

ALPINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOICES OF ALPINE SERIES
CARMEN LEWIS AND CLAUDE BAILEY
NARRATED BY VIKKI COFFEY – MARCH 2007
TRANSCRIBED BY CAROL WALKER – MARCH 2013

Vikki: Hello, Carmen. How are you today?

Carmen: Well, today pretty fair.

Vikki: Good. I'm glad to hear it. This is for the "Voices of Alpine" series for the Historical Society.

Carmen: I see.

Vikki: So, we're going to ask you some questions just so we can get you on tape and hear what your memories are of Alpine. Are you ready?

Carmen: Yes, I am.

Vikki: OK. Where were you born originally, Carmen?

Carmen: I was born in Mexico City.

Vikki: Oh, OK. And when did you come to Alpine?

Carmen: When I came to Alpine?

Vikki: Uh huh.

Carmen: Well, first I came to live in San Diego.

Vikki: OK.

Carmen: When I was a young girl. And then I got married in San Diego. I lived there with my husband and then I had two children. Their names are Claude and Paul. His [husband's] name was Bailey. Bob Bailey. So, I was Carmen Bailey. My husband had a restaurant in San Diego. That was his business.

So we lived there in Mission Hills for many years and then my son Claude had asthma. I took him to different doctors and they say that the only place that he might get better would be up in the mountains. So I asked the doctor which one did he recommend, so he said Wildwood Glen. It was a resort that I could probably go and see if I can rent a cottage. In the meantime we rented

a cottage in Wildwood Glen and I came to stay with my two boys and my husband stayed at our home in San Diego. He used to come on Friday nights and stay Saturday and Sunday.

Then we went and the doctor said we should go a little farther, so we went to Descanso. We lived in Wildwood Glen in Descanso for about two years during the war, wasn't it, and I got involved in the church and we got involved in anything that had to do with helping the people overseas. So, the women from the church started making bandages and they used to give the supplies from San Diego and we made the bandages in there and they came over and got them. One day, I said, "Well, you know, if they have to fumigate the bandages and so forth, why can't we sterilize them ourselves?" So all the women said yes, it would be nice if we sterilized them. So, we put them in trays and put them in the oven, and lo and behold they all caught on fire, so we learned that we couldn't do that. It was a funny thing, but we thought we were saving time. [Laughter]

Vikki: Now, you were still in Descanso at this time?

Carmen: Yes

Vikki: So, when did you come to Alpine?

Carmen: Well, he was getting a little bit better so we went back home to San Diego for a while and he was OK for some time, then later on he got sick again. This time he got so sick they had to take him to the hospital. So, the doctor said that this was impossible, he cannot live in San Diego, you have to go back to the mountains. So, my husband said, "Well, we have to go back to the mountains, but we are not going to go to Descanso. Let's not go that far." And, so he said, instead of going that far we looked around here and Betty Noble her place at...

Vikki: The Willows?

Carmen: ...yes, The Willows, you might find a place. So we did. We found a house. We rented a house at The Willows. A little cottage, you know. It was enough. In fact it was a two bedroom house. It was a large place; it was the largest place they had. So, the same thing again, my husband had to come once again a week to spend the night over quite a long time. So, he finally said, "That's enough. We have to do something." Because he had a business and he had to. He said, "That's enough. I'm going to look around here in Alpine and maybe we can find some sort of a business. In fact, we're going to find a house. And then, when we move in we might find some sort of business."

Vikki: Do you remember what year that was?

Carmen: That was 1944. So, we were looking for a house to buy and we found a house that was (there are a lot of things that I don't remember, like names and so forth),...

Vikki: That's OK; just say what you can remember.

Carmen: ... so we found a house and the girl that was there said her mother was not home, she's coming back tomorrow and if you want to talk to her tomorrow maybe you can talk to her about the house. So, my husband and I stopped at a little restaurant right here and across from the Woman's Club. It was a restaurant and a gasoline station and so we stopped (it was a kind of rainy day) so we had a bowl of soup and my husband looked around the little restaurant and my husband said to the lady, "You know, have you ever thought about selling this place?"

And the lady said, "Well, no, we just opened it three months ago and there are three partners (three couples) that own the place."

So he said, "Well, if you ever think of selling, let me know." So, we finished our soup and he said, "Here is my telephone number and sometime if you think of selling, call us up and we'll talk about it."

So, we went home and by the time we got home we got a call from the little restaurant that they thought about it and yes, they wanted to sell. So, we were very surprised because we just got home. So, we came back the next day and right away because the three couples decided they weren't making any money and there were three couples and they needed to make a living.

So my husband said, "Well, let's negotiate and so forth." So, we bought it. The restaurant and the gasoline station. We bought that because they went together. The gasoline station was run by Mr. Ring and they rented it to Mr. Ring to run the gasoline station. So they negotiate how did they want to pay, they said I don't want payments, I want cash. So, my husband and the people talked and we bought it right away. The papers were drawn. There was no time to lose.

And on the side of the restaurant was a little living quarters, so I said to my husband, "Where are we going to live?" Because by the time we negotiate for the house and they had already sold it to somebody else. So, we decided to live in the little quarters until we find a house to live. Because, you see, he had to move here. But before that it was a little cottage. Those little cottages...

Vikki: On Alpine Boulevard?

Carmen: Yes, those little cottages, there that I had come before him and I stay with him and my older son so I knew a little bit about Alpine, but my husband couldn't because he had the business and a house in San Diego. So then we went back and move out and sold the place in San Diego and we moved out late in 1944, at the end, but we closed it up because he wanted to renovate the place.

So, we opened up and I joined the Woman's Club right away, the first thing, you know. So we hired a cook and we hired a waitress. So he made some flyers saying when we would open up the restaurant. We opened up with fried chicken dinners. That's what we were going to open up with.

So, my husband of course knew about buying things like that. I knew about it too because in San Diego for the schools I used to help in the kitchens or wherever I was needed and I used to like to cook.

So, we were all set and then the day that we opened, our cook had taken another job and our waitress (the one that we had hired) had moved away, so we had no cook and no waitress. So I told my husband, “What are we going to do?”

He said, “Well, you’re a good cook, you are always cooking for the schools up there and always cooking for everything that you belong to.”

I said, “I have never been behind the counter.” You see, even though we had the restaurant in San Diego I had never even been behind the counter.

So I asked how are we going to run and he said, “I am going to have to be the waitress, or the waiter.” Because we had to open.

So I said, “How do I know what you want?” and he said, “I’ll come and tell you two chicken dinners but you have to give me two soups, two salads, and you put the chicken and the vegetables and the mashed potatoes and so forth and you put them right here and I’ll come and get them. Then, if somebody else comes, one or two or three, whichever and I’ll tell you how many.”

I said, “OK.” So, what happened is I had all my mashed potatoes, I had my gravy, I had my chicken, I had my salads and I had everything ready when we opened up. Sure enough, we thought there would be one or two people at a time. All of a sudden, they just came like mad—four salads, five salads, six salads, so I just was just giving him the soup, giving him the salads, giving him this. And I was just so busy all by myself. But, you see, I was used to it because I helped at the schools and so forth. The things I belonged to, I always was doing the cooking.

So the daughter of the man that was running the gasoline station came in and she said, “Do you need any help?” And I said, “Do we!” So she said, “I’ll go home...” (because she had her hair in curlers).

My husband said, “No. Just put a bandana on and help right now.” He said, “I have so many people waiting and she can do it fast enough.”

So, she came in and pretty soon her mother came in and said, “My daughter was going to help your husband out there, but I want to help you in the kitchen.” So, she started with dishes and started right away. So, from then on until we got a cook I had to do all the cooking until we got a cook which was for some time because we couldn’t get anyone to come to Alpine to be a cook. So we got so that I cooked...

Phone rang—lots of activity.

Vikki: OK. Go ahead.

Carmen: Where were we?

Vikki: You were going to tell me about the clubs that came to eat there. Like the Kiwanis.

Carmen: Well, it was the only place other than the Log Cabin, as it was the only place at the time. Being a place much bigger than the Log Cabin, and I used to feed the Kiwanis when they had their dinners and any organization and the fire department, feed them in there and then I used to prepare for weddings and for funerals, the food, and keep it in the restaurant itself you know and birthdays or if somebody wants to give any kind of a particular party or something that they wanted it was always available.

Vikki: And you mentioned something about a letter from Washington?

Carmen: Yes. I got a letter from Washington that my place was chosen for the wounded men from San Diego who were going to Campo to stop here [Alpine] and rest and they were hungry to eat because that was a place chosen on all the routes. And, so I had to close to the public to feed them. And so I had to do that. And then, when they had the fires around here, my place was chosen to feed the firemen, there were fighting the fires, until they got their own kitchens set up. So, sometimes they would call me at 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock in the evening, 5 o'clock in the evening. I never knew there would be so many men. 60 men for breakfast and in two hours there would be another 60 men, and so I had to call my bread man, my milk man, my meat man and they knew that they had to do it because the government wanted me to do it so they had to do it for me. And then, of course, at the time I had to have some help, so even my friends would say, "Carmen, when it comes the time, call me and I will come to help you." And, I used to call my friends and they would come to help—from the church and even my friends that come to eat here. They would say "Call me, because you have to do that." So I used to call them and feed 200 or 250 men for breakfast and lunches. I used to make lunches, but not what I wanted, the way they wanted. I had to pack them up and they would come and pick them up so they could eat them on the ground.

Vikki: I see.

Carmen: And it was quite a bit because after a time and so many years I said, "After so many years, can you just give me this year off for a change and just go to the Log Cabin Café?" So, they did, and for one year they went to the Log Cabin. And then I got a call that said I'm sorry Carmen you have to go back. I asked why and they said the men got sick on the food. There must have been something wrong with the food, because the men got sick. So, I had to do it again.

Vikki: You mentioned earlier that you prepared food for the school too. Can you tell me about that?

Carmen: No. For the school, I used to volunteer in San Diego. And of course, when I came here I still volunteered for the schools because of my sons. And, of course, the Boy Scouts. My husband, my sons used to be Cub Scouts in San Diego. They weren't old enough to be Boy Scouts. So, when we came here, we knew that they had Cub Scouts, but they disbanded the Cub Scouts because they had nobody to do it. So my husband said, well, we have to have Boy Scouts in order to have Cub Scouts, so he volunteered again to start the Cub Scouts again. So, he talked to the men around town and told them, "Come on, boys, we just have to do that." So, finally they got the Boy Scouts again and my two sons got to be Cub Scouts again. We always would volunteer for anything that happened.

Now, some of the, one time one of the drivers of the school house got sick and they didn't have anybody, so my husband said, "Well, I'll drive the bus." So, he volunteered and drove the bus for the school. So, they said, you are stuck. He said no, because he had a business to run. So, I said, you drive the school bus as much as they need you. We'll do without you for a while.

Finally, we got a cook, but I had to tell the cook how to cook my way, because they were used to my way. And bake, because we used to bake all our pies and all our cakes. And they used to say Carmen, ...that pie, and Carmen, you made that. The cook said, what am I going to do, you have to teach me how to cook your way. So, he said, "What is your recipes?" I taste it, put a little more of this and a little more of that.

Vikki: For the microphone—you pointed to your head. The recipes are in your head?

Carmen: Yes. I had my recipes in my head. I just taste it and add a little bit of this and a little bit of that. How about your pies—the same way? Yes, a little bit of this a little bit of that and taste it. Taste good? That's good. No recipes.

Vikki: So you got the business going and kind of got a social part of Alpine going. Right?

Carmen: It was the only place. And that's why I say, I got so many pictures.

Vikki: Oh, I can't wait to see them.

Carmen: There are so many pictures there because it was the only place to have weddings, they could have funerals there until they start doing the Kiwanis their own at the school years later. It was the only place. Now the teenagers they have no place to go. They couldn't meet anywhere. And, you see in the restaurant we had the ice cream bar. We had the ice cream bar, so teenagers came to get banana splits and all the things that they like and sometimes, so my husband and I said we have to do something about these kids. They have no place. So on Friday nights late in the evening we closed at a certain time and let the teenagers come and have their gatherings. We brought down our Victrola and records so they could dance.

Vikki: Was that what they called the Clodhoppers?

Carmen: Yes, it was the Clodhoppers and the others.

Vikki: And you had a soda fountain in there too.

Carmen: Yes. And we told them that you are very welcome to come here, but we have our dos and our don'ts. Do not mix our salts and sugars and peppers. Do not put your feet on the tables; leave things the way they are. We used to give them one or two drinks for free. If anybody does anything that they shouldn't do, we will close it up and you can never do that again. So, they respect that. They respect that. Except one time, they have put the salt in the sugar and the sugar in the salt, so naturally, when the customers came in [Laughter], so we told them that is it. So, they found out who did it and they wouldn't let them come in for a month. We didn't know; they didn't tell us. They took care of it themselves. My boys were too little, they were just little kids, they were not teenagers.

Vikki: This is a good time. I'm going to ask Claude a little bit about school. All right?

Carmen: Yes.

Vikki: Claude. Tell me about school. What was it like when you were in the fifth grade? Who was your teacher?

Claude: We started in the fourth grade when we started. I was in the fourth; my brother was in the third. We had our chores at the restaurant. We had to dump the trash and the garbage and rake all around the outside. We would wait for the tardy bell to ring at school. We could hear the tardy bell from down at the Alpine Grammar School and we would wait for it to ring and that would give us five minutes. We would do the Boy Scout run down to school. That is, run fifty feet, walk fifty feet, run fifty feet and so on. That way we wouldn't have to get there too early. But, our favorite teacher, of course, was Mrs. Hohanshelt. It was great. We had pictures of all of us. We joined the choir. We had a, she started a little choir at school, and we would sing at community churches and other places and it was a lot of fun. Almost everyone was in it because it was such a small school. We had maybe ten people in a class.

Vikki: How many classes?

Claude: It was up to eighth grade. I know in fourth grade we only had about six people. In fact, a couple of times they had two classes together, I think it was third and fourth or fourth and fifth, because there weren't enough people using one room. So they would put them together and Mrs. Hohanshelt would put us together doing different jobs, different work. And then there was Mrs. Hubbard. There were a couple of other teachers that I recall. And, it was a fun thing. We enjoyed it. Then we would skate, when they poured cement. It was a horseshoe shaped school rooms and they finally poured cement in the middle and we could skate on there. Other than that, we would have to go up to the ball field to play. It's still there. But it was a good, it was adobe and it was hard and it would wear a hole in your Levis right there.

Vikki: Was the school right here on Alpine Boulevard? Is that the one?

Claude: No, it was on Administration Way. It's the one where the original school was built onto part of another building. They built on sections. It used to be a one room school house and that part is still there. We used it as the hall, a meeting hall and where the choir would sing. It was also a school room. Everything was kind of flexible and you did things as they needed to be done. You had a little nurse's room and the principal, Mr. Brown, was right next to that and that was always feared if you had to go see Mr. Brown. [Laughter]

Vikki: When you went to high school, after eighth grade, where did you go?

Claude: We took the bus and we went to Grossmont.

Vikki: Grossmont. The one right off the freeway there?

Claude: Yes. Grossmont High School. In fact, George Snyder, Mr. Snyder, was our bus driver and picked us up every day. It usually took about an hour to go from here to Grossmont High School and about an hour to get back. A lot of times if we made a little extra money with our odd jobs, we would get a ride or walk down to the middle of El Cajon and, I remember, one of my favorite places was a little pastry place. You would buy a little half pint of milk and get some of these little, I guess they were cupcakes. They were just delicious, I remember, with a lot of frosting. And we'd walk down there and then we'd hitchhike home and we would beat the bus home so as not to let our parents know. We got off the bus early. We could beat the bus home because it had to stop and let all the students off all the way from Grossmont clear up to Alpine. So what we would do is get a ride to up above where my Mother's, my Mother and Father's restaurant, was, and we would get up there to where the bus would let us off and when the bus got there, we would come out of hiding and walk down home just like the normal thing to do.

Vikki: So, you had to take the bus from Alpine. It must have taken a long time.

Claude: Yes, it took about an hour. It took an hour from Alpine to Grossmont High School. It took about an hour, within ten minutes, the same way coming back.

Vikki: And at that time, there was no freeway, so you were on Highway 80.

Claude: Old Highway 80, yes. It was a two lane road. In fact, it was the only road going east from San Diego. Period. Only one going east to Arizona, anywhere east, it was just the only one. Of course, it wasn't that busy. There weren't too many people going east.

Vikki: So, when you got to high school were the kids still allowed to come into the restaurant? Did you ever get to do that?

Claude: We didn't. They were the older kids. My brother and I a lot of times would sneak, because we were living in back of the restaurant, and we'd open the door and listen to the noise and

the music because different teenagers played different things. Phil Hall, who was the postmaster at the time, played the saw. And used a violin stick and he played the saw. Bill SanSoucie played the violin. And Mary Ann Brotherton played the guitar and sang. There were different teenagers and different older people that would contribute, and one of them would play the piano (My folks had a piano there—in fact, it's still here. I have it on the other side of this wall.) They would play the piano and they would move all the tables out of the way and they would dance in the middle.

I remember growing up sometimes my folks would let me run the soda fountain and that was quite the experience because I'd make all kinds of ridiculous drinks and I'd put all kinds of things in it. It was interesting and, of course, being that we had at least an hour from home to high school, it would give us a little leverage if we decided to get off the bus. We'd get off the bus in El Cajon and go get some desserts and ice cream and different things like that. It was really silly because we could get the same stuff at home. It was just two or three of us and we'd get off the bus and then hitchhike. We could get a ride easily, it wasn't a problem. Everybody was fairly congenial. Alpine was small. I mean, when we got the youth center started, everybody in Alpine decided, Mr. Crouch had given us the land for the Alpine Youth Center and so we decided to get a member from each organization in Alpine to vote on it, work on it and to administer it, to run it. That's what he wanted. I represented the Boy Scouts, I remember, and Mom represented the Girl Scouts.

Vikki: OK.

Claude: As I said, I remember I represented the Boy Scouts and I also represented the Men's Group for our church. Mom and five other women, we were collecting donations at the restaurant for money to build a church in Alpine because we didn't have a Catholic church at the time, we used to have to go to Descanso when we were kids. In fact, Commander McDonnell, which was on Cat's Acres, off of South Grade, would give us a ride up to Descanso. Either that or my father would drive us up and we would go to church up there. Then we finally—the Sheedy's had a ranch here, just off of Victoria Drive, and they allowed the priest to come down and we'd have to clear away their ping pong games in this little building there that they used for recreation and we'd have mass there. So Mom and Mrs. Germain, Cleo Moore and five different women they would put on different little skits and they'd have little plays and things to raise money for the church. We finally got enough money and then Mr. Vitalich, who owned a fish factory in San Diego gave the Catholic Church, or gave us our property on Victoria Drive. He was going to give us the one by the trees, but we thought it would be better for the cemetery there, so he went over to the side and gave us the other property.

Vikki: I see. I want to get back to Carmen for a minute, because....

Claude: Sure.

Vikki: You were telling us how different Alpine was. You mentioned when we were just talking that when you first came to Alpine that it was very different than it is today and you told me something about the lighting on your building. Do you remember what you said?

Carmen: At the restaurant there were no lights at all anywhere outside until we turned a light on the restaurant. It was the one and only light [in Alpine]. Once every three weeks my husband would hire a man to come and play some movies and we used to put a sheet and get chairs between the café and the gasoline station and get chairs and boxes and all that for everybody, all the teenagers and anybody who wanted to see the movie, and put a sheet across the street. And once in a while you would see a car coming, every hour or two hours a car would come, and they would stop and watch the movie too. [Laughter]

Vikki: When you first came here, there really wasn't much in Alpine at all.

Carmen: Nothing. Because at that time The Log Cabin café was closed right after dinner, about 6:30 or 7:00 and we stayed open until 10 o'clock for those that came late. Then I joined the Women's Club and I kept the keys of the Women's Club in the restroom because when we rent the club, people had to bring the keys to me and they would come and see me and I would go and do whatever they have to do and bring the keys back. When they left, I would go and check if they left it clean. So one time, I always go and check and somebody forgot to clean it. Somebody forgot to clean the floor, so I went to the kitchen and got the mop and I started to mop the floor of the Woman's Club and somebody came and knocked at the door of the Woman's Club and I went to see and a man said, "Hello."

I said, "Hello."

And the man said, "Could you please—I'd like to talk to Mrs. Bailey." I asked what about. He said, "Well, will you please tell her I'd like to talk to her."

I said, "Well, either you tell me what you want and then I'll tell her."

He said, "Well, I'm a salesman and I am supposed to come and see her at the café and they told me at the café that she'd be here."

I said, "Oh, are you so and so? I am Mrs. Bailey."

He said, "You are? You are the owner of the café?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "What are you doing the mopping for here?" [Laughter] I told him I belong to the Woman's Club and he said, "I know, but you're cleaning the floor here and you own the café."

I said, "We don't have enough money in the Woman's Club, so we usually do our own cleaning." He told me he didn't believe it. [Lots of laughter]

Vikki: At that time, what would you say is your most vivid memory of Alpine? Was it the emptiness, or was it the Woman's Club, or what do you remember that really just sticks in your mind?

Carmen: Oh, so many things. I had so many awards. For three years in succession I had awards. The first volunteer. I had awards and I was in the parades. I was the, how do you call it, the Grand Marshal. I have pictures of that. I got awards from the church and from the Pope too. A commendation from the Pope.

Vikki: I understand you were quite a dancer too.

Carmen: Yes. In the church; I used to sing too. I sang for weddings. I can't sing any more. My favorite was Ave Maria.

And dancing, I used to [dance] when I lived in San Diego. We used to dance in Balboa Park on the stage with a group to raise money for the church or for the school or for anything else. I danced all the time. I did solo dances or with a group, mostly solo, because I love to dance. We had a little group and we would go to entertain at the hospitals and entertain the marines. We went to the Salvation Army and one of my customs was The Dance of the Seven Veils. So I had seven veils and I would get one and they would shout, "Take it off, take it off, take it off." [Laughter]

Of course, our husbands never went with us. See, it was just us ladies, because our husbands wouldn't come. One time our driver was sick so we didn't know what to do because none of us wanted to drive. So I said, "Let's ask my husband, he'll take us." And they said, uh oh, he knows I dance but he never sees me dance the Dance of the Seven Veils. Because all I wear is this and the veils and the whole bottom shows. Naked almost. We asked him and the girls said they would have him sit in the corner so he wouldn't see too much. But, he didn't stay in the corner, he wanted to see everything. I just had to do it, the Dance of the Seven Veils, and they shouted, "Take it off, take it off."

So, after it was over I asked him how he liked it. He said, "You know, the best dance was the Dance of the Seven Veils." I asked if he liked it and he said, "I loved it." [Lots of laughter] I was happy. It was a lot of fun. For the church, you know, I got from the Pope....

Vikki: So you and your group helped finance that church and you got the commendation from the Pope because of that.

Carmen: Yes. I can show you some pictures.

Vikki: How about we save the pictures for the second time I come?

2850 Olive View Lane

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QUESTIONS/ANSWERED BY CLAUDE BAILEY MARCH 2013:

1. How old was Carmen when she came to San Diego from Mexico? About 18
2. What was her maiden name? Gonzalez
3. How old was Carmen when she married Mr. Bailey? Between 20 and 22
4. What year did she marry Mr. Bailey? 1933
5. When did Bob Bailey pass away? 1956
6. What does Paul do now? Wife's name? Children? Wife: Joan; 3 girls: Deborah, Denise, Alana (Alana was a D too; however, she changed it!)
7. Does Claude have children? Wife's name? What happened to wife?
8. When did they sell Bailey's to Kapsala? 1969
9. When did they move to Alpine Heights? 1956
10. When was Claude born? 1934
11. When was Paul born? 1935
12. When did she marry Mr. Hoistad? 1957
13. What was his first name? Jack – owned Alpine Trucking
14. Did Mr. Hoistad pass away in 1971 (Bea's book)? Yes
15. Did she marry again? Yes
16. If so, husband's name? Jim Lewis
17. Did Mr. Lewis pass away and when? 2003
18. What did Mr. Lewis do for a living? Retired from business machine repair shop in the East and moved to Alpine where he met and married Carmen. Did business machine repair in Alpine.
19. Bea's book talks about what was served at Bailey's. Is this accurate? On oral history, Carmen talks about first meal being fried chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetable, soup and salad. This differs from book report by Bea.
20. Birthday April 26? Yes - 1913



Carmen Bailey dancing the Mexican Hat Dance at an Alpine Fundraiser



Bailey's Café—early 1950s



**Betty Noble and Carmen Bailey
at 90th Anniversary of Alpine Woman's Club**

