct this interview and the series that's going forth. But, is there anything else that we should know for this interview? That...
- 1:32:11 ES: I can't think of anything.
- 1:32:12 JK: Okay. So, that concludes this interview process and we appreciate your time in this process.

1:32:20 ES: Thank you.

1:32:20 JK: Thank you.