

Interview with

Dr. Herbert Gabriel

May 16, 2001

by Dick Nelson

for the

Oceanside Historical Society

P.O. Box 125

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Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne

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Interview with Dr. Herbert Gabriel by Dick Nelson for the Oceanside Historical Society. Monday, May 16, 2001 at the home of Herbert Gabriel, 1023 Leonard Avenue, Oceanside CA 92054. Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne

Dick: This is an interview with Herbert Gabriel. The date is May the 16th of 2001. And it's at his home on Leonard Avenue in Oceanside. My name is Dick Nelson. Dr. Gabriel, let's start off where you were born, your family, parents and things like that.

Herbert: I was born in Oceanside, downtown metropolitan Oceanside on the corner of Tremont and First Streets, on the northeast corner. Where the new Regal Theater is at the present time. Probably underneath where the Regal sign is as you drive north on Tremont Street, which is across from the building which was originally the Blade-Tribune building. However, that building was not constructed at the time. The house was a two story frame house and subsequently was recently featured in one of the historical Society newsletters. There was a query in there, 'does anyone know about this house?' This happened recently. I did contact Kristi Hawthorne and provided her with a picture of it, and asked my sister Pauline who had some photographs of the house and gave them to her. Apparently Kristi had seen this on a postcard and there was a relative to someone by the name of Love, and my older sister Mabel had married Harvey Love. We cannot establish that there was any familial relationship between the Loves, but it's a coincidental thing, I believe.

Dick: Who was the doctor who delivered you?

Herbert: Dr. Reid. Robert Reid. He did build a house and it's down near the corner of what used to be First Street and Pacific. I think the second or third house from the corner, a shingle house, painted white now. Very well restored. He was a physician here in town. I was born December 14th and my father said that he and Dr. Reid sat up cracking walnuts and eating them until it was time for the delivery, which was near midnight. He was a highly respected man, a good physician. He had some walnut groves up near Elsinore, I think, and owned subsequent to that by Tom Melbourne, Dr. Melbourne was a dentist, did have an office in the same building, not in conjunction with, but an office in the same building as Dr. Reid, and his successor, Dr. Cartwright. But anyway, it was behind the Howe Hardware Building between the hardware building and the telephone building, a multiple story building there on the North Freeman, I think, in the 100 block on the west side of the street. My parents came to Oceanside in 1911 from Albuquerque, New Mexico. My father was a roadmaster on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railway. He brought the family out here in 1910 on a vacation, and at the time they had four children. My oldest sister Mabel, my oldest brother Arthur, both were born in the Territory of New Mexico. For awhile the family lived in Winslow, Arizona. I have a sister, Louise, and a brother, Oscar, who were born in the territory of Arizona. Of course they became states in 1911. My parents moved to Oceanside in June of 1911 and my sister Pauline was born here in 1912 and I was born here in 1919. At the time they first arrived my father had an office on Santa Fe, south of the Santa Fe Station a little ways, and well, it was just opposite where First Street would have crossed; and they lived in a house on First Street there near Dr. Reid's residence, near the corner of First and Pacific Streets. So the families were close friends and Dr. Reid had a daughter, Elizabeth, who was the contemporary of one of my sisters, and they were good friends throughout their lifetime.

Dick: What is a roadmaster?

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Herbert: A roadmaster is a man who's in charge of the road, roadbed and ties and rails. He had the area from, it went from Santa Ana to, I think, a little town of Olive, down through National City which at that time was the end of the Santa Fe railway in California. It connected with the San Diego and Arizona Eastern railway, which went across the tracks through Mexico over into the Imperial Valley. But that was not part of the Santa Fe. The Santa Fe did have a line that originally came down from Riverside through Elsinore, Temecula canyon and into Fallbrook, but it washed out in 1894 by a heavy flood and was never restored. So they concentrated on the coastline as it was called.

Dick: What was your father's and your mother's full name?

Herbert: My father's name was Oscar Gabriel, he had no middle initial and he was born in Sweden in 1864. He was thirteen years older than my mother. My mother is Swedish also, and was born in Sweden, but they did not know one another until they had migrated to the United States. My mother was born in 1877 in Southern Sweden, she was born in Ravinge, which is south of Goteborg, north of Halmstad, near the western coast of Sweden. My father was born on the other side of Sweden, in a Parish that was called Morlunda. My father was born in Bokara over on the east side near the island of Oland, but on the mainland of Sweden on the eastern side.

Dick: What was your mother's name?

Herbert: Her name was Amanda Augusta Lundin (pronounced Lundeen). Some time they called her Agoosta [phonetic]. Lundin. L-u-n-d-i-n. My father's name was Gabriel because he had an older brother Charles, who had preceded his coming to the United States, and when he went through immigration in Castle Gardens in New York City, somewhere his name became Gabriel. It would have been Gabrielson had they maintained residence in Sweden. Because my father had an older brother here by the name of Gabriel he was given, or did take, or assume, the name Gabriel when he became a United States Citizen. Had I been born in Sweden my name probably would now be Oscarson.

Dick: Where did they marry?

Herbert: In Albuquerque, in 1898.

Dick: How did they get Albuquerque? It's a long way from Castle Garden.

Herbert: My mother, on the tape which she narrated, came in through Castle Garden and was taken to New York City and there were other people ... Perhaps I should go back just a little bit. She left in February 22nd of 1893 from Sweden to come to the United States. They took a ship from Gothenborg, Sweden to Hull, England. It took a couple of days, perhaps three days to get there. Then they had to wait there for one week. She said they went by Ireland and whether they stopped in Liverpool or not, I'm not sure. They arrived in New York in March. Probably a three week voyage after having spent a week in England. They were escorted through Castle Gardens and went into a hotel there and they waited for a day and then they had to take a train into New York and then went west on that to Colorado. She had an older sister who was working there and I think she got off the train in Greeley, Colorado and then someone met her and took her to Eaton E-a-t-o-n. She pronounced it at the time as E-Uh-Tuhn because she didn't know the English pronunciation. So then subsequently to that she did work as a domestic person for a family in Cheyenne, Wyoming for a period of time. I don't know how she got down to Albuquerque, and after several years she

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

married my father there. Now he was thirteen years older than she. He had his brother Charles who was working for the Chicago, Burlington, Quincy railway in Nebraska. But there was no opening for him so Dad worked on a ranch, for a rancher there for the first year in the cold weather and taking care of cattle and horses and so forth. And then he got a call from my brother to come and go to work in the summer when the weather was warmer and he worked as a section hand. Eventually he became a section foreman. I think he worked for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy for eight years and then he did work for the Denver, Rio Grande Western. That's how he eventually got down into Albuquerque. He worked for them for a couple of years and then he did spend the rest of his career working for the Santa Fe Railway, 42 years and three months. He worked out of Albuquerque as a section foreman. I know he said that his brother was a section foreman by that time and they didn't have any education in engineering or laying out railway tracks but they had to devise this on their own. And you know as a train, rode on a curve, it had to bank the rail so that outer rail was eight inches higher than the inner rail. They devised the same method to determine the radius of the curve and the elevation of the outer rail without conferring with one another. They determined this on their own. So that was a thing they acquired without any classroom education.

They were married in Albuquerque in 1898. Working on the railroad they had to go out of town and work on work trains and they had box cars set up for residences and they lived in that. My mother would tell us how the Indian ladies were fascinated by the fact that she could sew. She had a sewing machine and they would bring things and ask her to sew which she was happy to do. I know a couple of times she related the story to us how the railroad men were going to work in the early morning and they would stop and look under her boxcar where she was living and she didn't know why they were doing that. They were looking underneath there and laughing, so after they had departed from the work cars she went out and looked. A woman had had a baby underneath the box car. Another time she related that she could see a couple of Indian people on horseback and they were pretty far distant from the railroad but she saw them stop and they were out there for some time and one of the men was curious about it, too, so he walked out there and the woman had her baby and after awhile they packed up and she was astride a horse and her husband was astride another horse and they rode off again. Rather primitive, but these are rather unique experiences that she has related to us.

Dick: Did your family come out here because he was transferred?

Herbert: They had been here in 1910 on vacation, as I said previously, and liked the area. Subsequent to that whether that happened in 1910 or 1911, I don't know, the roadmaster here died and my father was offered the position here so he wanted to come here, having been here before. I guess he was predecessor of the western migration. He liked living here and they did come here in June of 1911. As I say, they lived down near the ocean and I think the family would go down there every day. They were fascinated by the beach and apparently they had a rather warm weather, because I think they would go down there and go swimming just about every day.

Dick: Oh boy. Hardy Swedes!

Herbert: There was a pier there at that time but that wasn't the first pier. But most of the activity my mother told us about was on the north side of the pier from the present location. The center of town was down in the area and as the population increased it gradually moved to the northeast of the city. The schools were close by and the house on Pacific Street was close to my father's work, it was close to schools, it was close to the stores downtown so they were pretty well situated. I don't

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

know how many years they lived there but in 1912 my sister Pauline was born and she was born on Second street, which is now Mission Avenue, up on a house that was the corner of, well, let's see, I guess it would be Ditmar and Mission Avenue. Where the present day parking lot for the Bank of America is located, on the northeast side of Mission at that intersection. In about 1920 I think the family did move to Topeka and Hill streets, 202 South Hill Street. That's where I spent most of my time as a child while I was going to school and that house was sold in 1940 or '41. Part of it is still down here on Nevada Street near the intersection of Nevada and Oceanside Boulevard. The house was two stories in front and Mr. Tenney was the school principal, I guess you would call him, and at that time bought the front part of the house and moved that part there and it's still in use. The other part my parents had moved to 224 South Ditmar Street and my mother and dad occupied that. He died in 1948. My mother lived to be 104, and she died in 1981 and the house was sold and destroyed at that time and an apartment house was built there.

Dick: How many tracks were there at that time into Oceanside when you came or as you recall?

Herbert: There were two tracks.

Dick: Just north and south?

Herbert: Yes. Mainline. It wasn't double-tracked all the way as it is today. I don't know when the double-tracking was completed but there were at least two more tracks for the freight trains before they built those marshalling yards up north of town. It was a pretty active town because the Santa Fe had a train that went in the morning over to Fallbrook, and then that train would come back in the afternoon and reload and go over to Escondido. We called that the Escondido "dinky." Of course, it was mostly agricultural products that they were hauling at that time. You used to see many cars filled with sugar beets probably taken from the Santa Margarita Ranch out here. I don't know, grain, they were growing wheat out there. They had asparagus that was grown in San Luis Rey Valley. Avocados.

Dick: Where was the line located?

Herbert: To Fallbrook. It went out through what is now Camp Pendleton. I rode out there on the train, and over to Escondido on the train.

Dick: Was it still there?

Herbert: Well, no. It washed out in one of the floods. I don't remember just what year, but after World War II. Of course, it was a pretty active base during World War II and the Korean War, and the Santa Fe maintained the railway out to Camp Pendleton and they had the loading area, staging areas out there and they could take equipment and load it or deliver it right to the base.

Dick: What were your first personal recollections growing up?

Herbert: Gee, that's a very difficult thing. I remember in 1927 the opening of The Strand. That was recently built. That was about the time I became old enough to go to the beach by myself in the accompaniment of our friends, but without parental guidance, I guess. The beach was a great part of our recreation in those days.

Dick: The price was right.

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Herbert: Well, I guess we didn't really consider those things. It was available and it was just--

Dick: Nearby.

Herbert: Yes. It was a clean beach. It was a wider beach at that time. Interestingly enough I do have a photograph that was taken. The only way to date it were cars which are parked up on the bluff, probably taken about 1918 and that time the beach had a what they called the Plunge. It wasn't a swimming pool, they called it the Plunge and there was a generating plant down there where electricity was generated for electric lights in the city. From what my parents told me the power was turned off at midnight. They didn't have any electric lights until the next morning. The Plunge was at approximately the same location where the Oceanside building is down there on the north side of the pier, the Community Center.

Dick: It was a salt water ...

Herbert: Salt water plunge, correct. They had a big slide in there. You could slide from the second story down. In this photograph there's about fifty feet from where the current edge of the Strand. There was no Strand. This was taken, oh say, 1918. There's a ledge there in the sand and people could sit on that. I compared this. The photograph was taken from an existing pier and the after the flood and heavy rains we had in 1983, I think it was, I went out on the pier and photographed that same area, there was a paved parking lot on the north side of the pier, in front of the community center, half of that parking lot was washed away and that ledge is about the same location where that edge is in that previous photograph. Basically you could almost take these two photographs and super-impose them upon one another and the terrain and the physical features and the sand on the beach would be almost identical. My contention is that there doesn't seem to be much relationship affected by the harbor and that area at the time. I'll have to leave that for some oceanographer to determine. But it's a little bit more than coincidental, I think. As far as early recollections, I started school in 1925 and we had no kindergarten at that time but there were about four or perhaps five of us who started at First grade and went all the way through high school together and graduated in the same class in 1937.

Dick: What school did you start?

Herbert: Oceanside grammar school which was up on Horne Street and adjacent to Oceanside-Carlsbad Union High School, as it was known at the time. In the same location where the present high school is now. These are not the same buildings now that were in existence at that time because after the earthquake in 1933 where so many schools were devastated and destroyed by the earthquake there, these were condemned soon after that. I know when they took the buildings down they did it in incremental stages. But the buildings were baked tile, you know about 12 inches square and four or five inches wide and they were all tile. There was no reinforcement bars or anything so they took it down and on the lawn on the elevated portion above Horne Street, South Horne Street it would be, there were tents placed in there. They had wooden frames with tent, canvas draped over them with sides that could be rolled up. Then on the quadrangle where the U-shaped parking lot is at the present high school, along in there there were more tents. Those were in use for about three years while the other school buildings were being built.

Dick: So they were built as a result of the quake?

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Herbert: Well the other buildings had to be taken down because they were a hazard because of earthquake liability. The new buildings, I think, were built around 1937 or 1938, thereabouts. So they probably used up their useful life. Also I should say this, another recollection is, we didn't have Highway 1 and 101, they became Hill Street through town. Going south it would go through Carlsbad and Encinitas and Solana Beach and these town and there was division down at Rose Canyon. One would go to La Jolla and one to downtown San Diego through Rose Canyon clear along the railway. But north of town the road went through the Santa Margarita Ranch up to San Clemente and then it was down on the beach to go on north and then it split again to up through Santa Ana and then a coast route through San Clemente down along the surf again.

Dick: Does the Interstate parallel that old road?

Herbert: Yes. On the west side of I-5 they made the State Park in there, part of that parking area now. And then if you'll look closely before you get there, say about ten miles up there's a remnant of it near the foothills on the east side of I-5 but I think that's designated as part of the military road in Camp Pendleton. I recall in my younger years that we never had an automobile. My father had a pass and could travel with the whole family on Santa Fe passes. If we went to San Diego we went on the train and took the street car to wherever we wanted to go to visit relatives down there because my mother had a sister who was married to a Santa Fe employee. It seems as if all of our relatives were railroad people. My mother came from a family of eight and there was only one son.

All of them migrated to the United States except for a sister. Her brother Carl worked for the Santa Fe in Winslow, Arizona and one sister was married to a section foreman at Flagstaff, Arizona. Another sister was married to a roadmaster in San Bernardino, California. Another sister was married to a foreman in National City, California. I think I was ten years old before I found out that Casey Jones wasn't the National Anthem! Anyway, the railroads created a big interest in our family. One of my brothers went to ... Well, let me start out with my older sister, Mabel. She had graduated from high school before I was born and she subsequently married Harvey Love. Before she married she worked for the San Diego Gas & Electric Company here in Oceanside. For awhile she worked for the Rosicrucian Fellowship as a secretary.

Dick: Did she graduate from Oceanside-Carlsbad High school?

Herbert: All of my brothers and sisters and myself graduated from Oceanside grammar school and from Oceanside-Carlsbad Union High School. The next in line was Arthur and after he graduated from high school in 1922 he went up to Davis, Cal-Davis, Cal-Aggi and he graduated there in agriculture. The next in line was sister Louise and she became a school teacher and taught in Escondido for awhile and then she taught in Glendale, California. Then she married Dorsey Merrill, who with his family had the Ford garage and service station here. His father was Charles Merrill and they had the Ford Agency downtown, I guess it would be the 300 block on North Hill Street, across the street from the city center right now, the Civic Center.

Dick: Do you recall the name of the business?

Herbert: Merrill Garage. They built a new Richfield station on the corner of Fourth and Hill street [Civic Center and Coast Highway]. They had a facility for painting cars, lubrication, washing cars and tires. It was a big facility. It actually occupied about one quarter of the block. Then next was my brother Oscar who was pretty industrious. He would sell carnations to people coming through on the trains. He liked to play baseball. He was born in 1905 and after he graduated from high

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

school he went to UCLA for a couple of years and then he entered dental school at the University of Southern California and graduated there in 1929. He was met at the train by Dr. Carrillo, Refugio Carrillo, who was brother to Leo Carrillo. Dr. Carrillo met Oscar at the train. He had graduated and put him in the car and said "we're going to Encinitas." He showed him an office down there and he said "here are the keys. This is going to be your office." I guess he wanted him to practice in Encinitas, not Oceanside.

Dick: What was the connection between the two?

Herbert: They were family friends. Dr. Carrillo and his wife lived across the alley from us when we lived on Hill Street. We saw them quite frequently.

Dick: Was he practicing in Oceanside?

Herbert: Yes. He practiced here in Oceanside. There were one or two other dentists here in Oceanside and that was about it. Oscar maintained his practice in Encinitas until he retired in 1965. Those four members of the family were fairly close together and then seven years after Oscar was born, my sister Pauline was born in 1912 and she had gone to San Diego State College before it became a University and then I was born in 1919, seven years later. I went one year to Oceanside-Carlsbad Junior College which was on the campus of the high school, Oceanside-Carlsbad Union High School one year. Then I went to Berkeley and finished my pre-dental education there, and then in 1939 I entered dental school at University of California in San Francisco.

Dick: One of the first radicals at Berkeley?

Herbert: No, I don't hold to that! I guess that made me the radical not going along with all that! But I remember one time some guy wanted us to take an American flag and go down to Oakland. There was a Russian ship in port there waving these flags. We got rid of him pretty fast.

Dick: Too much homework anyway for other activities.

Herbert: Yes, it was pretty serious. I worked too. I worked in the fruit products laboratory in the college of agriculture. I had a neat job there. Gee, I was fascinated by what I was doing. I really enjoyed that. I worked in the afternoons when I didn't have classes.

Dick: Were you in a dorm at that time?

Herbert: No, I was in a rooming house. I knew I was going to be there for a limited amount of time. When I had completed my pre-dental education in 1939 in order to get into Dental School I had one course to make up so Bill Huntalas, who was from Vista, he wanted to go to engineering school and I entered dental school in August of 1939 in San Francisco. There were others who had gone to Berkeley. Leland Blinman was in my class. Fred Hilton and Willis Jennings and Joe Mitchell had gone up. They were in the class of 1936. So they were sophomores by the time we got up there. Juniors I guess, because Leland and I were sophomores. Bill Huntalas was on the track team at Cal. He was a very good friend, and I became a track manager for the track team at that time.

Dick: Did those fellows, did any of them come back?

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Herbert: Fred Hilton now lives in Carlsbad. His father had the Hilton Cleaners and he had worked for Aramco for many years. During the war years he was unable to qualify for military service because his eyesight and he went with Aramco and stayed over there some years following the war.

They were all in engineering, all four of them, Bill Huntalas, Fred Hilton, Willis Lee Jennings and Joe Mitchell. Willis Jennings' father was in charge of all the busses and the equipment at the high school so he was there for many years. One was civil engineer, one was mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, and they all had different fields. I guess I was a junior in dental school at the time of Pearl Harbor. Our schedule was such that we entered the semester in mid-August so we completed our semester by mid-December, had our final examinations and then we had a month before the second semester began in the middle of January. Then we got out the middle of May. I was studying on Sunday morning, on the 7th of December, 1941 and there was two and a half hours of time difference between Pacific Standard Time and local time in Honolulu so I heard this radio announcement at 10:25 a.m., Sunday morning December 7th that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese. Things changed radically. I met my wife Betty at San Francisco. She entered nursing school in Berkeley at the same time that I was there, but we did not know one another there at that time. Her nursing education totaled five years. Two years at the Berkeley campus and then she had three years at San Francisco at the college of nursing. So I met her when I was a sophomore. We were graduated simultaneously during World War II on February 6, 1943. After the war began we did not experience any diminution of our classes. We would simply finish the semester on Friday and begin the next semester on Monday.

Dick: It was accelerated.

Herbert: Well, it was compressed. And then ordinarily, between the junior and senior years in dental school, you were expected to work in the Dental Clinic to accumulate more experience all summer long. Well, we didn't do that. So we went from one school year to the next over the weekend and when we graduated we had an appointment with the Dean on Friday afternoon. I guess that would be the 4th of February. An individual appointment, he would tell us whether or not we were going to graduate. This was pretty serious business because you know, if you didn't graduate you were going to have to stay for another year or if you got kicked out of school and you were going to be groundhog or in the Army! The students really worked pretty hard and paid attention to business and he said I'd graduate all right. We graduated on Sunday over in the Harmon gymnasium, on the Berkeley campus, because it was not possible to have any outdoor ceremonies during the war. They didn't want to have any grand accumulation of people visible outside. So all of the four classes, there were four schools on the San Francisco campus, there's the School of Nursing, School of Dentistry, School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy. They had all the classes in the Berkeley gym to graduate on that Sunday afternoon. Then on Monday we began our state board examination and this was five days from 8:00 to 5:00. We had two days of written examination and then we had a laboratory session and then two days in the clinic. So it was a very arduous thing. People had said, 'well, we're going to have a big party on Friday night when this is all over' but in the fraternity house everybody was in bed and tired out by 8 o'clock that night! So there was no entertaining. Of course, we had to wait about a month until we had heard from the State Board whether we passed that exam. But in a month we got the information and then we had to go in the service. I went in the Army Air Force.

Dick: As a mechanic.

Herbert: Tooth mechanic! Anyway, it was a good transition for me to go in from Dental School. Until I went, I practiced with my brother down in Encinitas and gained a little self assurance, lost

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

some of my self consciousness. He was very helpful to me in record keeping and so forth. Some of his mannerisms working with patients was very helpful.

Dick: Was it required that you had much basic training or did you basically go into your skill?

Herbert: No, I had a direct commission. Actually all I did was to change clothing!

Dick: Change office.

Herbert: Yes. I received an instruction in the mail that said 'take the oath' so I went next door to our house, the justice of the peace had an office there behind our house on Freeman and Topeka streets, so I went over there and he gave me the oath.

Dick: Who was that?

Herbert: Judge McLean. I don't remember his first name. Mrs. Whitney was his clerk.

Dick: This would have been, approximately the date?

Herbert: It was in August of 1943. And then I got a telegram and a check that said go out and buy yourself a uniform and the telegram said "1st Lt. Herbert F. Gabriel had a direct commission and report for active duty to Salt Lake City on the 9th of September" so I drove up to San Francisco and said goodbye to Betty and drove on over to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City. I reported there and he said "well, we're going to send you down to Clovis, New Mexico.' Are you familiar with Clovis? It's on the eastern part of New Mexico near the Texas state line. South of Tucumcari and not too far from Amarillo and Plainview and that area. I got there--

Dick: Nice cosmopolitan area at that time!

Herbert: For cows! It was a pretty agricultural region. The railroad went through there so I felt pretty much at home but the thing was it wasn't being like near the ocean. It had dust storms. I'd wake up in the morning and find a white spot on my pillow and the rest of it was red dust. We were living in tar paper shacks. It wasn't very substantial construction. They had wood stoves in there. It was okay, I'm not complaining about it, but--

Dick: War is hell.

Herbert: No! This was an easy transition before I went overseas. Then after a year Betty and I were married in April 29, 1944. I had the chance for a leave so I went to San Francisco and we were married in the Chapel of the Grace Cathedral up on Pacific Heights.

Dick: You had a car yourself and drove up?

Herbert: Yes, I did. So we drove back to New Mexico and I got back there. I waited until close to 5 o'clock and the fellow who was the dental surgeon, was a good friend of mine. His name was Major Winterhoff. Walter Winterhoff. He said, "I knew you were coming back today. Come outside I want to talk to you." He said, "I've just been given the assignment as dental surgeon for the 22nd Bomber Command." Which was a B-29 outfit and going out to the Pacific. "If you'd like to come with me you can be a dental surgeon for one of the bomber groups." Well, I hadn't been

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

married two weeks so I said, 'yea, how about a go!' He said, "Okay, I'll get things started." Before he did this I got an assignment with the 507 Fighter Group which turned out to have a long range version of the Republic P-47N, "Thunderbolt".

Dick: Thunderbolt?

Herbert: Thunderbolt, that's right. The Jug, you're right. It had a little longer wingspan and elevated landing gear so it could take ventral tanks, both on the wing and the ventral part of the fuselage. We went up to Bruning, Nebraska where the group was being formed and did our preliminary training there. I think that was in September of '44. Then we moved down to Dalhart, Texas in December. That is in the panhandle of Texas. Things were staging there and so was advance training in the P-47N and from there we went overseas through Seattle. We went out in the Pacific.

Dick: Seattle to the Aleutians?

Herbert: No, we went to the Western Pacific.

Dick: Flying out?

Herbert: No, we went by ship. Some of our pilots did fly. They did island hopping. This was a long range airplane. It was designed to escort the B-29's. In that regard the 507th was given a unit citation, distinguished citation and Presidential citation for flying the longest single engine fighter craft mission, of the war. It was from Ie Shima where Ernie Pyle was killed, out to Seoul. I think it was maybe 1550 miles, a nine hour mission.

Dick: I'm pretty familiar with World War II aircraft, I'd never think of the P-47N as, not many of them were used in the Pacific.

Herbert: No, that's true and in contrast to the 47's used primarily in the European theater, they were short missions. Landing on fields on an Island. These were over water flights. But to get the planes over there they did Island hopping. One experienced pilot would act as a navigator and he would send somebody down to altitude to check out the landing field to see if it was all okay and they would get down and stay over night and refuel. They'd have to put the gasoline in through five gallon cans and filter it through chamois, they went through from Pearl Harbor to Midway, Saipan, in a week tops.

Dick: With that kind of range you didn't have to do a whole lot of refueling.

Herbert: Well, I know they went up to Saipan, I think, and landed up there and refueled up there. I went by ship from Seattle to Pearl Harbor. Let me go back away. We went by two troop trains from Dalhart, Texas to Seattle and I was on the train that went up through Walsenberg and Denver and up to near Cheyenne, Fort Warren and then we turned west and went through Montana and Idaho and then down the Columbia River and came into Seattle that way. The other train went across New Mexico and Arizona up through the central valley of California through Sacramento, and Oregon that way. But anyway, I guess some of our planes that were awaiting for us over in Pearl Harbor, the pilots of course saw them immediately. They were going to load some of these on an aircraft carrier and transport them to Ie Shima from there. They were down on the dock and one of the squadron leaders, squadron commander was a real good friend of mine and I guess they were

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

going to hoist these aboard the carrier and the Navy or whoever was doing the lifting dropped it on the deck, so they said 'no more, we're going to fly them back!' But they did this particularly on Saipan. They would fly Army airplanes off the carrier, Jeep carrier, they were lightly loaded with gasoline, no ammunition, and it was only experienced pilots that would fly them off. But they didn't come back to land. They apparently were transported by an aircraft carrier over to an island and then they were flown off and landed when the airbase was secure, their landing was secure. So they could just fly them one way in and they would refuel them and arm them after they got ashore. But ours had to be flown over by ferry flights.

Dick: Okay, let's stop there for a little bit. (Switches tape) Okay, this is side one of tape two of the interview with Dr. Herb Gabriel on May 16, 2001 at his home on Leonard Avenue. My name is Dick Nelson and we have a foggy May afternoon, or overcast, I guess it's not fog. Okay Dr. Gabriel, you were in the Pacific.

Herbert: Correct. The Western Pacific is where we wound up on the Island of Ie Shima.

Dick: As you said, where Ernie Pyle, the famous war correspondent, was killed.

Herbert: Yes it was. This was off the west coast of Okinawa from the Motobu peninsula. A small island two and half by five miles. But by the time the war ended it was so loaded with planes it was ready to sink. It was an interesting experience. We had air raids almost every night it seemed for the duration of the war, four or five times each night. At that time we experienced lack of sleep, now they call it sleep deprivation. We were eating out of our mess kits, boiling water I think after each meal, we were young and taking all this in stride. It's nice to look back upon. I established some very close friendships and our 507th Fighter Group does have a reunion on a yearly basis, but it's reaching the end of the road. We're running out of people, as a matter of fact so they're thinking about terminating that in the near future.

Dick: Any local people from your fighter group?

Herbert: No. I have a friend who was the squadron commander of the 465th squadron who had moved to Temecula and he died just a couple of years ago. I have another friend up at Rolling Hills Estates and he had a machine shop at Torrance Air Field and he flies down here in his T34. Last September he asked me if I wanted to go over to Catalina for lunch so he picked me up at the Oceanside airport and we flew over there and we were back here by 3:00 in the afternoon. I do talk on the telephone to some of my friends who I've known. I think if you've had this experience where you live closely under adverse circumstances that you develop very close relationships with these folks.

Dick: Closer than family in some cases.

Herbert: In some respects, yes. Some things that you can discuss with them you don't feel comfortable talking about to other people.

Dick: What did you wife do during this time?

Herbert: Well, she went back to her parents' residence in the ranch west of Corning, California, which is about 600 miles north of here. Just prior to our departure for overseas her father died so she lived there with her mother. Our son Douglas was born on May 23rd, 1945. We had departed

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

from Seattle in May of '45. He was born May 23, 1945. But in this regard, I should give you a little family history, too. Douglas had a very traumatic birth. Two of our sons have a genetic problem. It's a form of mental retardation called fragile X, which relates to a constriction on the long length of the x chromosome. Our son Douglas is in a residential home in Vista and our son Gordon lives here at home with us. We do have another son Gregory who was a graduate of the high school here and he attended Harvard. He graduated there summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa. He received a Marshall scholarship to Kings College in England and spent two years there. He is presently employed for Microheart in Northern California. He lives in Los Altos. But anyway, that's the range of their capabilities.

Dick: When did you return home?

Herbert: I got stuck! The war ended in August and we had an alert on our island. We really didn't shut down completely until the document was signed in Tokyo Bay. And we were carrying gas masks all that time. I arrived at San Francisco aboard ship on June 19, 1946. I had a critical MOS, Military Occupation Specialty, so many of the dentists and physicians were required to remain there until they could get other replacements for them. Interestingly enough, when we were on Ie Shima the Japanese delegation was told to come from Tokyo to Ie Shima in two Japanese "Betty" bombers, Mitsubishi G4M, a two engine bomber about the size of our B-25. They were told to paint them white and where the red "meat ball" was on the wings and fuselage, that was to be painted with a green cross. Which they did. They came, I don't know when it was, around August 21st or August 22nd, something like that. The two planes came down and our aircraft went up to meet them because we didn't know what to expect. There were P38's Lockheed "Lightning" and B25's North American "Mitchells", fully armed, they were escorting them and the first plane came into Ie Shima to land and he overshot the runway, he was too high. So he had to go around and make a second approach. And they landed and we had two C-54's which were highly polished. I knew the pilot on one of them and he had that plane so clean that he made his crew sleep outside on the landing field, under the wings.

Dick: The C-54 was the four engine Douglas transport.

Herbert: That's right. "Skymaster", I think. It had been cleaned and polished and waxed on the exterior. I guess he wanted to intimidate the Japanese. Some of these Japanese people got off the planes. Some were in morning coats and formal attire. Others were in dress uniforms with their swords and visor caps and then the pilots and the crew got off and they were wearing these lambskin cold weather gear, it must have been 120 degrees on the ground. They had bouquets of flowers! They had to line up in the shade underneath the wings and American Delegation was there. I think General Jimmy Doolittle was one of them. They were instructed to board the C-54 before that flew them to Manila. There they met McArthur's people, not with General McArthur himself, but they received the instructions which they were to take back to Tokyo and to give them the instructions on how the surrender proceedings would proceed when they had the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. After three days they came back without incident and flew back in the afternoon. One of the planes had difficulty and he had to land in the surf going north, back to Tokyo. Fortunately the water wasn't too deep and he crashed landed, but I was told the lieutenant who was carrying the documents with the instructions had to hold it up over his head and he didn't get it wet but he had to walk out through the surf there to get back to dry land and how he got back to Tokyo, I don't have any idea about that. But anyway, after that we were there on Ie Shima until we left after Thanksgiving but probably early December we moved to Okinawa. That group was disbanded and I went to Eighth Air Force headquarters as dental surgeon and was there with them until I came

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

back in June of '46. When I came back I had to re-attire myself in civilian clothing. My brother had built another room on his dental office in Encinitas and I practiced down there for three years with him.

Dick: Did you get promoted?

Herbert: I was a captain. I went in as a first lieutenant and I was captain. When I was, we came back into San Francisco and transferred into a smaller craft and went over to Oakland, an army base there and we stayed overnight there and were told I was going to be mustered out at Fort Beale, which is now Beale Air Force Base. So we had to take our physical examinations and do all the paperwork and get out of there. They caught me by surprise but I went into one room there and the fella said 'well, you know, you can walk out of here a major if you want to stay in the reserve.' I really didn't.

Dick: You were happy to serve your country but you were happy to get out.

Herbert: Yes. I had other goals.

Dick: Get on with life.

Herbert: Yes. I had other things I wanted to do and I didn't want to subject my wife to this again. Fortunately I didn't because those people were called back in 1950. My friend in Rolling Hills Estate stayed in and he was in the Reserve and he liked it. A friend who was a squadron CO in Temecula, he went to Yale one time and he went to Harvard and got his MBA under the auspices of the airforce but still he didn't really make a life career out of it. Which I suppose would be for some personalities but it wasn't what I would choose.

Dick: Did your wife meet you there?

Herbert: You bet she did! Let me explain, she had a sister and she was married to Tom Gillette. Her sister's name was Vera, and they lived in Crockett.

Dick: Crockett, I don't know.

Herbert: Well, its where the Carquinez straits are, where the C&H Sugar Refinery is located. Tom Gillette was a chemist for C&H. The two parallel bridges are there and Crockett is on the north side and down. So I was able to leave the base, Oakland, and we drove over and had dinner with them and then drove on up to Camp Beal the next day from there. We spent, I think three days, at Camp Beal; which is now Beal Air Force Base, and drove up to her mother's ranch in Corning, ten miles west of Corning.

Dick: Where was your folks' house at that time?

Herbert: At 224 South Ditmar Street, between Topeka and Michigan Avenues, on South Ditmar.

Dick: Were they alone at that time? The kids are all gone?

Herbert: Yes they were. My father died in 1948, so he was 82 at that time. He died at age at 84 at that residence. My mother lived there until she died at 104. Actually, she died up here in this

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

house. She was here, we had Swedish relatives visiting here and they had been over a couple of times and she went back to celebrate her 80th birthday. First time she had been back in about 64 years. My sister Pauline went with her and they stayed there for two months. These other relatives came here and they were going to be departing the next week but Saturday night we were having dinner in the patio and she had a slight stroke. So we put her to bed here and called a physician and he told us what to do and called the priest cause it was serious. The next morning she was fine but she wasn't able to walk again. She was alert mentally. The two nieces who were here, they prayed with her and stayed up quite awhile. They were praying in Swedish and she was fine the next morning, alert. It was an unbelievable thing. Then they departed the next week but my mother, we got a wheelchair for her and then a hospital bed, this was in August. They were here to celebrate her birthday, her 104th birthday. Then she died here on November 19th, 1981. She was easy to take care of. Made no demands and she was content and happy and said all her needs were met. So it was an easy transition for her.

Dick: A relatively low maintenance person.

Herbert: Yes, she was. She wasn't demanding. She had a nice personality. It never changed.

Dick: It's transferred to her son. So you came back here, the two of you and your little son?

Herbert: Yes, we had Douglas. We lived in Encinitas until I came up here and rented an office space at 110 North Ditmar, corner of Ditmar there used to be a telephone building now the Excel building, catty corner from what used to be the Methodist Street on Ditmar and First Streets, Seagaze now. I practiced there in that building. We called them courts. Ray Feist had his law practice right next door and then Dr. Carl Miller had moved down from Pasadena where he had his dental practice up there so he was on the other side and then there was a medical laboratory in one of the other suites there, so it was nice little corner.

Dick: Who was the landlord?

Herbert: Oh, it was a lady, Mrs. Benson. It was a good location because it was downhill from the high school.

Dick: What did you pay for rent in those early years?

Herbert: I don't know. My wife wrote most of the checks, I'd have to ask her!

Dick; Ah ha. Now we're starting to know where the power is!

Herbert: You're right. In fact, she still does. As long as she had enough there to write the checks, we were content.

Dick: When did you open your office?

Herbert: In February of 1949. And then I commuted back and forth between Encinitas until August. We bought a house down here on Stanley street. We lived there for about eleven years and then we built this house. We acquired this property first from people by the name of Smith, who had a drive in on Sixth and Hill Streets. Betty, she asked Bob Gleason, who was working in John Steiger's real estate office. Bob later became postmaster, about these two and half lots that were

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

unoccupied. Vacant land. He said 'no, the Smith's own that and they plan to build on there pretty soon.' One day he did call and say that Mr. Smith had died and that Mrs. Smith wanted to sell the property we availed ourselves of that opportunity.

Dick: What year would that have been?

Herbert: Well, it was probably around 1954, I guess, because I had already started to think about building an office of my own, which we did build, it's the brick building on the corner of Seagaze way, First Street and Nevada. A brick building, an L-shaped building, across the street from the homes where the El Dorado high rise, low cost housing is. It's a block south of the Bank of America. Anyway, I built that office and we opened that on July 1, 1956. I had one tenant, Dr. Tiegen, who was a USC graduate and he did dentistry for children. I was in orthodontics. I had taken my orthodontic training as a dental student for three years and then I augmented that with other classes after I got out of the service. Dr. Tiegen stayed there I guess ten years and then I had Dr. Hori as a tenant. These are the only tenants I ever had in there. So we had a good relationship with them. We had many mutual patients so we could confer about them and talk with ease about our treatments and so forth and it was a very good thing. When I decided to retire in 1987 I sold that corner to Dr. Hori. I had the other building on the west side of that which now has the Oceanside Dental Group, there are two dentists in there, that he leases to them. So anyway, I had that, and then we built the house up here. We conferred with an architect for about a year and then started construction on this house, where we are today, in August of 1959. We moved in here, had our first meal and our first over night here on January 30, 1960. So we've been here 41 years in this house. It's still together. It's been retro-fitted a little bit with a new roof, but we haven't changed the basic construction. We haven't added to it. 125 foot frontage from the Smith's and occupy 75 feet and there is a 50 foot lot below us here, so we can maintain our view. I should tell you about our next door neighbors on the east side, who were Paul and Mildred Beck. Paul died several years ago and Mildred died after that. The property is owned by Joanna and her husband, Dale Wendel. They have another home up in Hawthorne. They're the third generation.

Dick: Hawthorne, California?

Herbert: Correct. He worked for Hughes Aircraft. She is an enrolled agent of the IRS. The third generation in the house which was built by Mildred's mother and then when she married Paul, they moved in with her and then she subsequently died. It was Paul and Mildred, now it's Dale and Joanne. They have two children, a son who worked for TRW and his wife does too, and then they have a daughter who is a lawyer and married back in Denver.

Dick: Paul Beck is quite a name here in Oceanside.

Herbert: Paul Beck came here in 1929 with his brother Harold and they came from a newspaper family from Centerville, Iowa. I guess they graduated from Stanford in 1929, I think. I'm not sure about Harold. Paul said he worked for a time in Santa Jose and his dad had an opportunity to buy the paper down here and they moved to Oceanside in October of 1929. Harold subsequently died of lung cancer and Paul maintained the newspaper which he later sold to Tom Braden.

Dick: Did Tom live in town?

Herbert: He lived on South Pacific Street, yeah. Way down there, I don't know the 1700 block on the west side of Pacific Street.

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Dick: The outskirts of town.

Herbert: Not really, because St. Malo beach is down there and that's the end of Pacific and that was built by people from Pasadena. My dad knew them. It wasn't a locked gate community at the time. The architecture is that of St. Malo. In our younger days as a college student, Julia Childs was down there. Her parents would come down. Ben Hecht had a house down there and people from the movie industry had these houses and they would come down on weekends. When the war started and there was rationing of gasoline and tires were very difficult to get, the local people bought some of those houses. Frank Butler, who wrote the screenplay for "Going My Way" lived there after the war. He lived here for quite a few years until he died. I know there's at least one Oscar down there! Anyway, it was, I think, in more recent times Prince Philip stayed down there when they had the Olympics, the equestrian tournament down at Del Mar. This is where he stayed, but it wasn't publicized at the time.

Dick: That was 1984.

Herbert: Yes. So there is probably a lot of history there. I think Kenyon Keith is the name of the fellow from Pasadena who built St. Malo, who had the concept, the idea of it. You had free access to it at that time, in other words it wasn't a locked gate or a sentry on the entry way there.

Dick: When you began your practice here in Oceanside, how many dentists were there in town?

Herbert: Earlier there were Dr. Logston, this was when I was a high school student. There was Tom Melbourne who had gone to USC. He was in with Dr. Reid's office and subsequent to that, Dr. Cartwright took the office, and Harold Taylor. Tom Melbourne was first in the First National Bank building up in the second floor. That's where the Kings Men was. My sister Pauline was his dental assistant for some time. Then Harold Taylor had an office straight across from there on Third Street, on the north side of Third Street, down there on the middle of the block. Dr. Smith, I forget his first name, and Dr. Marchand, they were in the 100 block of South Hill Street on the east side. There was a Dr. Irving Stone, an M.D. Then there was Le Mar Beauty Salon that Mrs. Hilton, Fred Hilton's mother had in there. Then they had the medical offices and the dental office in that. Then on the corner there was a Shell station, that would be just west of the First Street post office.

Dick: What did Chet Heltibridle do?

Herbert: You mean Tiny? Tiny Heltibridle? He worked with Texaco. Have you talked with him?

Dick: Not recently.

Herbert: He's great. He's a very personable fellow. He had a little dance band when I was in high school, "Tiny's Toe Teasers."

Dick: Was that their name?

Herbert: Yeah and he was called Tiny. They would play, I recall, you know where the "Y" is on the pier, where that hamburger stand, there was a stand there and the orchestra had the band stand there and they could dance on that concrete platform between the two arms of the pier, the approach to the pier. There was a lot of entertainment going on down there. They would have dances down

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

there Saturday nights.

Dick: It was the center of town for recreation.

Herbert: The beach was, yes, because there was no place else to go. He [Heltibridge] worked for Texaco. He worked for the distributor, I think his name was Roberts. Then eventually he became the distributor himself. That makes me think, too, I don't want to pass this up: When I was in grade school I was selling newspapers. I didn't work for Paul or Harold Beck but I would get newspapers, the Los Angeles Herald, on the train in the afternoon. It would come in after school, around 3:00 or 3:30 and I'd get a bundle of papers and sell them on the streets. This was when I was in 7th and 8th grades. So I circulated around downtown quite a bit.

Dick: Did you make pretty good money?

Herbert: Any money was good. Anything was good. My parents had told me that I really should save the money. I wanted to go to college so I put it in the bank and then in 1933 the bank closed. So I lost \$300.

Dick: That was a lot of money.

Herbert: Yes, it was. But I think I got it back later, after some time. But by the time I entered high school in the fall of 1933 I began to deliver papers for the San Diego Sun and Mr. Cary from Leucadia and Encinitas was a distributor. He brought the papers up from San Diego in his car and delivered them on the way and took them over to Vista and I don't where all. But he dropped the bundle of papers off there, there were about five or six of us, so we could deliver the papers in the afternoon, meet them at my house. We'd wrap them if it was raining. They came out with a Sunday edition later on so my folks let us come in the front room. Early in the morning it was still dark. We'd fold the papers and wrap in the wax paper. They had to stay dry and we had to put them on the porch. There was no throwing them on sidewalk or grass. You get it on the porch. I actually delivered them for 50 months.

Dick: You developed some business skills because you had to go and collect, too, didn't you?

Herbert: That's true, it was very good training. I met a lot of people that way and became friends with the people downtown, of course the other boys, Leroy Atkinson was a good friend. We all had tandems on the back over the wheel of our bicycle and he had a dog who would ride with him. The dog would balance on that tandem and he would sit down on that. If turned, the dog would turn this way. I had a Sealyham terrier but he was a little more stocky than Leroy's dog so I would put that dog in one the canvas paperbags, you know, and she would ride in there and put her two little feet up front. We created our own diversions, I guess, by doing these things. Once in a while I worked hoeing weeds out for Mr. Carter, Fred Carter on Camp Pendleton. This was before the war started, when we were in high school. They were dry farming for lima beans. It was on both sides of Highway 101. In 1936, I think it was, I'm not sure, but there were two railway guns, 14 inch rifles they call them. The highway came this way, and these were pointed at a 45 degree angle, actually pointing south over the ocean. I was told I could get behind these guns and we were hoeing weeds, pulling the morning glory weeds out of the weeds out of the rows of beans. They would elevate these guns to about a 45 degree angle and you could stand behind the rifle and see that missile go out of the barrel of the gun. I think it had the capability of throwing shells about 25, 26 miles.

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Dick: There was no marine base up here, so they were just brought out on maneuvers?

Herbert: They built two spur tracks from the railway. They probably came down from Fort MacArthur. There were times too, south of Carlsbad, Terra Mar, on that little plateau just south of ... it's called Terra Mar, before it was called Ponto, and they would have maneuvers out there and they had what they called Vickers machines and they would set these up to trace the track of the airplanes and they would fire at the tow targets. The Navy up here at Santa Margarita river bed, they had an auxiliary landing field up there. The tow targets would be dropped there and the planes would take off, and the different aircraft would fire at these tow targets, different colored paint on their cartridges on their bullets, so they could tell who hit the target and they could count them up. In regard to that airfield, this is about where that chapel is, a little bit north of there, on the south side of that Santa Margarita slough, as its called. There was a radio antennae tower. They had small station there and there was a radio operator in there. If you recall, Amelia Earhart took her first around the world trip, she flew from Oakland to Honolulu. I think this was in the summer of 1936. Now this story was related to me by Paul Beck, from the newspaper, for what I tell you now. She flew across there and she was in contact with the radio operator at this station at the tower on the Santa Margarita Slough for 24 hours. I should go back, when she took off from Honolulu to continue her first round the world trip, she crashed and damaged the Lockheed aircraft so they had to take it back to Oakland on a ship and repair it. Anyway, she and her husband, they were going down to see Jackie Cochran and her husband Floyd Odlum in Indio, I think it was, where they had a ranch and they stopped in the afternoon to go into Paul's office there and ask if he had any papers left for the day's publication. So he did and said yes. And he said to him could you put some up with a headline for me? He wanted some humorous headline put on one. Paul said how many do you want? He gave him whatever he asked for and Paul said is that your wife out in the car? And he said yes. So, why don't you ask her to come in? So he talked to her and interviewed her and he said I also interviewed Charles Lindbergh back in Centerville, Iowa. His dad had the newspaper. He asked him to take his delivery boys up to Minnesota place, some place there and Charles Lindberg was up there and introduced the boys and interviewed him. And he did that. He said he was very nice to the boys and treated them well and he got his interview. To Paul's credit, he interviewed Amelia Earhart out here and Charles Lindbergh back there.

Dick: You know one question I should ask, when you came out of the service, before you started your practice here did you have to go through any recertification?

Herbert: No, there was no provision made for that. There was never any question about that. California and still does have it's reciprocity. You take the California State Board you can practice in California. Now they're trying to do away with this so that if you get a license in one state you can practice in any state.

Dick: California they say is pretty tough, though.

Herbert: It was tough, I guess! Five days taking an examination, that's tough!

Dick: When you started your practice here, you named several other dentists, did that cause you a little apprehension coming in?

Herbert: No, I didn't. I had known these people and I called on them and let them know I was here and what I was going to do. Of course they knew my brother Oscar pretty well and at that time, once a month, there were dental society meetings in San Diego so we would go down in one car. It

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

was a good relationship. I didn't consider them to be competitors. We were professional colleagues.

Dick: There was room for all of you.

Herbert: Well, yes, I think so. I was trained in curriculum 2 at the University of California. This was back in the days when they said "well we want you people to go out into the rural communities and practice with children and do orthodontics and do restorative work." At the end of the freshman year you could take a choice of what curriculum you wanted to apply for. Curriculum 2 was the orthodontic curriculum and in my year they took four students. Myself and another chap from my class and two had been holdovers from a previous year who couldn't get in. So there were four in my Curriculum 2 Orthodontic class. So when I graduated from school we had all taken a surgical requirements and operative putting in fillings. We had enough prosthetic requirements to get by the State Board and do crown and bridge but essentially when I came here I opened up my practice to do dentistry for children and orthodontics. Then by the time I opened up my new building I had limited my practice to orthodontics only. The fellow who came into rent space in that new building did pediatric dentistry or dentistry for children. Doctor Werhley, Keith Werhley was one of the first, he practices out on El Camino now, but he was down on 1825 South Hill Street for quite awhile. He's still practicing. He had been in the navy for a period of time and then Bob Germann, I think came here and opened an oral surgery practice in 1958. Bill Reilly came in about that time, too. He died about two years ago. He practiced down in South Oceanside. So we had a compatible group here.

Dick: How did you get along with the MD's?

Herbert: Dr. Hoskins was the primary physician after Dr. Reid. Dr. Cartwright was here. It mushroomed after that. Dr. Schultz came here early and there were two doctor Reekies. Keith Reekie and Charles, I think. These were people who were pretty well trained and established.

Dick: You said you had a lot of railroad experience in the family, yet you went into the dentistry. Was your brother an influence on that?

Herbert: I suppose. I was always more or less oriented to that type of education. I liked biology. I didn't do too well in physics. English was good, I knew I'd have to do a lot of reading and have a foreign language. I had Spanish and French. When I was in high school my brother would work on my teeth so I'd go down there on Saturdays. He had a lab technician. It was good. I really wasn't attracted to going to medical school. I didn't want to take German for one thing. Then it would have taken another year or two of training to do that.

Dick: Both your mom and dad spoke Swedish.

Herbert: Swedish, oh yes. My parents never made any attempt to teach the children Swedish. They only spoke Swedish when they had relatives.

Dick: So when the Hut-Sut song came out you couldn't understand it?

Herbert: Well, I still don't! I can sing a song "Rita Rita Ronkin" that's all I know of. "I'll meet you later at the Casablanca."

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Dick: I assume your wife, being a nurse helped out. Of course she had the boys.

Herbert: She had the children and once in a while she got stuck in the front office.

Dick: You tried to have somebody other than her.

Herbert: Oh yes, because nursing duties are not compatible with a chairside assistant. They just don't mesh. The care of the patients is highly desirable to have that, but to have the dexterity to handle the instruments is a little bit different from a surgical nurse. So she never really felt comfortable doing that.

Dick: So her contribution was a front office type.

Herbert: She enjoys doing that work. In this regard, Betty operated a nursing home for a physician up in Corning, California while I was overseas. She put her time to good use. Her mother took care of Douglas when he was a baby. Eventually her grandfather had homesteaded this ranch up in Northern California in 1870. He built the first part of a house. He started a family. He had been an orphan. They'd come from Missouri. His name was Francis R. Houghton. Her mother's name was Nanny Virginia Flournoy. There's a small little settlement up there which used to be a town called Flournoy, California, ten miles west of Corning, near the ranch. Anyway, her grandfather had probably around 3000 acres with another man who was a sheep farmer and they at one time had about 24,000 head of sheep. They were grain farming, too. Eventually they divided that and her father kept around 2700 acres. He died in 1945 as I mentioned and that left her mother to be the sole owner. Betty's father was Oscar Houghton. In Betty's family there were ten siblings, two of whom died in childhood. And then another brother died at an early age in his 30's, so there were seven heirs. Her mother kept the house up until she died in 1960, I think it was, in May of 1960. Then there were seven heirs. One sister and her family had been living with her mother at the ranch and taking care of her and seeing for her welfare. She and her husband inherited the central part of the ranch, about 418 acres with the house and the barn buildings. Betty had about 210 acres, we didn't anticipate spending much time up there so she didn't make any great demands about what she was given. But anyway, they thought it could be a collective thing and it didn't work out. The sister and her husband who had the ranch proceeded to farm it in an inopportune way and in nine years it was going to be sold for debts. There were debts on the operating expenses and property taxes and real estate loans that had to be paid. It was actually going to be sold on the court house steps. This was about 418 acres they owned. So Betty prevailed upon them to let us assume the loans and pay taxes and so forth and we did that. We didn't have any idea what we were going to do with it. So we leased it two of her nephews who are older than Betty and they farmed it until 1980, I'd say. Their families were getting too big and they wanted to divide their operation, which they did at that point. We had it and we leased it to one of them for a couple of years or so and then we decided we'd like to do something with it ourselves. It was agreeable to them. They wanted to divest themselves of it. So in 1982 we planted 30 acres of prune trees. I had researched and decided whether we should plant prunes or walnuts or almonds, they call them a-monds, because they're harvested mechanically. And when they shake the trees they shake the "I" out of them! We planted them, I was new to this, so I planted 150 trees per acre, 16 x 18 foot rows, put them all on drip irrigation. It went pretty well. So in 1984 we planted another 40 acres, one east of the house, one west of the house. So we had 10,400 prune trees, 70 acres of prune trees, 150 trees per acre. We harvested our first crop in 1986. It was a delightful experience. We had a young man plant the trees. We bought the trees from his father and he said, "Who's going to manage this for you?" And

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

we said, "We really don't know." He said, "I have a son who'd like to get into orchard management." So I said, "Let's talk to him." He wanted to do it. He became our orchard manager and we established a good relationship with him. He took over the care and maintenance of the orchard and we confer about this, we went up quite frequently to let him know we were interested and to make sure things were going appropriately and we had no difficulty. Eventually he divorced and we put a mobile home on the property so he lives in that. What I'm leading up to, is to say we sold this ranch last fall, after the prune harvest. It leaves you with ambivalent feelings. Betty's family had that for 130 years, you know, and we had no one in the family to whom we could give it. People are just not that much interested in it, so we sold it to a young veterinarian. I should say young, younger than we are.

Dick: Someone you have confidence in.

Herbert: Well, we have that feeling and his wife was interested in the house and they've done a lot of things to it that we agreed with. We would like to have had our son Greg but his wife died in 1998 and left him with an inopportune way of dealing with it, because you know he had to be there on the premises, especially during the harvest. It was an impossible thing for him to do. He liked to go there. He liked to spend time there and he still does but to operate the prune orchard it was something that couldn't be feasible.

Dick: Let's go back and hit an area, during your growing up in Oceanside, what was the entertainment. You mentioned the beach was the primary entertainment. There were movie theaters at that time in town?

Herbert: There was the Palomar Movie Theater which is down there on the block where the Civic Center is.

Dick: If you had a dime you could get in.

Herbert: Until you were twelve. I got in until I was 13 and got nailed! I was short for my age so I got away with it for awhile! But I played my luck too far! They'd give things away, like bank night on Wednesday, to increase attendance, give away Depression glass. They had two showings, one at 7:00 and one at 9:00, I think, and a matinee on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Just single feature films. They would have a newsreel and a short comedy, that would last twenty minutes, like "Our Gang" comedy or Mack Sennett comedy. Always had a few little advertisements on the screen.

Dick: Was there only one theater?

Herbert: Early on, no wait a minute. There was one down on Second Street. I don't know, I guess it would be about the 200 block, between Cleveland and Tremont on the South side of the street. I don't remember the name of it [The Elysium]. And then the Palomar was built on North Hill Street where the Civic Center is now and Mr. Hainline had that for a while, he had it when I was a child, I know. Mrs. Kruse played the organ, Billy Kruse's mother. They had a big organ down below the stage in a little orchestra pit, something like that. She played at all the intermissions. Then the Margo was built, the Star and I think the Crest was the last theater to be built. You were asking about the building on the north end of town on Cleveland street, the roller rink. They did have professional wrestling and prize fighting, boxing at that time. I was never really attracted to wrestling and I used to like to listen on the radio to the fights that Joe Louis and Max Schmelling. Floyd Patterson trained one year down on the beach at the community center. We would see him

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

jogging around the beach and say "Hi Floyd". He'd always wave back. As far as the wrestlers go, there were some professional wrestlers when I was in high school who lived in Vista. The son of one, Nick Daviscourt went to high school here. Nick and I were high school classmates. Jimmy Londos was a resident over there. The Londos became active in raising avocados. I know that they had other professional wrestlers visit them there from time to time because Nick would tell us about it. This was before it became a side show. I mean these were professional wrestlers and in the true sense of the word. They were physically trained in good physical condition and they understood the scientific approach as to wrestling, the way they teach it in high school now. I guess we had entertainment in high school physical activities. People would go out and watch the football games. That was before we had lights on the field, on Friday afternoon. The busses would load up and go to another school.

Dick: Who did Oceanside play in those days?

Herbert: Well, Escondido was the main rival. There was Coronado. They were also green and white as Oceanside is. Point Loma, Grossmont and Sweetwater. This was all of the county except San Diego and Mountain Empire which is up around Ramona. The first high school foot ball was in 1927, I think, with Mountain Empire and it was a tie, 14 to 14. Oceanside High School had students from Del Mar, Solana Beach, Cardiff, Encinitas, Leucadia, Carlsbad. Vista was here. It went nearly over to San Marcos. Some of the children on the coast would come up on the train to go to school here. Some of the teachers would drive the school buses and keep them at home over night and drive the students back the following morning to classes.

Dick: I assume they would get a pretty good deal on a train pass.

Herbert: I think so. But that never was much of a problem. When they started to furnish the bus transportation, I don't think the trains were utilized that much. But there were hazardous times I know our physics teacher was good. He explained to us why the windows on the buses got foggy and overcast when the temperature varied with the dew and all of this. I never rode the bus because I just lived down the street from the school.

Dick: Where was the school, on the site of Oceanside High now?

Herbert: Correct. If you went up Topeka Street, the grammar school, as it was called then, would be south of Topeka Street and the High School was on the North side of Topeka Street. There was a playground behind the elementary school buildings, which is now up by Division Street in that area. But we had a place for baseball and football and then on the high school they had tennis courts in there and had track around the football field and just portable bleachers. They could disassemble or assemble, whatever was necessary and put wherever they were needed. They would play football in the same field. They didn't have a gymnasium at that time. That was built later. If it was a rainy day we couldn't blouse up for training, we would go into the auditorium and march around the perimeter of the inside auditorium. Later on as we became seniors they set up a basketball court in there. It was a matter of adaptability, adjusting the buildings to the activity.

Dick: Compared to the classes, they were very small classes.

Herbert: I don't remember. In 1936, that was the first year that San Dieguito had their own high school classes down there. Next year, in 1937, our football team played the San Dieguito High School. The kids had gone here the previous year. In 1937, that was the last year that Vista

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

students attended Oceanside. So Vista students graduated with Oceanside in 1937 and next year they had Vista High School over there.

Dick: Oceanside mothered a lot of high schools.

Herbert: Well, it was an evolutionary thing. Carlsbad, I don't know when they started their own high school district, I sort of think it was in 1957, but I'm not sure of the date.

Dick: Where was your high school prom?

Herbert: That was in the assembly auditorium up on Horne Street.

Dick: So you had a dance right there.

Herbert: Oh yes. We'd have school assemblies. We'd have a speaker come in and have the auditorium used for that. The dances were used on Friday nights, all the school proms. The graduation was held on the tennis courts on the east side of the building down on the low side, the other side of the buildings. The growers contributed gladiolus. We had a cyclone fence all the way up. There was a high fence and they would put gladiolus and asparagus fern in there for a backdrop for the graduation and for the students and then they would put the chairs that they would use in the auditorium another time. So it was a matter of making do with what was available.

Dick: Over the years, you belonged to a number of Oceanside clubs?

Herbert: Yes.

Dick: What were some of those?

Herbert; I belonged to the Oceanside Junior Chamber for awhile. I was never really an active member. I belonged to the Oceanside Kiwanis Club. I should say Kiwanis Club of Oceanside. I was president in 1958.

Dick: Was that the first Kiwanis Club in Oceanside?

Herbert: Right. This month I think they're going to be celebrating their 50th anniversary. I was president of that in 1958. Also in that year I was president of the school board, board of education for the elementary school district and for the association of Retarded Children. This was a school board, I was a member of that for 15 years, the Elementary School Board and I remained on that until they unified with the high school district. At that time I chose not to run. I was on the school board from 1956 to 1971. In Kiwanis Club I had perfect attendance for 40 years but I haven't gone recently.

Dick: Only 40 years?

Herbert; Only. Just a kid! I belonged to professional organizations that would take me out of town, the San Diego County Dental Society. I was editor of that for five years from '72 to '77. I was able to do some work with the Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists and I worked with through the various chairs and I was President of the Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists in 1985 and 1986. That's how I got my name in the New Yorker Magazine on the blooper page.

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

Dick: Blooper page?

Herbert: It said that Dr. Herbert F. Gabriel, this was datelined in Phoenix, Arizona, elected Vice President of Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists. He was the 1943 graduate of the University of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii and Islands of the Pacific. All of these universities." I got letters from all over the state. I got letters from Guam, because they had two orthodontists in Guam kidding me about this. One orthodontists from Illinois, he said, "you know the press could mess up a one car funeral!" Anyway, I have a copy of that. I had to save that. That's too cherished too discard.

Herbert: That's why I tried to sort it out in my own mind right now!

Dick: You've been here a long time and you've seen the town develop. Has it developed the way you would like it? It's a wonderful town.

Herbert: The biggest attribute is the climate which we have here.

Dick: Best in the world.

Herbert: Yeah, but, there is some ambivalence about this. People for awhile didn't seem to want to advertise they wanted to have a little enclave here by themselves. I think this perhaps was a deterrent to getting light industry in here for awhile, so I've been told, that people wanted to locate here but they really weren't encouraged.

Dick: We just became NIMBY's earlier than other towns.

Herbert: Before the word was invented. It is has a some very worthwhile citizens who directed the growth of the city and I think we've been fortunate in that regard. A lot of things have happened beyond their control. I think the city government has dealt very well with Camp Pendleton. At times things were somewhat tenuous but they always seemed to come to workable terms and willing to satisfy residents of Camp Pendleton and the residents of Oceanside. This has been a very difficult thing, very difficult. There are times when people don't have the same goals in mind but you have to come together and find some common ground. I think at appropriate times the individuals who should be there were in place. The growth of the city has historically, as we talked about, has been down there at the beach and it's going eastwardly and it seems to be directed in a pretty orderly sense at the present time. I think we had Bob Weese who was in the city water department who was very farsighted. As you probably know, a lot of the water came from the San Luis Rey Valley, they had the well down there, even Carlsbad had a well in San Luis Rey Valley, near where that outdoor theater is. It got so deep that they were experiencing salt water intrusion, it took the water table so low. That's about the time that they brought the tunnel for the water down through the valley and had to connect with them. Our water supply seems to be pretty assured except with the possibility of drought years reoccurring. If that happens I think that's going to be the big deterrent to any ... well, if there's a drought with the population that we have here, and the drought is sustained over two or three years, then I expect there would be severe difficulties. Right now, the problem seems to be traffic, but lack of water can overwhelm all of this. Traffic is a little bit beyond the city of Oceanside, it's an endemic problem, it's not a local problem.

Dick: Who do you think about over the years, has there been a city official, mayor or council

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

people, or city department heads, who have particularly impressed you?

Herbert: Yes, there have been. I've always been impressed by the people in the library, how well they have taken over their responsibilities. They've been essential part of the city. As far as the city government and the council goes, this has been a roller coaster ride. Mayor Sklar was very good for the city. Howard Richardson did a pretty good job. In the early days there were local people who just seemed to be willing to step in and do the job and they did pretty well for what they had been given to work with.

Dick: Rose to the occasion.

Herbert: They did. That's a good way to put it.

Dick: Do you think we're going to get our redevelopment here? Our resort or development down at the pier?

Herbert: Well, it looks to me right now that it's up to the Coastal Commission and how they deal with it, if it passes their scrutiny and they give the green light to it, probably it will go through. If they turn it down, I don't know what they could do.

Dick: Powerful organization.

Herbert: Well, it is.

Dick: Do you think it's essential to the growth of Oceanside that we do something down there?

Herbert: Whether or not it's this particular plan, I don't know, but something has to be done. I mean, the area is available. At one time they had a proposal to do something closer to the railroad tracks where they have property down there. There are people who would come up with a plan that would be acceptable to nearly everyone, I think. This present plan seems to be sharply divided. There are people who are strongly for it and there are people who are strongly against it. I can see reasons for both sides. Well, let me put it this way, up until the present time Oceanside hasn't really been a vacation destination. People haven't, except for the Arizonians who come here in the summer time, and they like the type of climate that we are experiencing today, they like to go to the condos down on the beach, it's very attractive to people who live in hotter areas. So there's an awful lot to be done, on the other hand, local people have been so used to going to the beach that they sort of hate to divest themselves of that opportunity. But you know, it won't last forever, this sand thing is an insurmountable problem. It takes money every year to keep the sand.

Dick: Yes, dredging out there.

Herbert: The other thing is, pollution of the water. They are aware of the runoff contaminating the water. They're doing tremendous things as far as keeping the streets clean and presenting the water from running into the gutters and then into the ocean, so an awful lot can be done to keep it clean. It's a good recreation area but you have to have sand to make it effective.

Dick: You've got Carlsbad beach and it's not quite as attractive.

Herbert: The biggest part of the beach is on the north side of the jetties down there, where the

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

harbor has been built. A very attractive beach.

Dick: Well, I'm sure we've missed a number of things, but do you have anything in conclusion?

Herbert: Well, I think we're just sort of leaving this Oceanside future up in the air. I don't think there's any easy answer to it. I think that this is going to be an ongoing problem and the next hurdle to be confronted is the Manchester development at the head of the pier. Until we see which way that goes I don't think there will be much opportunity.

Dick: But it is probably reaching a point where something is going to be happening.

Herbert: Oh yes I think so.

Dick: In the next very few years. That hurdle will be over.

Herbert: Once you get past this, if this doesn't go something else will take its place. I feel sure. In what forum, I have no concept. Anyway, the growth of the city and the diversity of the population is another thing that probably is having its effect. I don't say this as a detraction at all, it's just a matter of fact.

Dick: Okay, I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me.

Herbert: My pleasure.

Interview with Herbert Gabriel, May 16, 2001

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Dr. Herbert Gabriel Date

Witnessed Date