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Caroline Goodwin Gwerder  
and  
Frank Joseph Gwerder

AGRICULTURISTS IN THE SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN RIVER DELTA  
AND SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Interviews Conducted by  
Fredric L. Quivik  
in 2001

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral history is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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Carol and Joe Gwerder, 2002



TABLE OF CONTENTS--Caroline Goodwin and Frank Joseph Gwerder

INTERVIEW HISTORY by Fredric Quivik	i
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION--Caroline Goodwin Gwerder	iii
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION--Frank Joseph Gwerder	iv

**Caroline Goodwin Gwerder**

I	FAMILY BACKGROUND IN THE STOCKTON AREA	1
	Carol's Mother's Background: The Minor Family	2
	The Thompson Family	3
	The Rutledge Family	5
	Carol's Father's Background: The Goodwin Family	10
	Carol's Childhood in Stockton	15
	The Hamlin School in San Francisco	21
	College Years at the University of California at Berkeley, 1951-1955	22
	Meeting, Courting, and Marrying Joe Gwerder	26
II	CAROL'S EXPERIENCES WITH FARMING AND FAMILY	28
	First Year on the Galt Ranch	28
	Moving to Walnut Grove, Raising the Gwerder Children	30
	Building the Present House, Working with Architect William Wilson Wurster	36
	Carol's Role in the Goodwin-Gwerder Farming Operation	41
	More Recollections of Childhood Activities and Years at Cal	42
	Family Vacations	47
III	ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH CAROL HAS WORKED	50
	California Women for Agriculture	50
	Walnut Grove Community Center	53
	Walnut Grove Community Presbyterian Church	54
	Parent-Teachers Association	54
	Cub Scouts and Campfire Girls	56
	Delta Head Start	57
	Delta Young Women's Club	59
	Junior League	60
	Sacramento Debutante Committee	61
	Sacramento Children's Home, and the Election Board	63
	River Delta Historical Society	66
	100 Year Club	67
IV	THE WALNUT GROVE COMMUNITY	69
	The Gwerder Children	69
	Floods in Carol's Memory	71
	Seasonal Workers in the Delta Area	73
	Changes in Walnut Grove Community	74

## Frank Joseph Gwerder

V	FAMILY BACKGROUND IN THE WALNUT GROVE AREA	77
	Joe's Paternal Grandparents: Joseph and Marie Gwerder	77
	Joseph Gwerder's Early Farming Methods on Grand Island	79
	Joe's Parents: Frank Gwerder and Murrice Sheehan Gwerder	84
	The Delta Region	87
	Joe's Childhood	94
	College Years at the University of California, Berkeley	99
	Meeting, Courting, and Marrying Carol Goodwin	100
VI	JOE'S EXPERIENCES FARMING	102
	American Angus Association	102
	Early Years on the Galt Ranch	106
	Starting the River City Bank	110
	Joe's Farming Partnership with His Father	111
	Changes in Tomato-Farming Methods	113
	Taking on the Operations of the Thompson-Folger Ranch	119
	Construction of I-5 Brings End to Cattle Ranching at Thompson-Folger	120
	Transition to Wine Grapes at Thompson-Folger	124
	Woodbridge Irrigation District	126
	Farm Labor on the Thompson-Folger Ranch	128
	Irrigation Infrastructure on the Thompson-Folger Ranch	131
	Mechanization of the Vineyards at Thompson-Folger	133
	Replanting and Mechanization of Vineyards at the Minor-Haas Ranch	134
	Working Closely with the Extension Service at U.C. Davis	136
	Special Problems with the Farmington Ranch	139
	Changes in Joe's Workday over the Years	141
	Changes in Methods of Applying Fertilizers, Pesticides, and Herbicides	144
	Other Aspects of the Growing Seasons	149
	Transition to Grapes on the Galt Ranch	151
	Joe, Carol, and their Children	152
	Working with Farm-Labor Contractors	153
	Changes in Marketing Farm Products	155
	Effects of NAFTA on Farming	156
	Effects of Mechanization on Farming	158
	Spraying along I-5 Kills Joe's Grapevines	163
	Government Regulations on Application of Chemicals	165
	Changes in Skills & Education Needed for Farming	167
	The Trend Toward Tenant Farming in the Delta Area	168
	Effects of the Williamson Act on Farming	171
	Effects of Conservancy Groups on Farming	172
VII	ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH JOE HAS WORKED	179
	Farm Bureau	179
	California Cattlemen's Association	181
	Western States Angus Association	182
	Cal-West Seeds	184
	Reclamation District 1002	186
	Various Finance Organizations	189

California Flood Control Association	190
Woodbridge Irrigation District	191
Agricultural Extension Service	192
Farm Service Agency	193
Farm Subsidy Programs	193
Environmental Protection Agency	194
Endangered Species Act	195
<b>VIII THE WALNUT GROVE COMMUNITY</b>	<b>198</b>
Changes along the Sacramento River	198
The Chinese Community at Locke	200
Japanese-Americans during World War II	201
Links between Joe's Fraternity (Delta Tau Delta) and Walnut Grove	203
Raising the Gwerder Children at Walnut Grove	204
The Gwerders' Present House	205
Passing on the Gwerder & Goodwin Family Farm Operations	206
Joe Gwerder: Horseman	209
<b>IX JOE &amp; CAROL GWERDER DESCRIBE THEIR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE</b>	<b>212</b>
General Outlook for the Future	212
Effects of Energy Costs on Agriculture	212
Effects of Free-Trade Agreements on Agriculture	214
Farmers and the Environmental Movement	217
Exporting Food-Processing Methods Abroad	220
Concerns about Costs of Land and Putting Land in Trust	221
Jim Gwerder Continues the Tradition of Farming in the Family	223
<b>TAPE GUIDE</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>INDEX</b>	<b>226</b>





## INTERVIEW HISTORY by Fredric Quivik

Joe and Carol Gwerder attended the University of California at Berkeley in the early 1950s, Joe graduating in spring 1954 and Carol the following January. They have maintained close friendships with several of their schoolmates at Cal, including Beau and Helen Bragg Breck. Over the years the Gwerders and Brecks have discussed how much California agriculture has changed and reflected upon the special window Joe and Carol have had on those changes, since both of their families have lived in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and the San Joaquin Valley regions for several generations. Recognizing that it would benefit future generations of Californians if agriculturalists like the Gwerders recorded their experiences and reflections in the form of an oral history, the Brecks spoke with Charles Faulhaber, director of the Bancroft Library, and Willa Baum and Ann Lage of the Regional Oral History Office, offering to fund an oral history of the Gwerders. Their mutual hope was that the Gwerder interviews could lead to establishing a more extensive program for recording oral histories of California agriculturalists, helping to preserve their histories and document changes in agricultural communities at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Ann Lage asked me, an associate of the Regional Oral History Office, to conduct the interviews. As the first step, Ann and I drove to Walnut Grove to meet with the Gwerders and the Brecks so we could all discuss ROHO's approach to the Gwerder interviews and the potential value of the envisioned broader program. Joe and Carol hosted the meeting on 7 December 2000 over lunch at their Walnut Grove home, designed by San Francisco architect and former dean of the UC College of Environmental Design, William Wurster. At the Gwerder home, Joe recounted stories of his grandfather, Joseph Gwerder, arriving as a Swiss immigrant on Grand Island in the late 1880s. In 1890, Joe's grandfather arranged a contract allowing him to round up stray cattle on the island, an enterprise that launched the elder Gwerder's career as an agricultural entrepreneur in the Delta region. And Carol showed us books and artifacts reflecting the background of the Goodwin and Miner families going back to seventeenth-century Virginia and eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. Branches of her family have ancestral links to such prominent Americans as Meriwether Lewis, James Monroe, James Madison, and George Washington, and two family branches arrived in California in 1849. At the conclusion of the meeting, all parties were enthused at the prospects, and the Gwerders and I proceeded to plan their oral histories.

The Gwerders and their family corporations and partnerships own several farms, totalling some 3800 acres, and there are other nearby farms that are important parts of the family story. Joe and Carol gave me a wonderful, nearly day-long tour of their farms, affording me an opportunity to get a sense of the varieties of crops and operations the Gwerders have on their several properties. I visited in early March 2000, so spring farm work was underway. Hearing Joe and Carol talk about their lives gave me insights into the many layers of farm labor, contract services, and university extension that help make farming in the Delta possible as the Gwerders practice it; how the changes that California agriculture is now undergoing compare to changes that occurred during previous generations; and how community life in the Delta has changed as the economy has forced many small-town businesses to close and as large cities like Sacramento and Stockton have expanded their spheres of influence. Seeing the various farms, communities, islands, rivers, and reclamation features also helped me to understand the Gwerder operation spatially and thereby craft an outline and set of questions for the interviews that would hopefully help readers make sense of the complexity of an agricultural operation as large as the Gwerder farms. I sent Joe and Carol the outline in advance of the interviews so that they could begin collecting thoughts and memories for the recordings.

I interviewed the Gwerders in three sessions at their Walnut Grove home. We agreed that I would interview each of them individually. Then at the end of the process I would interview them jointly, and we would record a conversation about their views on the future of agriculture in California. The first interview session was 16 April 2001, during which Joe and Carol each described their families histories and explained many of their own early experiences. Because there are so many details to the history of Carol's family, she prepared a few notes to help guide her in that first session. During the second set of interviews on 30 April 2001, Joe and Carol each articulated experiences of their adult years including not only work on their farms but also participation in community organizations, raising their family, and recreational activities. I spent about two hours each with Joe and Carol during the first two sessions, and by the end of the second I had concluded my interview with Carol. The last interview took place on 20 June 2001. It featured a marathon session with Joe of more than three hours. Then we concluded the project with the joint portion of the interview. During each of the interview visits, Carol served a wonderful lunch, sometimes inside the house, once in their backyard, so I got to appreciate features of their home from several perspectives. They also sent me home with fresh produce from one of their farms, another treat associated with this particular set of oral histories. It was a great pleasure getting to know the Gwerders and helping to document their story as a contribution to the history of California.

Shortly after completing the interviews, my wife and I moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, which is where I edited the transcripts of the interviews. I was pleased to see that Joe and Carol each had spoken very clearly and that the transcripts required little editing to convert the oral accounts into readable written records. During the editing, I inserted the chapter and section headings. Then Joe and Carol reviewed the transcripts, correcting a few misspellings and clarifying a very few places in which the tapes were inaudible. Eleanor Swent of ROHO indexed the transcripts.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954 to augment through tape-recorded memoirs the Library's materials on the history of California and the West. Copies of all interviews are available for research use in The Bancroft Library and in the UCLA Department of Special Collections. The office is under the direction of Richard Cándida Smith, Director, and the administrative direction of Charles B. Faulhaber, James D. Hart Director of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Fredric L. Quivik  
Interviewer/Editor

May 2003  
Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office  
Room 486 The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name CAROLINE ANN GOODWIN GWERDER

Date of birth 1-4-34 Birthplace SAN FRANCISCO

Father's full name CLAY DONALD GOODWIN

Occupation FARMING \* LIVESTOCK Birthplace SANTA MARIA, CA

Mother's full name CAROLINE VIRGINIA MINOR GOODWIN

Occupation HOUSEWIFE/VOLUNTEER Birthplace STOCKTON, CA

Your spouse/partner FRANK JOSEPH GWERDER

Occupation RANCHER Birthplace SACRAMENTO, CA

Your children CAROLINE MURRIE GWERDER TWITCHELL

JAMES JOSEPH GWERDER, ANN ELIZABETH GWERDER DURST

Where did you grow up? STOCKTON, CA

Present community WALNUT GROVE, CA

Education EL DORADO SCHOOL STOCKTON, HIGH SCHOOL, SARAH DIX HAMLIN

SCHOOL, SAN FRANCISCO, U.C. BERKELEY - BA DEGREE

Occupation(s) HOUSEWIFE - VOLUNTEER  
COMMUNITY

Areas of expertise \_\_\_\_\_

Other interests or activities MUSIC, SKIING, TRAVEL, BRIDGE,  
BRANDCHILDREN

Organizations in which you are active DR PAUL BARNES COMMUNITY

PARK, JEAN MARIE COMMUNITY CENTER, NAF STOCK INVESTMENT  
CLUB

SIGNATURE Caroline A Gwerder

DATE: 6-18-02



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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Frank Joseph Gwerder  
 Date of birth 6/18/32 Birthplace SACRAMENTO CA  
 Father's full name FRANK CHARLES Gwerder  
 Occupation Rancher Birthplace Ryde CA  
 Mother's full name ANNA MURRICE SHEEHAN Gwerder  
 Occupation Housewife Birthplace SACRAMENTO CA  
 Your spouse/partner CAROLINE ANN. GOODWIN Gwerder  
 Occupation Housewife Birthplace SAN FRANCISCO  
 Your children CAROLINE Gwerder Twitchell  
JAMES JOSEPH Gwerder ANN Gwerder DURST  
 Where did you grow up? Walnut Grove, CA  
 Present community Walnut Grove, CA  
 Education Walnut Grove Grammar School Courtland High School UC Berkeley BS Degree Agricultural Economics  
 Occupation(s) Rancher

Areas of expertise BUSINESS AND RANCHING

Other interests or activities BANKING, HUNTING  
FISHING SKIING RIDING GRANDCHILDREN

Organizations in which you are active GRANDFATHERS CLUB,  
WINE & FOOD SOCIETY, RANCHEROS VISITADORES,

SIGNATURE Frank Joseph Gwerder DATE: 6/17/02





Gwerder Family Agricultural Lands





## INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE GOODWIN GWERDER

## I FAMILY BACKGROUND IN THE STOCKTON AREA

[Interview 1: April 16, 2001] ##<sup>1</sup>

Quivik: My name is Fred Quivik. This is April 16, 2001. I am at the home of Carol and Joe Gwerder for an oral history. We'll begin an oral history with Carol now. Good morning, Carol.

C.Gwerder: Good morning, Fred.

Quivik: I would like to start right off with this oral history by asking you when and where you were born?

C.Gwerder: I was born in 1934, January 4, in San Francisco, but my family lived in Stockton. My mother went to San Francisco for the birth of both my sister and myself because she was a patient of Dr. Knight Smith, an obstetrician at Dante Hospital. But I grew up in Stockton, California.

Quivik: Can you tell me your parents' names?

C.Gwerder: My father's name was Clay Donald Goodwin, and my mother's name was Caroline Virginia Minor Goodwin.

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<sup>1</sup>## This symbol indicates that a tape or tape segment has begun or ended. A guide to the tapes follows the transcript.

**Carol's Mother's Background: The Minor Family**

Quivik: Let's talk a little bit about their family backgrounds before we get to your childhood. Would you like to start with your mother's family?

C.Gwerder: My mother's family we have documented all the way back to the 1600s, when Maindort Doodes, a Dutch sea captain, settled in James City, Virginia, and was naturalized with his son, Doodes Minor, in 1673.

Then we can continue the documentation all the way up to my grandfather, who came to California in the late 1800s. He had an interesting background growing up near Charlottesville at Cismont on a plantation named Music Hall. He was born in 1854 and was educated privately with other family members at neighboring plantations. His family were slave owners. Upon the death of his great uncle, Dr. James Hunter Terrell, the will specified that the slaves be freed and sent to Liberia on a colonization experiment that was going on at that time.

So there were, I think, about sixty-four slaves who were sent to Liberia. Then my great-grandfather, the nephew and adopted son of James Terrell, was the executor of that estate, so these former slaves wrote back from Liberia requesting--the will also provided that their upkeep should be taken care of in Liberia--so they sent back requesting a keg of nails, and a barrel of flour, and such things. It also told of their adjustment to the life there. So they are very interesting letters which we have--my sister, and my cousin, and I--donated to the Manuscripts Department, Alderman Library at the University Of Virginia. My great grandfather's name was Dr. James Hunter Minor. He died in 1862.

After the war, my grandfather--the money was scarce, so he borrowed money, and attended the Virginia Military Institute, from which he graduated in 1876. From there he taught school and studied law at the University of Virginia with his cousin, who was Professor John B. Minor, and then came to California to Modesto because his brother had come previously. He began a law practice, and then moved up to Stockton, where he met my grandmother. Then we would get into my grandmother's side of the family, who were the Thompsons.

Quivik: Why don't you give us your grandfather's full name first?

C.Gwerder: My grandfather's full name was Richard Catlett Minor. We have documented ancestry to Meriwether Lewis, and James Monroe, and James Madison, and George Washington. We have quite a good genealogy record and some interesting documentation of the Minor family.

Quivik: Did I misspeak, was that your great-grandfather?

C.Gwerder: That was my grandfather.

Quivik: Grandfather who moved here?

C.Gwerder: Who moved here.

Quivik: And came to Modesto first?

C.Gwerder: To Modesto, and then up to Stockton, where he practiced law.

Quivik: You said after the war?

C.Gwerder: After the Civil War. About twenty years after.

### The Thompson Family

Quivik: Okay. And then he met your grandmother--and her name, and family background?

C.Gwerder: Her name was Mary Alice Thompson. Her ancestors were of Scotch-Irish descent and came to America from England before the Revolutionary War. My great-great-grandfather, John Thompson, who was the one who eventually came to California, was born in Tasewell County, Virginia, in 1803, and grew up on a stock farm, and was educated in private schools. The family then moved to Missouri, which I understand a lot of Virginia families did. At least most sides of our family did it that way. He married a woman named Mary Williams, and they had four children.

In 1849, he and his son Reese traveled to California by boat to explore the area, to see about moving the family. On their return trip their ship was the Yankee Blade, and it was sunk off Point Conception with 800 passengers and \$153,000 worth of gold on board. The Thompsons--my great-great-grandfather and his son somehow got over to the headlands, and were there for a week. They were eventually rescued and returned to San Francisco, and sailed on another vessel back to Missouri, where he then sold most of his possessions.

He and his wife and four children joined a wagon train in 1852 and drove cattle across the plains, his wife dying on the trail in Nevada. The family then settled in New Hope in the San Joaquin Valley, which is now a town named Thornton. Each man of the family settled on a section of state grant land of 160 acres, and they introduced the first Herefords to California. They had driven most of these cattle across the plains. They also raised grain and reported that the land was quite fertile, which--I guess the San Joaquin Valley had been reportedly thought to be arid.

They made periodic trips into Mexico to buy cattle and drove them north. During one of these trips, in 1862, they arrived home to find that squatters had built a cabin on a section of their land. So there being no courts or any way of settling this, they had a pistol duel. One of the Thompson men shot Mr. Thornton through the wrist to disable him with the gun. Years

later though, the families became friends—although Mr. Thornton had the town named after him, so he evidently became quite prominent.

This property is still maintained and farmed by our family today. This is where the Thompsons settled. He eventually—this is John Thompson—eventually acquired a total of 2,000 acres. He was purportedly a Douglas Democrat, and he believed in states' rights, and supported the Union during the Civil War. He served on the San Joaquin Board of Supervisors in 1856 and 1857, and was elected to the state legislature in 1862. John Thompson died in 1886 and was buried in the Woodbridge Cemetery. And then shall I go on to the next Thompson generation?

Quivik: When your, let's see—is he two generations ahead of your grandmother?

C.Gwerder: He was my great-great-grandfather. He was my grandmother's grandfather.

Quivik: Grandfather, right. So it sounds as if, when your grandfather Minor arrived and met your grandmother, she was part of a well, long established family in California.

C.Gwerder: Yes, very much so, pioneers in the San Joaquin Valley.

Quivik: Had they engaged in other pursuits than agriculture?

C.Gwerder: Not other than politics, being in the legislature. Also there was, well, I think the next generation was all agriculture, and they did have a butcher shop, and a slaughterhouse as well at that time.

Quivik: Where was that located?

C.Gwerder: That was in Woodbridge.

Quivik: Who was in the legislature?

C.Gwerder: That was John Thompson, this was my great-great grandfather. But his son, John Chatten Thompson, who was also born in Virginia and crossed the plains when he was seventeen—he was educated by tutors in Virginia, and then attended Grand River College in Missouri. His mother was the one who died on the trail.

They, this family as I said, settled in New Hope. And the Thompson family eventually moved to Woodbridge, because evidently New Hope, which is now Thornton, was totally flooded. I think it was regularly flooding every year, so the families moved away.

As a young man John Chatten Thompson was engaged in farming and horse breeding, and was one of the first growers of wine grapes in the Lodi-Stockton area, and was involved in the development of the first cooperative winery in that area. In 1861 he formed a partnership with James Folger, Thompson-Folger Company. He was also a founder and trustee of the Woodbridge College, and vice president and founder of the Bank of Lodi, among other civic

endeavors. In the 1930s, Thompson and Folger donated acreage for the original nine holes of the Woodbridge golf and country club. An inscription on the flagpole there reads, "They had vision to see, and courage to do, that others might enjoy the fruit of their labors."

Quivik: Do you know if there is any sense that that wine growers' or grape growers' cooperative still exists?

C.Gwelder: I don't think it does. Joe probably has more of a history of that. I don't think that co-op itself has continued.

Quivik: When your grandfather Minor, as a relative newcomer, met your grandmother Thompson, was there any sense at that time of, oh, that you've heard, that she should have been looking for a husband who was established in California society? Or was this still, as far as you understand, a frontier society?

C.Gwelder: As far as I understood, my great-grandmother, who was Caroline Rutledge Thompson, sort of picked him out, chose him. So she, I think, had met—she was originally from Virginia herself, so she approved of the Virginia connection evidently. Also, one of her sons was at that time city attorney, Edward Thompson in Stockton, and he was a friend of Richard Minor, and so that was a good connection. They used to have musical evenings as they did in the Victorian era, and invite a group of friends for Thursday evening concerts, and little parlor chamber music type of things. So I think they met at those several times.

### The Rutledge Family

Quivik: Then your grandparents, Minor, had at least a daughter. What was the nature of their family and life?

C.Gwelder: I wonder if now we have skipped Caroline Rutledge?

Quivik: Oh, sure! [laughter]

C.Gwelder: John Chatten Thompson, the one who settled in Woodbridge, married Caroline Rutledge in 1863. The Rutledge family had a similar kind of a background. They came from Scotland in the mid-18th century to Virginia. They ardently supported the cause of the colonists, and a revolutionary war musket has been passed down in the family.

Quivik: Who has that?

C.Gwelder: Somebody named Relfe. We have not made contact, but we should. He evidently has the family bible too, but we could probably track that down.

So John Rutledge, who was my great-great grandfather, was born in 1803 in Virginia, and married Nancy Fulton in 1829. And they moved on to Missouri, similar to what the Thompsons had done. In 1850 he made an initial trip to California--then he went back to bring his family west, and his pockets were reportedly filled with \$50 gold slugs, they called them.

His daughter, who was my great-grandmother Caroline Rutledge, was born in Missouri in 1843. She crossed the plains by wagon train in 1851 when she was eight years old. She was one of nine children.

She told of a buffalo stampede, and the terror of the onrushing hooves of so many animals, and how the men waved them off with their hats. They also had an encounter with Indians who encircled their wagons. The men went out and gave them tobacco and beads, and they departed in a friendly manner. To her, at eight years old, this trip was sheer pleasure. I guess she didn't worry about any of these dangers.

Her father was the leader of the group, which was composed of six families. He would ride ahead to locate water. When he found a river or a spring, he waved his hat to come on, indicating that all was safe. And Caroline, my great-grandmother, in her later years used to say that to her heaven was west. And she believed that when she was crossing to that other shore she would surely see her father waving to come on, that all was safe. I thought that was a nice message, and we have repeated that at family funerals at times.

Quivik: Now how have those memories of her trip as an eight-year-old across the continent been passed down? In what form?

C.Gwerder: Mainly just from stories, from generational stories around the Sunday dinner table, and that sort of thing. My great-aunt wrote some of these things down, fortunately, so we have some record of that.

Quivik: So would she have been the stepmother to your great-grandfather?

C.Gwerder: No. She was the wife of my great-grandfather. John Thompson who lost his wife on the trail did go back to Missouri, and married a widow by the name of Hardesty.

Quivik: Okay, I have the generations mixed up. Yes.

C.Gwerder: We really need a family tree here. [laughter] So this family, this Rutledge family, first settled in Mountain View, which was then a stop on the San Francisco Mission/San Jose stage route, where John Rutledge's brother had settled. Members of this wagon train were the Morse family who remained in Mountain View and founded the Ferry-Morse Seed Company. So it is interesting to have that connection. They remained good friends. In fact, there may be some relationship there which we have not documented.

The Rutledge family then moved on to the foothills between Ione and Jackson and engaged in cattle raising and gold and copper mining. About the time they moved there, their communities were changed from Bed Bug and Freeze Out, to Ione. Reportedly, someone had

read Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*, and decided to name the town after its heroine. Ione was a little more glamorous than Bed Bug.

Then Bottilleas--Jackson was named Bottilleas, a name suggested by the scores of bottles strewn about by Mexicans who had worked dry diggings there. The name was changed to Jackson by some soldiers who had served under Stonewall Jackson. The Jackson area, at the time the Rutledges moved there, consisted of three log huts and seven tents. Ione was more of a cattle center than a mining camp, where I think Jackson was more the mining.

Nancy and John Rutledge were founding members of the Presbyterian church there. Caroline rode her pony to school there, and she loved to tell of the New England school teacher who came to teach, and it was written on the board, "Lord Help The Poor Fool Who Has Come To Teach School In Ione." So I think it was a rather bleak existence there.

As a young woman in Ione she received many letters from suitors, which our family has retained. Some from the copper and silver mines in Nevada and Utah, and some before the Civil War, some from an ardent Yankee from Connecticut, and others from R.P. Bland, who was just as ardent for the Southern cause. R.P. Bland later ran for the presidential nomination, and was known as "Silver Dick" Bland in Congress for many years. So we have these letters which are very interesting.

Caroline told of their local colony being for the South, but she remembered that they had a mock funeral for Abraham Lincoln, and the church was all draped in black, and people wore black arm bands. She was a Lincoln supporter unlike most of the community, so she rather unpopularity attended the funeral for Abraham Lincoln.

She then renewed a friendship and correspondence with John C. Thompson, who was living in Woodbridge, and actually had been her neighbor in Missouri. As I said, the two families migrated from Virginia to Missouri before they crossed the plains.

Quivik: They first met in Missouri?

C.Gwerder: So they had first met in Missouri, and she was eight years younger, so there wasn't any serious friendship then.

Quivik: And a little girl.

C.Gwerder: And a little girl, yes. In 1863 they were married and set up housekeeping in Woodbridge. In 1867 her parents, Nancy and John Rutledge, sold their copper mine in Ione and moved to Woodbridge, where John and two of his sons opened a general store in a building on Main Street--which you visited with us, which is still owned by a family member, and is currently housing an antique shop. Nancy Rutledge died in 1882, and John Rutledge in 1884, and both are buried in the Woodbridge Masonic Cemetery.

The little town of Woodbridge--the Woods were friends of theirs, and it was Wood's Ferry. Mr. Woods evidently then put in the bridge, and the town was quite--they called it the

“Athens of the San Joaquin Valley,” because there eventually was a college there, and there was quite a bit of culture. The San Francisco Opera Company would come up and perform on the banks of the Mokelumne River and so forth.

So that is down to the John and Caroline Rutledge, who were married and lived in Woodbridge, and eventually moved to Stockton. Although my grandmother was born in Woodbridge, my grandmother Alice, Alice Thompson Minor--

Quivik: So they are the parents of your grandmother?

C.Gwelder: Of my grandmother, yes, right. You're doing very well! [laughter]

Quivik: And she grew up in Woodbridge?

C.Gwelder: So my grandmother grew up in Woodbridge, and attended--

Quivik: In what kind of a family?

C.Gwelder: There were two boys and two girls. They attended elementary school there. Then the Woodbridge College--which eventually became supported by the United Brethren Church--was formed, and they had quite a good--I guess it was a liberal arts education, you would call it. She graduated in 1886. I have her diploma, which says that there were six members of her graduating class. At the same time, her mother Caroline Rutledge studied with the professors' wives, and she received a diploma from the Chautauqua Course. That was a kind of a correspondence course I guess in those days, in about the same time, in 1886. She went down to San Jose to receive her diploma, which must have been quite an exciting thing for a grown woman, to go back and get a degree, or complete a course.

Quivik: Your grandmother's family were primarily farmers?

C.Gwelder: Except for those engaged in mining and one attorney, they were farmers and livestock breeders, all of them, agriculture. When the Thompson moved to Stockton in 1888 they built a large Victorian house on Vine Street with a barn. They kept a cow there, and had lovely rambling gardens which I remember very well. It was a fun house for a little girl to wander around in, with its formal parlor and dark green heavy draperies.

Quivik: This is your grandmother and grandfather after they were married?

C.Gwelder: This is my great-grandmother and great-grandfather--

Quivik: Oh! When she was still a child?

C.Gwelder: My grandmother lived there as a young woman. But my great-uncle continued to live there after the death of his parents. My great-grandmother, Caroline R. Thompson, died when I was six months old, in 1934. Her son, a bachelor, John H. Thompson, lived in the house until his death ten years later. I remember family Sunday dinners there, including San Francisco



relatives, the Haas family. Each lady would receive from Uncle John a monogrammed linen handkerchief as a favor at the long table, even the little girls.

My grandmother, Mary Alice Thompson, was born in 1865 in Woodbridge, as I said, and attended the college. She then attended Mills College, which was a young ladies' seminary at the time. She graduated from there about 1888.

Quivik: The Mills College in Oakland?

C.Gwerder: The Mills College in Oakland, yes.

Then in 1899 she married Richard Minor. They built their home across the street from her mother, who was still living. My grandmother lived in that home until her death in 1952.

Quivik: So your grandfather was an attorney in Stockton?

C.Gwerder: Yes. He was an attorney in Stockton.

Quivik: And your grandmother and grandfather raised their family in Stockton?

C.Gwerder: Yes. They had an only child, my mother.

Quivik: And her name?

C.Gwerder: Her name was Caroline Virginia Minor.

Quivik: Good one, okay. And so for her, are there any things you would like to say about her growing up years in Stockton?

C.Gwerder: Mother went to Stockton High School, which was about four blocks from her house, graduated there. Then she graduated from Mills College in 1922. She and my father were married in 1929 in Stockton. Mother was very active civically, and served on the Board of Governors at Mills College and had many community responsibilities in Stockton.

Quivik: What was her degree in?

C.Gwerder: I guess liberal arts, and she also earned a teaching credential.

Quivik: Was it still considered a girls', or a young womens' seminary in nineteen--?

C.Gwerder: It was a women's college, liberal arts college.

Quivik: And so that she was the second generation to attend Mills College?

C.Gwerder: She was the second generation. Her aunt at that time was serving on the Board of Trustees--

Quivik: At Mills?

C.Gwerder: At Mills. So mother had a lot of very close associations with Mills College. Eventually my sister went to Mills. You call them "Bent Twigs" when you are an offspring of Mills, but I sort of broke the mold there.

Quivik: Your sister did, but you broke the mold?

C.Gwerder: My sister went for two years, and then she went to Berkeley.

Quivik: Okay. So we've got your parents marrying in 1920--

C.Gwerder: '29.

### **Carol's Father's Background: The Goodwin Family**

Quivik: '29. That's a good point then to shift to your father's family background.

C.Gwerder: The Goodwin ancestors immigrated from England to Pennsylvania in the 1700s. The next generation lived in Tennessee, and Nebraska, and Iowa, and Missouri, before coming to California. This is my father's paternal side. My great-grandfather, whose name was David Boone Goodwin, traced some ancestry to Daniel Boone. My grandfather, James Franklin Goodwin, was born in Nebraska Territory where Omaha now stands, and is reported to have been the first white child born in that region in 1855.

In the spring of 1856 the family started for California in wagons drawn by oxen. At that time Indians were endeavoring to prevent the invasion of the West by white men. Their train had encounters with hostile Indians. They arrived at Honey Lake, Lassen County, and spent the winter. In 1857 they moved on to Suisun Bay, Solano County, but back to Honey Lake the following year, because of more abundant pastures.

His father, it would be my great-grandfather, David Boone Goodwin, was a friend of Pete Lassen. They evidently went on prospecting trips to Black Rock together. On one of these trips Pete Lassen reportedly encountered an Indian and won a hand-to-hand battle. During a winter blizzard the family had given shelter to a Paiute Indian, and he later repaid their kindness by informing them that the Indians were about to eradicate their settlement. So David Goodwin informed the other settlers, and they all fled to a nearby stockade. The next morning they looked out to see their homes all in flames. So they narrowly escaped that.

The family sold that ranch and cattle, and returned then to Suisun, Solano County, where typhoid claimed the life of my grandfather, James's mother, at age thirty-six. She would have been the wife of David Goodwin. My grandfather was then eight years old. One sister also died of typhoid at that time.

So the father then moved them back to--they called it Lake's Port; I think today it is Lakeport, Lake County--in 1863. And that was the driest winter ever known in California. Having no railroads for transportation, many livestock died on the ranges that year. They were spared up there, because they were higher up, and they had some pasture. They escaped that drought.

And in 1869 the Goodwin family, along with a surge of settlers, moved towards southern California. There were eight wagons that followed that trail. At that time, Los Angeles was populated by about 5,000 people.

So now we are to my grandfather, whose name was James Franklin Goodwin. At sixteen, in 1876, he moved to Santa Maria, and worked on a Newhall ranch, Todos Santos, near Casmalia. He reported that the valleys were very well planted with bounteous wheat--I think 75 percent wheat, and 25 percent barley--but that year the wheat was stricken with rust, and was unfit to harvest.

On arriving in the Santa Maria Valley, he noted that the land was fertile, but was treeless and windswept, so not very suitable to accommodate crops, so he became engaged in the sale of trees and seeds from a San Francisco company. At that time fifty to 100 people lived in the Santa Maria area, so he was really a pioneer there.

He planted over 40,000 eucalyptus trees in 1879 and 1880 in the Santa Maria area. Santa Maria was then called Central City. The seed cost \$16 a pound and contained 44,000 seeds, and they planted them in beds like cabbage. When they had six leaves, then they transplanted them. He furnished and planted trees at one cent each, and two giant trees in the front of the Santa Maria Inn still stand as far as I know.

Quivik: So he was planting trees eventually for people who wanted those eucalyptus trees on their property?

C.Gwender: Well, I think it was to increase the production of the valley. Then he also planted one of the first apricot orchards. After he planted these eucalyptus, evidently other people planted cypress trees, and they started--he had one of the--

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C.Gwender: He furnished and planted trees at one cent each, and two of these giant trees still stand in front of the Santa Maria Inn. He was one of the pioneers who really brought the production--the Santa Maria Valley into production, because of his tree planting. And he also was farming. He also opened a variety store in 1878 and a butcher shop, and a post office. Up until then people had to go twenty miles to Guadalupe to get their mail. So he opened a post office and served as the postmaster from 1879 to 1885.

Evidently in the variety store and butcher shop that he had, he couldn't afford to have very much inventory, so he had a lot of empty cans on the shelves to make it look like he was

sort of prosperous. But many nights he slept on the counter there, because he had no real home other than the store.

He also assisted in incorporating the Bank Of Santa Maria in 1890, and served as its cashier until 1903. When oil was discovered in the area he invested in oil mining, and became part of the Pinal Oil Company, which was eventually sold to Union Oil Company of California. He also invested in oil property in Loving County, Texas. So then he and my grandmother, who was the former Sarah Belle McGaugh, were married.

Quivik: May I ask you a question about your grandfather Goodwin and the tree planting?

C.Gwelder: Yes.

Quivik: There was quite a movement in California at one time to try to establish settlements of families who were engaged in horticulture, fruit growing, and there was a recognition that there was an absence of indigenous trees that could provide shelter for those fruit trees--and that is one of the reasons that eucalyptus was brought in--

C.Gwelder: Yes, I think so.

Quivik: --and it was sort of a social movement. Do you know to what extent he was part of that social movement, or how he learned those ideas?

C.Gwelder: I don't know, but I think from having worked on the Newhall ranch, he gained some experience in it. Because at that time--he was sixteen when he started working on the Newhall ranch--then it wasn't until, well, it was three years later that he started this planting. So he probably got his foundation from the Newhall experience.

Quivik: Would you say that his planting provided the financial basis for the rest of his activities?

C.Gwelder: Yes, definitely, rather than the variety store and the butcher's shop, which didn't last very long evidently. So I think then, with this planting of the one-cent-each trees, and maybe this apricot orchard--and he must have engaged in some other kind of agricultural activities--. He also had the first pump for irrigation in the area. He was then able to invest in this oil mining which had just been discovered in the area. So then he and my grandmother--

Quivik: Her name was--?

C.Gwelder: Her name was Sarah Belle McGaugh. They had also moved from Lake County to Los Angeles when the Goodwin family moved.

Quivik: Did they know each other?

C.Gwelder: And they knew each other from Lake County. Her father was of Irish descent. They had crossed the plains to the gold fields from Missouri in 1849. So they had a similar type of experience--on to Lake County, and then down to the Los Angeles area. They, in their later

years—J.F. Goodwin, who was my grandfather, after this investing in the oil and all that, he invested in property—7,000 acres in San Luis Obispo County, at Pozo, and on the Carrizo Plain.

The Carrizo Plain acreage, which is 5,000 acres, was sold in 1990 to the Nature Conservancy. And it is famous today for its beautiful wild flowers and the preservation of the kit fox. He also bought property at Farmington, 3,000 acres, east of Stockton. His son Donald, my father, came north then to farm that property. So that was how my father arrived in Stockton.

Quivik: So he bought that when your father was a young man, and it was essentially a farm that your father was running?

C.Gwelder: Yes, right.

Quivik: Where was your father born?

C.Gwelder: My father was born in Santa Maria. Then the family moved to Los Angeles, his mother and father moved to Los Angeles, probably about 1920. So he moved with them to Los Angeles and then came north to farm. Before that, he did spend some time at the Carrizo Plain, which he reported was beautiful. It was all dry-land farming, wheat, and he came to love that area as well.

Quivik: And where is that area?

C.Gwelder: That is in San Luis Obispo County. It is high desert and lots of rattlesnakes. [laughs] No water. Patches of loco weed were frequently cut by hand.

Quivik: So did he spend most of his time growing up in one of those farm areas, or in Los Angeles?

C.Gwelder: He spent his time, I would say, in Santa Maria basically, then was educated—he came to boarding school in Belmont, and then attended Berkeley for a short time, and went on to Davis because of the agricultural program. I'm not sure that he graduated. He served in the First World War, and was sent to France—just arrived at the time of the Armistice, so he didn't see any action in the war. Then in 1929—

Oh, and when he first came to Stockton—I thought this was interesting—he lived with the Holt family. That was Benjamin Holt, who developed the Caterpillar tractor. So Mr. Holt, Sr., and Mrs. Holt had a house with several young bachelors. Their son and his wife lived there, and their other son who was a bachelor, and my father. So it was quite a lively place.

Quivik: So your father moved to that area to operate this farm for—?

C.Gwelder: Moved to Stockton to operate this for his father.

Quivik: Did he eventually take over that farm?

**C.Gwelder:** He managed it for the Goodwin family. Eventually we divided the properties between my cousins, and my sister, and myself. My sister, Alice Goodwin Lenz and I, and one cousin, kept the northern California property, and the other cousins took the southern California properties, which were the San Luis Obispo properties, and also some property in Santa Barbara County--Suey and Casmalia. There was 1,400 acres in there that my grandfather had purchased. It is kind of amazing to me to see how people really could, in those days, start out with planting trees, and end up acquiring quite a bit of property--it was possible, much more possible.

**Quivik:** Given your grandfather Goodwin's experience in farming in southern California, and I guess you consider it central California perhaps, do you know what attracted him to buy land in the Stockton area?

**C.Gwelder:** It was for the agriculture. He was also always looking for oil property. There never was any discovered there. I think it was basically for agriculture that he came north. He wanted to come north. Everybody has this kind of a story--but he had the opportunity either to buy the farming property or he could buy something which has now become Pacific Avenue, the "Miracle Mile" in Stockton. [laughter] He said he didn't want to be in the real estate business, he wanted to be in agriculture, so he went out east of Stockton.

He died in 1928, and my grandmother Sarah Belle Goodwin in 1946. Before her death my grandmother gave stock in the company to all of our generation, the J.F. Goodwin Company, so that we were all owners. She hoped that we would take more of an interest in it, which we have.

So after my father died in 1960, Joe was involved in the management of this Goodwin property.

**Quivik:** How did your parents meet?

**C.Gwelder:** They met in Stockton through the Holt family. They were married in 1929 and lived there -- my mother died in 1950. My father remarried, and he died in 1960. As well as the farming and management, he was president of a farm implement company that the Thompson family had been involved in, the H.C. Shaw Company. Upon my father's death, Joe assumed the vice presidency of that company. There was another family company, the Stockton Iron Works, which--I don't know if this is the time to go into those--they are ag. related properties.

**Quivik:** Well sure. These are properties that your--?

**C.Gwelder:** These are businesses that the family--

**Quivik:** Businesses that your parents were--?

**C.Gwelder:** Yes, that--were involved in.

**Quivik:** Let's start with--your parents were married in '29?

C.Gwerder: '29.

Quivik: And they met through the Holt family.

C.Gwerder: Yes.

### Carol's Childhood in Stockton

Quivik: Tell me a little bit about their early married life and the growth of their family, which includes you.

C.Gwerder: My sister, Alice Belle Goodwin, was born in 1930, and I was born in 1934. Stockton at that time was considered a farming community and had only 54,000 people. So it was sort of like growing up in, a little bit like Mayberry, because I could roller skate to school, four blocks very safely, and I could ride my bicycle, and I could walk to my grandmother's house for lunch everyday.

Quivik: You mean 5,400?

C.Gwerder: 54,000.

Quivik: It was 54,000, okay.

C.Gwerder: 54,000. Yes, because during the war it grew to 71,000. Now I think it is up to 300,000, at least.

Quivik: How did the Depression affect that kind of an agricultural community?

C.Gwerder: You know, I'm not quite sure, because I, being born in 1934--I don't think it affected us, because of the agriculture. I never had a sense of the Depression. People talk about themselves being Depression babies, but by the time I was old enough to be interested in such things nobody talked much about it. Although we were always cautioned to turn off the lights, and to clean our plates, and "think of the starving Armenians." Thrift was always important. Also, if a "hobo" came to the door, he was given a sandwich.

Quivik: Do you have a recollection as you were growing up of being--I suppose if I were to use the terms a "farm kid" or a "townie," would--?

C.Gwerder: [laughs] Definitely town, because the ranch was oh, probably fifteen or twenty miles away. And then my father was also managing the Thompson-Folger Ranch at that time, and that was the other direction, about twenty miles. So we would ride out there with him on Sundays, and he would do his managing of that ranch on Sundays. We would go down in the summers to the

southern California properties, and stay there with the rest of the family, and go out to the Carrizo Plain. But basically I grew up in town. I would say I was more of a city girl.

Quivik: And what kinds of things did your mother do?

C.Gwerder: Mother--well, then the war came along, and mother had a Victory Garden, she volunteered at the Red Cross as a Gray Lady, and at the Blood Bank, and--

Quivik: Can you explain what a Gray Lady is?

C.Gwerder: A Red Cross Gray Lady was a middle-aged lady who went out to the hospitals and read, or wrote letters for service men. They had a gray--kind of a cape that they wore, and a cap. It was quite impressive to me, at least in that time. Should I talk a little about the war, my memories of the Second World War?

Quivik: Yes, if you want.

C.Gwerder: I was ages seven to eleven, so I remember that we had to wear dog tags that had your blood type on it, and we had air raid drills, and you'd get under the desk. Nothing that ever frightened us. Somehow I think we were fairly naive--of course, at that age. My father was a block warden, and he had a helmet, and he'd go around when we'd have a blackout drill, and he'd go around to be sure everyone had their blackout shades. We'd have blackout shades down every night. We very often entertained servicemen from a nearby air base at Lathrop. Several young men would be invited for a Sunday or holiday dinner and Mother would include some young girls--family friends. At least one occasion resulted in a romance and marriage.

I had three first cousins who were killed in the war. One was a pilot in the first B-29 raid over Tokyo, and one was a sailor on a navy ship off Guadalcanal, and the third was in a test flight over India. So that was a very tragic time, of course, for our family. I remember the Japanese going to the internment camp, and I know that they had to stay at the fair grounds in stalls for several weeks before they were moved. I didn't know any from my school personally.

Quivik: Were there quite a few Japanese living in the Stockton community?

C.Gwerder: There were about 6,000, I think, at that time.

I did christen a minesweeper in the Stockton channel with a bottle of champagne. That was pretty exciting. So, and rationing, and--but somehow we--my grandmother would give us her shoe stamps, and somebody would give us some sugar for Christmas or something, so we didn't suffer very much with that.

My mother had a huge Victory Garden, forty tomato plants, and I know we spent a lot of time delivering vegetables around everywhere, because we had an overabundance of them. We would play kick-the-can in the street at night, which you would never do in Stockton today. But everything was quite safe, and quite secure.



Quivik: Did the Japanese families in the area live in Stockton, or were they on small farms around Stockton?

C.Gwelder: I think there were quite a few who--well, both, I guess. But I think there were quite a few who lived in town.

Quivik: Do you remember what the feeling of the community was as the Japanese families were being moved, first to the fairgrounds, and then moved away?

C.Gwelder: Yes. I remember a great sadness about it. I know you will find that Joe--I mean although he felt sad about it--but they felt in the Walnut Grove community, that it was a matter of safety. We didn't have any of that feeling in Stockton. We went to a home, and bought some bicycles from a Japanese family that was moving away. That was very sad to me, to think that we were buying their bicycles and going to be riding them. So my mother took to riding a bicycle, which I was quite proud of.

Then I went to high school, eight blocks. I could walk to high school--couldn't ride a bike anymore because that was not appearing to be very cool. You would rather walk than ride at that time. This was after the war.

Quivik: During the war, how did you come to be able to christen a ship?

C.Gwelder: My father knew someone from the Colberg Boatworks, and they were looking for a couple of little girls, and so another ten-year-old and I christened the ship. It was very exciting.

Quivik: And do you remember what kind of a ship it was?

C.Gwelder: It was a minesweeper with an iron hull.

Quivik: Do you know any of the people who were involved in the shipyard? Was that the family connection your father had?

C.Gwelder: The Stockton Iron Works, which was a company that the family had a part ownership in during the war years--they did have some contracts with the navy, and they repaired winches, and manufactured some kind of decking. So all that Stockton waterfront was involved, that channel was involved in quite a bit of war work there, war manufacturing. The Stockton Iron Works was next door to Colberg Boatworks.

Quivik: This was a company that before the war was primarily producing agricultural implements?

C.Gwelder: Yes. The Stockton Iron Works was established in 1868 and was incorporated in 1899. My grandmother, Alice Thompson Minor, her sister, Mabel T. Haas, and her two brothers, John H. Thompson and Edward R. Thompson, purchased a controlling interest in the company in about 1899. They then purchased a city block on the waterfront and constructed a plant of steel, and brick, and corrugated iron. The principal business was the building of dredges. It was

considered the pioneer dredge builder of the Pacific Coast. The reclamation of the delta islands, that was their big business.

They also had some business in the Mother Lode with gold dredges. They developed the clamshell bucket, which was a dredging tool. Then during World War II, they had some government contracts manufacturing decking for the navy. I still have retained an interest in that property, which is now just warehousing and some Head Start offices. The property has been designated as an historic landmark. There is a nice little brick building on the corner. It has a marker on it.

Quivik: And the company is no longer active?

C.Gwerder: The company is no longer active, just the space is leased out. Currently, the city of Stockton has expressed an interest in the property for redevelopment. They intend to test the soil for toxic waste and we are concerned about what will be found. Then the other company, the H.C. Shaw company, that the family was involved in, was started in 1854--sold hardware, and crude implements and supplies. Then they adapted to the needs of the farmer, and began in 1876 to manufacture reversible plows. They had a catalog at that time that evidently was hand bound, in 1876. In that they had gang plows, wagons, and steam engines, Buckeye mowers--you probably know what all these are.

Quivik: Not the Buckeye mower. [laughter]

C.Gwerder: Self-rake reapers, and sulky rigs, and headers, and separators, and they had John Deere mowing plows, and Studebaker wagons. In 1898 they became engaged in wholesaling as well as manufacturing, and phased out the manufacturing in the early 1900s. Then in the late--in 1898 the Thompson family had bought an interest in the company, and eventually bought out the remaining stockholders. It was until 1975 that the company engaged in wholesale tractor and implement sales.

My great-uncle, John H. Thompson, was the president from 1929 until my father assumed the presidency in 1942. Then when my father died in 1960, my brother-in-law, Howard Lenz, and Joe took over those management positions, Howard Lenz as president, Joe as vice president.

Quivik: Do you have examples of some of those old catalogs?

C.Gwerder: I don't have a catalog, but I have a picture of one of the plows.

Quivik: Or do people in the family have records of--?

C.Gwerder: We have records, we have some records.

Quivik: --of that company?

**C.Gwerder:** Yes. We do. Then in 1975 a new division, the Farm and Industrial Supply Company, FISCO, was formed, and eventually there were eight retail stores in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys. That distributorship has recently been discontinued and the stores have been sold to a larger company. Both of these companies--well, no, I guess just the Shaw company became a member of the 100 Year Club in 1962, and Thompson-Folger in 1963. Well, we'll go into those 100 Year Clubs I guess later, because we have Gwerder Farms also.

**Quivik:** What were your interests as a high school girl?

**C.Gwerder:** I went to Stockton High School for two years. Then I went to boarding school in San Francisco at the Sara Dix Hamlin School on Broadway. The school was an old Flood mansion, a very beautiful old building, and our classrooms were in what had been the bedrooms. We had lovely fireplaces, not working, but--there were thirteen boarders, and we occupied the third floor. Each bedroom had a marble washbasin, and most rooms had a beautiful view of San Francisco Bay. My interests there--I took riding lessons in Golden Gate Park, and the usual athletics, and so forth. I then went on to--or do we want to--?

**Quivik:** Let's stick with high school here and go back to Stockton. What were your interests as a high school girl in Stockton before you went to boarding school?

**C.Gwerder:** I took all the usual lessons of dancing and piano, and--I actually studied piano for fifteen years altogether--and so I was quite interested, always interested in music--took some tennis lessons, and sewing lessons, belonged to Rainbow Girls, which is a Masonic organization, and other school and social clubs. I was a cheerleader. We also had lots of dances and parties. At a friend's father's ranch on a delta island, we would sit on the riverbank of the San Joaquin and fish for catfish. Just had a very happy time with lots of friends and lots of family friends, and a very, I would say a rather sheltered existence.

**Quivik:** Were you--would you consider yourself, when you were in Stockton, to have been a serious student?

**C.Gwerder:** Yes, yes. I was always a serious student, even won a national Latin exam.

**Quivik:** In, that would have been, I guess the late forties?

**C.Gwerder:** Late forties, yes.

**Quivik:** Do you remember, as a high school student in Stockton, what you thought your life might become when you grew up to be a woman, what your outlook or prospects were then?

**C.Gwerder:** I thought I would like to be a teacher, and I knew I wanted to go to college. I don't remember having a lot of big goals like some of the women do today, because career development for women was rather modest, I would say.

**Quivik:** You said you had a sheltered life then. How did that manifest itself?

**C.Gwerder:** Well, I just mean that I didn't have any real worries--and the same way in college. I think we were a generation after the war where there was a certain affluence and peace, and it was just a time of--well, in fact, when I got to college they called it "student apathy." And maybe we were a little bit that way too, where you just went along happily, and didn't worry too much about concerns of poverty, and famine, and that sort of thing.

**Quivik:** Then do you know whose idea it was for you to go to boarding school?

**C.Gwerder:** Yes. It was definitely my parents'. So they gave me several choices, and I chose to go to Hamlin's, because you could come home every weekend, and I had a great-aunt who lived a couple of blocks away, and I spent a lot of time at her house. Her name was Mrs. Edward Haas. She was Mabel Thompson Haas, my grandmother's sister. She always surrounded herself with a lot of visiting intellectual and cultured people. She was a very inspiring woman. So I spent a great deal of time there. I could go--her driver would pick me up and take me to my piano lessons at the Stanford Court Apartments. I'd get on the bus and come home on the weekends. When leaving the school, we were required to wear a dressy hat and to be otherwise properly dressed in a skirt, et cetera. Our uniforms were navy blue pleated skirts, white middy blouses, and silk ties in different colors according to class. We attended the opera, and museums, and so forth. I had a very wonderful education, both at Stockton High School, and at Hamlin's. I really had some very fine teachers.

**Quivik:** Do you remember why your parents wanted you to go to boarding school?

**C.Gwerder:** Stockton High School had become a high school of 3,000, and they felt I needed to broaden my horizons. My sister had gone to Dominican Convent for two years, and so I just went along, I didn't question whether I was going or not! [laughs] In those days, most parents made all the important decisions.

**Quivik:** So you don't remember either being enthusiastic or reluctant, you just--?

**C.Gwerder:** I was reluctant, but I was resigned to the fact that I was going. I did love language. I studied Latin and French--those were favorite subjects of mine. And as I say, had some very fine teachers and some very fine experiences there. Team sports were very important--volleyball, tennis, and basketball tournaments with other private schools. I was the school athletic manager in my senior year.

**Quivik:** What kind of a neighborhood did your family live in in Stockton?

**C.Gwerder:** We lived in an older part of Stockton. It was four blocks south of Harding Way. So we did not have a lot of my friends in the neighborhood. So I would ride my bicycle eight or ten blocks and visit all my friends. As I say, you could run around in the summer evenings and not worry. But then I got my drivers license at age fourteen and I had an antiquated farm pickup at my disposal. So I could go around in that, and I became very popular because of the pickup.

**Quivik:** What kinds of things did you and your friends like to do in that antiquated pickup?

C.Gwelder: We liked to go to the drive-in, and go out to a friend's who lived a mile out in the country, or swim at the Stockton Country Club, and play tennis. There was a local soda fountain on Pacific Avenue. I attended Sunday school and church at First Presbyterian. We would meet our friends over there. I did a little bit of volunteer work at the Stockton Children's Home. I didn't go to summer school in those days. The San Joaquin County Fair and the Haggin Museum were big attractions. We always had a box at the horse show. With my family, I spent a large part of the summer at Tahoe, at the Pozo Ranch, and in Los Angeles. We had two family trips to Canada.

Quivik: And then you said drive-in. Do you mean to eat, or the drive-in movies?

C.Gwelder: To eat. But we also would go to the drive-in movies at night, but that would be with a date.

### The Hamlin School In San Francisco

Quivik: So you had an expansion of cultural opportunities in San Francisco at the boarding school--?

C.Gwelder: I did, yes.

##

Quivik: How was the change in academic setting from the large high school at Stockton to the small boarding school of, did you say sixteen students, twelve, or--?

C.Gwelder: Thirteen boarders. But in the school--there was a grammar school and a high school, mostly of course day students. In the high school, well, in my class there were thirty students, thirty girls. So definitely it was much more academic. With the small classes you had to be more prepared than I certainly had to be in a large class at Stockton High School. But it was a very very fine experience, and I was very happy that I attended there. And then the beautiful surroundings of the classrooms, and the lovely dining room overlooking the bay. They have since added more classrooms, but at that time we were just in the one building. At graduation, I was awarded the Stanwood Cup, given to the student "Who best exemplifies the values and standards of the school." The inscription read, "To do justice, to love mercy, to do more than is required of thee and to walk humbly with thy God." Good words to live by. My fiftieth reunion is coming up in June.

Quivik: You said your sister went to a convent?

C.Gwelder: She went to Dominican Convent for two years, her last two years in San Rafael.

Quivik: Is your family Roman Catholic?

C.Gwerder: No, they weren't. She had some friends going there, and I think that was the reason she went. In Stockton, I attended the First Presbyterian Church, which had been actually--the Thompson family were founding members of First Presbyterian. They had donated the pipe organ in 1928 in memory of Edward Rutledge Thompson, my grandmother's brother, who died at an early age. He had been the organist there, so they donated a Skinner organ, and it is the only one of its kind that is still in use today west of the Mississippi. It is a beautiful pipe organ, and it is a lovely church, the First Presbyterian Church, a very vital church today as well.

Quivik: So with a Presbyterian family, was there any response to your sister going to a convent?

C.Gwerder: Yes, there was. My grandmother really had to kind of get used to that idea, because I think at that time, religion was an issue. In fact, when Joe and I were married they called it a "mixed marriage," you know [laughs] but evidently everyone got used to the idea of my sister going there, that was fine.

Quivik: Was that ever a thought for you?

C.Gwerder: Of going there?

Quivik: Of going to a convent?

C.Gwerder: Not after I saw how cold and [laughs] and bare I thought it was, although she had a wonderful education there. But they could only come home every six weeks, and I thought, "I don't want that!" And I just liked the idea of going to San Francisco.

Quivik: What year did you graduate?

C.Gwerder: I graduated in 1951.

### College Years at the University of California at Berkeley, 1951-1955

Quivik: And then after high school, what was your next step?

C.Gwerder: Then I went to University of California, Berkeley, and I became a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority, and eventually served as president. We had a very peaceful time also in college there. The only demonstrations of any kind, or any kind of mass hysteria, would be a panty raid, or a water fight, and we were rather bland about politics. Although I worked on the presidential campaign for Eisenhower. Communism was a known threat, and the Greek system mobilized in an effort to defeat a suspected subversive group called "SLATE" running for ASUC offices in 1954. Also, the McCarthy era was in full force, and we did expect that there might be a communist on every corner. The Korean War had broken out, but most everyone I knew had a student deferment, so they were able to stay in college. And I had a wonderful education. I am

one of twenty-eight family members who have attended the university, and so I have a lot of feeling and respect for it in lots of ways.

Quivik: When I asked you this question before, I don't believe we were on tape. Who is the earliest member of your family to go to the university?

C.Gwerder: Oh, that was Edward Franklin Haas, who graduated in 1892. He was an engineering student who eventually became involved in the reclamation of a great many of the delta islands here. He graduated in 1892, and he was the graduation speaker to his class of fifty graduates. Then the next one was--

Quivik: And that is a new name, so what is his relation?

C.Gwerder: He married Caroline Mabel Thompson, my grandmother's sister. Then my aunt on my father's side graduated around 1910. I have some pictures of her graduation, the girls in white dresses and carrying parasols, and the president, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, was the graduation speaker at that graduation. So it is fun to trace all this back.

Quivik: Did you live on campus?

C.Gwerder: I lived in the Pi Phi house the whole time.

Quivik: Did each sorority in those days have something about it that it thought distinguished it from the others? What was the character of your sorority?

C.Gwerder: Well, we tried to contribute some service to the community. Many of us worked through the Y.W.C.A. at some of the projects in Oakland, did some kind of volunteering with children. We had several members who served in campus positions. We were very concerned about our academic standard, and that was a big push. We competed seriously in intramural sports.

Quivik: As a sorority?

C.Gwerder: As a sorority, yes. Lots of wonderful friendships that I've continued today. One fun thing we had was an octet, of which I was a member. We won the Spring Sing at the University of California in 1952, and we have never gotten over it! Whenever we meet, which we do maybe once every two years, we all burst right into song.

Quivik: What kind of singing was that?

C.Gwerder: It was like barber shop.

Quivik: Sweet Adelines?

C.Gwerder: That kind of thing.

Quivik: What was your major?

C.Gwerder: My major was education, but you had to major in general curriculum, and then take education courses on the side, take extra units in education. When Joe graduated in 1954 and took a physical for the army and found that he had a medical deferment, we decided to be married in April. So I had to speed up my college career and graduate early in January, instead of June.

I think we had to be married in April because of planting and harvest, and hunting. Now it seems as if I could have done my practice teaching, but instead I graduated in January, and then I came back to Stockton. My father was impressed with my diploma from the university, my B.A. degree, but he said, "You really have no job skills, so now you must go to Humphrey's School of Business for a six-week course." So I did that, and then we were married in April of '55.

Quivik: Humphrey's School of Business was in Stockton?

C.Gwerder: In Stockton.

Quivik: When you were at the university, initially were you intending to be a teacher?

C.Gwerder: Yes, and also I was thinking of--which I still like the idea of--counseling, or physical therapy, or psychiatric social worker. I was very interested in psychology and all of those courses. And also I loved, particularly, all the English classes. I had some very wonderful professors. I would say English and psychology were my two favorite subjects. Dr. Mark Schorer and Dr. Jayne were excellent in the English department. Dr. Hine's geology class was held at Wheeler Auditorium which, at that time, held 800 to 1,000 students. He led the class in Cal songs on Friday afternoons. Dr. Towster's lectures on Communist propaganda were exciting. I believe Cal's tuition in the fifties was \$37.50 a semester.

Quivik: What were the interests of University of California students in those days, if not politics?

C.Gwerder: Yes, well--

Quivik: Other than academics.

C.Gwerder: Other than academics? We had an awful lot of fun. We did a lot of things in groups, and we'd come up to the delta and go water skiing, and we'd go on spring breaks down to Balboa Island, and just did a lot of congenial things. Intramural sports were fun. Picnics at Tilden Park, tennis--. Many many strong lifelong and treasured friendships were established at this time. A special one is with the Brecks, who are responsible for this oral history project. Helen Bragg Breck and I met on the street corner the first week of class in 1951, and Joe and Beau had met the year before as freshmen. Over the fifty years, we have enjoyed annual out of state ski trips with the Brecks, as well as several European trips, and many other outings.

Quivik: Were you a member of other campus organizations besides your sorority?



**C.Gwerder:** I was a member of the Ace Of Clubs, which was an inter-sorority group, a social organization. And Pan-Hellenic, the Greek system's overseeing body. As sorority president, I attended meetings and also regularly met with university officials at the deans' offices.

**Quivik:** How did you travel back and forth between Berkeley and Stockton?

**C.Gwerder:** When I was a freshman, my sister was also a student, and so she had a car. After she graduated I had my father's old Pontiac sedan that I used to drive back and forth.

**Quivik:** Was that fairly typical that students had vehicles?

**C.Gwerder:** Not very. Parking was always limited, and so--no, there were not that many cars as far as our group, so I made quite a lot of trips to the airport and so forth, taking friends.

**Quivik:** As a college student were there, I'll call them, opportunities or resources in the Bay Area that you were anxious to avail yourself of?

**C.Gwerder:** I didn't do so many cultural things as I did at Hamlin's at that time. We gathered together at football games and fraternity and sorority events, formal dances, Big Game parties, theme costume parties, that type of activity, I think, more than the cultural--. I was always busy in my sorority with offices, and those took up quite a bit of time. As I say, we did put a lot of import on our studies and study hall. We also held faculty dinners, mothers' club fashion shows, father-daughter dinners, house formals. Rush season was busy with practicing for the entertainment, and chapter and house council meetings were held at least weekly. In those days--they don't have any lock-out now--we had 2:30 a.m. lock-out, which to me now seems like--I can't imagine that we stayed up until 2:30 and wanted to stay up until 2:30 a.m.

**Quivik:** Describe what a lock-out is.

**C.Gwerder:** A lock-out was that you had to be in the house--you signed out where you were going, and you had to be home on the weekends by 2:30 a.m. and sign in. Somebody was checking the door, and then locked the door. Up until that time the house was totally open, all the time. On week nights, if you had a B average, and you were--other than a freshman, you could be out until 1:00 a.m., and the same situation, you signed in and out. So we always knew where everyone was.

That is something today that I worry a little bit about with the students. I mean, nobody knows if you are missing for several days or not. We were very structured as far as watching out for our fellow sorority members. I mean we watched out for grades, and morals, and everything, the works. We were very parental. A slogan was, "Remember who you are and what you represent."

**Quivik:** Are there ways that you competed with other sororities?

**C.Gwerder:** Oh yes. We had floats for rallies, and in the octet we competed with other sororities and fraternities. With the octet we did go around to the Naval Hospital and different places, and

performed and entertained, which was fun. There were powder puff football games and intramural sports, that sort of thing, as far as competition. We seriously competed for new members during rush week in the fall. And we were always competing academically. You always wanted to know what your rank was.

Quivik: So that they would come up with a grade point average for the entire sorority and compare that with others?

C.Gwerder: Yes, right. The Pan-Hellenic would keep track of that, so that was important.

### Meeting, Courting, and Marrying Joe Gwerder

Quivik: How did you meet Joe?

C.Gwerder: Joe and I had met really in high school through other friends and renewed our acquaintance at Berkeley. He was then a junior, and I was a sophomore at that time--.

Quivik: When you met?

C.Gwerder: When we became reacquainted.

Quivik: So you first became acquainted when you were still going to school in Stockton?

C.Gwerder: Yes, in high school. When I was going to the Hamlin school, because I had friends who lived in Walnut Grove, so I would come up here and visit. I met Joe at that time. He also went down to Hamlin parties with friends. And then I had a cousin living in Walnut Grove, so by family and friends, we were reintroduced.

Quivik: Do you remember what kind of event it was, the first time you met?

C.Gwerder: I think it was a swimming party out here in Walnut Grove when we were in high school.

Quivik: In the river?

C.Gwerder: No, in a pool.

Quivik: So then you were a sophomore, he was a junior, when you--?

C.Gwerder: When we became reacquainted. We started dating off and on, and we became engaged when I was a junior and he was a senior. I passed the traditional five-pound box of chocolates at Monday night dinner at the Pi Phi house to announce our engagement.

Quivik: What was Joe studying?

C.Gwerder: Joe was studying ag. business, so we didn't have any classes together at all.

Quivik: What kinds of courtship activities did college students at Berkeley engage in?

C.Gwerder: There were lots of fraternity parties and sorority parties, picnics in Tilden Park, and these outings to come up here water skiing, or just go down for the day to the beach or up to the Sierra to ski. We were fairly mobile, I would say--had lots of friends in common, which made it a lot of fun. A special evening would be dancing at the Claremont Hotel to the music of Dick Jurgens or at the St. Francis and Fairmont hotels in San Francisco. Sunday dinners at the Cape Cod House in Lafayette with good jazz were special. We enjoyed the races at Golden Gate Fields and comedy at the "Purple Onion" and "Hungry I" in the city.

Quivik: Was Joe at that time intending to go into farming?

C.Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: What did that prospect look like to you?

C.Gwerder: Well, it looked fine, because I'm from an almost totally agricultural background, so it looked very inviting to me. That was something that was a very natural idea to me.

Quivik: You married in 1955?

C.Gwerder: We married in Stockton in April of 1955. We had a large wedding at Church of the Annunciation, followed by a garden reception at my father's home, and then a honeymoon in Acapulco.



## II CAROL'S EXPERIENCE WITH FARMING AND FAMILY

### First Year on the Galt Ranch

Quivik: Where did you first live?

C.Gwerder: We first lived near Galt, on the Galt Ranch, in a refurbished Quonset hut that had been kind of a playroom or entertainment room for Joe's parents, because they had a herd of registered Angus cattle, and would have people come to see the cattle. So they had added a fireplace and a little kitchen to the end of it. So it was, I wouldn't say it was cozy, because I think it was--how long was the Quonset hut, seventy-five feet long? [laughs] But we had a very nice time there, and we had a lot of field days and activities going on at the ranch at that time with the cattle.

We had our first child. Caroline Murrice was born there. Carrie, we call her. We were very tied down at that point because Joe was cooking a hot breakfast for the cattle. He had this huge cooker in the barn that would cook sort of a mush. This show string had a very good life in there with the hot meals, and lots of brushing, and lots of attention. They were beautiful cattle, black cattle.

Quivik: How was that adjustment for you? You had been a city girl, and then lived in San Francisco and Berkeley?

C.Gwerder: That was somewhat of an adjustment. I spent a lot of time visiting my family in Stockton. I was happy to move then to Walnut Grove after a year and a half. We bought a house here in the one subdivision, which is three blocks square. I was very happy suddenly to have people around again, a lot of people around, and I enjoyed that. Do you want me to get into that neighborhood?

Quivik: Well, let's go back to that first year. Did you have any responsibilities on the farm once you and Joe were married?

- C.Gwerder: Just some record keeping--the registered cattle had to be all documented, and all the forms filled out for that documentation. That was, I think, about all I did as far as helping--just providing three square meals a day.
- Quivik: Had you learned, growing up, to cook and do those sort of--?
- C.Gwerder: No, I had not, so Joe had to help me there. I think we had lamb chops, and peas, and baked potato quite often, because that was what I knew how to cook! Joe lost some weight having moved directly from his mother's house to married life. But it was a fun time to be right there on the ranch. The bulls would scratch their backs on our windows in the morning, and there were horses around, and a very pretty area, lots of oak trees. It was a very nice time.
- Quivik: On that place, and given the kind of operation it was, when you were cooking were you cooking just for Joe, or for a larger--?
- C.Gwerder: Just for Joe, no, just for Joe.
- Quivik: Okay. There were other people working on the place?
- C.Gwerder: There was one permanent man and one or two part time, I think at that time, never a big crew of workers on that ranch.
- Quivik: Did you have any kind of a relationship with the other people who worked on the place?
- C.Gwerder: Well, a very nice family that lived next door--and actually the man is still there. He and his family have been there for over sixty years now. Then we had lots of company because all of these cattle buyers and people from the Angus association were always coming by, stopping by, and we'd often include them in a meal. So it was quite, when I think of it, it was somewhat of an adjustment for me with all this going on. But it was a very fun time.
- Quivik: Can you describe what was new and different about it, some of the details?
- C.Gwerder: Well, I know they came one day from the slaughterhouse and said that they were going to slaughter a calf, and which one was it. So I had to point that out, and then I had to give them a pan so that they could bring the liver back to me. That was quite a bad day. They brought the liver, it was still quivering, and even though my father had been a cattleman, and I had been involved in watching de-horning and all those processes, I never had quite been involved with the close-up slaughter like that. So that was a little bit of a revelation. Of course we didn't have to have de-horning with the Angus cattle; they're hornless. So that was progress, as far as I was concerned.
- Quivik: What were you expected to do with the liver?
- C.Gwerder: I was expected to cook it, which Joe did, though. And still does. When he brings home liver, he cooks it, handles it.

Actually, a lot of our college friends would come and stay with us. And we had a lot of these business people who would come, but not stay, but drop by. My father would come by, he was out on his rounds, and it was a lot of fun.

Quivik: At that time was there a similarity in the kind of farming operation that your father was engaged in and Joe was engaged in?

C.Gwerder: There were lots of similarities in the crops and also in the cow-calf operation. My father never had a lot of use for the registered business. I think he was more of a commercial cow-calf man, and he thought that you buy a \$20,000 bull from somebody, and you sell them two \$20,000 heifers. He thought it was just kind of a lot of money changing hands. So he would kid Joe about that, because he never quite warmed up to the registered business.

But we also went to a lot of cattle shows--at that time Joe was showing cattle--and lots of auctions, and we'd go to the Cow Palace, and we'd go to the state fair and county fairs. We spent a great deal of time doing that.

Quivik: How far is that Galt place from a sort of community of other people?

C.Gwerder: The town of Galt was about four miles away, which now has grown a little bit. But from Sacramento it was thirty miles, and Stockton thirty miles, and Lodi about twenty miles. So it wasn't that far.

Quivik: Did you, as a young farm wife just getting started, try to get involved in some of the community?

C.Gwerder: I did have a few friends on my road, mostly dairy people, so they were busy, and so I didn't become very involved. But we were only there for a year and a half.

It is kind of interesting that we--I had started my married life there, near where the Thompson family had come to what is now Thornton, which is really only about five miles from the ranch. So it was quite the same area.

Quivik: And did you know some people around there through your family connections?

C.Gwerder: No, not any more, because they had moved away.

### Moving to Walnut Grove, Raising the Gwerder Children

Quivik: Then what led to your move?

C.Gwerder: We always had wanted to come over here to Walnut Grove and live in this community in which Joe grew up, and which we admired and liked very much, the life here. So we were

able to buy a house in a subdivision. We came to know every single family, not only in the subdivision, but in the whole area, either through church, or school, or fund drives which I would participate in. At that time, I don't know if you want me to get into the looks of the community, or the ethnicity, or--?

Quivik: Oh, sure.

C.Gwerder: The Sacramento River has historically been a kind of a boundary. Historically the Asian community lived on the east side of the river, and the Caucasians on this side of the river, on the west side of the river, which has continued up until about probably 1980. Now it's different. But at that time every family in the area was either involved in agriculture or in some ag. related business, which is certainly not true today. So it was a real neighborhood, lots of little children, and lots of activities, and a nice place too. We lived for eight years in that house.

Quivik: And that was on the east side?

C.Gwerder: That is on the west side.

Quivik: Oh, it was the west side.

C.Gwerder: Still on the west side, but it's one little subdivision one mile south of here.

Quivik: At the time, can you describe briefly what places Joe was running as the farmer?

C.Gwerder: He was farming then on Ryer Island, and also on Grand Island on which we lived, also at the Galt Ranch where we had started out. So he was pretty much on the go all day.

Quivik: How did that move affect your life, would you say?

C.Gwerder: Well, it was wonderful to have neighbors. At that time one child had been born in Galt in 1956, Caroline, and then in 1958 our son James Joseph was born, and in 1961 Ann Elizabeth. I loved having all the other families around. All the children would play together, and the mothers would have coffee, and maybe play a little bridge, and entertain the children, and feed babies. We just all kind of shared the responsibility, watched out for each other's children, and it was friendly and very supportive at that time.

Quivik: And were most of those families farm families?

C.Gwerder: Yes. They were all either farm families or in some ag. related business, fertilizer, that type of thing. So it was a busy household, because it was always filled with not only our children, but other people's children.

Quivik: Did your responsibilities for the household change with the move? Did that move affect some of those matters?



C.Gwerder: No, I don't think so.

Quivik: You still had people passing through?

C.Gwerder: Oh yes, even more company it seemed, which I enjoyed. I think it was a little hard for Joe to move into a community like that. He had never lived--he had always lived in the country, and it sort of bothered him to hear our neighbor's alarm clock.

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Quivik: You mentioned that you had neighbors, and that most of the neighbors had children, and it was a nice place for children to be able to play together and that sort of thing. Can you describe a little bit about being a mother and raising children in those years? What were some of your objectives, concerns, etc.?

C.Gwerder: Well, we all were actively involved in the educational process in our schools. I served as president of the P.T.A., and as a Cub Scout Den Mother, and volunteer teacher's aide, Campfire leader--

Quivik: Where was the school?

C.Gwerder: The school was across the river, and the children would go by bus. Just a half a block away the bus would pick the children up and take them to school, a very nice school with a very strict principal and some very good teachers. As I say, an active parent group, a very active P.T.A. Everyone was expected to participate, and pretty much did.

Quivik: You mentioned there was sort of a demographic division by the river.

C.Gwerder: Yes, but never in the school, no, never at all.

Quivik: It was an integrated school?

C.Gwerder: Yes, very. We had quite a few Japanese people at the time, but we have been diminishing in those populations, the Chinese and the Japanese populations. So, at that time, it was a very good, natural kind of a mix of people, without any busing or any necessity of doing anything like that.

Quivik: Can you say briefly what the Japanese families and the Chinese families did in the area?

C.Gwerder: It would be agriculture related, I think all of them, unless they were the druggist, or in retail. There were a couple of retail stores and grocery stores.

Quivik: Did they own their own--?

C.Gwerder: Yes. They owned their own businesses, but not the land even under their houses because of the Alien Land Act.

Quivik: Or farms?

C.Gwerder: And mostly farms on leased property.

Quivik: Can you remember any stories, indicative events of your children growing up in the area, just stories that kind of help define what life was like in this rural community?

C.Gwerder: Well, we always not only supported each other, but we reported on other people's children, if they were seen jumping off a bridge, or later years in high school, driving too fast, or if the school bus driver was driving too fast, or--it was just a very supportive kind of a community. Our doctor's office was a block away, and he, Dr. Paul Barnes, was the old-time family physician, and as much of a psychiatrist as an internal physician, I think. He really watched out for the mothers. He wanted to be sure you didn't overdo your nervous system, you know, so [laughs] he would recommend vacations and nice things like that.

The Fourth of July was always and still is a big celebration in our community. A parade with floats, fire engines, horses, bicycles, et cetera, is a big event. Joe would bring a flat bed trailer home and we would spend the evening before decorating with crepe paper and getting costumes together--sometimes with other families. The evening before usually turned into a street party. After the parade, there would be pot-luck barbecues and fireworks. Now our children's age group loves to return to Walnut Grove for the parade especially to see friends of all ages from their childhood.

I had a Cub Scout troop that was kind of a trial, because some of them were, I think, on their way to juvenile delinquency. I was a founding member of Delta Head Start, which is still going strong here, which is I think a very fine organization.

I've been on the election board for probably well over thirty years, and that is a very interesting thing to do, because you do see all the people come in. I was on the Western States Angus Auxiliary, you asked about our cattle organizations, that was one. Do you want all these organizations, or--?

Quivik: Well, we can get to that in a bit.

C.Gwerder: I sang in the Community Presbyterian church choir for a while.

Quivik: And what is the name of that church?

C.Gwerder: That is called the Walnut Grove Community Presbyterian Church. It is a community church, but under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church.

Quivik: You mentioned that Joe was Roman Catholic--

C.Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: --and when you folks were driving me around the last time I was here, you showed me the St. Anthony's Catholic Church, and your Presbyterian Church. How was that, developing a family where you both ( )--?

C.Gwerder: It really didn't cause us a lot of trouble. The children, I had agreed to raise the children Catholic, so I saw to it that they went to Catechism, and studied their lessons, and all that. I always had a nice friendship with the priests, the various priests that we've had here. I did for a while sing in the choir, and accompanied the children's choir in the Presbyterian church, and that became a little complicated with the time, and the family going one place and me going another, so I gave that up. But it hasn't ever really constituted a problem, and we have all remained very steady in our faith. I still participate in church fund-raising activities and served on a year-long pastor finding committee.

Quivik: What kinds of things did your children find to do in their free time around here? You mentioned jumping off bridges, and so I'm just curious, because being on an island, so close to a big river, is different from a lot of other communities. So is there a way that the river helped shape the activities of the children?

C.Gwerder: It was always a danger. We, during the high school years, lost six of our children's friends in separate accidents, high school students drove into the river. I used to carry life jackets in my car when the children were little, just always was afraid of going into the river.

Generally, otherwise, with water skiing, and--there was a lot of nice recreation on it--used to be a lot of boat traffic, a lot of barge traffic, and more interesting things going by. Now we have a lot of pleasure boats using it. Of course it is always a danger--the levees are always a concern, as far as floods and all that. I did also help with the Red Cross swim lessons. I always felt it was especially important in this community for everyone to learn to swim.

Quivik: How far was your neighborhood from the river per se?

C.Gwerder: About two blocks.

Quivik: Were there rules that your kids had?

C.Gwerder: Oh yes, yes. They were never allowed up there on the levee road, or anywhere near it. Actually there would be some danger from irrigation ditches in the back of the subdivision that were of more concern.

Quivik: And what were those concerns?

C.Gwerder: That they would just wander out there and fall into a ditch, or be playing around them. So we just had a lot of rules, and as I say all the parents watched out for the other children, it helped a lot.

Quivik: And those were kind of standard rules among all the families?

- C.Gwerder: Everybody, yes, we all were in pretty strong agreement as far as a lot of rules. The parents were mostly all in agreement and strict, so that was good.
- Quivik: Was drowning the specific danger, or was it some other dangers as well?
- C.Gwerder: Well, of course with farm equipment around and all that, you would have to have those concerns, and pesticides being left around, any of that sort of thing. We had a couple of incidents of children, thinking that they had gotten into some nitrogen, and had some scares that way.
- Quivik: Would the children exhibit some symptoms, or you could just tell what they had been playing--?
- C.Gwerder: We saw some white powder on his lips, and then we took him to the doctor, and he did sort of a purging.
- Quivik: Ever with your children?
- C.Gwerder: It was my next-door neighbor. So I think nothing more than the usual concerns of city children. Of course our children would go with Joe quite frequently, and there are always concerns about the equipment and livestock and being careful about that. Our son Jim was brushed off his horse by a tree limb and fractured his jaw when he was eight years old.
- Quivik: Given the levees, and then it seems like most of the ground around here is taken up with crop land, were there places where children could play informal games, whether it's baseball, sandlot baseball, things like that?
- C.Gwerder: Pretty much over at the school grounds or the church parking lots, or they could play in the orchards. They would climb around and they played in some of the open land in back. They had their forts. Probably not so much baseball unless they played, as I say, over at the school. They did a lot of roller skating and bike riding. Many weekends were taken up with trips to Tahoe and to the San Andreas Ranch, horseback riding at the Galt Ranch, and picnics and dinners with family and friends.
- Quivik: Were there rules that they had to abide by if they were playing in an orchard? Are there ways that they were trained or taught to respect the orchard?
- C.Gwerder: Yes, definitely.
- Quivik: What are some of the rules?
- C.Gwerder: That you didn't knock down any branches, or bruise any blossoms, or pick any blossoms, or not break off anything. Yes, there were definitely rules. I think it was kind of a natural evolution of all that, that they just grew up knowing that you took care of property.

- Quivik: So given those rules that they were expected to abide by, were they then relatively free to play in someone else's orchard?
- C.Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: So it wasn't considered private property, keep out, but rather--?
- C.Gwerder: No, no. They'd be probably with their friends in their orchard, but--they stayed pretty much close to home. It was not a problem as far as any trespassing or anything like that.
- Quivik: Then did you move from that Walnut Grove subdivision to St. Anthony's? Or is the St. Anthony's, that is--?
- C.Gwerder: St. Anthony's is the church, that is the parish.
- Quivik: And that is the subdivision?
- C.Gwerder: No. The subdivision is named Clampett Tract.
- Quivik: Oh, okay. I misunderstood that, okay.
- C.Gwerder: St. Anthony's is the Catholic church, so that is the only reference. But we lived just half a block, when we lived in Clampett Tract, we were just half a block from St. Anthony's Church.

### **Building the Present House, Working with Architect William Wilson Wurster**

- Quivik: And then when did you move from there, and to where?
- C.Gwerder: Then we acquired this two-acre lot with river frontage which Joe's parents owned, the grandfather having divided all this property which had been formerly part of his ranch. His parents gave us the lot, and we compensated his sister for half of the value of it. So we were very fortunate, because there is very little river frontage available anymore. It is zoned, I think it is an ag-80 zoning of the rest of the property along the river here. So we embarked on making plans to build our house.
- Quivik: What do you mean by an ag-80 zoning?
- C.Gwerder: Oh, that the parcels are eighty acres, and it is agriculturally zoned--cannot be industrial or residential. Any other use than agriculture--it would have to be re-zoned.
- Quivik: Can you tell me a little bit about the things that you and Joe were thinking about as you decided to build this new house?

C.Gwerder: We decided that we wanted an old-fashioned farmhouse type of house, California ranch house, or what you would call that style. We went around to a couple of architects, and always in the back of our mind we had the idea of contacting William Wurster. We felt shy about contacting such a famous architect as he was. William Wilson Wurster at that time was just retiring as dean of the University of California College of Environmental Design, which he had founded, and he was dean emeritus of the university's School of Architecture, and also had a practice in San Francisco, Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons.

He and my mother had grown up next door to each other in Stockton. So we decided, well, we would give a call. His letter to us warmly welcomed us to a wonderful association. His letter said--this was June 25, 1963--"No word of mine could ever describe the pleasure of having you turn to me for the house at Walnut Grove. It took me back with a rush to all that the Minor family had meant to me over the many years, for I owe much to Carol's grandfather who encouraged me whenever I was frustrated in research or learning a profession. And Caroline's playhouse was truly my first architectural commission."

That was the beginning of a wonderful, educational time for us. We were in our late twenties, and Mr. Wurster would explain to us his architectural theories, such as the use of the least materials possible, and taking advantage of the site for climate control, and that sort of thing. He called our house a Monterey colonial style.

And so we would suggest things, such as that we loved double front doors. He responded that he had chosen an extra-large front door for us so that our guests could "sweep into our house." Then he wanted to be sure that we had some space where we could roll up the rug for dancing. So he had a lot of fun ideas as well as the practical. I think that our house reflects the timeless elegance of his designs and the sensitive simplicity of his work. He was very thrifty. It also shows the dignity and modesty of Mr. Wurster himself.

So we asked him about contacting Thomas Church for our landscape design, who was also a very famous California designer. Mr. Wurster said we were on our own there, that if Thomas Church liked the area, he might come, or he may not come. So we called, and Mr. Church agreed to come up and have lunch at our house and look over our site.

After a short tour of our two-acre site, and back in our living room, and with a martini in hand [laughs] and the companionship of our then two-year-old daughter Ann, supplied with his pencils and sitting next to him making a picture--he sketched out a plan that he suggested we use, "Just use this sketch." He said if you run it through the office it costs a lot of money, and Joe can do a lot of this engineering himself. He said, "I'm very comfortable with that. He knows the land." So we proceeded from there with a very low maintenance garden. I think it reflects his sense of proportion and his sensitivity to the climate.

He was very in tune, Mr. Church, as well as Mr. Wurster, with the clients, and what you wanted. So when we went back to him about five years later to build our swimming pool we had our children with us. We asked about the color of plaster, and he said, "Well, I really prefer kind of a river green." And our children in unison murmured something like, "Oh

yuck." And with that, without taking a breath, he said, "In your case, I think it should be white." And that was our pool.

After we moved in to our house two nights later, we had a, what they used to call a "shivaree," or housewarming. That is a big community tradition here. We had over 200 people arrive with food, drink, and music, and everything. They also did some mischievous things like remove doors, and hang Joe's deer head out in the orchard, and a few things like that. But that is a great community tradition, to have these housewarmings.

Quivik: Had you known Wurster before?

C.Gwerder: I had never met him, no.

Quivik: Had your mother talked about him?

C.Gwerder: Yes, and she had talked a great deal about him. His sister, whom I knew, had still lived in Stockton next door to my grandmother, but I had never personally met him. It was a very wonderful association.

Quivik: What other buildings of his were you familiar with at the time?

C.Gwerder: The Bank of America in San Francisco, and the UC Santa Cruz campus. He had designed many houses in Stockton around the 1930s, and in Berkeley. I was familiar with quite a few of his houses. Also he had designed a house just three doors from us here, so we were quite familiar with his work, and also had seen in *Sunset* magazine an adobe house that we liked very much that he designed in Madera. So we went to him. A lot of people say they have a miserable time building a house, and we just had the happiest of times because he made it very easy for us.

Quivik: Was he living in the Bay Area still?

C.Gwerder: He was living, yes, in Berkeley.

Quivik: How often did he come out here?

C.Gwerder: We would go down to his office in San Francisco. He really came on the site maybe just a couple of times. He had a lot of faith in our contractor, so he said he didn't need to visit it very frequently. Then he came a couple of times after we had moved in and visited us, looked around.

Quivik: Whose idea was the brick initially?

C.Gwerder: The adobe brick? We liked that. Our contractor had built quite a few adobe brick houses around here. It is a product made in the Fresno area. We wanted to go with that. It provides a very good climate control as well.

Quivik: How about the redwood interior? Whose idea was that?

C.Gwerder: The redwood, well, that was part of his plan, but Joe and our contractor were able to find this heart redwood from the Yolo Causeway over the bypass that was being torn down to be replaced by a concrete structure, so—

Quivik: Where is that?

C.Gwerder: That is up between Sacramento and Davis. So we were able to buy this wonderful dry redwood. So that was very fortunate timing right then for us.

Quivik: Who was the contractor?

C.Gwerder: His name was Alec Dambacher, a local, a man from Thornton.

Quivik: Had you agreed ahead of time that he would build a house, or did you put the project out for bid?

C.Gwerder: No, we didn't put it out for bid. We knew that we wanted to have him, because he specialized in adobe houses.

Quivik: Was there much communication between the contractor and the architect?

C.Gwerder: There didn't need to be. The plans were very well explained. There didn't seem to be much communication. I would call and ask how high the light fixtures should be, and they would give me an answer immediately, and that sort of thing. But as far as the contractor and the architect, I don't think there was a great need for a lot of communication. Charles Upham, a fine San Francisco interior designer, helped us with furnishings.

Quivik: Did you spend a lot of time, while it was being built, sort of watching the construction?

C.Gwerder: Yes, we would be over here daily.

Quivik: Were there decisions to be made?

C.Gwerder: There were decisions.

Quivik: What were some of those?

C.Gwerder: Kind of important but architecturally unimportant, like where the light plugs should be, and switches, and that sort of thing. But anything major I would simply call the architectural office, and as I say, they would give me an answer very quickly. We had a marble fireplace and a washbasin that we had bought from a family member's house that was being torn down, a Victorian house. We wanted to use those, and Mr. Wurster figured out a way to put a redwood backing on the fireplace so that it would fit in with an adobe house. So we had a few things like that that we wished to incorporate, which he was quite willing to do.



Quivik: Was the house already built when the landscape architect, Church, started his design work?

C.Gwerder: No. We just had the plans at that point. In fact, he added porches and some more cement work around that time. So that was all agreeable.

Quivik: When did you move in?

C.Gwerder: We moved in October of 1964.

Quivik: Your children were how old?

C.Gwerder: They were eight, six, and three.

Quivik: What was the development around here like then?

C.Gwerder: There was just one house to the north of us, and then there were four vacant lots to the south.

Quivik: There are lots of trees now that are part of your landscaping. Was this--?

C.Gwerder: This was a pear orchard--half the lot.

Quivik: An orchard?

C.Gwerder: Yes. So we had to remove some trees, but we planted other trees--mainly olives, Monterey pines, and live oaks.

Quivik: How did your children respond to moving from a neighborhood with a lot of neighbors to--?

C.Gwerder: We were still able to bring friends here, and they would go over and play with friends. But they did miss the old neighborhood in the beginning, and then after we put in the swimming pool, they were very happy to have their friends over here.

Quivik: Was there--could they walk to anyone's house?

C.Gwerder: Not really. The field was usually muddy, or not very accessible to go through.

Quivik: So they were a little more isolated?

C.Gwerder: They were a little more isolated.

Quivik: And how about yourself? That meant you were a little more isolated as well.

C.Gwerder: A little more, but we quickly all adjusted to living here.

Quivik: What were some of the adjustments that you made?

C.Gwerder: I suppose transporting them around to more activities, driving more. But then when they started high school--the high school is seventeen miles upriver in Clarksburg, so that involved more transporting to games and so forth, although they would go to school on the school bus--but for any extracurricular activities, there was lots of driving with that--

Quivik: Has that always been the case, that the high school is that far away?

C.Gwerder: It was formerly about ten miles away in Courtland. When Joe went to school there was a high school in Courtland, but not when our children were in school.

Quivik: The Walnut Grove school is through eighth grade?

C.Gwerder: Through eight, yes, K through eight.

Quivik: Did that mean that a good share of your time was as a, you could say, a chauffeur?

C.Gwerder: A chauffeur, a lot of it, and I had some activities that I belonged to, some organizations, and boards that would involve some driving to Sacramento.

### Carol's Role in the Goodwin-Gwerder Farming Operation

Quivik: Let's talk a little bit now about your role in the management of the farm operation. So far we have been talking mainly about the household, if you will, but there is this family farm operation that involves property that comes from Joe's family and property that comes from your family. Talk some about your role in managing that.

C.Gwerder: I have always been consulted, I would say, on any major operational things that come up. Now we have our Goodwin-Gwerder Company, which is Joe, and myself, and our three children. I am the president of that. We have meetings, and we have our formal minutes, and all that sort of thing which is required. So we all really participate in what we are going to do next, and what is going on, and of course the day-to-day management is totally Joe's and my son's. Goodwin-Gwerder Co. also owns a small office building in Sacramento and I participate in leasing decisions.

Quivik: Were there earlier examples of either corporations or partnerships that these properties were a part of?

C.Gwerder: Yes--Gwerder Properties, J.F. Goodwin Co., and C.D. Goodwin Co..

**More Recollections of Childhood Activities and Years at Cal**

[Interview 2: April 30, 2001] ##

Quivik: My name is Fred Quivik. This is session two of the oral history with Carol Gwerder. I am again at the Gwerder residence in Walnut Grove. It is Monday, April 30, 2001. We talked a couple of weeks ago about some of your experiences growing up. I think you said in the intervening time that there are some other memories that you would like to go over, that we can talk about before we get back into some of your experiences as an adult. Let's talk about some of the things that you did in your free time as a girl growing up in Stockton. Were you part of any organizations?

C.Gwerder: I was a Campfire Girl, and I also belonged to the Rainbow Girls, student council, cheerleading, that kind of thing. In the summers we rented a house in Tahoe, and stayed up there for six or eight weeks in the summer. This would be prior to the war. To visit my grandmother Goodwin in Los Angeles, we would either drive or take the Santa Fe train.

During the war we took trips, car trips to the ranch properties in San Luis Obispo County, very hot summer trips in the little Club Coupe that my father had, because he had a C-Ration card, being a farmer. So we would go in that car, because it was a business car. It had just a shelf in the back rather than a back seat. My sister and I would sit--there was a little space between the seat and the shelf, and my sister and I would sit facing each other on very small folding chairs. We would have our two Springer spaniel dogs lying on the deck up above, and my father and mother in the front with the window air conditioner, which didn't amount to very much, kind of a swamp cooler sort of thing.

Then when we would get down close to Camp Roberts, which was near Paso Robles, we would always pick up a soldier, who would be hitchhiking. Then I would--the soldier would then take my seat, and I would lie up on the shelf with the two dogs for the rest of the trip. Those were good memories, hot memories--we always looked for the Giant Orange on the way, that was like an oasis.

Quivik: What was the Giant Orange?

C.Gwerder: The Giant Orange was a roadside stand that sold fresh orange juice. They are extinct now, but they were up and down the Central Valley at one time.

After the war we had a couple of trips to Canada, family trips. One summer I took a business course at Maude Cornwall's School of Business, and another one at Humphrey's College, which I took again after getting my degree at Berkeley.

Quivik: What kinds of things did the Campfire Girls in Stockton do?

C.Gwerder: We did things where you could win awards. You had certain programs that you participated in such as cooking and sewing, swimming--. Then the Campfire camp was at Silver Lake,

called Minkalo Camp. It was really a very beautiful camp. And we did a lot of canoeing, beadwork, and hiking. It was quite a nice experience.

Quivik: Where is Silver Lake?

C.Gwerder: Silver Lake is up above Jackson.

Quivik: Then your summers in the Tahoe area, what were activities that you did at Tahoe?

C.Gwerder: We rented a house on the beach at Tahoe Vista. We would do a lot of hiking, and lots and lots of swimming, and a little boating, and just generally enjoyed the wonderful area --it was a very wide, sandy beach, and we had just a wonderful time there, and got to know all the neighbors along there. Some were from Berkeley, and some were from other areas, and we all became very good friends. My father would come up on the weekends and always bring steaks to barbecue for extra guests. He loved to entertain, and Mother did too.

Quivik: Were those friendships that extended into the winter season as well?

C.Gwerder: They definitely extended--they did. Yes.

Quivik: You mentioned your father would pick up a soldier. Why would he do that?

C.Gwerder: There were always service personnel hitchhiking during the war, and you always gave them a ride, wherever you were going. It was just a very common practice to give them a ride.

Quivik: To help out?

C.Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: What were some of the things that you would do on those trips, then, when you would go to--

C.Gwerder: Down to the Pozo Ranch. We would ride horseback, and usually our cousins were visiting, and we would have a big family group, and barbecues every night. That ranch was primarily a cattle ranch, and at one time they raised turkeys. That was always a nice time to be with the family, and my grandmother Goodwin would be there occasionally, and aunts and uncles, and cousins as I said. So it was a very nice family time. It was just a little hot getting there. [laughs] There would be cattle branding, dehorning, and castrating, and the neighbors would come to help. I can still smell the hair burning and hear the calves bawling.

Quivik: What kind of horseback riding did you do?

C.Gwerder: Just Western, just around the ranch there.

Quivik: Exploring up in the hills, or--?

C.Gwerder: Well, it was--the terrain is rolling hills and oak trees, very pretty, and yes, we just did trail riding, we'd take a picnic lunch.

Quivik: Did you ever have a horse that you considered your horse that you were raising?

C.Gwerder: We all shared a horse named Daisy. That was the only child's horse that was available.

Quivik: So you each had to take turns, you weren't riding in a group?

C.Gwerder: No, we took turns to go with my father.

Quivik: Then you also have been thinking of some other things that you did with student time when you were a student at the University of California.

C.Gwerder: Yes. Well, before that, maybe at the Hamlin School, I should get into that part of my high school years.

Quivik: Okay, sure.

C.Gwerder: I've mentioned about going to my music lessons. I was allowed to also go to my music lessons on the cable car, which was pretty exciting, to have the freedom of going from a boarding school--to be able to go on your own, and that was quite a privilege.

At my graduation, it was a sad time between my junior and senior year--my mother had passed away in 1950, and then I graduated in 1951, and had a graduation trip to Hawaii on the Matson Line's *Lurline*, with my roommate and her mother.

Quivik: When your mother died, did that interrupt your school year? Did you come home to Stockton for a while?

C.Gwerder: She passed away in the summer. I had expected to stay home and continue going to school there so that my father wouldn't be alone, but he insisted that I return to Hamlin's and continue as they had planned. So that is what I did.

Quivik: Had she been ailing for a while?

C.Gwerder: She had been ill with aplastic anemia. I guess it was not unexpected, but it was very unexpected to me, because I didn't grasp the seriousness of her illness.

Quivik: You are the younger?

C.Gwerder: I was sixteen. My sister was nineteen, and I was sixteen.

Quivik: And she had already gone away?

C.Gwerder: Yes. She was in college.

Quivik: Then you went back and finished up your senior year, and then went on to Cal?

C.Gwerder: Then went on to Cal. I did take one summer session at Cal, and one at University of the Pacific. It was then College of the Pacific. You had asked me before what Joe and I did during our courtship—a couple of activities were snow skiing and water skiing.

Quivik: Where would you go water skiing?

C.Gwerder: We would come up here to the delta. Joe had a boat, a very early boat on the river. He was sort of a pioneer in water skiing, because he made his own skis. He would bend the wood and make his skis; those were the original skis. So he would bring a lot of friends, and his mother would cook a big roast beef, and we'd all have a great time.

Quivik: Did you participate in any kinds of school activities that were generating school spirit, that sort of thing?

C.Gwerder: At Cal I was on the freshman rally committee.

Quivik: What did the rally committee do?

C.Gwerder: The rally committee tried to keep order in the rooting section. We tried to stay out of the men's rooting section, because the men were all segregated from the other sections, and you passed out the cards, and tried to collect the cards after the card tricks.

Quivik: When you say card tricks, what do you mean by that?

C.Gwerder: Well, in the rooting section, you would have these large colored cards on the seats, and then they call out when to put the card up to make the--you're not a Californian so you didn't have card tricks in Minnesota?

Quivik: Well, I don't know if the people listening to this tape would know what you are talking about. Card tricks--

C.Gwerder: Maybe I should call them "card stunts." They are big cardboard cards, and then as you turn them up, and the announcer would say Row One, Blue, and you turn up your card and they would all spell out "Cal", or a big "C", or a bear hitting an Indian, or tackling an Indian, for the Big Game with Stanford. And it showed—one would show the axe that we were all hoping to get back and reclaim. So there was lots of school spirit, and I think we all enjoyed that. I think it was just as well that there were segregated rooting sections. If any unsuspecting person wearing red walked by the men's rooting section, he or she would be yelled at, "Take off that red shirt!" And sometimes, a person would be "rolled" up the stands--passed from hand to hand.

Quivik: So this is a whole section that would have these cards, so someone across the stadium on the other side could look at it and see that?

- C.Gwerder: Yes. Then they could see the picture the cards made.
- Quivik: Who designed those?
- C.Gwerder: There would be a committee that would put these all out on graph paper, and figure out how they could work. Then as I say, they were tacked onto your seat, and one of the yell leaders would announce which row was to hold up which card, and they would say, "Everybody down," and you would bend down with your card, and then "Everybody up," and you were to bring your card up so that it showed. You were not to throw the cards around, because they were to be collected. There would be some cards thrown at the end, but I think nothing as serious as some of the things that go on today. It was rather harmless fun.
- Quivik: Did the men's rooting section also perform those card stunts?
- C.Gwerder: Yes. The men's rooting section were the main ones to do the card stunts.
- Quivik: What was the difference between the women's card stunts and the men's card stunts?
- C.Gwerder: Well, I think it all continued across. But the men's rooting section was much larger than the women's rooting section. And I guess there were more men students at that time at the university.
- Quivik: Were there other reasons that someone wanted to keep the two sections segregated?
- C.Gwerder: Well, they said it was tradition, but then there was a mixed rooting section, they called it, where you could go with a date, but that wasn't a very chic thing to do—it was more popular to go just with the girls, to go with your friends.
- Quivik: Did you perform other functions in the rooting section besides the card tricks?
- C.Gwerder: No, that was all.
- Quivik: Did that ever take practice, or how were you sort of indoctrinated in what to do?
- C.Gwerder: You would just have a few meetings about what your job was to be for that game, for that season.
- Quivik: And you could sit anywhere, because the instructions were in each seat?
- C.Gwerder: Yes. You could sit anywhere.
- Quivik: Did you help formulate those instructions?
- C.Gwerder: No, I didn't do that.

Quivik: It must have been a lot of work.

C.Gwerder: It must have been a lot of work, yes.

Quivik: Each seat would be distinct, right?

C.Gwerder: I think they do a few card stunts now, but not as many as they did in those days.

Quivik: What was it like being at Cal during the summer session?

C.Gwerder: The summer session was quite lonely, because I was used to having a lot of friends in my classes. I took two English classes that session. So academically it was very interesting, but socially it was lonely.

Quivik: Why did you go to the summer session?

C.Gwerder: Joe had sent me a proposal. I was at a Pi Phi convention in Florida, the summer of 1954, and he had gone for his physical check-up, because he had been called up in the draft. So he sent this proposal, a telegram that said, "My uncle doesn't want me." Which was the signal that he had a deferment, and that meant that we would plan to be married the following spring.

So I immediately, when I returned from the convention in Miami, signed up for summer session at Berkeley, and signed up for a correspondence course, so that I could graduate in January, so that I could then go at my father's request to a short business course before we were married in April. That was the reason for that. For the UOP summer session I went to take some of these extra education courses, which had to be extra units.

Quivik: Did you do much other traveling while you were a student at Cal?

C.Gwerder: Within California, to Sun Valley, and Florida.

### Family Vacations

Quivik: You mentioned when you were younger a couple of trips to Canada, and did you say Hawaii once?

C.Gwerder: I went to Hawaii after my high school graduation, yes, on the ship, the *Lurline*, which was a Matson Line cruise ship that is no longer in operation.

Quivik: What kinds of things did you do on that cruise ship?

C.Gwerder: Well, there was a ping-pong contest [laughs], and there were dances, and hula lessons, and that sort of thing.



Quivik: How about in Hawaii?

C.Gwerder: In Hawaii, my father had a friend with Standard Oil company, and so he arranged for Sargent Kohonomoku, who was the brother of Duke Kohonomoku, the swimmer, who was the Standard Oil public relations man, to meet us at the ship with leis. And then he had us join an outrigger canoe team that he was training. So we participated in an outrigger canoe race. It was hard work, too. You had to carry the canoe to the water and all, but it was all fun.

Quivik: How many people were lifting that canoe together?

C.Gwerder: There were just four of us, four girls, and with the big outrigger on the side it was heavy. But it was very exhilarating when you would get going on the top of a wave with that canoe, that outrigger.

Quivik: Had you done anything like that before?

C.Gwerder: No, I hadn't, no, just a little canoeing at Minkalo Campfire Camp, but this is quite different from that.

Quivik: So would you say that you'd get going on the wave, something like surfing?

C.Gwerder: Yes, yes, definitely. We did try a little surfing, a little board surfing. But you get the feeling of the board surfing with the outrigger canoe, riding the crest of the wave.

Quivik: Do you remember where you went in Canada, you said a couple of trips to Canada?

C.Gwerder: We went to Victoria, and Vancouver, Banff, and Lake Louise.

Quivik: Since you have been married, have you and your family taken trips then?

C.Gwerder: We have. When our children were little, my stepmother would take us almost every year, with my sister and her family. There were seven children, and there would be five adults. We went to Hawaii, and Sun Valley, and Mexico, and Yosemite, and Disneyland. And we took our children to Washington, D.C., and on several ski trips to Colorado, to the Sierras, and to Europe. Joe and our daughters and our son at various times went on pack trips with horses, and Joe and I have been on a couple of pack trips ourselves.

In 1966, Joe and I went on a "People to People" trip to Russia, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Ireland, and France, sponsored by the American Horsemen's Association. In the Eastern European countries and in Ireland we were taken to the National Stud Farms, in Vienna to the Spanish Riding School, and in Paris to the Arc de Triomphe Horse Race at Longchamps. We had very close contact with the farm people, farm managers and horse breeders. Everyone was so anxious to be friendly with the Americans. We felt very fortunate to go behind the Berlin wall, to be in Moscow, and on a collective farm in

Pyatigorsk, a farm community in the Caucasus Mountains near the Black Sea, since these places had only recently been opened to tourists.

Quivik: You mentioned your stepmother. When did your father remarry?

C.Gwelder: My father remarried in 1963. My stepmother passed away last year at the age of 104, and she was a very hardy, wonderful lady. She was proud to have lived in three centuries.

Quivik: What was her name?

C.Gwelder: Her name was Nell Ralph Goodwin. She was a widow and had no children. So she immediately became a grandmother, and enjoyed it very much. We certainly had a beautiful relationship with her.

### III ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH CAROL HAS WORKED

#### California Women for Agriculture

Quivik: Well, changing topics now--Carol, you have been very active in quite a wide variety of community events, and I wonder if we could turn our attention to those and talk about them in turn. Maybe we can cluster some of them by topics. This is an oral history having to do with farming in the delta area, so let's start by talking about the California Women for Agriculture. Can you describe what that organization is, and what you have done with that group?

C.Gwerder: We had a chapter here. The California Women for Agriculture is quite an amazing organization, because where farmers traditionally do not like to be organized--I mean, Joe hates to go to meetings. The idea of farming and your freedom is I think all part of it, so you don't really want to get too organized--whereas the women don't mind that. They don't mind sticking their necks out and talking to legislators, and going to the capitol.

There would be times, there would be a day, they called it "Take a Legislator to Lunch," and you would choose somebody, and they would have a little party, and you would have your individual person.

They also held state conferences. I went to one in Fresno where we had some wonderful speakers, Senator Hayakawa, and Congressman Dorman. There were a lot of people who were very prominent in politics. Maureen Reagan spoke, others spoke to all the water issues. Pete Wilson also spoke at that convention.

I have not been active in it lately because our chapter folded by reason of lack of bodies to staff it. But it is still a very strong organization. For instance, the members are not afraid to call somebody and express their feelings about how they feel about some of these imports being brought into the state. They were responsible for getting labeling on vegetables and fruits in the supermarket to show the country of origin, so that people, the

consumer, would be aware. So it is a very, very fine organization, a volunteer action group and voice for agriculture.

Quivik: Do you remember approximately when you joined?

C.Gwerder: I think the early eighties.

Quivik: Is it an older organization?

C.Gwerder: No, it is a comparatively new organization. It was organized in 1975. In 1982, there were 4,822 members and thirty-eight chapters.

Quivik: So you were a member from near the beginning?

C.Gwerder: Near the beginning of the organization.

Quivik: In terms of organizational structure, is it part of any national organization?

C.Gwerder: It is just California.

Quivik: But then there are chapters by county, or community?

C.Gwerder: They are by county, community, yes. And there are three college chapters.

Quivik: What was the name of your local chapter?

C.Gwerder: We were the Walnut Grove chapter. I know there is one in Sacramento, and one in Stockton, and Fresno. So there are some rather close by.

Quivik: Focusing on primarily agriculture production issues, or would it get into concerns of communities as well?

C.Gwerder: Mostly I think political issues are the strong point. I think that is definitely the strong point.

Quivik: Well, I am thinking of political as it relates to agricultural production, or would you be concerned about political issues pertaining to, say, schools in farm communities?

C.Gwerder: I think the California Farm Bureau does that, Agriculture in the Classroom, so that is taken over by that. Actually, our niece is currently the director of that, California Agriculture in the Classroom, in the state. That is a very fine program where they educate the teachers to be able to educate the children on agriculture and agricultural products, and the process of producing food.

Quivik: Did you participate in some of those "Take A Legislator To Lunch" days?

- C.Gwerder: I did go up to the capitol and delivered boxes of products to the desks of the legislators. The organization has made quite an impression. Politicians are anxious to come and speak to this group, because they are a powerful group of women.
- Quivik: What was in the boxes?
- C.Gwerder: There would be some oranges, and a little bag of rice, and some raisins, and various non-perishable items, and flowers. And it was well received. California Women for Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion of food and fiber in California.
- Quivik: How would that organization determine what issues to address, and what position to take on those issues?
- C.Gwerder: They had a newsletter that would come around to all the chapters, and discuss what the current worst problem was, or best issue.
- Quivik: Would they have ways of polling you as a member, or your chapter, as a participating chapter, to--?
- C.Gwerder: There is a task force that determines the most important current issues and then presents the information to the membership.
- Quivik: Does California Women for Agriculture take positions on elections? Supporting, endorsing candidates?
- C.Gwerder: No, they do not. What they do is lobbying and promoting legislation. The goal is to present the real identity of the American farmer to consumers, politicians, educators, media, and church groups, and to assist in the preservation of the family farm system as an essential component of free enterprise.
- Quivik: Did you participate in any other organizations that are specifically ag. related? I know Joe is active, or had been active in the Farm Bureau. Was there a public--?
- C.Gwerder: Yes, I had an office in the Western States Angus Auxiliary, that was the women's auxiliary to the cattle organization. We primarily put on banquets during any of the cattle shows. We had some promotional items with books that we sold, and cards for scholarships for children and for ag. students. Other than those two, I don't think I would consider that my other activities have been strictly agricultural.
- Quivik: But quite a number that are, I'll call them community based.
- C.Gwerder: Yes, definitely.

Walnut Grove Community Center

Quivik: Let's turn to some of them. How about the Walnut Grove Community Center?

C.Gwerder: Well, that I do currently. That was our old school building, grammar school building, a beautiful brick building that didn't pass the Field Act, which was to close non-earthquake-proof buildings. Some of them had to be abandoned. So this one has been purchased by the county, and is used as a community center. There are senior activities there, Head Start meets there now. There is a garden, and a little park area for people. The River Delta Historic Society occupies one of the large classrooms. Community meetings and agricultural workshops are held in the auditorium, and it can be rented for private parties as well.

Then part of that is our Dr. Paul Barnes Community Park, in honor of our family physician, whom I previously mentioned, which is a separate location, but that is also owned by the county, but the county was running out of funds to maintain it. It had been founded by local members. It is on the old Southern Pacific railroad bed. The railway station was taken down and SP donated the land.

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Quivik: Could you repeat the kinds of facilities that are in that park? We may have missed some of those.

C.Gwerder: In the park—it was started by a group of citizens. It was the old railway, the Southern Pacific railroad station. So they decided to put in a park, and a lot of volunteers got together, and actually laid out the park, and built the park. Then the county came in and said they would take it over, as far as the insurance, and but they didn't have any money for maintenance. So we have a committee, and we raise money through memberships, and memorials to maintain the park. Then we have work days. We had one Saturday. And we have volunteers who come and do the planting, and do some weeding, and maintenance, general maintenance. We've had the California Conservation Corps come and clean off the berm of a levee that we have there. So it is a very well-used and a very welcome addition to the community. It was started in about 1989.

Quivik: Is the name of the organization the Walnut Grove Center, or is that just the name of the building?

C.Gwerder: The Center is the corporate body. The Jean Harvie Community Center, named after the school principal and band director, is that building, and then the park is under that auspices, but it is a separate location.

Quivik: Did the organization spring up when the building became available as a former school, or was there a comparable organization--?

C.Gwerder: Yes. There was a necessity for having a board in order to have it be an incorporated nonprofit community center. The programs are run by the county there.

Quivik: Did you help organize the initial board?

C.Gwerder: No. I was not in on the initial board.

### Walnut Grove Community Presbyterian Church

Quivik: Then you are a member of the St. Anthony Community Church?

C.Gwerder: No. Joe is. I'm a member actually of the Walnut Grove Community Presbyterian Church.

Quivik: Can you tell me about your participation in that congregation?

C.Gwerder: Well, I sang at one time in the choir for three or four years, which was a very nice experience. It is a lovely little redwood church building, and an active congregation. Not a large congregation, but an active congregation.

Quivik: What part do you sing?

C.Gwerder: I sang alto.

Quivik: At lunch you said you played piano for a while at church?

C.Gwerder: I did. I accompanied the youth choir for a short time, which I found to be quite a difficult task. Accompanying is much harder than just playing the piano.

Quivik: Have you played piano during worship services?

C.Gwerder: Just accompanying the choir.

### Parent-Teachers Association

Quivik: You've participated in a number of organizations that related to children, and I'm sure your children.

C.Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: How about some of those, like the PTA?

- C.Gwerder: I served as the PTA president, and a volunteer teacher's aide in both elementary and high school. I was a co-director for a couple of productions that the drama department put on at the high school.
- Quivik: What were the names of those productions?
- C.Gwerder: *Music Man* we did, and *Oklahoma*. And then I was a Cub Scout leader and a Campfire leader, and a founding member of our local Delta Head Start, which is still continuing. It has been a very viable organization in our area.
- Quivik: Let's take each of those in turn. What are some of the issues that the PTA grappled with while you were active in it? Was this both Walnut Grove and at the high school?
- C.Gwerder: The PTA was just Walnut Grove, the elementary school. I think the usual problems, raising funds for the band, making costumes for the band. We had a very, very strong principal, who made it very easy to participate. You knew exactly what was expected of you. It was getting speakers and that kind of thing. I think these days they are working on advancing their building program and so forth. We didn't have any of that going on at that time. So that was just more organizational—track and field days, that kind of thing, sports activities, supporting those.
- Quivik: Is there a full-time music teacher at the school?
- C.Gwerder: There was. Well, the principal was also the music teacher when we were there, when our children were there. She was an excellent musician and band director. She would stop the band, and turn around and glare at the audience until there was quiet, because she was very strict. She was just as strict with the audience as she was with her students. The Jean Harvie Community Center is named in her honor. Since then, I think they usually have a music intern from University of the Pacific to come and teach part time. I don't think they can afford to have a full-time music instructor.
- Quivik: Had she not had that music background, would there have been, perhaps, a part-time--?
- C.Gwerder: I think there would have been, yes. I think they would have hired somebody.
- Quivik: While you were active in the PTA, how was the support in the school for, shall I say, non-three R's kinds of programs, like art, and music, and so on?
- C.Gwerder: It was very well supported. We have had a very supportive community, and a lot of people interested in the arts, in the fine arts. So there has always been a strong impetus there to have that in the schools, and to continue it even when the funding was slim. We have had volunteer artists teach classes. We had a friend who taught a French class there, and somebody else who helped with the music. So people would really come forth and help out in those situations, in those areas.



Quivik: You mentioned directing a couple of musicals?

C.Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: What kind of a background did you bring to that?

C.Gwerder: I didn't really have any. The *Music Man* was really our principal one that we worked on, and we would play the videotape--then we had some really talented students, one of them who went on to Juilliard School of Music, and he helped us a great deal. We would watch the tape, and then we would train the kids with the dance and songs that we had been watching. So it was quite a good production, I must say.

Quivik: Did you perform it several nights?

C.Gwerder: We did. I think it was three nights. Our high school is quite small, it is just 375 students. It was amazing, the talent that came forward, some very nice voices, and some good acting.

Quivik: Had you ever performed during high school or college?

C.Gwerder: Oh, nothing really much of that nature, just little plays and so forth.

Quivik: Could you describe what gave you the impetus, I suppose, to take on the task of being a director, without that sort of personal background?

C.Gwerder: Well, I think you--everyone felt a very strong obligation, all of my peers, that we all had to do our part to keep things running. So if you were asked, you really tried to participate. That was the reason.

### Cub Scouts and Campfire Girls

Quivik: Then you mentioned Cub Scouts and Campfire Girls. You had said you were a Campfire Girl yourself when you were young. Were you an official leader of a local group?

C.Gwerder: Yes. We had a troop. I did it, actually, for both of my daughters, two years each. They have certain programs that you follow, and it was a very nice experience. I actually think it was much easier than having the Cub Scouts. We had about twelve eight-year-old boys to try to organize after school when they were tired, [laughs] and try to have them glue some macaroni on cigar boxes. Anyway, it was an experience.

Quivik: So you were a den mother?

C.Gwerder: I was a den mother.

Quivik: And what is the title called for the leader of the Campfire Girls?

C.Gwerder: The Campfire leader, is called the group leader.

Quivik: Did you go on any outings with either of those groups?

C.Gwerder: We were going to go on an overnight with our Campfire Girls, and we decided to try it out at the church hall. So we had a campout, an overnight campout in the Presbyterian church hall. And then something happened that we couldn't go to our outdoor campout.

Quivik: How did that indoor one go?

C.Gwerder: Well, it was quite a long night. [laughter] But I think they all had a good time.

Quivik: They would have been ready for going outside?

C.Gwerder: They would have been ready, and I don't know--I can't remember whether it was one of the times we had a flood, or something, some catastrophe happened. I participated in several "Scoutaramas" with the Scouts, an all-day event in Sacramento.

### Delta Head Start

Quivik: Then the Delta Head Start project--?

C.Gwerder: The Delta Head Start project began in the late seventies. We had a cooperative nursery here, and so we decided to try to get the funding to start a program, a federal program of Head Start. So we had to approach the Office of Economic Opportunity in Sacramento, and also got some seed money from the Sacramento Junior League to start this program, which was in the Presbyterian Church hall. We succeeded, and it became a very strong program. Delta Head Start is still operating today, twenty-five years later.

There was kind of a natural integration. Head Start was supposed to have a certain ethnic balance, and ours was a fairly natural balance of Hispanic, and Caucasian, and--we have very few black families here, there were maybe two black children.

Quivik: Any Asian students?

C.Gwerder: Very few Asians in that program. There were economic guidelines, financial guidelines. You had to have a certain income level, so you were not allowed to participate if you were over-income. That eliminated some people.

Quivik: In this area, are those children from families of seasonal workers, or what would be the occupation--?

C.Gwerder: Some were. The reason Head Start is such a fine program is that the mothers are required to participate, and the whole family is visited by the director and the teacher. So there is a lot of participation by the family, and it is increasing the encouragement for the children to learn English.

Quivik: Did you work at all as a teacher, or other—I'll say staff person, helper, in the Head Start program?

C.Gwerder: We did, yes, participate, just in an overseeing capacity, not in any teaching. But as board members we would spend quite a bit of time on the site, overseeing it, and hiring teachers and so forth, hiring a director.

Quivik: What kinds of things did you teach when you were a volunteer teacher's aide?

C.Gwerder: I taught in the elementary school, anything that needed to be done that day, working individually with children on reading, and that type of thing.

At the high school I helped in the English department. The teacher said one day, "Well, would you just take the class?" She had something to do. Well, here I had supposedly a degree in education, but I had never taught a class, and it seemed as though the hour—it was a class of Shakespeare—it seemed to go on and on. And then I corrected papers. And wrote the final midterm, made a crossword puzzle out of all their vocabulary words.

Quivik: Were you working as a volunteer teacher's aide at the grade level where your children were in school, or just generally in the school while they were there, or after your children left school?

C.Gwerder: It was when my children were in school. In the elementary school it was within their classroom. At the high school it wasn't necessarily their class. In fact it was better if it was not their class. [laughs]

Quivik: Were they very active in extracurricular activities?

C.Gwerder: They were. They all were involved in sports. Our oldest daughter was very active in the Future Homemaker program. Our son Jim belonged to Future Farmers of America and had a lamb project. All the lambs were in a pen at the high school when a pack of wild dogs came during the night and killed them. The next day the teacher suggested a lamb barbecue, which they had. I had mixed feelings about that, but I suppose it was better than total waste!

Our younger daughter was very active in athletics there. The girls basketball team played in the Oakland Coliseum. They went way up in their league and they were advanced into another division, and so that was very exciting. All of our friends and neighbors went down to the Oakland Coliseum to watch this game. We had a huge picnic in the parking lot. KCRA Channel 3 from Sacramento taped the game for a news broadcast, the interest being in how such a small school could advance so far.

So everyone was very supportive of any school activities. The stands would be full at every football game, basketball game, and track meet. Our son played football even though he weighed 135 pounds, playing varsity football. But everyone felt an obligation to participate. He got out without a scratch, fortunately. Both daughters were high school cheerleaders.

Ann, our younger daughter, did have her horse at home. She kept it in a little corral up by the levee. She had a friend who had a horse, and they would ride around the back of the island.

### Delta Young Women's Club

Quivik: Then you have been active in some other groups that at least have to do with children, maybe your children, maybe not. How about the Delta Young Women's Club?

C.Gwerder: The Delta Young Women's Club was a local group of young women, and was active in raising money for scholarships and putting on fashion shows. It was a very nice organization for welcoming newcomers. You were supposed to resign when you were thirty-five, so it was really a young women's organization.

Quivik: So this is something you were a member of early in your--?

C.Gwerder: Yes, very early on. The same way with the Sacramento Junior League. I belonged for sixteen years, and became a sustaining member at the age of forty, because that was the time line at that time. Now the Junior League members, I don't think there is a cut-off date for the age.

Quivik: What are some of the projects that you worked on with the Delta Young Women's Club?

C.Gwerder: Mainly fund-raising. Our annual fashion show was the big fund-raiser. It seems like it has been a long time ago.

Quivik: What were you raising the funds for?

C.Gwerder: For scholarships, for the high school scholarships.

Quivik: What does that mean, high school scholarships?

C.Gwerder: Every year, we would choose two deserving students to receive this money that was to go towards their college education.

Quivik: College scholarships for students from your high school?

C.Gwerder: Yes, right. It was just a monetary award.

### Junior League

Quivik: How about the Sacramento Junior League? What were some of the projects you worked on ?

C.Gwerder: In the Junior League I served on the board quite a few times. The Junior League has a lot of wonderful community projects. It has started Fairy Tale Town, which is a children's amusement park, children's theatre, volunteer bureau, art in the schools. It gave funding for Head Start, child abuse, lots of children's issues--just a very fine, strong organization. It is made up of dedicated young women. The association of Junior Leagues was founded in 1901. Sacramento affiliated in 1941. You were required to put in a certain amount of volunteer hours to promote these causes. The mission of the Junior League is to find a need in the community, meet the need by providing partial funding and volunteer staff, and hope the project can become self-sustaining.

Quivik: Were there any of those projects that you helped to initiate as a board member?

C.Gwerder: The Delta Head Start was one that used that money. Washington Neighborhood Center, art in the schools, excavation of the Eagle Theatre in old Sacramento were projects initiated during that time.

Quivik: How far is Sacramento from here?

C.Gwerder: Sacramento is thirty miles.

Quivik: Would you consider that unusual, that you would go thirty miles to join a group like that?

C.Gwerder: When you live in the country, you just have to make up your mind that you are either going to drive and do these things, or you are going to stay at home. So it is just a matter of necessity. I don't love the driving, but it is not that bad of a drive.

Quivik: Were any of your neighbors members of the Sacramento Junior League?

C.Gwerder: Yes, quite a few. We had a whole group, eight or ten, who would go together to meetings and events such as the annual two-day huge rummage sale. Several of us performed in the Junior League Follies.

Quivik: Did some of those fund-raisers and service projects that the Junior League did extend out into this area, or were they focused primarily on Sacramento?

C.Gwerder: They are primarily in the Sacramento community. The only two in which the Junior League participated here were the Head Start program and a weekly well baby clinic provided by our Dr. Barnes, at which I was a volunteer.

### Sacramento Debutante Committee

Quivik: And the Sacramento Debutante Committee?

C.Gwerder: That was a committee that sponsored a Debutante Ball, and the proceeds were for the Sacramento Symphony. It has now been abandoned because the Sacramento Symphony lost its funding, and so that was also the end of the Sacramento Debutante Committee. It was a fun time when our daughters participated, because they did a lot with their fathers, and there were waltzes, and other dances, and parties. It was a nice outlet for our daughters to be in the Sacramento area and meet a whole other group of friends before they went off to college, or just as they went off to college.

Quivik: Can you describe what the debutante event was like, and what was involved in planning for it, leading up to it, and so on?

C.Gwerder: Yes. I was chairman of the ball one year. What happened that year was that the power went out on all the west coast of California and down into Arizona in the afternoon just before the ball was to begin. We had a big orchestra, Walt Tolleson from San Francisco, and Walt said they might be able to play three pieces, and the hotel said they could provide a cold dinner. Actually, it became sort of a moral issue with me, because I thought there were all these accidents happening out in the streets because the street lights and signals were off, and should we cancel, or should we go on? Just as the girls arrived with their white ball gowns, the electricity came back on.

It was a fun time; it was quite an elaborate ball. There are about 450 people who attend, and the debs and their fathers do the traditional cotillion figures. The debutantes have an escort, and an usher, so there are two young men for each debutante as they are introduced.

The tradition is for the father to be introducing his daughter to his friends. That tradition is what it is all about. It was a happy, a very happy experience for our girls and for Joe and the whole family.

Quivik: Did you attend?

C.Gwerder: Yes, definitely.

Quivik: So is there sort of an audience of adults?

- C.Gwelder: Yes. There are 450 people for the dinner itself, for the ball. That is family and friends, as well as all the young people.
- Quivik: How many young women typically?
- C.Gwelder: There were typically about twenty. Each girl's family with another one or two puts on a party during the year. We had ours in a friend's packing shed. We had pear bins for tables, and we had some kind of popular music, and volleyball in this huge packing shed. It was really quite an unusual party, and all the young people had a very good time.
- Quivik: Are those parties sort of building up to the main event?
- C.Gwelder: They are building up to the main event, yes. They are in the summer before, and then the ball is held at Christmas time. It is quite a lovely event.
- Quivik: Are the same groups of people in attendance at each of the parties?
- C.Gwelder: Yes, the debutantes and their friends.
- Quivik: What is the difference in the function between an escort and an usher?
- C.Gwelder: The escort just had a little more importance. The father would come out first with the debutante, and they would do a few marches around the ballroom. Then the escort would come along and she would take his arm. The debutante makes a bow, a curtsy, and goes to every corner of the room and makes a bow which they practice for, and they worry about whether they will teeter on their heels. Then the usher is there to dance and promote a good time. The orchestra leader announces first that the girls dance with their fathers, and then they dance with their escorts, and then they dance with their ushers. Then everybody dances. As I say, it is not going on any longer, but there was a lot of interest, and a lot of people who enjoyed the dancing and party.
- Quivik: How are the escort and usher chosen? Are they like a date for the young lady, or chosen by the father?
- C.Gwelder: They are chosen by the debutante, but she is encouraged to choose somebody who is not her current boyfriend. They might break up the day before, and she would be left without somebody. So she was encouraged to take her next-door neighbor, or her cousin, or somebody that is going to be more of a friend than a real boyfriend. So that worked out. Carrie chose a cousin as her escort, and then she had a good family friend as her usher. Both of our girls did. In fact Ann, our younger daughter, had her brother Jim as her escort.
- Quivik: Was that a long-time tradition in Sacramento, the Debutante Ball?
- C.Gwelder: It had been going on since the early 1960s, certainly not long like San Francisco and some other older ones.

Quivik: How did the fund-raising aspect of it work?

C.Gwerder: There was a required fee for the debutante's family. Then the dinner itself, there is a charge for that. The proceeds from all that would go to the symphony.

### Sacramento Children's Home, and the Election Board

Quivik: The Sacramento Children's Home you have participated in.

C.Gwerder: Yes. I served on that board for six years, and served as the secretary. It is a residential facility for abused and neglected children, and also has outreach programs into the community. Now they are working with the schools on other programs, and there are counseling programs, and there are group homes. The home was established in 1867. It started out as an orphanage, It has always been a very strong organization in Sacramento.

Quivik: When were you on that board?

C.Gwerder: 1985 to 1989.

Quivik: How long did you serve, roughly?

C.Gwerder: Seven years, because I was on a quality assessment committee at the end, so seven years.

Quivik: In this day and age, if it is not an orphanage, how do they locate the children that need their service?

C.Gwerder: They are placed there by county social workers and the Child Protective Services. So they are not orphans, they all have families, and they have been neglected or abused in some way and are referred to the home. They can stay until they are eighteen, and some children have been there for ten years. Now the Children's Home has started a Sacramento Crisis Nursery, which is a program which is also residential, where mothers or care givers can bring a child when they feel that they need some rest for themselves, that they might be abusive, or they might neglect their children. The child is allowed to stay there up to three months. That is a very fine new program that the Children's Home has started in conjunction with the Sacramento Junior League and the Child Abuse Council.

Quivik: What sorts of things did you do as a board member?

C.Gwerder: Setting policy and working with the management. There were some board decisions that were required, legally as much as anything. So we were kept in very close touch by the management team as to what was going on at the home and--

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Quivik: Approximately how many children lived there?

C.Gwerder: There are about seventy children, and there is a school on grounds. Then there are three group homes off grounds in which eight children live. They are more the teenagers, and they live with a staff member there. We were hoping to start what they call an emancipation program, where they would support a child to live in an apartment, maybe if they were nineteen, and unable to live on the grounds. They work very closely with all the county organizations. But it is a nonprofit organization.

Quivik: Do you remember how you got involved in that particular project?

C.Gwerder: I had always been interested in it. My grandmother was a founding member of the Stockton Children's Home, and my mother had served as the president of the Stockton Children's Home. When I was invited to join this board, I was very happy to be a member of it, to be a member of such an organization which was so worth while.

Quivik: Then I see that you have participated in the election board? Tell me about that.

C.Gwerder: Yes, about thirty-five years. We are a precinct now of about 470 voters, sometimes 700 if the precincts are combined. There are four of us who have been doing it for years, and it is a wonderful way to keep in touch with all of the community people who maybe you don't see until the next election. It is a very long day, but a fun day.

Quivik: What is the name of your precinct?

C.Gwerder: It is just a number, but we would be Walnut Grove, the Walnut Grove precinct.

Quivik: Where is the polling place?

C.Gwerder: The polling place has been in various places. Lately, for the last few elections, it has been in either of the church halls. Over the last few years it has been in the Presbyterian Church hall. So we have a nice facility with heat, and a kitchen, and a telephone, and all the necessities.

Quivik: What are the four roles that the four of you play?

C.Gwerder: We sort of switch off, doing the roster, and handing out the ballots, and receiving the ballots. We are allowed to assist voters. This last time particularly, we seem to have had several voters who were having a difficult time punching, this is of course the year of Florida [laughs], and our ballots are similar, hard to punch. We are allowed to go in and assist a voter as needed.

Quivik: Is there any sort of ceremonial opening of the polling place at each election?

C.Gwerder: Yes. We all have to sign the roster, and then the inspector announces that--we have three clerks and an inspector--the inspector is in charge, and she announces that the polls are open

at 7:00 a.m. The first voter looks into the ballot box to show that it is empty. Then it is locked up, and then we proceed.

Quivik: So the first actual voter--?

C.Gwerder: Looks into the ballot box, yes.

Quivik: Who does the inspector announce that the poll is open to?

C.Gwerder: Audibly she announces that the polls are open.

Quivik: Is there a sort of formalized speech?

C.Gwerder: No, just that the polls are now open. In past years we have sometimes had interpreters come with Hispanic people to interpret ballots. You are allowed to take a helper in--it is kind of a fine line there to who can crowd into the little voting booth, but we have never had any.... Oh, well, we did have a problem this year, this is sort of interesting. We had a man come in, Hispanic man, and he said that his name was say, "Juan Gutierrez." We looked at our roster, and we said, "Well, it says you have already voted here."

And he said, "Oh, that is my son, that makes me so mad, my son uses my name. I don't know what to do. I want to vote." We said, "Well, we're not allowed to let you vote, you're somebody who doesn't have a name on the roster." So half an hour later, the same man came in, and now he said his name was "Joe Garcia," and presented us with some phony-looking identification. We are not supposed to confront a voter, so we allowed him to vote, but wrote on the back of our ballot roster to have this name checked and to be sure that this was a valid voter, which I really feel he was not. I mean, there was something going on there. But other than that episode, we have not had any confrontations with voters.

Quivik: The four of you have been doing this--?

C.Gwerder: We have all been doing it for over--this particular four, for over twenty-five years,

Quivik: Wow. Are you thinking of recruiting somebody new?

C.Gwerder: There are always people who would be willing to do it. But we all enjoy it, and take our meals, and one of our local restaurant owners sends over a pot of stew and a pot of beans for us, so they provide our dinner.

Quivik: Is that an entirely volunteer day, or do you get paid something for it?

C.Gwerder: You are paid I think about \$65 for quite a few hours. You get there at six, and you get home about ten. [laughs] So you don't do it for the money.

Quivik: How does the polling place close?

C.Gwerder: The polling place closes at 8:00 p.m. We are supposed to allow anybody who already has a ballot to finish his voting. But we don't give out any ballots after 8:00 p.m.

Quivik: Any sort of announcement made?

C.Gwerder: An announcement is made again.

Quivik: How do you handle the ballots from there? What becomes of them?

C.Gwerder: We stay and we count all the ballots. There is a whole routine to go through. You put them all in stacks. If it is the primaries, you put them by party, and they are all different colors. If it is general election, you just stack them all a certain way and count them, and be sure that your count is the same as the number of people who have signed your roster. You have all these totals, and different boxes to put different things in. There is a whole routine. Then we take down the voting booths. Those are all put into suitcases. We put those all together. Then two people take the ballots to a drop-off place. This year it was in Elk Grove. Sometimes it is in Sacramento. We have an inspector who comes from the county to see that we are doing everything right. During the day he comes by a couple of times. We have always had a good report because we have done it so long.

### River Delta Historical Society

Quivik: Then you are a member of the River Delta Historical Society.

C.Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Where is that based?

C.Gwerder: That has a room over at this Walnut Grove Community Center. From Isleton up to Clarksburg, is considered the River Delta Society. Their meetings are once a month, with some interesting speakers. Somebody will put together a slide show of floods over the years, or various events that happened. Various speakers.

Quivik: Is the historical society about as old as the Community Center?

C.Gwerder: The historic society started out, I guess that was about thirty years ago.

Quivik: So it is older.

C.Gwerder: Yes, definitely. Up until then there was not a central location. Now it is nice to have that room, because people can donate pictures, and books, and all kinds of data that they have been keeping in their attics.

- Quivik: Are there other projects that the society has undertaken besides this regular program series?
- C.Gwerder: Yes. There was, in Locke, an old Chinese gambling hall that the society took on. We painted, and cleaned it up, and opened it to the public as a museum and staffed it on weekends. That was up until, I think, about eight years ago. It was turned over to a commercial group, somebody who would run it because we were running out of staff. But it is quite an interesting old gambling hall with the secret door, and all--because Locke was a very active Chinese community.
- Quivik: The historical society then is interested in all aspects of local history, including the Chinese history?
- C.Gwerder: Yes, definitely.
- Quivik: Is there a distinct Locke historical society?
- C.Gwerder: No. Locke had a Chinese Benevolent Society which was quite active for some time, but there are very few Chinese left in Locke, so there is not much of an organization over there. They had a school at one time, a language school. Locke was built in 1915 and is the last rural community built and occupied exclusively by the Chinese. Once a bustling community of 1,500, today there are about 70 residents, of which about 10 are Chinese.

### 100 Year Club

- Quivik: And then the 100 Year Club?
- C.Gwerder: Yes. The H.C. Shaw Company, which my family has been involved in, and that was established in 1854 as wholesale farm equipment dealers, we are a member through that since 1963. Gwerder Farms joined last year.
- Quivik: What is the 100 Year Club?
- C.Gwerder: It is sponsored by the California State Chamber of Commerce and the State Fair. That is where the recognition is given, and that is where the annual meeting is, of the 100 Year Club. We received a nice gold medallion paper weight of the Seal of California for the Shaw Company.
- Quivik: But I mean, what does the name refer to, 100 Year Club?
- C.Gwerder: That a California business has been in operation for 100 years, over 100 years.
- Quivik: I see. So only businesses are recognized?

C.Gwerder: Yes, any kind of a company, or a corporation, or a farm business.

Quivik: Is it something that the state has established to recognize these--?

C.Gwerder: I believe so.

Quivik: And then once you have been recognized, do you participate as a member?

C.Gwerder: Then you are invited to an annual luncheon at the fair grounds during the California State Fair, which is in August, August or September.

Quivik: So I interrupted you. What are the different family entities, now that are members of the 100 Year Club?

C.Gwerder: The Thompson-Folger Co. is a member also. Since 1961.

Quivik: Any of the Gwerder?

C.Gwerder: Gwerder Farms.

Quivik: Gwerder Farms is?

C.Gwerder: Yes. Last year it was recognized, although it had been in business over 100 years, since 1892.

Quivik: Any other organizations that you can think of that you have been a part of?

C.Gwerder: I am a member of the Society of California Pioneers headquartered in San Francisco. In order to join, you must have documentation that your ancestor came to California before 1850. My cousin, Edward T. Haas, commissioned Oscar Lewis in 1958 to write a history of the Haas and Thompson families, *A Family of Builders*. This provided the documentation of John Thompson's arrival in California for the admission to membership of my son Jim and myself. The book also illustrates the important role that Edward F. Haas as engineer and contractor played in the early day reclamation of the San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta. My son has been a member of the society for some fifteen years, and I joined in 2000. Women have been admitted to membership only within the last decade.

I also belong to the Meriwether Society headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia. This connection is through my maternal grandfather, Richard Minor. Members are documented descendants of Nicholas Meriwether (1631-1678), early colonist of Virginia. The society conducts family research, publishes a newsletter, and holds annual reunions among other activities.



#### IV THE WALNUT GROVE COMMUNITY

##### The Gwerder Children

- Quivik: I noticed that a number of those organizations are ones that your children were involved in, and then in recent years you have been involved in some other kinds of community service organizations. Can you describe the transition that you feel like you went through as your children grew up and left the home, and you probably had a little more time on your hands? What was that process generally of you moving into these other organizations?
- C.Gwerder: That probably was about the time that I became active with the Sacramento Children's Home and with our local community center and park. When our children were in college, we did travel around to anything that involved them. We went down to Berkeley quite a bit when our daughter was a student there. It was nice to be back on the campus, and look around, see what was going on.
- Quivik: When did your youngest daughter graduate?
- C.Gwerder: She graduated in 1983. Then we have had some trips. We have some time to travel, and we take a ski trip every year out of state. At the time that the last child left home, we were beginning to have grandchildren as well, so that filled in a lot of time.
- Quivik: Did you find yourself at all consciously looking for some new kinds of projects to--?
- C.Gwerder: Yes, I did, definitely, I did. This opportunity to serve on the Sacramento Children's Home board, I welcomed it, because I really was sort of looking for some direction.
- Quivik: Were there any sorts of job opportunities that presented themselves?
- C.Gwerder: Not really, no.

Quivik: Was that because of the location here?

C.Gwerder: It is probably because I don't have a lot of, really, any particular training, and the location too. It would be a matter of traveling. I even thought I could take some courses for job training. But when you think of the commute every day, it does put a damper on that sort of thing.

Quivik: We have talked in passing about your children. Let's move on to them specifically. I'd like you to name them, when they were born, and give me a brief overview of where they are today.

C.Gwerder: Our oldest daughter Caroline, whom we call Carrie, Caroline Murrice Gwerder. Her name now is Twitchell. She was born in 1956. She went to local schools, and graduated, then to St. Mary's College, and then graduated from Chico State University. Carrie has three daughters now, and her husband is a hydro-engineer in Sacramento.

Quivik: What is his name?

C.Gwerder: His name is Jeffrey Twitchell. Carrie graduated with a certificate in early childhood education and has been a preschool teacher. Their daughters' names and birth dates are: Caroline Ann, 1983, Laura Catherine, 1985, and Sarah Elizabeth, 1990.

Our son Jim, James Joseph Gwerder, was born in 1958. He went to local schools and also graduated from Chico State University, with a degree in agricultural science. He is married to the former Julie James. Julie was from Bakersfield and graduated from the University of the Pacific. She is a kindergarten teacher, and they have two little girls. They live in Woodbridge. Jim works with Joe on the ranch, and always has done so. They have two daughters: Jennifer Katherine, 1992, and Mary Jane, 1996.

Our youngest daughter, Ann Elizabeth Gwerder, now Durst, is married to Fritz Durst. They live in Woodland. He is a corn and grape grower, rice farmer, and cattleman. Ann was previously married to Patrick Madden, who died at the age of thirty-four. They had twins, and the twins were just two years old when he passed away. When Ann and Fritz were married, Fritz had one son, and then they have a son together. So they have three boys and a girl. Their children are: Garrett Edward, 1990, Molly Elizabeth, 1991, Patrick Joseph, 1991, and Nikolaus Goodwin, 1996.

When our children were growing up they worked in the summers in the local packing sheds packing pears, and also at the farm supply store that we had an ownership interest in in Lodi. So they had some good on-the-job training in both. The packing sheds I always thought looked sort of like a movie set, because there were all these young people, and they were all having so much fun while they were working. Students would come down from Sacramento, whole car loads of young men, and pick the pears, work in the orchards. A lot of young people in the packing sheds.

We have nine grandchildren altogether, and they all live close enough that we see them very frequently. We feel very fortunate.



Quivik: There is a packing shed almost across the river from you here. Did your children ever work at that one?

C.Gwerder: No. That one has not been in operation for years. That was an asparagus packing shed, where they loaded onto the barges that went by. Ever since I have lived here, that has not been operating. It is now turned into a boat storage, which is a good use for it.

Quivik: Where were those packing sheds your children worked in?

C.Gwerder: The one where they worked belonged to our brother-in-law John Wheeler and is seven miles upriver here, and across the river at Courtland.

Quivik: Your youngest daughter Ann, did she go to college?

C.Gwerder: She went to the University of California at Berkeley. She graduated there.

Quivik: In what field?

C.Gwerder: She was in sociology.

Quivik: Now I know that through you and Joe she has a family connection to Cal. Is there any sort of family connection for Chico State, for your older two children?

C.Gwerder: No, there wasn't.

Ann took a paralegal course, and worked in San Francisco as a paralegal for several years before she was married. Then after her husband's death she continued working there. She hasn't worked since she has moved to Woodland, but she has quite a busy household.

### Floods in Carol's Memory

Quivik: Sounds like it. Well, you have mentioned living along the river here, and one of the things that comes with river living is floods. Can you tell me something about floods?

C.Gwerder: Well, our first flood, was--actually, we were living in Galt at the Quonset hut. That was the winter of '55, and it was Christmas Eve. The water was up to our door, and we were unable to leave or get out. All the roads were closed between Stockton, where my family was, and Walnut Grove. So we spent Christmas Eve at home worrying about what was going to happen that night. By the next day the water had receded, and we did go to our family dinner.

Then in the 1970s there was a flood in Isleton. All the housewives were called upon to help make sandwiches for the men who were filling sandbags down in Isleton, and also to help evacuate our school principal, who as I mentioned was also the band director, the music director. So we went down to her house, the whole group of us. We had a couple of pickup trucks. The only thing she wanted removed particularly was her ping-pong table. [laughs] So we said, "All right, if that is what she wants." So we wrestled the ping pong table into one of the pickups. I think that was about the only thing that we removed. The rest of her things we just put up high. Everybody survived that. There was quite a bit of water damage, and there was certainly a lot of crop damage.

Then in 1986 we were returning from a trip. We had been to New Zealand and Australia. As Joe and I were driving home, we saw cars going by on the islands with mattresses on top. It was just pouring rain. We had heard that there was flooding in Marin County, but we came home and went to bed. At 2:00 a.m. the fire sirens started and kept going and going and going. We decided, "We better go see what is going on."

So we went down to the firehouse, and found out that the levee had broken across the river on Tyler Island. The people on the east side of the river were evacuated and moved into the two church halls.

There was a whole group of us, volunteers, who helped cook. The Red Cross came down and provided cots. We provided breakfast every morning, because the people were allowed to go home in the daytime, but were required to evacuate at night. So they came over and stayed in the two church halls. That evacuation was for about a week. But the Red Cross--that was my first real dealing with the Red Cross organization. They were very, very efficient, and very wonderful people.

Quivik: Any flooding affected your place here?

C.Gwerder: We were not affected. Joe has been affected several times at the Galt Ranch with flooding through the shop, and having to move the cattle up on higher ground, which he has probably told you about, and roads being closed, and having to take circuitous routes. We have always been threatened--we have watched, and we would see boils, where the water comes through the levee, boils up on the inside of the levee. Those are all scary things, and those are all reported around the area. I don't feel as nervous about it as I used to when I had little children. You think you can get yourself out. You only have to worry about yourself. Our island has never flooded, this is Grand Island, it has never flooded. So, we have pretty sound levees.

Quivik: You talked about seeing those boils. Is there a sort of watch duty that folks living along here perform when there is a flood or high water?

C.Gwerder: They do. I think they probably, even without being organized, most of the locals just keep an eye on it, and report to each other what is going on.

Quivik: Has Walnut Grove been flooded on the other side?

C.Gwerder: Not the town itself, but they had to put up a levee, at that time in '86. One part of the island was flooding, and they kept it out of Walnut Grove itself, out of the community. At least since I have been here it hasn't flooded. Historically, I am not sure.

Quivik: You have talked about some of those floods occurring over time. I'd like to hear your reflections on other changes that you have seen occurring in this area across the time that you have been farming here.

C.Gwerder: I have to go back. One flood that I forgot was in September of '82. The Minor-Haas property, all the grapes were lost, they were flooded, and the tomatoes on Thompson-Folger were all flooded. So those were disasters on the ranch, but it didn't come to our home.

Quivik: That was just that river flooding? The Mokelumne?

C.Gwerder: That was yes, the Mokelumne.

As far as the changes, yes, our community has been. As our children were growing up, and up until just a very few years ago, every member of the community was probably in agriculture, or in some agriculturally related job. Now we are turning more into a community of a lot of commuters. We have several politicians, we have some teachers, and business people from Stockton and Sacramento. It has changed in that way, where there are quite a few new people in town, which is good to keep us going.

### Seasonal Workers in the Delta Area

Quivik: Has your family, or you personally gotten to know any of the seasonal working families who live around here temporarily?

C.Gwerder: Well, not the seasonal, no, because we--I think if you are in the business of orchards maybe you would be more involved with seasonal workers. We really don't have any seasonal workers in our business, except in the grapes, and they are provided by a labor contractor.

Quivik: Then as you observe seasonal workers in the area, are there changes that you have observed in that whole facet of agriculture in the delta region?

C.Gwerder: There used to be more Filipino workers. And of course the Chinese and other Asians. But I think most of the seasonal workers now are Hispanic, and some Laotian and Cambodian. I think there are quite a few unmarried. But they are the full-time people, the ones with families, usually, that I have come across.

Quivik: Do you have a ballpark sense of when that shift occurred, when there were more Asian and Filipino workers, and now it is primarily Hispanic?

C.Gwerder: Probably in the last twenty years, it has evolved. There used to be more camp houses, where men could live seasonally. I don't think so many are provided any more on the ranches.

Quivik: Can you describe more what you mean by a camp house?

C.Gwerder: It would be like a bunkhouse, for workers. They would provide a cook and meals. I don't know whether that was economics, or what the reason was, for the demise of that kind of thing.

Quivik: Did you ever have any bunkhouses on any of your places?

C.Gwerder: No, we didn't. I'm sure Joe's grandfather did, and possibly his father when they were growing peas and asparagus, and some of those things, but not since 1955, when I moved here.

### Changes in Walnut Grove Community ##

Quivik: You mentioned people living around here now who work in Stockton or Sacramento. I am wondering about folks who have lived here for a long time, in a sense turning their attention to those towns for shopping, or other kinds of activities. Have you seen a change that way in community life?

C.Gwerder: Definitely. We had, in the early years of our children growing up, we had two drug stores, and two dry cleaners, and we have neither of those. We had a shoe repair, we had a dry goods store, a movie theater, hardware store--these are all things that we no longer have. When I first moved here, there were two automobile dealerships.

Quivik: And all in Walnut Grove?

C.Gwerder: Yes. All right here, very conveniently located. We had a doctor just in our little subdivision; we now have a doctor in Courtland, seven miles away. And we are very fortunate to have him. We are all worried that when he retires, we won't have a physician who will put in the hours and the driving to the hospital, and all the things he does. He is a University of California graduate, and graduated from UC med. school as well. But he is sixty-seven years old.

So those things have changed. We do have two or three grocery stores, but for variety as well as the cost, I usually do quite a bit of shopping in wherever I happen to be, Stockton or Sacramento, although we want to support our local people. Now we are down to one gas station. We had two or three gas stations before. What we have increased in is the marinas. We have several new marinas, so recreation is probably going to be our next increase in anything financial, any--

Quivik: Kind of economic development?

C.Gwerder: Economic development, yes.

Quivik: Are the patrons of those marinas residents around here, or do they live in Sacramento?

C.Gwerder: The owners are generally residents here, but the patrons are mostly from the Bay Area. Actually, one of our friends, you were mentioning the big asparagus shed, he traded his farmland for that building. It is a storage business, marine storage. So you see somebody like that going out of agriculture into recreation. We may see more and more of that.

Quivik: Have you noticed how things, it could range from the transition from regular broadcast TV to cable TV, or the advent of the internet, any of those electronic media, do they seem to be affecting community life here in Walnut Grove?

C.Gwerder: Well, they are certainly an advantage. We do not have cable TV, but we have a satellite dish. Cable has not come here. I don't think we have a lot of hope for getting cable. The advent of the computer has been a great asset to agricultural accounting, because there are programs that are specifically designed for it.

Quivik: Are you folks linked by internet?

C.Gwerder: We are. Our daughters—I should have mentioned, too, that our children all participate in the business and are on the payroll. Our daughters do the ranch accounting, and our son is working with his father, so everybody is involved with the operation, which is very good.

Quivik: You mentioned then satellite TV, not cable. The introduction of more of those kinds of entertainment options, in individual homes, has that had any effect on community recreation or social life?

C.Gwerder: I don't think so. I don't see a change there.

Quivik: Then since you have been farming with Joe, is there a way that you would characterize any changes in the relationship between your family, and operation, with government agencies, whether the county, state, or federal level?

C.Gwerder: I suppose we complain about too many restrictions. I think Joe and my son both work more with the university and with the ag. advisors than my father did, and than Joe's father did. I think they are very receptive to having the assistance of those agencies more than the old generation did. I don't know whether that was availability, or what the reason was, but I see more of that going on.

Quivik: So that sounds beneficial.

C.Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: But then when you talk about the restrictions, is that an increase in restrictions?

C.Gwerder: We realize the need for environmental controls, but sometimes we feel they are overly restrictive.

Quivik: Does it seem like there are more of them than there used to be?

C.Gwerder: Definitely more of them. And we object to the imports of food that are not restricted in pesticide use and labor restrictions.

Quivik: Okay. Well, we will talk about what you and Joe think the prospects for the coming years in California agriculture might be when I record you together reflecting on those. Can you think of any other topics that--?

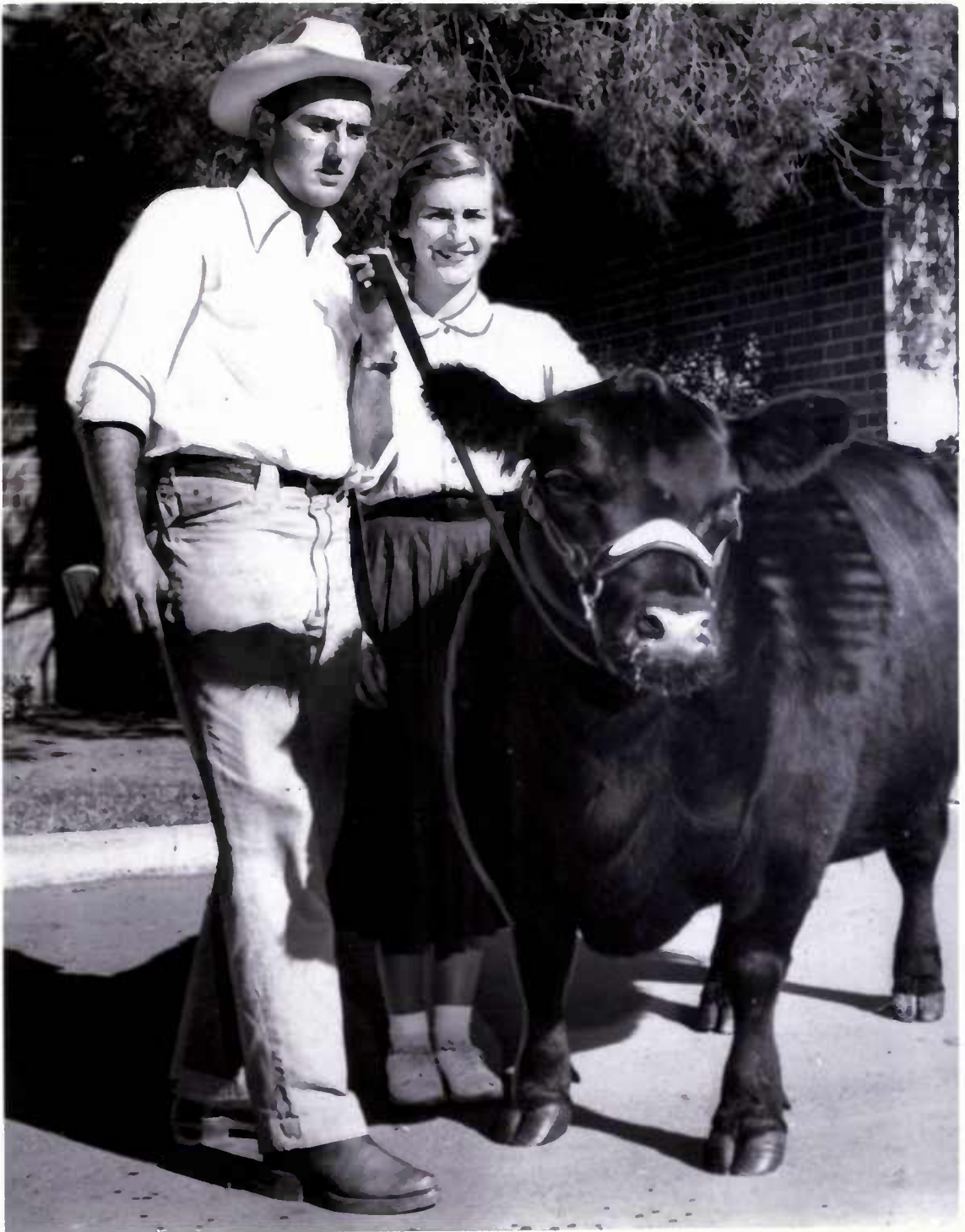
C.Gwerder: No, I think we have covered quite a bit.

Quivik: Okay.

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Addendum by Carol Gwerder:

When I told our interviewer, Fred, of my concern that the listener or reader may have to endure some tedious details of this account, he encouraged me not to leave out the details, as he felt that someone one hundred years from now might be interested in e.g. the Sacramento Debutante Ball and the Cal rooting section card stunts. So I sincerely hope that may be the case and not that the reader will be bored to death by what could be considered the trivias of everyday life.



Joe and Carol Gwerder, 1955







The Gwerder home, 1965



The Gwerder home, 2002





The Gwerder grandchildren at the Galt Vineyard





The Gwerder family, 1998



Gwerder Vineyard (Galt, California)





Left to right: Beau Breck, Helen Breck, Carol Gwerder, and Joe Gwerder (2002)





## INTERVIEW WITH FRANK JOSEPH GWERDER

**V FAMILY BACKGROUND IN THE WALNUT GROVE AREA**

[Interview 1: April 16, 2001] ##<sup>1</sup>

Quivik: This is Fred Quivik, and it is April 16. I am at the home of Joe and Carol Gwerder, and I am about to begin an oral interview with Joe Gwerder for the Regional Oral History Office program at the Bancroft Library. Good afternoon, Joe.

J. Gwerder: Good afternoon.

Quivik: Good afternoon. What I'd like to do today, is start at the beginning of your life, and ask you when and where you were born?

J. Gwerder: Yes. I was born June the 18th, 1932, in Sacramento. My home was in Walnut Grove, on the Sacramento River.

Quivik: What's your full name?

J. Gwerder: My full name is Frank Joseph Gwerder.

**Joe's Paternal Grandparents: Joseph and Marie Gwerder**

Quivik: Okay. Let's get a little background on your family. What brought that family to this point, so that you could be born in Sacramento, and raised in Walnut Grove? Let's start with your grandfather. I've heard your story of his arriving on Grand Island. Can you tell us that story?

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<sup>1</sup>## This symbol indicates that a tape or tape segment has begun or ended. A guide to the tapes follows the transcript.

J. Gwerder: Yes. My grandfather, who was born in Schwyz, Switzerland, a small community near Lucerne, in 1857--he was the third son in the family. So therefore, as things are done in Switzerland, you have two obligations in your schooling. Number one, you have to learn a trade, and number two, you spend one year in the service. So his trade was cheese maker.

Being the third son, there was no room for him on the dairy farm where he was raised. So he left there and went to France, and made cheese for a time there, then moved on to England--finally then, came to the United States, and did the same thing in Wisconsin. Was there for a couple of years, and then heard of the opportunities in Nevada. So he came to Genoa, Nevada, and went to work for a rancher there. Not in the dairy business, but in the beef business.

So he stayed there for the first year, and the rancher for whom he worked could not pay him. He had not sold enough cattle, he did not have the funds. So he stayed another year. Then at the end of that year, he was paid for the two years, and so he stayed another year.

In the meantime, he heard of the California Delta, the wonderful areas, and had heard of some wild cattle that were running in the delta right near our home in Walnut Grove. They had been--had really gotten away from the other islands as the winter floods would come through, and always ended up on the high grounds, so this herd multiplied. Through some Swiss contacts in San Francisco, he was able to find out who owned the cattle, or whose land they were on, so he decided to go down and gather these cattle.

He went to San Francisco and made a business deal with the owner of the land, that if they gathered them and boarded them on the river boats, they would be delivered down the Mokelumne to the San Joaquin, from the San Joaquin into San Francisco Bay. And they would be sold, the cattle would be sold. When they were sold, he was to receive 50 percent of what they brought.

So this was his first move in really going on his own. So with these funds he was able to come back, and lease a ranch on Tyler Island, which is about a mile from Walnut Grove. And on this island, which is surrounded by the north fork of the Mokelumne and the south fork of the Mokelumne. He farmed there for some two years, and then was able to lease 600 acres on Grand Island, which is bounded by the Sacramento River and Steamboat Slough. He was able to lease 600 acres at Walker's Landing, which was a boat landing where they were able to load any produce that they had. So he proceeded to go into the dairy business and make cheese. The cheese was then shipped by barge to San Francisco and sold there.

Quivik: Roughly what year was that that he rounded up those cattle?

J. Gwerder: That was in 1890.

Quivik: 1890. What was his name?

J. Gwerder: His name was Joseph Gwerder, who I'm named for.

Quivik: And one question about his Swiss background. Was he French Swiss, German Swiss?

J. Gwerder: German Swiss.

Quivik: German Swiss.

J. Gwerder: Spoke German. In 1892, he met my grandmother, whose name was Marie Senn, in San Francisco. She was four years younger, but from the same town, Schwyz, in Switzerland. So through the Swiss community they had met in San Francisco and were married. She then moved to Walker's Landing.

Quivik: Had they known each other before?

J. Gwerder: No, they had never met, because of her being younger. So anyway, they were married, and they had six children--four girls, and two boys. My father Frank was the oldest son. He went to school in Ryde, which was a community about four miles from Walker's Landing. That is where he did his elementary schooling.

### Joseph Gwerder's Early Farming Methods on Grand Island

Quivik: Can you tell me a little bit about your grandfather's cheese operation, how that functioned?

J. Gwerder: Well, he had built--they had built some heavy brick buildings to store the cheese in, and they made it there on the farm, and would store it. Then about three times a year it would be shipped to San Francisco. All of the help that he used on the dairy all came from Switzerland, because when these people came over, they would search out other people of Swiss descent to work for.

Quivik: Would you say in those early years that cheese was virtually his sole marketable product, or were there others?

J. Gwerder: I think for a short time it was, and then he proceeded to go into the farming business. Because of the floods that happened, it was very hard to keep the livestock there. At that time they were starting the asparagus business for shipping, and also the peas, and some other vegetable crops. He had a fortunate location. Because of being right at Walker's Landing, there was a stop for the boats going by, so there was always transportation for the product.

- Quivik: Do you have any idea of what kind of cheese he made?
- J. Gwerder: He made some Swiss cheese, and then he went into the, what they call American cheese, which was a yellow cheese.
- Quivik: Similar to a colby or a cheddar, do you think?
- J. Gwerder: It would be more a cheddar.
- Quivik: So then he started making the transition to these vegetables?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: And on the same farmland?
- J. Gwerder: On the same--he still had the same 600 acres that he was leasing then from the landowner in San Francisco. And as he proceeded on from there, he proceeded to buy five different ranches, all on the Grand Island itself, in separate locations, and continued expanding his row crop and field crop--and eventually got out of the dairy, and gave up the lease on the Walker Landing ranch. Because by then he had purchased his own land, and at that time, then started into the orchard business, planting pears, and had some cherries.
- Quivik: Now, were these developments in agriculture that were going on around here at the time, or was he helping to pioneer them, or--?
- J. Gwerder: No. They were starting, because as the land was developed, the levees were built higher so there was less flooding. They had put the internal drains in, and were starting to drain the property. This was done through the reclamation district.
- Quivik: So, there was a reclamation district around here, that was building up levees? When did that reclamation district begin?
- J. Gwerder: It was started in the 1880s, I believe, and they were in charge of two functions. Number one: building the levees to keep the winter waters out, and also to pump the drainage, the seepage that would come under the levees. So they put in pumping stations. On Grand Island they had two large pumping stations, one at Ryde, and one at what was called the Pump House Ranch area. And that was one of the first ranches that my grandfather bought, right next to the district pumps.
- Quivik: How many ranches did he end up buying on Grand Island?
- J. Gwerder: He ended up with five ranches.
- Quivik: What are their names?

J. Gwerder: There was the Pump House Ranch was one, the second one was the Brierly Ranch, which was the area where the ferry came across from Ryer Island, which was across the way. Then there was what they call the Big Ranch, which was right out in the middle of the island, between Walnut Grove and Ryde. Then he bought the Reynolds Ranch, which was where I was raised, on that ranch. Then he bought a small ranch, 120 acres, that he built his home on eventually, which was on the Sacramento riverside.

Quivik: And were all these existing operations, or did he start any of these up from scratch?

J. Gwerder: No. They were existing operations that he purchased and expanded on. As I say, he was right at the ferry, so he was able to lease, then, land, on Ryer Island, which is the next island to the west. They grew asparagus on that island, mainly asparagus.

Quivik: Was San Francisco the main market for all of this produce?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Everything went by barge to San Francisco, until the time they finally put a railroad in on the north end of Ryer Island--with a tract, a farming tract, called the Holland tract. They put a railroad down there, and so my grandfather, and my father, and his younger brother, they had built a packing shed there. So then they were able to truck their asparagus to the packing shed. There it was packed and put into refrigerated rail cars. Then it would go to Sacramento, and then it could go east, or where it was necessary.

Quivik: Can you describe what packing meant in those days?

J. Gwerder: Packing was washing, cutting, and sizing the produce, sorting through it so that it would be a final grade, a grade that was acceptable to the public. That would be the way that we'd go.

Quivik: And it is called packing, was there a particular kind of container that it went in?

J. Gwerder: It went in a square box, but the asparagus itself was in a round bunch, and then put into the packing crate.

Quivik: Was that sort of packing business conducted by the farmers on an individual basis, or--who did that work?

J. Gwerder: At that time, the larger growers had their own packing sheds, employed all their own help. Since then, today, it has been taken over by the commercial operators. There are not many left that still do their own packing.

Quivik: What kind of preservative, if you will, is used for produce going to San Francisco? Was it just temperature?

J. Gwerder: Nothing. Just temperature. The asparagus is cut in the spring of the year, so it typically is cool anyway.

- Quivik: And that asparagus would be the only crop? Or were there other crops on other pieces of ground that they were growing?
- J. Gwerder: Well, they were also growing peas, which went in a round hamper. They were all hand-picked and shipped in the round hamper. And then part of the other crop that was shipped was celery. It was packaged the same way. They could use the same shed, the same facility to pack that crop too.
- Quivik: In those early years were those crops irrigated, or did it just depend on--?
- J. Gwerder: No, it was typically irrigated. The celery was, the peas weren't. The asparagus was during the wet season, so it wasn't typically irrigated. But the farming was all done with horses. All the groundwork, everything was done with horses.
- Quivik: And the orchards, were those irrigated?
- J. Gwerder: The orchards were not irrigated at that time. Then in the thirties, then they put pumps into the river, and started pumping out, and then flood irrigating the orchards. And then followed by a rain machine, where they would then rain the orchard, rather than flooding them.
- Quivik: Did your grandfather either lease or acquire land elsewhere than Ryer Island and Grand Island?
- J. Gwerder: No, just in the one area. Never acquired anyplace else.
- Quivik: And which of those places was the family homestead, where your grandfather and grandmother raised--?
- J. Gwerder: It was Walker's Landing where they raised all the children, and then they moved from there in the 1920s. My grandfather built a home on the river between Ryde and Walnut Grove. He wanted to build, because of the floods that he'd gone through. He wanted to build a home that was high enough that it would never flood. So he--when the barges were going by, which were building levees all over the delta--he'd get them to go by, and take the sand out of the bottom of the river and swing it over, over the road. And so he built a large platform for his home to be built on, so that he would never have to worry about flooding again.

The home is a Mediterranean style of 7,000-square-foot living area supported by a re-enforced concrete basement of 5,000 square feet designed by Bay Area architect Henry C. Smith. We first became acquainted with Mr. Smith's granddaughter, Lowrey Hardin Jones, at Cal, but did not know of the connection until recently.

- Quivik: Was that a practice (building a platform) that anyone else adopted?

- J. Gwerder: Yes, there were quite a few of the old homes--were always built up on the--close to the levee, and at a higher elevation.
- Quivik: What is the relative or the proximate elevation difference between the ground level and the top of the levee now?
- J. Gwerder: About twelve feet higher on top of the levee. Typically, Walnut Grove is about a fourteen-foot elevation, so at the low end of the island you're at sea level. So, then the levees would be ten or twelve foot above sea level.
- Quivik: What was the relationship of farmers like your grandfather to the reclamation district and the dredging operations in those early years?
- J. Gwerder: Well, they all kind of joined in. The financing of all the work was done by tax that they assessed on themselves, on the landowners. So they paid for all the work that was done on the levees, and also the drainage. They shared in the expense proportionate to the acreage that they had.
- Quivik: Did they decide everything as an entire group, or did they elect a board to--?
- J. Gwerder: They elected a board so that they would have, I think, typically five members on the board. They would choose the sites, and have the engineering done on whatever they were trying to accomplish.
- Quivik: Did they manage that entirely themselves then, or did they get assistance from the state as well?
- J. Gwerder: I don't think at that time they did. But, they did have a manager that would run the district, that would represent all the landowners, and make sure that the work was done right.
- Quivik: A professional manager who was answerable to the board?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, correct.
- Quivik: Was there other kinds of cooperative work, or cooperative endeavors that those farmers engaged in?
- J. Gwerder: Not at that time. Later on, we have been involved in co-ops, but not at that time. They were all single entity.
- Quivik: So did they market their produce to wholesalers at the other end?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. They would go to wholesalers, and then the distribution would be handled by the wholesalers.

**Joe's Parents: Frank Gwerder and Murrice Sheehan Gwerder**

Quivik: Can you tell me a little bit then about your father's family--meaning his siblings growing up in your grandfather's household. They initially lived at Walker's Landing, you said?

J. Gwerder: Right. And then as they grew up, they went on--my father went to grammar school in Ryde, and then went on to Saint Mary's in Oakland and graduated from high school there. Then he came back and went back on the farm with his father and started farming. Then he had a younger brother who, when he got out of school, came home to go to work for his father.

Then my father left the family and went on and started his own farming operation, and bought a ranch at the Pump House, bought 330 acres, and proceeded to farm on his own. Then he went over to Ryer island and leased some property over there, and went totally on his own. His younger brother stayed with my grandfather, and they continued that operation. But they always worked the--or did the shipping together. All the marketing was done for the whole family.

Quivik: What were their names, your father and his brother?

J. Gwerder: My father was Frank, and my uncle was Bill.

Quivik: Were they the only two children?

J. Gwerder: They were the two boys, and then he had four daughters. They ended up--he ended up providing a home, as they got married, each one of them, he would build a home for them, typically on the ranches that he owned. One on the Pump House ranch, two on the Brierly ranch, and then his own home that he built. Then on the Reynolds ranch was the house that I was raised in. It was an existing Victorian home on the river, and we moved there--I was born in 1932, and we had moved over here in 1931. So we lived there, oh, until my grandfather passed away, and then we moved down to his house.

Quivik: These four daughters would have been your aunts?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Were they also somehow involved in the farming business?

J. Gwerder: No, not directly. They were of course part-owners in it. One of my aunts lived in San Jose. That was the only one that--my grandfather built her and her husband a house in San Jose, because they were not living in the area. But he provided a home for each one of them.

Quivik: The other three who were living in this area, did they marry farmers, or--?



J. Gwerder: No, but they continued to live here. They all had their homes here.

Quivik: What kind of farming did your father engage in once he went off on his own?

J. Gwerder: Well, for a while, it was all the exact same thing he had been doing. Then he had the opportunity to purchase what we call the Galt ranch, which was 500 acres, and it was near the confluence of the Cosumnes and Mokelumne river. He developed that. He bought it originally to raise the horses for his farming operation. He always enjoyed livestock, so he bought some cattle and started running cattle besides--

Quivik: So he was engaged in things like asparagus and peas and so on, right?

J. Gwerder: Right.

Quivik: Okay. Did he expand his operations beyond the Galt place?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Then in the meantime, he bought a ranch next to my grandfather's and was farming that. Then the land that he rented over on Ryer Island, and those, were his properties.

Quivik: How did he meet your mother?

J. Gwerder: They met at church in Walnut Grove. My mother's maiden name was Sheehan. She was from an Irish family who were second generation in Sacramento.

Quivik: What was your mother's family involved in?

J. Gwerder: Her father was in the retail business. She had three sisters, and their whole family was involved in the Sacramento area.

Quivik: So do you know the circumstances of their meeting? Was it--they were on a shopping trip, or on a social excursion, or--?

J. Gwerder: A group of young Sacramento women came occasionally to sing in the St. Anthony's church choir. They met on one of those occasions.

Quivik: When were they married?

J. Gwerder: They were married in 1925.

Quivik: And then they moved here?

J. Gwerder: And then they moved here, right.

Quivik: To which place now?

J. Gwerder: They moved to the house that had been built for him on the Brierly ranch. They lived there, and my sister, Jane Marie, was born in 1929. Then in '31 we moved to the Reynolds Ranch home on the river. That's where we were raised.

Quivik: So how many children in your generation total?

J. Gwerder: There were twelve grandchildren.

Quivik: I mean descendants of your mother and father, just you and your sister?

J. Gwerder: Oh, yes. Just two of us.

Quivik: Okay, yes. So you grew up during the Depression years around here?

J. Gwerder: Right.

Quivik: What was the Depression era like in the delta region on the farms?

J. Gwerder: Well, it was interesting, because at the time--my grandfather was able to buy these properties, just prior to that time. One interesting bit about his purchasing--he purchased what's called the Big Ranch, and it had been lost to the banks, and so they had a public auction. They put the word out and the brochures out, that the land was going to be auctioned. He was very interested. On the brochure it said it had to be cash --a cash sale. So he took a satchel and went to the bank, and brought cash for what he thought he could pay for the ranch, and showed up at the auction, and had the highest bid. They couldn't believe it, because he opened his satchel, and here were all 100-dollar bills for the price of the ranch. [Laughter]

The other interesting thing during that time, the banks--there was a run on the banks because of all of the failures. So he went over to our little local bank, which was the bank of Alex Brown, a small--just one branch--but a family he had known since he had arrived here. In 1929, there was a run on the bank. There was a whole line of people who were trying to draw their money out. My grandfather, he got in the other line to deposit, and everybody commented, "Why would he do that?" He said, "Well, I have no use for cash, and these are good people, they're not going to run on us." He said, "So I'm going to put my money in." So that stopped the run on the bank.

Quivik: In other parts of the country, in farming areas, because of drought, we hear of tremendous hardship that corresponded with the Depression. Do you know if there was that--because this is an irrigated area, perhaps drought wouldn't have affected things? But was there a Depression-era hardship that you can remember in this area?

J. Gwerder: I think in the early thirties, because of the drought, there was a time when the saltwater backed up. So the river became a high salinity content, and everybody had to stop irrigating--because if they put it on, the salt would stay in the soil and ruin the farming

land. So they didn't produce crops that year. They only produced what would grow without irrigation. Anything that needed irrigation, why, they didn't dare use.

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Quivik: So that one year of not being able to grow irrigated crops probably caused hardships?

J. Gwerder: Well, I think it did, yes. It really caused extreme hardship.

Quivik: I suppose you were a child then, so you wouldn't have necessarily been aware of whether there was less of a market for agricultural produce?

J. Gwerder: No, I don't, I can't remember--

### The Delta Region

Quivik: Yes, okay. You mentioned the drought causing the river--the saltwater--to encroach into this area. I wondered if you could describe for me generally what the hydraulic situation is here relative to the river, the San Francisco Bay, the elevation of the ground, the ground water, those kinds of things? And just, maybe if you could start out with what your sense of what the original conditions were, and then what human intervention, like levees, has done to change that set of circumstances?

J. Gwerder: It definitely is in the tide zone. The tides would vary four to six feet between a high and low tide. Of course, in the winter, we, with the flows coming out of the Sierra, it was plenty of water to flush out the saltwater. But in the drought years--then at that time, there was not storage, there wasn't the Shasta dam, or Folsom dam, or any of those--so in the real dry years, the salt would just back up, and stay salty, and that is when we couldn't use the water until the next winter, once it would flush out. Then we would be back farming the way we typically did.

Quivik: With the elevation of the islands being what they are, how frequent was flooding before the levees? Was that an annual event?

J. Gwerder: Oh yes. Yes, and people were careful to put their buildings and any of their farming equipment, storage, or anything on the high points in the island, and the lows just went under. It was just a typical annual occurrence until they started reclaiming the land and building the levees.

Quivik: And once they started reclaiming the land, you described the introduction of drainage ditches. Can you describe for us what the purpose of that is?

- J. Gwerder: Well, that was two-fold. It would drain in the winter. Then in the summer they would siphon, by priming a pipe through the levee from the outside to the inside. They were able to prime it, and get a siphon effect, which would pull the fresh water in. Then they would use these drainage ditches in the summer to hold the water table up. So you got, in effect, an irrigation, a sub-irrigation, where the moisture would come up under the crops, and it would irrigate them to a certain amount.
- Quivik: That was siphoning water out of the rivers?
- J. Gwerder: Out of the Sacramento, and the Steamboat Slough, the Mokelumne, and the Cosumnes, all the rivers that came through the delta.
- Quivik: Is the ground water here--is freshwater? Or during those drought years, would there ever be an encroachment of salt in the ground water?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, there would be, very definitely. So all the wells that were driven or drilled for household use would all have to go through the upper layers, and get down to where there was sub-surface water, because the top could be brackish from the dry years.
- Quivik: That is the circumstance along the Sacramento River here. Is it a different situation over by the Galt place?
- J. Gwerder: It being a little higher over there, we never did get a saltwater intrusion on that property.
- Quivik: Is it tidal?
- J. Gwerder: It is tidal, yes. We get water that backs up from the Mokelumne, and we catch it on a high tide and use it to irrigate in the summer.
- Quivik: Even today?
- J. Gwerder: Even today, right.
- Quivik: Are there any sorts of devices that are used to--valves, automatic valves or anything like that--to regulate the flow, to make sure that the water can flow during high tide towards your land, and perhaps not flow away from the land during lower tide?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. On the Thompson-Folger Ranch, which is on Hog Slough, which is a tributary of the Mokelumne, we had thirty-inch pipe through the levee with a flap gate on each end. So in the summer we would open the outside flap and the flow and the high tide would come in. Then as the tide changed, it would close that flap, and we'd have the freshwater trapped. Then we'd use it until the next change in tide. In the winter, we would close the inside one until it was fresh, and then we would open it up and let it flow out for drainage.
- Quivik: Do you know how old that technique is around here?

J. Gwerder: No, I really don't.

Quivik: People using it before you were here though?

J. Gwerder: Oh yes.

Quivik: How many islands are there in this area around--well, Grand Island, we're on. Can you name some of the other islands around?

J. Gwerder: Yes. There is, let's see, Grand Island, Ryer Island, Sutter Island, Tyler Island, Sherman Island--oh, many more, so many that I can't begin to remember. Andrus Island, Staten Island, Dead Horse Island.

Quivik: And are all of those natural islands?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: All of those sloughs that just created them--?

J. Gwerder: They were low places, and when they came in and built the levees, they would build them on a natural high berm. That's why they all meander. You'd start with what high ground there was, and build from there.

Quivik: When you think of the delta region, in your mind, what is the geographical extent of the delta area?

J. Gwerder: It would be from Antioch clear to Stockton, and then from Antioch above Sacramento up into the north part of the state, those islands and drainage districts, that type of--

Quivik: How far upstream does the tidal area extend?

J. Gwerder: I believe the tidal area goes up to Marysville. So it's quite extensive.

Quivik: There are well-known stories in California history about the conflict between the hydraulic miners and farmers in the Sacramento Valley, and with all the debris washing downstream. Do you know of consequences that hydraulic mining may have had in this area right around your place?

J. Gwerder: Other than some build-up in sandbars, I think that's about the only thing that would get over there--a flat area, an area where the sand could accumulate--they would have to go back in and clean it up to keep the water moving. That was usually created by sediment coming downstream due to floods.

Quivik: Were any farmers in this area, your family in particular, involved in any of those early lawsuits that were--?

J. Gwerder: No.

Quivik: That all happened before your grandfather arrived?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Right.

Quivik: Did anyone in your family work on any of the levee construction projects?

J. Gwerder: Carol's great-uncle, Edward F. Haas, was the engineer and contractor on many of the projects.

Quivik: Were the levees completely built by the time you were farming, or were they still adding to the levees?

J. Gwerder: No, they were totally built.

Quivik: How about levee maintenance?

J. Gwerder: It still goes on, and it is still done by the reclamation district system. The districts take care of their own drainage and their own levees, with the help of the federal government now; because of all the barge traffic, they started getting washes on the levees. So now they get in and help with the rocking program, with replacing the cobblestones on the outside to keep the wave wash from the barge traffic that went on.

Quivik: Who owns the ground under a levee, and the levee itself?

J. Gwerder: The landowner does. It's an easement that gives the highway the right to be on it, and also the levee to be built on it. But still, your deed reads straight through the bottom to the low water, or high water, however your deed reads. But everything on the outside is an easement.

Quivik: Right. An easement both to the reclamation district and to the highway department, right?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: Have you or any of your immediate family members had any sort of direct work involvement in the maintenance of the levees?

J. Gwerder: Yes. My father was on the--he was a member of the Reclamation District Three board. Then I was on another district that we got involved in. We purchased a ranch just off of Interstate Five, and that was in '86 when that flood came, and I was a director of Reclamation District 1002. That was one of the worst floods that we had had. At that time, Interstate Five had been built and was just opening. The levees all broke to the east of us, from the Cosumnes and the Mokelumne, and it flooded everything. Most of

the district was under, and we got a call from the federal government saying that Interstate Five was a national defense highway, from Mexico to Canada, and they wanted us to get the water off the highway, which—we had absolutely no way of doing anything for them, but they insisted that we should do it. Finally they came in and helped us. Financially. Our pumps were underwater, so none of our drainage pumps could work. It was a crisis, a real crisis.

Quivik: And what was the source of that flood?

J. Gwerder: That was out of the Cosumnes and the Mokelumne Rivers.

Quivik: Rain or snow melt in the high countries?

J. Gwerder: Yes, huge, huge rain. And it just poured down, and no levees could control it.

Quivik: You mentioned Reclamation District 1002, and earlier you talked about Reclamation District Three. Can you describe differences between those two in terms of history, the kinds of challenges they face, et cetera?

J. Gwerder: Well, there must have been a thirty-year difference between the time those districts were formed. The District 1002 wasn't near the challenge that was in District Three. But the real challenge was because of the low end of Grand Island being almost to Rio Vista, which was a huge bay. The levees had to be much stronger, wider, and with more height to it than 1002. With 1002, the only real problem was a year like we had in 1986, because rains couldn't be controlled.

Quivik: Are they both governed similarly, by--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Board, and--

Quivik: And people voting based on, proportionally based on how much acreage you have?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right. And they have payment based on acreage, to protect the whole district.

Quivik: Is there irrigation involved in either one?

J. Gwerder: Some people were able to use those drain ditches in the summer to carry water, but it is still basically a drainage district. And if its use is available, it is incidental to the fact that it is not needed for drainage.

Quivik: Right. And then another one that you are involved with is the Woodbridge District.

J. Gwerder: Oh, Woodbridge Irrigation District. Yes, that's one.

Quivik: Now that is irrigation, is it?

- J. Gwerder: That is strictly irrigation. No drainage. In fact, they will not let you drain into those. That was a diversion put in on the Mokelumne River at Woodbridge. Then they went in and built their lateral canals, one going south towards Stockton, one going due west, and one going northwest, to supply summer irrigation water to all of the farmers in the area vineyards. That's still going on, a wonderful system. They have now lined some of their canals with concrete, so that they can get a better flow down.
- Quivik: Is there storage for that irrigation system?
- J. Gwerder: Well, the storage, now that the federal and state have put in Comanche Reservoir and Pardee Reservoir--which is also where East Bay MUD [Municipal Utility District] takes their water out of. Then, backing up the Mokelumne, to Salt Springs reservoir. So, there are three reservoirs that really supply the water. When it was originally put in, it was strictly water coming down the river.
- Quivik: The seasonal flow?
- J. Gwerder: Seasonal flow. But now it is for the whole season, they have water.
- Quivik: Is there any necessity in the Woodbridge District for some drainage ditches, just to allow irrigation water that has been applied to the fields to drain away?
- J. Gwerder: Well, people put their own drainage systems in. But typically that ground is so sandy it absorbs most all the water that is applied.
- Quivik: Is that district governed similarly to the reclamation districts?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. They have a board, and they have their office, and they have an engineer, and a manager right in Woodbridge--their headquarters is in there--and they operate the system.
- Quivik: Have you served on the board of any of those districts?
- J. Gwerder: No, the only--reclamation's the only one. I've never been on any of these boards.
- Quivik: But the reclamation you were on--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: That was one of those two? 1002?
- J. Gwerder: 1002.
- Quivik: What years was that?
- J. Gwerder: That was '84 to '88. I was on it four years.



Quivik: Can you describe the kinds of duties that a board member has?

J. Gwerder: Mainly it's reviewing the operation of the district. We had a part-time man that was running it. We had three sets of pumps for drainage, and that was mainly the whole primary use. The district itself was strictly for drainage. We had no water coming in.

Quivik: How often would you meet?

J. Gwerder: We'd meet once a month for a half-day and review bills and you know, whatever engineering had to be done. Unless you had a crisis like '86, then we met every day for two weeks just trying to hire contracts and bid jobs out and everything else to get the levees put back, so we could continue doing what we were supposed to do, which is provide drainage.

Quivik: And it is a five-member board?

J. Gwerder: That was three.

Quivik: I gather that you were elected to that by these fellow members?

J. Gwerder: Right.

Quivik: What are some of the--is there much of a contest for an election?

J. Gwerder: Not typically. It is certainly not a high-paying job, and a lot of people don't like to get involved. So you kind of do it and serve your time, and then go on and let somebody else. It is a good experience for everyone to be involved in it.

Quivik: Is there anything involved in--like in national politics, we think of there being basically a liberal and a conservative split. Would you say that in governing a reclamation district there is any sort of split in, not necessarily conservative and liberal, but some other set of issues, a split in ideas about how these things should be run?

J. Gwerder: No. Typically because you are all landowners, and you are all trying to benefit from a service that it provides, that--it is kind of a single purpose.

Quivik: So that it is usually pretty much agreement?

J. Gwerder: Absolutely. It might not agree totally on priorities, one area of the district or the other, just because depending on where your own location is, but typically, it's, you know, they get along very well. It is a common cause.

### Joe's Childhood

Quivik: Okay, well, let's go back to your early life then. We talked a little bit about the Depression years in general, but let's talk about you growing up. What are some things you remember about growing up in this area?

J. Gwerder: Well, as I spoke, I was born and raised a mile north of Walnut Grove on the Sacramento River. From the early days, my most enjoyable thing was watching the *Delta King* go by. It was a huge, well, not huge now, but at that time a huge paddle-wheeler, and went by on the way to San Francisco. It would go down and stay overnight, and then come back. There were two of them, the *Delta King* and the *Delta Queen*.

And that was my most favorite birthday present, was to be able to go down on the *Delta Queen* or *King*, either one, which happened to be going to San Francisco, and stay overnight. And then come back and watch from the other side, always watching the boat go by our house--on the boat, we'd always be happy to go by our house, and my grandfather's house, or anything. So that was enjoyable--

Quivik: Where did you board the boat?

J. Gwerder: In Sacramento.

Quivik: You had to go to Sacramento?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We'd have to drive to Sacramento and get on it, and go to San Francisco, stay overnight, and then get back on, and get back off at Sacramento. Anyway, then I attended grammar school in Walnut Grove, and then I went on to Courtland High School, which is seven miles upriver. It was a high school of 225 students, and I graduated from there in 1950. In September of 1950, I started the University at California at Berkeley, and I--

Quivik: Let's hold off on the Berkeley stuff, and stick with your childhood up here a little bit--

J. Gwerder: Oh, all right.

Quivik: I'm interested in some of the things that you did in your free time as a boy growing up around here. Did you have much free time? Or did you have a lot of farm work to do?

J. Gwerder: No, we had the normal amount of free time. Typically we always had horses, so we could ride. But other than that, it was the typical summer swimming, and--

Quivik: Where did you swim?

J. Gwerder: In the river. We did a lot of fishing in the river, had a rowboat, and would do mostly catfishing. And that was about it. And then finally some neighbors put in a pool. So then we started swimming in the pool.

Quivik: What was the approximate season when the river was good for swimming?

J. Gwerder: Oh, in, you know, June, end of September. And then of course, we, as we got on, old enough to drive—why, then we started working every summer. I was twelve when I started driving a truck, delivering grain to the elevators. It was all ranch road, so you didn't need a license. If you could reach the clutch pedal and the gas pedal, why, you started driving truck.

Quivik: How big were those trucks then?

J. Gwerder: They were just small ton-and-a-half trucks that would haul about six ton of wheat or barley, or that type of crop.

Quivik: With a trailer behind?

J. Gwerder: No, just the truck.

Quivik: Six tons in a ton-and-a-half truck?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: So by that time it sounds like the farming operation had diversified beyond the vegetables to include grains?

J. Gwerder: Right, yes, all the grain crops, yes.

Quivik: Instead of vegetables, or in addition to—?

J. Gwerder: No, in addition to it. It was just to—it was used mainly as a crop to just diversify in timing, and also for the good of the soil—to dry it out, not to continue the irrigation, and put it in wheat and barley, and that would dry it out for the season—and go back and plant it the next year.

Quivik: Just one season?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: And in those days, what were you doing to maintain—let's see, what years are we talking about, when grain was introduced?

J. Gwerder: Oh, thirties, '38, '39, '37, in those years.

- Quivik: What, if anything, did folks do then for fertility of the soil?
- J. Gwerder: Well, a typical rotation always included alfalfa, which adds a lot back to the soil. It has nitrogen nodules on the root system. Then you turn that after three years or four years production, you turn it all back under. It gives it a good boost of fertility and also improves the tilth of the soil.
- Quivik: Turn it under, then go into vegetables again, irrigated?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right.
- Quivik: Was there much fertilizing with manure?
- J. Gwerder: Not that I ever had been involved in--
- Quivik: Just wasn't enough livestock then?
- J. Gwerder: No, there wasn't enough. They had all pretty much left by then.
- Quivik: In the thirties, any artificial fertilizers?
- J. Gwerder: I can't really remember. I know certainly in the forties it was. We used nitrogen, potash, sulfate.
- Quivik: I'm interested in the--back to the river for a minute--the catfishing. What's involved in catching catfish on this river? Or, what was involved back then?
- J. Gwerder: [Laughter] Well, just mainly worms. Go out, dig the worms. Then go out, drop anchor, just out in the river, and it was--kind of sit there and wait for them to bite.
- Quivik: Just anywhere along the river?
- J. Gwerder: Oh, there were certain holes that everybody knew, where the best ones were.
- Quivik: Driving here today, I saw some folks out in the river. Are they still after catfish?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, absolutely, sure. It's not like it was, but I mean, there are still fish.
- Quivik: Any other fish?
- J. Gwerder: Mainly stripers, striped bass has been a big thing. In the last few years, the last twenty years, there are a lot of sturgeon there being caught, but mainly that's it. A few black bass, but mainly stripers. Used to be quite a salmon run. There used to be commercial fishing on the river, but that's gone.
- Quivik: Commercial fishing for salmon?

J. Gwerder: For salmon, yes.

Quivik: When you caught those catfish, what did you do with them?

J. Gwerder: I always ate them--skin them and fry them, they were wonderful.

Quivik: That was your favorite--the preparation of choice was to fry them up?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: How big were the catfish you would catch?

J. Gwerder: Oh, eight to twelve inches.

Quivik: Were there other kinds of river activities that you did? I'm interested in--I'm thinking that a lot of people have grown up, perhaps in farms, lived miles from river, or grown up in cities-- and here you are along a river like this, that is a major artery for transportation, but also probably was a focal point of some of your activities.

J. Gwerder: Yes, it was.

Quivik: Are there things that as a kid you did along the river that were--?

J. Gwerder: Well, swimming and fishing. Then eventually, when we got old enough, water skiing and all of that was--during my high school years, that was the big thing.

Quivik: And then how about along places like irrigation ditches? Were there any things for kids to mess around in in the irrigation ditches? I'm sorry, the drainage ditches.

J. Gwerder: Not really. Some of the--where the siphons brought the freshwater in, they would fish in those holes for catfish, because they would float right through the siphon pipe.

Quivik: What is the diameter of the siphon?

J. Gwerder: From sixteen to twenty-four inch.

Quivik: Oh, wow.

J. Gwerder: You know--plenty of room.

Quivik: Were there any kinds of organized sports that you participated in?

J. Gwerder: Mainly just in high school, and we had all the sports there. Grammar school, we'd play some baseball, and touch football, and that type of thing.

Quivik: Sandlot kinds of--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, yes.

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Quivik: Where did you play those sports? Was that at the school, or on fields around here?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Typically at the schoolground. There was no community area at the time that people would play on.

Quivik: Were there kinds of activities--I can remember when I grew up on a dairy farm, and some of the kinds of--well, we had a big pasture, and we would have picnics out in the pasture. It was always high adventure for me as a kid to go wandering through the cornfields, and think of these stories that the adults would tell me, to make sure I didn't get lost in a cornfield--about kids who disappeared, and never came back, and that sort of thing.

Were there things that you did on the crop land that you would call play-related rather than work-related, whether it is the orchards, or the row crops--?

J. Gwerder: Well, not so much that, as we did--we had a Boy Scout troop, and at an early age we did a lot of camping on some of the islands in the delta that were not reclaimed, which usually ended up in poison oak, [laughter], poison ivy, poison sumac, or something. But we would have camp outings, you know, and stay on the river banks.

Quivik: How long would you stay out?

J. Gwerder: Usually one night, or maybe two nights, with the Boy Scout troop--twelve years old.

Quivik: And come back and itch for a few days?

J. Gwerder: Oh, yes. [Laughter]

Quivik: How about school? Were you a serious student?

J. Gwerder: Yes, I was. I always maintained a good grade.

Quivik: What kinds of things did you like to study?

J. Gwerder: I enjoyed math--once in high school, physics, and chemistry, and that type of thing.

Quivik: How large was your high school class?

J. Gwerder: Well, the whole high school was 225 students. So we had about thirty-some-odd in each class. Quite small.

Quivik: And yet with a school that small, you had a physics class?

J. Gwerder: Oh, yes.

Quivik: Yes? All the sciences--?

J. Gwerder: And math.

Quivik: Did you participate in extracurricular activities at school?

J. Gwerder: Yes, we played--at school outside you played everything. You played football, basketball, baseball, any sport that was going. Everybody, in order to field a team, why, you had to participate.

Quivik: Which was your favorite sport?

J. Gwerder: Basketball. That was my favorite.

Quivik: So you graduated in '51, you said, from high school?

J. Gwerder: 1950.

### College Years at the University of California at Berkeley

Quivik: And then you went directly to--

J. Gwerder: Berkeley.

Quivik: Berkeley? How did you choose to go to Berkeley?

J. Gwerder: Well, I'd had lots of family that had gone there, and I always --as opposed to going to Davis, I always wanted to go to Berkeley. My sister had gone down there, and so I was familiar with the campus, and so I decided to go down there. But it was quite a change from--when I was in Berkeley, it was a university that had 23,000 students. It was a time when World War II veterans were there, so it was quite a change from 225 to 23,000.

Quivik: Where did you live?

J. Gwerder: I lived in a fraternity house, Delta Tau Delta, on Hillside Avenue. I lived there my four years and served as president in 1953.

- Quivik: Was that--sometimes fraternities are known for some special kind of activity that they are associated with. Was there a reason that you chose that certain fraternity?
- J. Gwerder: No. I knew a couple of other people who had come from a farming background, and they were both in the Ag. Economics Department, and that's what I wanted to do, get a Bachelor of Science in Ag. Economics. So I guess that kind of had something to do with it.
- Quivik: When you went to the university, were you intending to return here and take up farming?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, that was always what I wanted to do.
- Quivik: What were some of the activities you engaged in besides studying at the university.
- J. Gwerder: Just general social things with the fraternity and exchanges with other sororities, and you know, just the typical "what you do at college." I belonged to several social organizations: Beta Beta, Skull and Keys, Winged Helmet, and Triune. Of course we would come home in the summer and work.
- Quivik: Worked on the farm?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Worked for your dad?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Were there things in the, either Berkeley community, or broader Bay Area, that you availed yourself of while you were a student at Berkeley--whether it was outdoor activities, or cultural activities, or--?
- J. Gwerder: Nothing in particular, no, just kind of, you know, all-around interest in everything.

### Meeting, Courting, and Marrying Carol Goodwin

- Quivik: Then can you tell me about meeting Carol?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. I had met Carol in Stockton a few years before. Then we met again at Berkeley and started dating then, and proceeded to be engaged. Then we were married in 1955.
- Quivik: What were some of the kinds of activities that a young couple courting each other at the University of California would do in the early 1950s?



J. Gwerder: Well, we did a lot of dancing. They had some great jazz bands around, either over in the City or in the area, and we would do that. Then, the typical sorority and fraternity parties--

Quivik: What were some of the popular dances then?

J. Gwerder: "Swing" and "Jitterbug."



## VI JOE'S EXPERIENCE FARMING

### American Angus Association

Quivik: How did the timing of your, let's see--you graduated a year before Carol?

J. Gwerder: Yes. '54.

Quivik: How did the timing of your wedding correspond to your finishing up your schoolwork, and so on?

J. Gwerder: Well, she graduated six months earlier so that it would fit my work program--because at that time we were showing a lot of cattle. My father had, on the ranch at Galt, had gotten into the registered Angus business, and that was a big activity. We showed cattle pretty much all over the west coast--Portland, Oregon, Pacific International, the Sacramento State Fair, the California State Fair. Then of course the Cow Palace. The Pacific International that's in Portland. Then the Grand National--that's the Cow Palace. And then on down to the Great Western in Los Angeles, and then to Phoenix--is where we would finish our show string.

We took twelve to twenty cattle and two men on the road, and showed in all those shows. So we--that was our early days spending time--my father had really gotten very interested in the breeding of registered Angus cattle, so he became a national director. And so for four years he traveled for the association.

Quivik: What is the name of the association?

J. Gwerder: American Angus Association. Their headquarters was in Missouri. So they would have six directors' meetings a year. He would go back and forth, and then travel to the Chicago International livestock show, and the Denver livestock show, and attend--they'd have meetings as part of those livestock expositions at the same time. It was interesting --he had a wonderful experience.

They were one of the first breed associations that computerized all the breeding records, date of birth. Then they went into production testing, all computerized, so that you

could look up an animal, and what the weaning weight was, what the yearling weight was, what the production was. So as we showed, I kind of followed along on that, and I was president for one year of the Western States Angus Association, which was the seven western states, including Hawaii. So I traveled quite a bit doing that.

Quivik: What year was that, that that data was computerized? Ballpark--?

J. Gwerder: I think it was about '72 maybe, something like that, '70. It was one of the first mainframes that they had done in Missouri, somebody had been able to do that. But it was a big breakthrough then.

Quivik: When did your father get involved in that sort of thing?

J. Gwerder: He started in about 1946. He was the director of the local association and president of the Western States Angus Association, and kind of moved on from that.

Quivik: So were you helping him with that even while you were in high school?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right, absolutely. Then I--

Quivik: Then you continued during the college years?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Both in the summer and the fall.

Quivik: Now can you tell me a little bit about those livestock shows? Well, first of all, just what happened at them?

J. Gwerder: Well, we would take a string of cattle down, show them in competition with all the other breeders from the different western states. We would show by age, different groups, and then by the animals out of a certain sire.

We did all of the rate of gain, we did this through the University of California, through the CBCIA, which is the California Beef Cattle Improvement Association. They did the grading, and then we kept all the weights, weaning weight, average daily gain after that.

Then we got into--did some testing with the university in dwarfism. At that time they were having a problem with some strains of Hereford and Angus. All the cattle would come up with these little dwarf calves, which were unusable. So we put a herd of test cows together, so that we could prove the sires we were using--that it was not carrying that gene. Otherwise, it would show up in sixteen--if you got sixteen calves out of known cows that had had dwarfs, and--then you could certify your animal as dwarf-free.

We did this same thing with carcass cut-out ability and grade. We did the same thing with the university. We would feed them in a normal feed lot situation and then take them in. They would measure the rib-eye, all the gains, all the conversion of pounds of feed per pounds of--and the grade, and everything. The university did that all for us, and we

were doing this to sell the ability of our sires to carry on the traits that you wanted. And so--

- Quivik: How were other people availing themselves of your sires? Through their offspring, or through semen for artificial insemination?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we were--we did a joint venture with the university on some of the semen. And then Curtis Candy Company had a huge artificial insemination program, so we sold them a percentage of our bull. They would put up all the semen and freeze it. So they were gathering records on it too. What we were trying to do is improve by testing, not just the eye, but by testing actual figures, to try and improve the breed. That was our main purpose.
- Quivik: Now as I hear you describe that, it sounds like something that is focused on improving the breeding stock in the livestock industry.
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: What is the relationship between that and these livestock shows? Were you basically showing your animals to prospective--to livestock growers who were looking for breeding stock to improve their own herds?
- J. Gwerder: Exactly.
- Quivik: Okay.
- J. Gwerder: Exactly. Then we would also, if they were interested--then you could show them the book of what they had produced, what they were out of, what their rate of gain, carcass grade, the yield, the measurement of the rib-eye--we could do all of that statistically. So it was really interesting.
- Quivik: The way you described it initially, it sounded like there was a sort of competitive aspect.
- J. Gwerder: Oh, there is. Yes. Because--
- Quivik: And how does that relate?
- J. Gwerder: Well, the competition was up to the eye of the judge. And so he would place them in a class as he saw them. And the judges would be invited from all over the United States. The judge at, like, a Cow Palace show--then he would place them, so you would have a --if you could win in the ring, and have the back-up statistics, why, it would increase the value of your animals.
- Quivik: So there's not necessarily a relationship between a good looking cow, and a cow that can produce good rib-eyes--?
- J. Gwerder: No, no, not necessarily.
- Quivik: But if you can combine them, then you've got--?

J. Gwerder: Then you're--that's what we were always after.

Quivik: I see.

J. Gwerder: It was an interesting time.

Quivik: Was that one of the main kinds of work that you were engaged with through your father?

J. Gwerder: Well, for a while we lived, Carol and I, when we were married--we lived over there, and that was one of our chores, was to--I was feeding this whole show string myself. So we would cook a hominy type product for them, and, you know, the whole way to try to make them win.

Quivik: How did you serve that to them?

J. Gwerder: In a pan with a little molasses on top just to sweeten it up. [Laughter]

Quivik: Did you let it cool off, was this--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Oh yes. But it just, it made the conversion factor much higher. There was nothing would go through them, it would be all consumed.

Quivik: Now, you mentioned your work schedule, and trying to tie that in to when you and Carol were married. When did you graduate?

J. Gwerder: I graduated in 1954. We were married in April of '55. She took some extra courses and all so that--she graduated in February of '55 so that we could be married, because April was late, and then the show season started, so we had to be married, and--

Quivik: Once the show season began were you on the road then, continuously?

J. Gwerder: Back and forth.

Quivik: Back and forth?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We would have people to go with the cattle, but we went always to show day, or the day before, or the day after. Like Cow Palace, we would be down there for four days or five days.

Quivik: How did you transport your stock?

J. Gwerder: We had our own truck and trailer.

Quivik: Did you live in a trailer with your stock, or did you stay in motels?

J. Gwerder: No, we would always stay in a motel.

- Quivik: Did Carol travel with you?
- J. Gwerder: Sure, yes.
- Quivik: That's throughout basically the western states?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Yes.
- Quivik: How long did you continue doing that?
- J. Gwerder: About six years. And then by then we cut back on the showing, because we were able to get all the bulls sold, females sold, without having to do the--we had promoted the cattle enough by that time that we didn't have to--we were using more the numbers on them rather than the presentation at a fair.
- Quivik: Did your father continue showing cattle after that, or did he get out--?
- J. Gwerder: No, he got out too. Then we finally got out completely after he passed away.
- Quivik: When did he--?
- J. Gwerder: 1972.
- Quivik: But, he continued until then?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.

### Early Years on the Galt Ranch

- Quivik: Okay. Let's go to that first year then of your married life together. You were living on the Galt place?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, we were. We had a horrible rain in 1955. That was our first year of marriage and we couldn't get to Stockton to where her family was because the roads were closed, they were flooded. There were some islands that had gone under. And we couldn't get to Walnut Grove to my family because we couldn't get across the bridges, everything was flooded.

So we spent our first Christmas Eve at the ranch over there, just the two of us. It was two days before we could finally get out. We had water within a foot of going through our house, and we had cattle standing in the water all night, and we had no more high ground, everything was under water. By two days later it started going down and we were all right. An interesting start--first Christmas.

Quivik: In that first year, were you essentially working for your father?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Right.

Quivik: What was the--what shall we say--the formal organization of his farm operation? Was he a sole proprietor in his own name, or did he have some kind of a corporation?

J. Gwerder: No, just sole proprietor.

Quivik: So you were working for him as an individual?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: How long did that relationship last?

J. Gwerder: Well, then I started buying a few cattle of my own and running them with his. That went on for about eight years. Then, when I bought my first farm in in the sixties, from a neighbor. And it was a woman that--their family had had the farm about seventy years. She had no family, and she lived in Seattle. She had 190 acres next door to my father's ranch.

Quivik: The Galt place, or--?

J. Gwerder: Next to the Galt place.

Quivik: Okay, you were saying that you bought your first place that was next to your dad's Galt place. When was that, about?

J. Gwerder: That was in 1962. I got a call from a Mrs. McKinstry in Seattle who had been born and raised on the ranch, and her brother--she had 190 acres, and he had ninety acres. They had been raised in the Galt area. She wanted to sell the property, and so she offered it to me. So I immediately said that I didn't really have the money to buy it, but maybe my father would. She said she wouldn't sell it to him, because she thought he had too much land, and she wanted me to have it.

So that was my introduction to the farm credit system, which is a cooperative consisting of Federal Land Bank, Production Credit Association, and the Bank for Co-ops. It was originally started in the Depression.

The government got it started, loaned the money to it, and it is a totally cooperative area. All the borrowers are stockholders in the company. It's run by associations. Each association has a board of directors that runs the association.

So I borrowed from the Federal Land Bank of Sacramento, and was able to purchase that ranch. In about two years I was asked to run as a director, which I did, and won the position. I stayed on the Federal Land Bank for thirteen years, and then financed a livestock operation, and financed the putting-in of wells, pumps. We leveled, totally leveled the land,



and financed it all through the Federal Land Bank and the Production Credit Association. And I've been involved with them ever since. It's been a wonderful relationship.

Quivik: Are those loans at lower interest than conventional--?

J. Gwerder: They were at the time. Since then all the money was paid back to the federal government, so now your interest rate is based on the cost of funds. They are variable rate, so if the cost of funds goes up, you pay a little higher additional rate. But the margin that they take is very small. It's extensively all over the United States, it is a huge system.

Quivik: Does it differ also in the requirements for down payment, or collateral, things like that?

J. Gwerder: They are a little more lenient than the typical privately-owned bank. So it was a wonderful experience. I was on the board thirteen years.

Quivik: In that first introduction you had to the--Federal Land Bank--and the Co-op--?

J. Gwerder: Federal--

Quivik: --and the Co-op Bank, did you call it?

J. Gwerder: Well, the second one is Production Credit Association. That is short term money. Federal Land Bank is long term. The Bank of Co-ops would only service cooperatives that the individual members belonged to.

Quivik: Oh, so you were involved with each of those three, depending on different activities at the time?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Yes.

Quivik: So that the purchase of the place was through the Federal Land Bank?

J. Gwerder: Federal Land Bank. Then I developed it with the Production Credit Association money.

Quivik: Since that was your first loan with them, what kinds of things did they do to check you out? Was there any different set of hoops that you had to go through with them compared to a commercial bank?

J. Gwerder: I think maybe a little lesser demand on the credit rating and all that. But you still had to do the straight financial forms and everything else. I think they were a little more lenient for farm families and individuals that had been in farming, and had not yet purchased any ground. But still, they felt assured that you could operate it, make a go of it, and pay it back.

Quivik: So you had been married roughly seven years by then, and for those seven years, working for your father?

J. Gwerder: Correct, yes.

- Quivik: And doing other things for him besides helping him with his--?
- J. Gwerder: Cattle.
- Quivik: --Angus showing?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Then I was into farming, by the end. That is kind of the reason we kind of backed off a little on the showing of cattle because we--I was taking over then for him and his farming operation.
- Quivik: What kind of farming?
- J. Gwerder: That was the cattle and row crops. Tomatoes, sugar beets, all of the standard--wheat, corn, those crops.
- Quivik: On what places were you--?
- J. Gwerder: That would be the Pump House Ranch, which we had. It was 330 acres. Then he had another ranch east of Galt, 460 acres, and then the 500 acres at Galt. He also had 1,600 acres leased on Ryer Island. So then I started farming that for him.
- Quivik: During that time when you were farming for him, had you acquired any other--I'll call it capital investments of your own? Not land, but perhaps machinery, or anything else?
- J. Gwerder: When we started farming on the leased land on Ryer, and we had a partnership.
- Quivik: You and your dad?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. So we bought the equipment that was running that into the partnership. I borrowed money from him to pay for the equipment. So then I was farming as a partner.
- Quivik: How old was he then, roughly?
- J. Gwerder: He was then sixty. Yes, about sixty.
- Quivik: So he was still fully involved.
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: It is not like he was retiring, and you were taking over, but you were working together?
- J. Gwerder: Right, yes.

### Starting the River City Bank

J. Gwerder: Right, yes. So then as long as we are speaking about the banking business--since I had a background in it, a group of friends of mine in Sacramento, acquaintances, had decided they wanted to form a bank in Sacramento, and asked me to buy stock for one thing, and be on the advisory board in starting the bank. So we did--

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Quivik: You said you helped start a bank in Sacramento? What was the name of that bank?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It was River City Bank. I was invited to buy some stock and become a member of the advisory board, I think partly because of the thirteen years experience I'd had in making loans with the Federal Land Bank. Soon after that I became a director of RCB.

Quivik: What year was that?

J. Gwerder: It was in 1972, and I eventually had to make a choice between the Federal Land Bank and River City Bank, because the Federal Land Bank said I had a conflict of interest. So I had to resign from one. So I resigned from the Federal Land Bank, and stayed with River City. It has been excellent. We now have twelve branches. I'm still a director--with assets of a little over 600 million.

Quivik: What kind of a bank is River City Bank?

J. Gwerder: It is a commercial lending institution.

Quivik: Are all the branches in the Sacramento area?

J. Gwerder: Yes. From Sacramento to Placerville, to Woodland, to Davis, to Rocklin, but all within a forty- or fifty-mile radius of Sacramento.

Quivik: Is it the kind of commercial bank that could become a target for--there is so much merging going on these days--that it may be acquired by someone?

J. Gwerder: Yes, it might be. But we like to think of acquiring another bank ourselves, and growing our company. That's our intent.

Quivik: Does the River City Bank have any kind of an agricultural focus?

J. Gwerder: Yes, we do. Mainly in the Placerville area, the livestock operations. Woodland is lots of farming in that end. And some out of our main branch in Sacramento, some of the delta areas, there are some customers from down here.

Quivik: Did your college education, do you think, play a role in your movement into banking?

J. Gwerder: Absolutely.

Quivik: Can you describe some of the...?

J. Gwerder: Very, very definitely, because I--majoring in Ag. Economics. But I also took an equal amount of business courses in my time at Berkeley, some banking courses, you know, just typical straight business classes. I think it was definitely a help.

### Joe's Farming Partnership with His Father

Quivik: How long did you continue working with your dad?

J. Gwerder: Until about 1968, about '68. Carol's father wanted me to get involved in the Thompson-Folger Company and Minor-Haas Company that he had been running many years for the family. So I just didn't have enough time to--so we gave up the leased land over in Solano County on Ryer Island, and I took over more of the operations which--Thompson-Folger and our ranch at Galt are only four miles apart, so it was much easier to do that than to travel to Solano County.

Then we started developing that to a higher and better use. We were running--Thompson-Folger company then was running mainly cattle. We had a large acreage, the 2,000 acres. About 1,500 acres was being wild flooded. We didn't have the best drainage in the world, so it tended to leave pockets of water. So one day we were asked to meet with the Mosquito Abatement District. They said that they were going to fly those fields on a daily or every-other-day basis, and bill us for spraying to kill the mosquitoes--that the areas that we were not draining were a detriment to the whole area because of the mosquito population.

Quivik: When you say fly, you mean aerial spraying?

J. Gwerder: Aerial spraying. We decided then that we couldn't afford that, so we started a very vigorous approach to leveling all the land, bringing it to grade, and developing drainage and irrigation. And so converted that from pasture land, a lot of it into farming, and just put it to higher and better use.

Quivik: Before we get into that--Thompson and Folger--

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: --place, let us wrap up your dad's stuff.

J. Gwerder: Okay.

- Quivik: When you got out of the 1,600 acres of leased land on Ryer Island, is that when he got out of it as well, or did he continue--?
- J. Gwerder: No, he got out of that. We gave up the lease.
- Quivik: Together?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. And then his land, at that point, he incorporated, and gave my sister and myself part of the stock, and gave our children all stock. And he set up a very vigorous gifting program at that time.
- Quivik: So his land at that time consisted of which ( )--?
- J. Gwerder: The 509 acres--
- Quivik: At Galt?
- J. Gwerder: At Galt. And he still had that 330 acre--
- Quivik: Walker's Landing?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: What was the name of that corporation?
- J. Gwerder: That was Gwerder Properties, Incorporated. That was the main focus we were on at that time, was to get it out of his name. He and my mother were still very active, but he just didn't want to continue the daily operation of the farming.
- Quivik: Did you--as you were turning your attention to the Thompson-Folger place, did you continue to participate in the management of the Galt place or Walker's Landing?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. I was directly involved in that. And then we were developing the 290 acres that Carol and I had bought at the same time. But the proximity was fine, because it was not too far apart.
- Quivik: Were you operating your dad's Galt place and the 290 acres, or 280, whatever it was, that you had bought--were you operating them kind of jointly, or as two separate operations?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. No, we kept them separate. But we were using the same equipment and pretty much the same management. We had one manager for both ranches. So we worked together on that.
- Quivik: And your sister was involved in the corporation that your father established?
- J. Gwerder: Correct.

- Quivik: Had she been involved in your father's farming operations prior to that?
- J. Gwerder: No. She and her husband had their own farm up in Courtland, which was 230 acres of pears. It was their own pear operation, and so--but she was always involved, you know, knowing what was going on, and being a stockholder, why, she was--and her children were involved too, so--
- Quivik: Then with the operation of the Galt place and the Walker's Landing place under this corporation that your father established, can you describe how the management took place? How did you guys--your sister was involved by now, your dad still at least?
- J. Gwerder: Well, what we did then was--since my brother-in-law, they were so active in the pear business, and my father's ranch had fifty-five acres of pears on it, why, my brother-in-law and sister just took over the management of that. Then I managed the open land and managed the Galt Ranch. So they managed the pears.
- Quivik: And on the open land at Walker's Landing and the Galt place, what were the crops at that time?
- J. Gwerder: By that time we had cut back on the cattle and it was mainly alfalfa and corn and safflower, which was a new crop that had come in. They were the main crops. Tomatoes and sugar beets too, on the Grand Island property.

#### Changes in Tomato-Farming Methods

- Quivik: Tomatoes at that point were a labor-intensive crop, or was it after--?
- J. Gwerder: Just the end of it. It was just the start of the tomato harvester. It was direct seeded. We were getting into the totally mechanical thing, not much hand labor at all, trying to stay away from--
- Quivik: When you started out in tomatoes, what was the operation like?
- J. Gwerder: Oh, it would be all transplant, put in by hand, each plant at a time. At that time we were irrigating strictly with overhead sprinkler pipe and those are all labor intensive, moving those pipes everyday, or twice a day. That is what we were trying to get away from--so much labor.
- Quivik: Did you start those tomato starts yourself or did you buy them from somebody who specialized in it?
- J. Gwerder: No, we would buy them from a--
- Quivik: A nursery?

J. Gwerder: A nursery, right. They would do a room and--

Quivik: Then they all had to be planted by hand, and staked up by hand?

J. Gwerder: No, we didn't stake them, just--

Quivik: Laid on the ground?

J. Gwerder: Yes. They were strictly canning, not shipping, by hand labor--

Quivik: And picked by hand?

J. Gwerder: Yes. At that time we were just changing over to mechanical picking, which we eventually went to totally.

Quivik: We'll talk about this some more with some other crops, but I wonder if just with tomatoes you could describe how you, as a farmer, learned what you needed to learn about getting into tomatoes in the first place, and then learned new things as the technology of tomato growing and harvesting changed?

J. Gwerder: Yes, it was a very quick change. At the time we had tomatoes they were with Cal Can, which was a cooperative very similar to Tri-Valley. We delivered all the tomatoes to them. They had retains, which they held back some of the funds from every grower to operate the co-op. They were into fruit crops: pears, peaches, all that.

The last year they were in, they were using a product called cyclamate, which was a sweetener. The Food And Drug Administration in October of that year said that the cyclamate was cancer-causing--and so we could not sell any product. So the co-op went broke immediately and we lost all the retains, and all the last year's crop. Because even though it didn't affect the tomatoes, the cannery went under, and the creditors took all of the inventory. And so that's the last time we grew tomatoes.

Quivik: Was your only involvement through tomatoes?

J. Gwerder: No, pears. The pears went in--

Quivik: Oh, the pears as well?

J. Gwerder: They went into Cal Can too.

Quivik: And they would have been sweetened perhaps with the cyclamate?

J. Gwerder: Yes, very definitely. They were using it all. And since then, in the last three years, they came back and said it was all a mistake, that there is no problem with cyclamate. They finally had proved that, over enough years of testing that--it's water under the bridge.  
[Laughter]

Quivik: Was that a co-op that you were then a member of?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: Was it a long established co-op, and you joined?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It had been in business probably for twenty years. It acquired a lot of those small canneries, and everything seemed to be going fine, just as we thought Tri-Valley was too. But now I'm very careful on the co-ops that I'm involved in.

Quivik: And it was called Cal Can?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Cal Can. Did you join the co-op for the purpose of getting into the tomato program, or--?

J. Gwerder: No, mainly the pears. The cannery we had been shipping to became a part of Cal Can, the whole cannery. So the contracts-- we were shipping with them anyway, and knew the management and the field staff. And so that is why we went into it.

Quivik: Can you describe the, I guess I'll call it business relationship, between that co-op structure, which on the one hand is made up of all these farmers who are members, but then there is this canning business, and I take it there must be a core professional management staff--?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: What is the business relationship, what was the business relationship, beyond simply being a member? What did you have to provide, what did they provide you, et cetera?

J. Gwerder: Well, typically, as all co-ops, it had a board of directors, and a president, and then the paid staff. So it was run like any other corporation, although they usually had too many directors, so nobody was the real leader. I think that was one of the problems.

But it was cyclamate that did it, because that--and the minute it was done, why, then every foreign country came in and bought it on twenty-five cents on the dollar, because they had no fear of the sweetener. But it was still enough to put the whole thing into bankruptcy.

Quivik: So you as a member would--would you sign a contract saying you would supply a certain quantity of tomatoes, or how did you--?

J. Gwerder: We would sign up an acreage based on your history of production. In other words, if you had 100 acres, you would produce 2,500 tons, twenty-five tons per acre, and the same way with the pears--although that was always weather-related, it is difficult to do. But you still had to put a figure on it, a conservative one.



Quivik: So, you would turn all of your output over to the co-ops--

J. Gwerder: To them, right.

Quivik: Did they supply you during the growing--did they arrange for the nursery to supply you with plants, for instance?

J. Gwerder: No, we did that ourselves.

Quivik: That you did on your own?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Okay. And did they have any kinds of stipulations about fertilizing, or pesticides?

J. Gwerder: Oh yes. Yes, everything had to be documented and recorded. Anything you used. It was mandatory that they know what you were doing, so that you wouldn't use anything that was not under permit or under license.

Quivik: And what were some of the things they were concerned about then, back when--?

J. Gwerder: Oh, that--geez, I guess at that time probably still DDT, and some other--organic phosphates, and so on, things that were being used. But it was all legal at that time.

Quivik: But they wanted to know, for--because this was going to be canned, and--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Right.

Quivik: Then they would take your output, put it in cans, and--would they divide up the proceeds from the season among the members? Or did they pay you a fixed amount?

J. Gwerder: It was dependent on the season, you would get an advance at harvest time of like fifty percent of what they estimated. Then you would put ten percent into retains that would revolve over the next seven years. That gave them operating capital, with the retains. Then after the product was sold, then you would get another payment. So another piece of the pie would come back to the grower.

Quivik: Before the co-op went out of business, was there a time when you were theoretically supposed to get the retains back, or--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It would roll through, you would be back--

Quivik: So there was always seven years of retains that they were using as operating--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Right.

Quivik: I see.

- J. Gwerder: Then it would revolve each year out. You would put more in from your current crop, and revolve that, which you did in the crop before.
- Quivik: So then, the decision to go to mechanically harvested tomatoes--was that one that was being encouraged by the co-op, or was that something you wanted to do as a grower?
- J. Gwerder: No, it is something we wanted to do as a grower, because it was so much more efficient. You could harvest in a shorter amount of time with just way less labor.
- Quivik: What year was that approximately, when the shift, at least on your--?
- J. Gwerder: That would be in the late sixties, I think. Seventies, early seventies.
- Quivik: What did that take for you as a grower to make the shift from the labor intensive tomatoes to the mechanically harvested tomatoes?
- J. Gwerder: Well, it changed your planning a little, went to a bedded plant, on a bed, rather than flat with the ground, because the cutter part of the tomato machine works better on a bed, and the beds are--your equipment is running in the bottom of the bed, so it's easier for the operator to drive exactly straight, because the wheels stay in those beds. For many years, the tomatoes were picked into boxes. Then every box had to be handed to the truck, and then the trucks stack it. This way, they go in bulk into the big white containers, and straight out of the machine, right straight in. They go to the canneries and they're dumped, and that's it, there is no hand labor whatsoever. So it was a tremendous cost saving.
- Quivik: As you were making that transition, there must have been, for instance, specifications for how wide those beds should be, how deep the trough between the beds, what kind of spacing on your tomato seeds, et cetera? Where did you get that information?
- J. Gwerder: Usually, yes--either your field men, or--and essentially I would say, would go back to university trials, where they had done trials in the year before--and what is the most efficient way, as far as [variety trials?]-and as you say, spacing, that's a big thing.
- Quivik: And the university would disseminate that information?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: In the--?
- J. Gwerder: Through the extension service. And you have your local farm advisor, who is in charge of the different crops. And they do their test plots.
- Quivik: And who is a field man? You used that term--?
- J. Gwerder: The field man works for the cannery. He mainly would come out and give you planting schedules, so that they would know what their harvest schedule would be. So that you

might have to wait a week if there was too much of an acreage planted at the same time, just so that they would get a very orderly delivery per harvest. So that you don't get too much at one time, where they couldn't handle it.

- Quivik: Did they have to make any changes at the cannery, to accommodate these different kind of tomatoes that were coming in?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, because it was--they were getting a lot more in a shorter amount of time, so they all made the necessary changes to handle it.
- Quivik: Then were there some growers who were producing--well first of all, what do you call, at the farm end, as a tomato grower, the difference between a tomato field that is headed for the cannery, as opposed to the tomatoes that are going to the produce stand?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, well, these we refer to as canning tomatoes, as opposed to those that are picked individually or grown for size and everything. These are strictly for canning, they go into all the tomato sauces, or the tomato concentrate paste. That's the difference. And we were doing strictly that. No shipping, or--
- Quivik: That is who you call the other kind of operation, a shipping operation?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, yes.
- Quivik: Is there any of that kind of tomato production, or was there then, any shipping tomatoes around here?
- J. Gwerder: They were at that time, and still do ship some greens, that they ripen. They are totally green when they are picked, and they are picked by hand. Then they are ripened on their way to market.
- Quivik: In transit?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: In this area?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. They are still doing it.
- Quivik: So that is still a labor intensive operation?
- J. Gwerder: Oh yes. Yes. All by hand, everything by hand.
- Quivik: In your decision, you talked about how you could reduce the cost of production by mechanizing. Was there any reason to be leery of that transition? Or has--in all of your crops, has that been a desirable direction to move? If whenever you can mechanize, you want to?

J. Gwerder: Yes, I think so, because you don't have the problems of that much labor. You know, all the transportation of the labor. It's just easier if you can deal with fewer people. That is the reason for the conversion.

Quivik: So then you had tomatoes, what other crops did you mention?

J. Gwerder: Sugar beets.

Quivik: Sugar beets. That by then was entirely mechanized, right?

J. Gwerder: Yes, absolutely.

Quivik: And where did you sell your sugar beets?

J. Gwerder: They went to Holly Sugar in Tracy. Just as an incidental thing, there were only two plants left, Spreckels Plant, and they closed last year, so there is no sugar beet industry in this part of California.

Quivik: When did the Tracy plant go down?

J. Gwerder: It went down two years ago.

Quivik: Oh, that recently?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It's just, the world market is so low on it, they can't compete with the cane sugar.

Quivik: So you were operating the Walker's Landing and the Galt place with Gwerder Operations--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

### Taking on the Operations of the Thompson-Folger Ranch

Quivik: And then you started moving into the Thompson-Folger place over there for Carol's dad?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: They were two separate, completely separate families operations, right?

J. Gwerder: Totally separate, yes. No involvement at all. No close involvement at all. We were first in mainly livestock over there. And then as the cattle market got tougher, and we had—I had seen the benefit of the row crop for the land, and the higher and better use of it.

We started converting that to row crop land. We took in some tenant farmers and I farmed it, part of it on my own as an individual, renting it from Thompson-Folger Company.

But they had no equipment. I had the equipment, so I did some farming directly for them. We eventually, until we got up to Interstate 5--that's when they came through and condemned part of the ranch and split it into two pieces, and would not give us a way to move the cattle.

**Construction of the I-5 Brings End to Cattle Ranching at Thompson-Folger**

J. Gwerder: There was 2,000 acres in the ranch; 1,000 was on the east side of the ranch and the other 1,000 was on the west side. We would have had to load those cattle all up just to move over the other side of the freeway. They would not give us an underpass. We were totally fearful of--they put cattle guards on the off-ramps, and we were just so fearful of the traffic on Interstate 5, trying to drive cattle against a barbed wire fence and a cattle guard. We were just fearful if they got on the freeway, why, it would have been mayhem. So we then--

Quivik: What year was that roughly, when 5 went through?

J. Gwerder: 1975. So anyway, the east side of the freeway we immediately converted all to farming, and the west side we continued to run cattle for about five years more, and then we sold them all off, because we had a bad incidence of cattle rustling during the construction, when they had a construction road down Interstate 5.

There were people in there all night and we lost, one year we lost--thirty-five head of cattle were shot and killed and hauled off to the dirt road that was--during the construction of the highway. They would go down and shoot them out of the field, and then they could load them in a pickup and they would go on. There were no lights, no patrolling. So that was one reason why we just curtailed the way we ran the cattle and moved on into the farming business.

Quivik: Did you ever catch any of them?

J. Gwerder: Yes, we caught one. He had killed a calf and put it in his pickup. Our foreman had seen him take off. He also had stolen four railroad ties from the railroad. He took off east, and this foreman that we had started chasing him. But he was able to call the highway patrol--.

[Interview 2: April 30, 2001] ##

Quivik: Good morning, this is Fred Quivik. It is Monday, April 30, 2001. I am back at the Gwerder residence in Walnut Grove, talking with Joe Gwerder. Good morning Joe.

J. Gwerder: Good morning.

- Quivik: When we left off a couple of weeks ago, you were in the middle of describing the catching of a cattle rustler. I think that someone was heading for the Highway Patrol. Could you pick that story up?
- J. Gwerder: Well, to continue with the story, the individual who had stolen the calf was proceeding east. My foreman was able to get a Highway Patrolman in pursuit of him, and as he was going down the highway--there were two people in the pickup, one climbed in the back --as he would approach them, he would throw a railroad tie out, trying to crash the patrol car. So, they just radioed ahead, and when they finally hit the Highway 99 interchange, they had two other Highway Patrolmen to catch him. That was the end of that story.
- Quivik: Did you press charges, or did the Highway Patrol take care of that for you?
- J. Gwerder: They took care of it completely, because of the severity of the throwing of railroad ties at a pursuing enforcement officer. So they took care of that.
- Quivik: Do you know anything about the rustler? Was the rustler associated with the construction, or just an opportunist?
- J. Gwerder: No, I think he was just an opportunist. Everything was--there were construction roads all over, and that is what they traveled on. They felt they could get away with whatever they wanted.
- So, anyway, to get back to the problems we had--they first approached us to settle the taking of forty-five acres of deeded land--
- Quivik: Let's start at the beginning. You were operating this ranch, and--
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Start at the beginning, and how you were initially approached about putting I-5 through there in the first place.
- J. Gwerder: Well, where they wanted to put the highway--we, the Thompson-Folger Company, had 2,000 acres. And where they decided was a proper place for the freeway was right in the middle. So it would leave us with approximately 1,000 acres on the west side, and 1,000 acres on the east side. The year was 1973.

Prior to the Interstate 5 we were always able to move our cattle, on horseback, down the highway, changing fields, irrigation-wise, and moving them to feed. We had no interference. We would just ride ahead and stop the traffic, and then we could move our cattle.

But with the thought of the four-lane highway going through, why--we requested in their planning that they put some underground tunnels for us to move our cattle. The Division of Highways, the state, and the federal, because it was--Interstate 5 is a federal highway--they said that they couldn't do that, but that they would, on the interchange, which

is a full four on and off ramps--that they would agree to put cattle guards in, so that it would keep the cattle from getting on the highway. But we were very fearful, with just a barbed wire fence up to the cattle guard. We were just fearful of ever moving any cattle down the highway.

This was a contested point, and they just failed to move on that. And we couldn't agree on the value of their take. They had offered us almost a dead-even payment for the land by saying that they were giving us four corners, which would all be service station sites. So they had a value added to the company for these service station sites. So, we hired appraisers and proceeded to do battle with the state and the federal government. Because as we worked with the appraiser, we found that the sites might be virtually worth nothing. In fact, if we were going to transfer cattle back and forth, we would have to load them, and haul them in trucks, to move back and forth.

And they would not accept it, so we finally ended up in a trial in San Joaquin County, a condemnation trial. They picked a jury, and I spoke for the Thompson-Folger Company. It was four days we were in trial, and the jury came back in favor of the Thompson-Folger Company. We were paid the amount that we had requested, to add the additional forty-five acres that we were losing back. We were able to purchase the forty-five acres from a neighbor who had also been cut in half. He had that on our side of the freeway, so we were able to purchase that land. With that in mind, why, we then proceeded to change our farming operation.

- Quivik: What was the basis of the valuation that you wanted the Highway Department to pay, and what was the basis that they wanted to pay?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we were asking for \$1,500 an acre, which we felt was the fair market value of the land. We also wanted severance for splitting it into two parcels rather than one. They came back, and kept using the figures of these four corners that were offsetting our demands. So in reality they wanted to pay us nothing. They were going to take it, but they said they were giving us these four service station sites.
- Quivik: I see. So the potential value added, they thought, should be adequate compensation for your forty-five acres.
- J. Gwerder: And the jury totally disagreed with their side, sided with us in the end. So we were able to finally settle the dispute.
- Quivik: So it was a jury verdict, or did you reach that settlement before the jury reached it--?
- J. Gwerder: No, it was a jury verdict.
- Quivik: And you used that money then to be able to pay your neighbor for the forty-five acres--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. So we were able to maintain the 2,000 acres in the property, because we had lost forty-five--and the parcel we were able to purchase was forty-five. So we ended up with our same acreage.

- Quivik: A couple of other questions relative to that episode. I've seen in other areas those kinds of large culverts, you could call them, that allow livestock to pass under interstate highways. What was their reasoning that they gave you that said that they would not do that in this instance?
- J. Gwerder: They said that they didn't want to. Because of I-5 going from the Mexican border to Canada, they didn't want to set a precedent. Any farmer then would demand the underpass for a livestock operation. So they just said they were not going to do them. And they took a very positive stand, and of course we took the opposite stand. And we did not get the underpass that we wanted. So it forced us at that time to then change our operation and everything on the east side, because we could no longer move the livestock. We changed it from a livestock operation to row crop and farming.
- Quivik: In that livestock operation before building I-5, you described using the highway to move your cattle back and forth. That is the existing east-west local highway?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Peltier Road.
- Quivik: Peltier Road?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: And was there any sort of an even local road along the alignment where I-5 is now?
- J. Gwerder: No. It cut diagonally across all the existing roads.
- Quivik: Right, okay. Well, let's move then to your--the transition that the Thompson-Folger place went through, and the stages of that transition.
- J. Gwerder: We then ran cattle for another few years on the west side of the property, and our farming operation had done so well on the east side--
- Quivik: What did you move, what kind of farming did you move into?
- J. Gwerder: We went into tomatoes, beans, sugar beets, wheat, corn, and some certified seed crops. That was our rotation, and it worked very well for us. So then we decided to eliminate the livestock operation and farm the whole parcel, both west and east.
- Quivik: Did you move into the same kinds of crops on the west side?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, the same kind.
- Quivik: Can you say a little bit about the rationale for that kind of rotation of crops?
- J. Gwerder: Well, the other crop I failed to mention was alfalfa, which we had been raising for the livestock anyway. There were many more dairies moving in to the area, and for their needs



of feed, it was a natural crop to grow, being so very close, within just a few miles of delivering the product to them. The demand was great for alfalfa.

It is also a soil-builder. In a rotation, it is an excellent crop, because tomatoes, or any of the row crops do very well following it, the three- or four-year period that it was in alfalfa. You get tremendous yields, and also a very high-quality product, particularly tomatoes.

- Quivik: Prior to the dairy farming moving in and that market being available for the alfalfa, was alfalfa nevertheless a popular part of a rotation because of the soil-building characteristics?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, it was. It was also good for--they had raised a lot of oat and vetch hay that was used for either the beef cattle or the dairy cattle. That also followed alfalfa with a good crop.
- Quivik: And then aside from the soil-building characteristics of alfalfa, are there other considerations for selecting the order of other crops in a rotation like--follow one crop after another, because of, oh, either the way it might eliminate some weeds, or notions of companion cropping, any of that sort of thing?
- J. Gwerder: That is definitely a very important consideration, because it is also useful in cleaning up ground, because the alfalfa is very thick and it tends to outgrow anything else. So you can eliminate a lot of your weeds by using that crop.
- Quivik: Once you have plowed your alfalfa under and then you proceed with a succession of other crops, is there any reason for choosing one order over another?
- J. Gwerder: Well, it is usually whatever crop had the best price. Because when you turn the alfalfa over it has nodules of nitrogen on the root system. For the next at least two years, and into the third year, you get a higher yield. Basically, tomatoes was the highest producing--dollar-wise--crop that we had. That is why we would follow the second year, not the first year, because it was hard to take the alfalfa out, and be able to till the soil. So it would go into a wheat crop, and then the following year, we would then go to the tomatoes. And from tomatoes either into corn, or sometimes two years of tomatoes.
- Quivik: How many years between alfalfa crops typically?
- J. Gwerder: About seven years.

### Transition to Wine Grapes at Thompson-Folger

- Quivik: Then you made a move to another type of crop on that place. Can you describe that?

J. Gwerder: Yes, we then--from this we had decided that we would put in--try some vineyards. So, we put in forty acres of Sauvignon Blanc on the east end of the property, a trellised white grape--and just to see how it would work on the land and how we'd like raising grapes.

We got a delivery contract with Gallo Wine Company. And so we had to manage for just two years, and then we got a call from Ernesto and Bob Gallo, two of the partners, an uncle and a son. They wanted to come up and visit with us. They arrived and we met, and they wanted to look over the ranch. So we toured them around.

When we got back to our shop and headquarters, they said that they were very interested in putting the 2,000 acres in grapes. They wanted to do it in five different varieties--put in a Zinfandel, a Cabernet, a Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, and Merlot. We proceeded to discuss the terms. It was a percentage lease and they wanted to do a twenty-year term on it. They would do all the expense of putting the vines and the trellising. We had the irrigation system in.

When we kept discussing it, finally it got down to the end and they said, "We only have one thing that we need if we're going to do this: we have to have the option to buy it at the end of the twenty-years." This was totally unacceptable to us, because it had been in Carol's family for five generations, she being the fifth generation, and we just would not go along with those terms. So that ended the negotiation on that, and they went on home.

They called back about a week later and said they would give us an eighteen-year contract if we wanted to put them in ourselves, or find somebody else to put them in. So fortunately we were able to find a group that wanted to put half of it in, 900 acres, and we have the Gallo contract for delivery at a minimum price. The average price is based on the district for the variety. In other words, if it were a Cabernet grape, they would pay what the district average was, but no less than \$500 a ton. So the people that we found were a group called The Creekside, and they were willing to make the investment. We put in all the irrigation system necessary. They put the vines in, and they are still operating it now.

Quivik: Would you consider them a tenant then, Creekside?

J. Gwerder: They are a tenant. So we got the original acreage in, which was Zinfandel, Cabernet, Merlot, and as we went west towards the Interstate 5 freeway, we put the Chardonnay down there. That was in 1993. Then in '96 Sutter Home approached us to put some additional Chardonnay on the west side of the freeway. So we proceeded to sign a contract with them, also with Creekside as the tenant. The next year we were able to do another Sutter Home and a Beringer contract--100 acres to Beringer, and 124 to Sutter Home. Our last planting was in 1998, and that was another 100 acres of Chardonnay to Sutter Home.

That leaves a remaining 424 acres which we were able to find another tenant, who is currently raising corn, and some melon seed, and tomatoes. We hope next year that he will be able to start putting asparagus for fresh shipping in the remainder of the land.

Quivik: What is the relationship between your tenant, who made the investment in the grapevines, you as the landowner, and, let's start with Gallo, as the purchaser of the grapes?

- J. Gwerder: Well, we as the landowner, provided the water system and the land. Gallo is the purchaser of the end product. The tenant--the lease is based on a percentage, of which we get 20 percent of the crop, and Gallo purchases it all. And the tenant gets 80 percent of the crop. And he has the investment of the trellising and the vines. He puts all the labor and management into that part of it.
- Quivik: And so is Gallo buying the grapes from the tenant, and you get 20 percent, or--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Though the contract is in our name.
- Quivik: Oh, it is.
- J. Gwerder: We wanted that in case the tenant was not happy. We didn't want him leaving with the contract with Gallo, because it is a very favorable contract. It has continued to work very well.
- Quivik: And the same is true with the other wineries, Sutter Home, that the contract goes with the land?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. They all--same thing, it stays with the land. So if the tenant decides to leave we either find another tenant, or do it ourselves. We have the option.

### Woodbridge Irrigation District

- Quivik: Can we talk a little bit about the irrigation of that place? First of all, what irrigation district is the Thompson-Folger place in?
- J. Gwerder: The east part is in the Woodbridge Irrigation District, which was developed originally on the Mokelumne River. They put a dam in the town of Woodbridge, and then put their laterals out serving everything west of the town of Woodbridge and Lodi on these different laterals. And they have water available. There's a charge dependent on the cost involved, and it's delivered to the edge of your property. Then anything after that you build yourself, if you want additional ditches, or--they have some of them now are concrete lined.
- It is very well run. You are charged so much per acre per year, or per acre-foot, depending on the crop--for the water, for their delivery service. They have filed rights on the Mokelumne River, so there is a right to the water.
- Quivik: The irrigation district has--?
- J. Gwerder: The irrigation district has--
- Quivik: When was that irrigation district formed? Roughly, ballpark?

J. Gwerder: Well, I would say early 1900s.

Quivik: Okay, beginning of the century. And has the Thompson-Folger place been a part of that irrigation district from the beginning?

J. Gwerder: Yes, indeed. Yes, definitely. They were one of the originators, and a very definite part of the start of the irrigation district.

Quivik: Can you talk then about the changes that you have been a part of in the use of irrigation on the Thompson-Folger place, beginning with the livestock operation, moving to the row crops, and then finally to the vineyards?

J. Gwerder: Originally the water was delivered to the edge of the property. Then it was just wild-flooded, that is when we were in the livestock business. From there we leveled the land and then put our own interior laterals in, where the water was taken to each field, and would level the grade, so it could run down the rows or down the furrows. Then when we went into the vineyard we went to a drip system, where the water is dripped on each side of the grapevines. You use much less water, with much less cost.

On the west side of the property the irrigation system was totally different. It was based on tidewater which comes in from the Mokelumne, from the San Joaquin, and the Sacramento River. It backs in on a changing tide; we had built interior canals where it could be trapped on an incoming tide. Then we put low-horsepower lift pumps, just to lift it up to field grade. That was all first flood irrigated, and then furrow irrigated down the rows. And now we have gone, on the vineyards on that side, to putting a well in, and now we are on the drip system there.

Quivik: Can you describe what you mean by "wild irrigating?"

J. Gwerder: Oh, it is just using contours and a pattern, no particular pattern, only by elevation. So the contours, the levees that you irrigate within are on a set grade, so that the water just flows through and out the other end. There are some low spots, some high spots.

Quivik: Then would you periodically set moveable dams in the ditch and allow the ditch to overflow?

J. Gwerder: Yes, to create the overflow--to flow out. But now it's much more efficient with the drip system in. Totally level, we can control the water in a much better fashion.

Quivik: When you use the--you had the ditches, and the row crops, and the siphon moving the water into the furrows between the rows?

J. Gwerder: Yes. The very small one-to-two-inch siphons, one per row. Typically the row crops are in thirty-inch rows. Tomatoes and the bedded crops are on sixty-inch beds, so it is a little wider apart, so you have to use a larger hand-siphon pipe.

Quivik: So all of the application of water to the crops is by means of those furrows between those raised beds?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

### Farm Labor on the Thompson-Folger Ranch

Quivik: When you had a livestock operation, what other labor was involved besides moving those dams for the irrigation, in the livestock operation?

J. Gwerder: That was about it. They were very low labor use, and most of the irrigators were also the cowboys that would move the cattle, and feed them in the winter time. It was a full-time crew.

Quivik: So those were not seasonal workers on your livestock--?

J. Gwerder: No, they were full-time. I would have to hire possibly two extra irrigators for the summer, but otherwise it was a full-time crew.

Quivik: Who would you hire for those seasonal irrigators?

J. Gwerder: Oh, just whoever was available. And of course now our main irrigators are Hispanics. They would come in--we started that during the Bracero program, when they came in on a permit basis for the season, and then went back to Mexico. They also did the work in the tomatoes and the sugar beets, and all of that was done by them.

Quivik: How about the cowboys?

J. Gwerder: The cowboys were all just typically people that had been there all the time, and stayed--

Quivik: Hispanics, or--?

J. Gwerder: No, they were--

Quivik: Gringos?

J. Gwerder: Yes, gringos! [Laughter]

Quivik: What would be the local term for describing--?

J. Gwerder: Whatever. [Laughter]

Quivik: Yes. The long-time residents.

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: And were they your employees?

J. Gwerder: Yes. They were.

Quivik: Did you provide housing for them?

J. Gwerder: We provided housing for part of them--part of them, [but?] we didn't have enough housing for all of them. But they would come to work, and then we would furnish a vehicle for them.

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Quivik: Of the--when you had a livestock operation, how many year-round employees did you have, and how many seasonal?

J. Gwerder: We had approximately six year-round, and then a couple of additional seasonal irrigators in the summer.

Quivik: Then when you made the transition from a livestock operation to the various row crops, your labor situation probably changed. Can you describe that change?

J. Gwerder: Yes. When we first started into the row crops, the first thing we did was--I leased the land from the company, because I was in the farming business anyway. I had all the equipment that was necessary. So Carol and I as individuals leased the property from Thompson-Folger Company, and did the transition from livestock to row crops. We continued that, and then were able to get a couple of tenants, that specialty--tomato farmers, so they took over that part of it. We carried that on until we moved into the grape situation.

Quivik: When you were in the alfalfa part of the cycle, or corn, any of those other crops, was the tenant operating the ground then, or were you operating--?

J. Gwerder: No, we operated it.

Quivik: You operated it?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Had there been any, oh, any of those cowboys who had been on the Thompson-Folger place for a long time, who--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. The main individual we had was a man by the name of Manuel Ferreira, and he had--the previous foreman was his father-in-law. He had married his daughter, and so he inherited the job. He stayed until he finally retired in about 1982, I believe, at the age of seventy. He had worked his whole life--

Quivik: On the Thompson-Folger place?

J. Gwerder: On the Thompson-Folger Ranch.

Quivik: Wow. So was he part of that transition into row crops, then?

J. Gwerder: He kind of—he was as far as the alfalfa and that type of crop. Not the intensive farming, but the wheat, and the grains, and the alfalfa is what he was involved in, not the cultivated crops.

Quivik: For those crops then, I take it, your year-round number of employees declined?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: And was he the only one who stayed on?

J. Gwerder: He was the only one that stayed on, yes.

Quivik: Then during the summer you hired seasonal workers?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: And did you own all the equipment for--?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: —cutting the alfalfa?

J. Gwerder: No. A lot of it we did custom. The hay crops were done by a customized equipment operator who owned the equipment, would come in and perform the service, at so much per time. But as far as the groundwork, and the cultivation, and the tilling of the soil and everything, we had our own equipment.

Quivik: And the workers in the cultivation, preparing the ground, were they your employees then?

J. Gwerder: Yes, they were my employees.

Quivik: Were they seasonal?

J. Gwerder: Most of them were. We had a couple of year-round people, but most of them were seasonal.

Quivik: When you moved to that kind of seasonal employee operation, did you provide housing for them, or--?

J. Gwerder: We had housing for three of them. They were basically year-round employees.

Quivik: But none of it—you didn't provide housing for the seasonal--?

J. Gwerder: No.

Quivik: Where did they live?

J. Gwerder: Typically they lived--either working for a labor contractor, or--there is a government housing, a farm labor housing camp in the town of Thornton, and some of them were able to live in there.

Quivik: So then did you usually hire people through a sort of labor contractor, or did you hire some of them directly?

J. Gwerder: Typically directly. Unless it was a hand-labor hauling, or--then we would use a labor contractor, who would furnish transportation, and would handle all the employment records, hours, and all that. And they would bill us directly. So he would have his own compensation insurance and workman's insurance for the employees.

Quivik: How would the assignment of tasks work in a case like that?

J. Gwerder: Through a foreman. The other thing, when we were doing this--I was fortunate that my son Jim had graduated from University of California, State College at Chico, and had majored in agricultural business. He had come back from school, and so he ran that part of the operation for me.

Quivik: Was language at all an issue, for you as the operator?

J. Gwerder: Yes. I'm not great at Spanish but I can understand it and convey my thoughts in Spanish to employees. But I always encourage them to speak English. Since they were in this country, we always thought it was beneficial for them to learn English because they could get along much easier. And now it's kind of both ways.

### **Irrigation Infrastructure on the Thompson-Folger**

Quivik: The cost of laying out the place--getting back to the irrigation now--so that you could lay out those row crops and install the different kinds of ditches, I assume that was all your cost, even if you had a tenant?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: And the moving of those siphon tubes, is that a labor cost that you bear, or the tenant bears?

J. Gwerder: The tenant bears that.

Quivik: Who owns those siphon tubes?



J. Gwerder: We usually do.

Quivik: So that is part of the infrastructure that you provide, but they actually operate it

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Then, can you describe what kinds of investments you had to make for irrigation to move from that row crop system to the vineyards?

J. Gwerder: Well, in three instances we had to put in deep wells and pumping systems, for two reasons. We still have two that are still pumping out of the Woodbridge irrigation ditch, but the irrigation system in Woodbridge is--you have water on for four days, and then off for ten days, on for four days, and off for ten days--and in a drip system that does not work. So we had to put additional wells and deep pumps in, because you drip so much everyday. So we had to change somewhat our irrigation system and put the pumps and wells in--also the strainers for the water coming out of the well, so that it can flow through the drip system without plugging the emitters.

Quivik: Is the drip system operating under gravity pressure, or pump pressure?

J. Gwerder: Pump pressure. Very low pressure.

Quivik: Once it's put in place, is there any labor involved?

J. Gwerder: No. It is permanent. It is tied on the trellising system. The only thing that we have to do intermittently is to run acid through it to clean any sediment that might be settling in the emitters, any alkali or any chemicals that might stop the drip system.

Quivik: How about checking either for blockages or leaks?

J. Gwerder: Yes. The tenant, they use what we call little four-wheeler motorcycles. They drive every row, once a week. They carry a box of all the necessary repair items, and if they see a leak, or a break, or a plugged emitter or something, they are able to fix it while they are right there.

Quivik: And if they are fixing it but the infrastructure is yours, do they bill you for that, or the maintenance is--?

J. Gwerder: The maintenance is theirs.

Quivik: I see. Okay. On the Thompson-Folger place, you have got some rows of olive trees along the road. What is the story on those?

J. Gwerder: Well, that was the idea of the tenant. He thought it would be nice to line the Peltier Road with olives. They are a high-quality olive oil variety. And so, it not only increases the appearance of it, but there is a little return from the sale of the olives.

When we first put them in it was interesting because again, along the interchange at I-5, we planted them and put a drip system in for irrigation. And the first year, people would come in and take the trees, and then they would cut the drip system off and take it with them, take them all, take them and replant them. But now they are large enough that they can't do that anymore.

- Quivik: When I picture a drip system associated with a tree, I just think of a little length of tube. Is there something more to it than that that they would take with the tree?
- J. Gwerder: They would just take the tube. They took twenty trees, they took the length of tube to irrigate twenty trees. They would just cut it all and take it with them, so--
- Quivik: They weren't just taking one or two trees, but a--?
- J. Gwerder: No, no, they were taking, usually ten to twenty trees. Do it in the middle of the night, and cut it off, and you come back in the morning and everything has just disappeared.
- Quivik: So on the east side of the Thompson-Folger place now, is that entirely grapes, with the trees along the edge?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Totally?
- J. Gwerder: Totally.
- Quivik: And the west side is some grapes and some of these other crops?
- J. Gwerder: Right. There are about 400 acres of farming land on the westerly edge, and the reason that is not in grapes is we have quite a high water table down there, just because of the seepage from the river. And so, we are not going to put that in. If we had to, if we were going to do it, we would have to put a total drainage-tile system underground to keep the water table down.
- Quivik: Is the labor for the grape operation entirely the responsibility then of the tenant?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, oh, everything of the tenant. They use labor contractors who have buses to deliver crews in, and--so that is totally their operation.

### **Mechanization of the Vineyards at Thompson-Folger**

- Quivik: Has the amount of labor involved in a grape operation changed lately?

- J. Gwerder: Yes. It is not as intensive as it used to be, because of the drip system. Other than checking for leaks, or plugs, or breakages, why, the only time we need any intensive labor is at pruning time and on a new vineyard, the tying of the vine, to train it onto the trellis system. Of course now our harvest is all done mechanically. There is no need for a large amount of labor. It is machine picked. There's three men on the machine, and at least two tractor drivers who run the trailers that the grapes are put into, where they load them into the truck and trailer on the way to the winery.
- Quivik: Has your Thompson-Folger operation been mechanized picking since the beginning?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. It was designed that way. It was laid out, as far as the trellis system and everything, to be mechanically harvested.
- Quivik: Does that mean a difference in spacing of the rows?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right, so that you have adequate room for the machinery in the headlands or the ends of the fields, adequate room to turn and get straightened out to come back the next row. So it was all designed for that.
- Quivik: Do you lose any productive capacity?
- J. Gwerder: We don't think so. We think that it is just as efficient as if we were hand-picking.
- Quivik: In terms of the--that would be an economic analysis?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: But might there be a few less grapes per acre, than--?
- J. Gwerder: Could be. I've never seen any real facts on that, whether they would be or not.

#### **Replanting and Mechanization of the Vineyards at the Minor-Haas Ranch**

- Quivik: When we were driving around, I remember you talking about the transition from hand-picked grapes to mechanically-picked grapes and your Gallo contract. Was that on a different--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. That was on the Minor-Haas ranch, which is--
- Quivik: Coming up soon?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Well, maybe we should switch to that place. What is the background on that place?

J. Gwerder: Minor-Haas is an acreage on DeVries Road, 220 acres, that was one of the original pieces that the Thompson family developed. It was one of the original grape plantings in the area, in the 1870s. But at the time it was non-irrigated, it was just dry land and rolling rough. That's what really started them into the grape business. It had no irrigation, although as the irrigation district came in, then they started leveling pieces at a time.

And we got involved in it and decided that we should take all the grapes out, because they were old, not high producers, and the land was not level. So we took them out and changed the irrigation system, and re-leveled the land, so that it could be irrigated.

Then we started back into the grape production. We put some Chenin Blanc, and with the Gallo contract, and so--an interesting visit we had. We requested through our field man, working for Gallo, that we wanted to try a new mechanical harvester that was brand-new in the area. So they brought the machine in, and we had trellised for this; they were talking about it at the time, to mechanically pick them.

So we got a call from the Gallos, Ernest and Julio, who said they wanted to come up and inspect how it worked, and what the quality of grapes looked like. They set a time, and here they came in their helicopter, and landed on the ranch, and got out, and actually got up and rode the machine, to make sure that the quality--that it wasn't hurting the quality of the grapes.

They thought there were too many leaves and stems going in. One of the controls on the machine is a fan to blow the trash out. So they kept increasing the fan, the velocity of the fan, to where it was finally blowing the grapes out. Then I had to stop the machine and say that we couldn't do that. So we had kind of a stand-off, because they wanted the leaves out, and in order to do that, we were blowing the grapes out. We were kind of at an impasse.

I finally suggested that we go next door where they were hand-picking, a crew, similar grape to ours right there. So Ernest and Julio, we went over to look at it. They agreed that there was just as much trash in the hand-picked as the mechanically-picked. But their idea was that it was only a poor crew. If they'd had a good crew it wouldn't have been a problem. So anyway, they allowed us to continue, and that was our start in it.

Quivik: What year was that about?

J. Gwerder: About 1982. That was I think the harvest that we started on.

Quivik: Were you one of the first people in your area to--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right. There was an individual in Lodi that had brought the machine in, and we have still to this day never owned our own machine. We always use a contract company that harvests them for us, owns the machines.

Quivik: You know where that machine was developed?

J. Gwerder: No, I don't.

Quivik: Can you just describe briefly how it gets the grape off the vine?

J. Gwerder: It is a high frequency vibrator that goes down over the top of the vines, down the trellis, and it has bars that run close to the grape stake and the trunk of the grape plant. As it goes along at a high frequency, it just shakes them, and it shakes with such frequency that the berries drop off. So it drops onto a belt, and then this belt, it travels to a cross-conveyor. It goes up and into the next row where there is a gondola going along at the same speed, and it's collected in there. Then it goes to the end and it's dumped into a truck and trailer. So that is the way--almost all the grapes are done that way now.

Quivik: Throughout that whole--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, every place.

Quivik: Every place. Even in Napa Valley?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right. Certain small vineyards with a specific use, or something they are trying to accomplish, are still hand-picked. But the majority are all done with machine now.

Quivik: Again, this would be for wine grapes? If those were table grapes--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right. Not table grapes.

Quivik: When you made that transition from the early, the old grape vines to the new grape vines, as I recall, you had an interval there, with some other crops for a while?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Those were the grain crops, and the alfalfa, in preparation while we were doing the re-leveling--and one side, we didn't have a good irrigation system, so we put a well and pump in, and kind of straightened the property up, drainage, and everything like that.

### Working Closely with the Extension Service at UC Davis

J. Gwerder: Then we started back in again. When we did, we worked very closely with the extension service, University of California Extension Service, who had a grape specialist in Stockton. He had a student who would work with them in the summers. He was a viticulture major at Davis, and he had just finished school, and came to work for us part-time to manage the planting at the new vineyard.

At the time, the head of the viticulture department was a Dr. Omo. He wanted to put a new trial in of fifty varieties that were not named, they were just numbered. They were looking for a Cabernet-type grape that would have all the qualities and possibly greater

production. So we volunteered to put a test plot in for the university. There were fifty varieties, ten vines of each. This fellow that we had hired who had worked at the university and for them got it all put together.

For the first--they didn't pick the first year, actually--the second year they went in and picked them, and everything was by the numbers. It was labeled, and they made individual bottles of wine out of the fifty different varieties on the second and the third year, still searching for the ideal red grape. Then Dr. Omo retired and the new head of the department that came in didn't feel there was any real need for it, so he canceled the whole thing. So then we had to proceed back in and graft those over to our standard variety, which was a Cabernet and French Colombard. That was the end of our experimentation [laughter] with new variety.

- Quivik: So to make that switch you left the roots and stem, cut off all the branches and grafted--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, just graft it right in to the main trunk. Then of course we had to go back and train them all back up onto the trellis again. We still have, of that original planting, we still have sixty acres left, some Semillon, twenty acres of Semillon, twenty acres of Sauvignon Blanc, and twenty acres of Chenin Blanc. The tenant is operating, and this will be the last year, and then they will come out. They are some twenty-two years old. So that'll be the end of that. Then we'll probably go back in, maybe dry farm it for a couple of years and touch up the leveling, and then go back in. Because that was never drip, it was just flood irrigation down each row, so we would, if we go back in, change that.
- Quivik: Is that the typical life of a grapevine, twenty years?
- J. Gwerder: I think so. Particularly with the--they probably, under a hand-picked and handled vineyard, they might last longer. But with the machine harvest and the trellising, that is about all you can get out of them. The grape stakes start to break, and the trellises are not what they should be, and so it is easier to take them out and start all over again.
- Quivik: When you first started making these improvements on the Minor-Haas place, were those old grapevines that you took out about that old, about twenty years, or older?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Older, they were older.
- Quivik: Would you guess how old?
- J. Gwerder: Oh, I would imagine, some of them were probably thirty years old.
- Quivik: What kind of work is involved in taking out old grapevines?
- J. Gwerder: Well, it is a--they now have a U-shaped tool that is towed behind a crawler tractor, and that typically has a dozer in front. You doze up the top into a pile to burn them. Then you go back with the U-shaped chisel-type plow, and it pulls up all the underground rootings, and everything. Then that is, as can be, picked up mechanically. Then it finally ends up where

you go in by hand and pick all the last roots, to burn them completely. So, it is an expensive process.

- Quivik: How had you established a relationship with either Professor Omo in particular, or UC Davis in general, that would have allowed you to be running these trials, as opposed to just putting in a crop for productive purposes?
- J. Gwerder: It was because of the farm advisor who we worked with in Stockton. He was interested in the project, and helped us get started.
- Quivik: He knew that Professor Omo was looking for--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, for a test plot in the Woodbridge area. So that is how we got into that.
- Quivik: Is the Minor-Haas place also part of Woodbridge Irrigation District?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right. The east side of the road--we now get the east side--we have a tenant operating that now, and all the grapes are gone, and it is in cherries and apples. It is irrigated with micro-sprinklers, and the whole system is put in to operate with Woodbridge irrigation water out of their irrigating ditch. So we just have a small horsepower lift pump which just pressures it in order to operate the sprinklers. That's a system that was put it by the tenant who is operating it.
- Quivik: Are the cherries and apples new to that ground, or--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, on that particular ranch. There are quite a few in the area, and this is the third year, and they won't be harvested until next year. So it will be fourth year before they'll be, anything will be harvested.
- Quivik: And was that--?
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- Quivik: Joe, can you describe how the Minor-Haas place fits into the operations that are part of Carol's family background? Was this another farm that Carol's dad was operating?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. He managed it too. It was totally a Thompson family farm. So he had operated it, and then we stepped in on his passing. It is basically the same ownership as Thompson-Folger, but a small percentage difference on Carol's cousins' side, the Haas family. There is a little different percentage between the Thompson-Folger interest and the Minor-Haas interest, but it's basically the same people.
- Quivik: Did you start operating that at the same time that you started operating the Thompson-Folger place?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right. Because Carol's father managed both of them. So we just took over from there.

**Special Problems with the Farmington Ranch**

Quivik: Then there is another place called the Farmington place. Can you describe that?

J. Gwerder: Yes. This is a piece that belonged to the Goodwin family, which I think Carol has already done some history on. It's a piece of dry land pasture, 776 acres. It's outside of the town of Farmington, east of Stockton, in San Joaquin County. It has always been--Carol's father at one time operated out there and ran cattle on it as part of the original Goodwin family 4,500 acres in that area. Since we became involved in it we have leased it out. Now due to family division and sale, our remaining ownership at Farmington is the 776 acreage.

We made an attempt a few years ago to possibly lease it out for another vineyard development. We had a tenant who was interested. We were informed that we could not do that because of the vernal pools. It has some natural vernal pools on it. Not originally, though, because it had been farmed at one point in time for about ten years in dry land grain. But there still are vernal pools on it, and because of the Endangered Species Act, and the fairy shrimp, why, we are not allowed to work those pools in any way. We cannot disturb the soil.

So we are trying to--there is a group, interested, through the county, and there are individuals now that are buying properties like that for what they call a mitigation bank. They are able to put it into this bank, and developers, or whoever might need some additional vernal pool areas--if for example, closer to Sacramento, a developer might need to mitigate the use of his property with additional vernal pools, why, this is what we're looking for now, to--because we cannot do anything with it, we are trying to sell it for that purpose.

Quivik: Can you describe what a vernal pool is?

J. Gwerder: A vernal pool is a very shallow pool or low spot that has water in the winter during the rainy season. Then it dries up, so it's dry all summer. But during that time it is the home of the fairy shrimp.

Quivik: Then they are dormant during the dry--?

J. Gwerder: They are dormant. They're in the soil, but--until the first rains come, and then they are back active again.

Quivik: That ten-year period when there was dry-land farming, were those grain crops?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Approximately when was that?



J. Gwerder: I would say probably the twenties, 1920s. They went in and just lightly tilled the soil, and planted grain crops.

Quivik: And then what has the land been used for since?

J. Gwerder: Strictly dry-land grazing. Just cattle for the winter season, for the grass season, and then they're off. In the summer there are no improvements on it.

So it's interesting. We have a certain amount of interest from people, but we haven't been able to do anything yet. It's a hard situation to be in, because you have an asset that you can't do anything with. I mean, if they are going to control the usage, they should pay us then. We should be reimbursed for what we are losing. And yet they don't, and yet they stop us from doing anything. So it's an interesting situation.

Quivik: Are you still grazing livestock on it?

J. Gwerder: We have it rented to a tenant who is a neighbor. It isn't large enough with capacity enough to afford to have somebody go down and check the cattle and manage it and operate it ourselves, so we just lease it out.

Quivik: Does the vernal pool situation affect at all the kinds of grazing operations--do they try to regulate the grazing?

J. Gwerder: No. But now we have a new one--the federal government is now claiming that possibly they own the water that's in the vernal pools, so that would be another thing that we'd be faced with. So we are looking to get out of the situation.

Quivik: When did someone discover that the fairy shrimp were in those pools? Do you know?

J. Gwerder: It happened most recently in a case out of Sacramento, where a developer was caught ripping these, and so-called destroying the vernal pools. He was fined a tremendous amount of money. They stopped him, got a court order, and stopped him completely. So the only way he's been able to carry on his development was to mitigate and buy other areas that can be turned into that. We had our neighbor down there, right across the road, that had put some grapes in. He had gone in, and torn up some ground, and he was fined approximately \$2,000,000 for disturbing the vernal pools on land that he owned.

Quivik: Is this a sort of blanket protection of all vernal pools wherever they exist?

J. Gwerder: Yes, that's what they are trying to do.

Quivik: I see. Is that federal or state that is regulating--?

J. Gwerder: Federal.

Quivik: Which agency is implementing that?

- J. Gwerder: It is under the Endangered Species Act.
- Quivik: You just know of this happening elsewhere, so you are concerned--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, it's been in all of the papers, the fines and--there's a great controversy over the whole thing.
- Quivik: When did that controversy first begin to surface?
- J. Gwerder: About, I would say, eight to ten years ago. It's to the point now where the landowners now feel that if they (the government) want to preserve it, then they should buy it, and compensate us, to the land owner for non-use of his property. If you own the land, you should be able to use the way you see the best and highest use. That's what we always look for.
- Quivik: So that place basically gets leased out for grazing. Unless you can sell it to someone else you have no other plans for it, correct?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Did you start managing that at the same time as the other two places?
- J. Gwerder: Approximately, yes.
- Quivik: I'm not sure if we covered this--what's the approximate distance separating each of those three places?
- J. Gwerder: It's about fifty miles or forty miles from Lodi to the Farmington Ranch, or Woodbridge. Then Woodbridge and Minor-Haas are all within three miles apart, they are in one area.
- Quivik: How far are they from the Galt place?
- J. Gwerder: They're about eight miles. So that's why the Farmington one is just too far. It takes too much time to manage it and operate it.

### Changes in Joe's Workday Over the Years

- Quivik: What I'd like to talk about next is--well, let's go back to before you started putting all the grapes in on the Thompson-Folger place--your overall operation, which included the places you were operating for Carol's family, and then the places that you were operating that you got from your own family. I'm interested in what your workday was like as the operator of all of these places. We have touched on what some of the labor was involved in the field, what people had to do to move siphon tubes and so on, but what was your typical workday like, let's say, in the seventies? Maybe you could talk about it on a seasonal basis.

- J. Gwerder: Well, it's kind of a workday that starts early. Get up at 5:30 and start. It's a day that's spent mainly just trying to put the fires out. Telephone in your car that never stops, traveling from one to the other to make sure everything is still running, and--
- Quivik: Did you have a telephone in your car in the seventies?
- J. Gwerder: I guess it was the eighties. I got one of the first ones that was available. My main reason for getting it was--when I would get home in the evening, 6:30 or so, then all of the people that couldn't get you all day long would be calling. So we would have an hour of phone calls every night, people trying to get a hold of you. The minute we were able to get the communication in the car, why, then you were getting calls all day long, and you could make your calls without having to get home and do everything in the evening.
- Quivik: Were these people on your various places trying to reach you, or other folks that you were--suppliers, or people selling to you?
- J. Gwerder: Right, exactly. Mainly suppliers and grain companies for pricing, and people that are trying to buy crops. So it's just a constant communication.
- Quivik: Well, can we think--let's say in the seventies, before you had that phone in your car--and maybe we could start with what one of your--a typical day would be like, as you are approaching planting time? What were some of the fires that you would have to put out, or what would you have to be attending to?
- J. Gwerder: Every day is a little different. There's really not one typical. But the first thing would be to make sure that our crew is all there and that the equipment started, and that whatever we were doing, if we were pre-fertilizing, or planting, that there was seed available, and fertilizer available--so that the day can run in somewhat of a normal fashion. Mainly that the employees were there. Same way in the cattle operations, was always to make sure that the irrigators were there, that you could keep your normal flow going.
- Quivik: Did you have a foreman on each place?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, yes, very definitely.
- Quivik: So there were workers who were supposed to show up and start work, and a foreman--?
- J. Gwerder: Who was in charge of the day-to-day. And that would be the main thing I would do, would be to visit with them every day, and try to lay out what the next project would be, for the next type of supplies we needed, what the activity was at the time. Then I would always try to get back in to the office, just to check grain markets.
- Quivik: Where was your office in the seventies?
- J. Gwerder: In my home. I've always had an office in my home so that everything is there--just because changes in the markets can happen at any time, so we try to keep in contact.

Quivik: You mean you try to get in at mid-day?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: Check on the markets--?

J. Gwerder: And then back out. The most important time was the morning--you know, to get everything going, that is most important.

Quivik: What could be a--maybe there isn't a typical problem, but perhaps a representative problem that might require some action that would--in other words, if things were going as they should, you could move on to the next place--?

J. Gwerder: Right.

Quivik: Let's say there was a problem at the Thompson-Folger place, what might be a problem that you would have to do something about?

J. Gwerder: Well, depending on the problem, we also depend on our service agencies, like our fertilizer dealer. They have field men that check for specific insect damage, or something that might come up. And if it did, then you would have to react, and not only set up, to get the material. For example, an army worm that was attacking a crop or something, you have to be able to order the material, and then also get the airplane, for example, that would fly the material on, so that you could just--you know, every day is so different, it is hard to--

Quivik: If you--well, you mentioned some kind of a pest in the field. Was that some kind of a--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Army--that is an army worm.

Quivik: Okay. Would that be something that your field hands would notice, or would a specialist--?

J. Gwerder: Well, they could, but typically with the people we do business with, they provide a man who watches the field. Also, other fields of a similar crop in the area, which they are aware of, and then they let you know when they need to try to schedule and set up the application of the pesticide, insecticide, or whatever is needed. And then the type of--when we're planting, you always have to make sure that your supply of seed is delivered, and your fertilizer is delivered, and the machinery then is set up to put the proper amount of pounds per acre of seed, or pounds per acre of fertilizer, or in a way of liquid fertilizer, gallons per acre. Those are all things that have to be--and some of those your foreman can't do, because he doesn't know exactly what you are trying to achieve--trying to put more of one fertilizer or other depending on what the next crop would be the next year, I mean, you've got to plan ahead.

Quivik: As I hear you describe that, it sounds then like you were tied in with a lot of different kinds of suppliers. Each of them, one of the services that they would provide, is to help you identify what you needed, and when you needed it.

J. Gwerder: Very true.

Quivik: So perhaps you needed to make a decision to go along with their advice?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: But it wasn't the kind of a situation, at least with regard to a pest or something like that, where you'd go out in the field some day and you'd see this pest is starting to get to be a problem, and you'd have to get on the phone and call someone out there to--?

J. Gwerder: Well, sometimes it would happen--

Quivik: Is that right?

J. Gwerder: But typically you try to depend on somebody else.

Quivik: Anticipating the problem, and agreeing to take care of it ahead of time?

J. Gwerder: Yes, yes, right. Because it's a continual thing. You have always your insurance coverage to worry about, just an ongoing--things that have to be done everyday.

Quivik: So again, focusing our attention in the seventies for the time being, I think you said that the field preparation was work that you did with your equipment and their employees. Then how about planting?

J. Gwerder: Yes, we did most of the planting.

### Changes in Methods of Applying Fertilizers, Pesticides, Herbicides

Quivik: Fertilizing?

J. Gwerder: Fertilizing, yes. We would do usually the--well, some of the applicators are furnished by the companies. You buy the product from them, and with it comes the unit to put it on. But we had our basic tractors that always pulled the towage tools, and the pre-fertilizing was all done.

Then our planters had the individual planter units on the back. On the front are the large liquid tanks. We went to all liquid fertilizer because of the ease of handling it, pumping it rather than the sacks, and the men physically having to handle those bags and everything--liquid was the wave of the future, and that's the way to go.

Quivik: Were there any sort of workplace safety hazards associated with fertilizers? I'm not talking about pesticides, but just the fertilizers?

- J. Gwerder: Yes. Yes. Particularly in the use of  $\text{NH}_3$ , which is a nitrogen gas. We have to have a learning process that we put the employees through. They have to wear a shield over their face, and have to be careful handling those high-pressure type fertilizers.
- Quivik: Who did the training? You or someone representing the fertilizer company?
- J. Gwerder: Usually the fertilizer company did, and then, since my son has been with me, he takes over all the—he does all the training, and also gives all the reports. If there is an accident, it has to be reported to the county and to the state, and likewise to our own insurance company for the worker's compensation insurance. He takes care of all of that now.
- Quivik: Can you remember any serious accidents that have happened on your farms while you have been in charge of operations?
- J. Gwerder: Not really, not that I can think of.
- Quivik: Then, pesticides, insecticides, was that usually someone else who applied it, contractors who were applicators, or did you apply some of those things?
- J. Gwerder: We applied some of them. We had to go through the whole routine. Our employees now are required to go to—it's one thing that the Farm Bureau, which is an ag. association, a membership, they put on clinics, and we send our employees in to learn how to handle the different products with gloves, and white suits, and face guards, and whatever, depending on what the product is. The county now requires that we keep those hours, that everybody has to spend so many hours in these training sessions per year, if they're going to handle these classified type materials.
- Quivik: Are they mainly in the pesticide side of things, or does that include, are some of the fertilizers--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Some of the herbicide too, fertilizers too.
- Quivik: Fertilizers are also classified?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right.
- Quivik: Does that--the county, you say, keeps track of those things?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Is that in compliance with state law, or federal law, or both?
- J. Gwerder: With state law. And it might be federal too, I don't know what the tie-in is on that. But we have a local county representative who has an office here in Walnut Grove. There's one in Lodi, and there's one in Galt. Some of the permitting—we have to go through them. Some of them you have to go in and sign up for the use of the product with them, not just the supplier—but you have to go in and get a permit to use some of these supplies.

- Quivik: What are some of the major changes that you've seen in fertilizers through the years that you've been working these places?
- J. Gwerder: Well, I think the biggest one has been the use of liquids as opposed to when I first started--it was all dry, it was all sacked, and you had to handle those eighty-pound bags. It took a truck to go pick it up, or if it was delivered, then you'd have to have a forklift to pick it up and move it onto your own truck so you could keep a supply in the field. Now we use mostly all liquids, and they are delivered into a 2,000-gallon holding tank, and you just pump out of that. It's certainly the most convenient way to handle material. The fertilizer companies deliver it, so--we used to have to go in and haul our own, so we've eliminated the trucking part of it, because they deliver it. It's more efficient for them to do it anyway.
- Quivik: How about changes in pesticides, herbicides, what are some of the major changes you have seen there?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we seem to be using more. I don't know whether they respond differently, I don't know, but it just seems like we have to use more all the time.
- Quivik: In both the herbicide and pesticide?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: Did you use DDT on your places back in the fifties?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: What was DDT used for around here?
- J. Gwerder: It was used to control pests in tomatoes, and that type of thing.
- Quivik: What do remember about the, oh, you know, Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring*, and then in the sixties there were those controversies about whether DDT should be banned or not? How did that controversy play itself out in the delta region?
- J. Gwerder: Well, it was very controversial. There were lots of things--always, every place all of my family lived was next to an orchard, and there were some toxic sprays that were used then in the pear crops. So I was always aware of it. It's interesting--look into the future, what's going to happen, because anything that is outlawed in this country, it's sold to Mexico and it's used down there. So I don't know that we're ever going to get away from it, but--I personally never handled any DDT, so I don't know.
- Quivik: You didn't use it on your own place?
- J. Gwerder: No. Well, not that I was using, nothing that we were using at the time when I first got out of school.

Quivik: Were you using arsenates?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Oh, yes, they used a lot of arsenic in the pears for the worms, and that type of--

Quivik: What are some of the most intractable, either pests, or weeds, that you are having to deal with these days?

J. Gwerder: Well, the army worm is the one that I mentioned. It attacks alfalfa, and also our Sudan seed crops. It attacks that and eats the leaves, just devours them. So we spray by plane, and that's the other thing we do a lot of--either helicopter, or fixed-wing plane. And then we don't have to handle the material at all, they totally handle it themselves.

Quivik: In those cases, it is someone else, you don't own the planes and helicopters?

J. Gwerder: No. It's all with a crop duster. He does it all. And then, we do all that we can that way now, because they are trained, they have closed systems, everything locks in place, and their employees handle it every day. And it's just better for us not to handle it.

Quivik: Is there some sort of a time period that you have to be aware of before workers can go into the fields?

J. Gwerder: Oh yes, oh absolutely, yes. You have to post the fields now. If you use a toxic material, there's a twenty-four or forty-eight hour wait. You have to post it, so that if somebody gets confused, and shows up at the wrong time, why, it's all posted.

Quivik: Do you use the aerial spraying on the vineyards?

J. Gwerder: Just dust, sulfur dust, is all.

Quivik: That is mostly for the row crops--?

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Quivik: Thinking now in terms of the relationship between you and your tenant--if, hypothetically, one of these crop dusters dusted a field with something that was toxic, and, I don't know how this would happen, if the field was improperly posted, or someone didn't see a posting, but anyhow--suppose some workers got in there and were injured by contact with a pesticide, who's liable? The pesticide applicator, your tenant, or you as a landowner, or all of the above?

J. Gwerder: Typically it's the applicator first, then the tenant, and we would be last. But it's--it just depends on what the circumstances are.

Quivik: So there's a certain amount of protection that you get by having these tenants be the operators now?

J. Gwerder: Yes, yes, right, right, exactly.



- Quivik: Okay. Well, we were talking about one of your typical days, and I was trying to get you to focus on the early part of the season when you are planting and that sort of thing. Now shift your attention to the growing season, not harvest yet, but the growing season. Is there anything that would have changed about one of your typical days during that period?
- J. Gwerder: Once you get to that phase of it, the main thing is your irrigation, to keep that constant, ideal moisture. That's the most important thing, to keep your pumps, and employees, siphons, all that type of--and then, as I was mentioning, watching any pests that might be in the area, and we look to our fertilizer and insecticide companies to--they do enough fields with so many other growers, that they'll know a certain hatch of something that is going to attack a crop from other fields, and they seem to have a better knowledge of it than an individual farmer if they know it's moving or happening.
- Quivik: Then as you're moving towards harvest time, and let's focus on the seventies again, before-- I forgot, when did you say the mechanical tomato harvester came into use?
- J. Gwerder: Oh, that came in about early seventies.
- Quivik: Early seventies. And were you growing tomatoes yourself before the mechanical--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. At that time, we were still hand-picking.
- Quivik: Hand-picking. So let's think first of before you got into any kind of mechanized harvesting. Obviously, if you were cutting alfalfa that was mechanized.
- J. Gwerder: Or grain, we always were harvesting with combines, yes.
- Quivik: But moving towards a harvest time when your labor needs would presumably increase.
- J. Gwerder: Very definitely.
- Quivik: Okay. So, what would you be doing as the grower to anticipate harvest?
- J. Gwerder: We always work with labor contractors, and typically they would have their own camp for the employees. They had a mess hall that they would eat in, and they would get their lunches from there. They would be transported by bus, their own bus, to the fields. They also had a supervisor for every so many men. So that was all done through the labor contractor.
- Quivik: So your main task was to make sure you had a contract in place, because harvest is approaching.
- J. Gwerder: Right. And that they were doing the right thing, providing water and everything for the employees.

Quivik: Then in terms of marketing that crop as harvest is approaching, did you usually already have contracts in place?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We tried to forward-contract everything. In all crops we try to have a home and arrangements made for delivery and everything before we plant. Not always--our grain crops we always tried to sell, or I always tried to sell a third before we planted, a third in the middle of the season, and a third after the season, so--just to dollar average the price that we might get for it.

### Other Aspects of the Growing Seasons

Quivik: During those roughly three phases of the growing season then, planting, the intermediate growing period, and harvest--well, I suppose different crops are harvesting at different times, so it is staggered--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, they are.

Quivik: But what part of that year would be your busiest time, when your demand--the demands on you were the greatest throughout the day?

J. Gwerder: Probably the spring. Everything seems to come at once when the weather breaks from the rainy season to the dry season. Then everything has to go at once, because you have your fall crops that were planted, that you have to--possibly additional service or fertilize. Then you have all your summer crops are being planted. I think that really takes the most time.

Quivik: In those early years before you had a telephone in the car, then you'd put in a long day, and have to come back at night--

J. Gwerder: And a lot of miles.

Quivik: A lot of miles, then back to the office, a lot of time on the phone. Did you find during that time that you were shorting on sleep?

J. Gwerder: At times. At times.

Quivik: How about time for your family?

J. Gwerder: That is something I always tried to take. We have always, always made the commitment to giving our employees Sunday off, even in--unless there was a storm approaching, and a certain situation, why--and we still do that, we make sure that everybody gets their one full day, because they've got family. We just have always done that. My grandfather, my father, and myself, we have all made a commitment to the employees to have their day off.

- Quivik: And that was their day off, and then were you able to pretty much take that day off too?
- J. Gwerder: Right, sure. Unless there was something pressing.
- Quivik: Would you say then that from the break in the weather and planting until harvest, this was a six-day operation, or a five-day operation.
- J. Gwerder: Six-day.
- Quivik: Six-day, that entire period?
- J. Gwerder: We have always done that, yes.
- Quivik: Then what would your workday be like, after the bulk of the harvest is in, over the winter?
- J. Gwerder: Then things really slow down. Our permanent employees, then we start our shop work, trying to prepare for the next year any equipment that has to be repaired, or discs, changing disc blades, typical work like that to keep them busy all winter. We've always had a shop on each farm where you could put the equipment in if it did rain, why, the employees could be inside and do that type of preparation for the next season.
- Quivik: How about yourself, change for you?
- J. Gwerder: I have always enjoyed skiing, and that is one of the reasons I like it so much, because we were never pressed during the winter. We could take some time off and enjoy that. All of my family, Carol, the whole family skis, so we still do it, still enjoy it.
- Quivik: Where did you go skiing, when the kids were still at home?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we had a home at Tahoe, and so we would go up there, mainly that's where we went. We have gone on special trips with them to Sun Valley when they were smaller to get them started skiing. Anyway, it has always been a great sport for us.
- Quivik: Any other vacations that you were able to take that come to mind besides skiing?
- J. Gwerder: We've always, and the children, we've always done some horseback trips, packing into the Sierras. The children have all enjoyed that.
- Quivik: That would have to have been during the summer.
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: How would you carve out some time in the summer for that?
- J. Gwerder: [Laughter] Carve out a weekend. Just not long stays.
- Quivik: Two or three days, not a whole week--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, yes, right. So we always had fun doing that.

### Transition to Grapes on the Galt Ranch

Quivik: We've talked about a lot of aspects of the farming on some of the specific places, and some overall trends. Are there any things that you think that we've missed about any of the places in particular?

J. Gwerder: Well, the one thing I wanted to review is our vineyard that we put in on the Galt Ranch, on the 290 acres that Carol and I had purchased. We decided when we wanted to put the vineyard in there that we would have it appraised. We did that prior to any planting of vines. Our three children, we took them in as partners, and gifted them approximately thirteen percent a piece, and formed a limited partnership. So that's the way we moved on to the vineyards.

Now 150 acres of Cabernet grapes, and we have a five-year contract with Bronco winery, which is the Franzia family. We were just able, just last week, to extend that for an additional two years. So it's working really well.

The children are involved in it. Ann, our youngest daughter, does the books for the vineyard and the limited partnership. My oldest daughter, Carrie, does the total books for Gwerder Properties Inc., which is our family corporation, and Jim is in the management of all the farming operations. So we have them directly involved, so they know everything that's going on, everything that we are doing.

Quivik: Is that the 290 acres that is adjacent to your dad's place?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: Did you put that into grapes as soon as you bought it?

J. Gwerder: No, we bought it, and leveled it, and first went into a livestock operation, ran cattle on it. Then we went into the row crops and seed crops. Then we took 150 acres of it, and over three years, put in the vineyard.

Quivik: When did that vineyards go up?

J. Gwerder: That went in in '96, '97, and '98. We did fifty acres a year.

Quivik: So that's a more recent transition than at the Thompson-Folger place?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right. That was our first venture into anything but row crops and cattle on that ranch, that particular area over there.

**Joe, Carol, and their Children**

Quivik: Then that makes me realize we talked about you and Carol being married and living in the Quonset hut. Then we kind of launched into your farming, but we haven't talked about your children arriving. Can you say something about that briefly?

J. Gwerder: Right, well they were--

Quivik: By names and dates, that would be great.

J. Gwerder: They were born and raised in Walnut Grove, and went through school in Walnut Grove Grammar School, then went to the Delta High School. Then our oldest daughter Caroline went to Saint Mary's in Moraga for one year, and then transferred to Cal State Chico, where she got her teaching credential, then married her husband. They live in Sacramento, and they have three daughters. He is a civil engineer.

Quivik: What's his name?

J. Gwerder: Jeffrey Twitchell. Then Jim did the same, raised in Walnut Grove, grammar school, and Delta High School. He also went to Cal State Chico, and majored in agricultural business, and graduated from there, and was married to his wife Julie James. They have two little girls. Their first place when they were married was the foreman's house on the Thompson-Folger Ranch, so they lived on Ray Road for approximately three years. Then they bought a home on Woodbridge, so they now live there.

Ann, our youngest daughter, graduated from Cal Berkeley, and has four children, and they live in Woodland. Her husband, Fritz Durst, is a farmer. He farms in the Esparto Woodland area, doing basically the same thing that we all do. So they're actively involved in our total farming operation.

Quivik: Let's review then--at the present time, what are the various family corporations and/or partnerships that you are involved in?

J. Gwerder: We have the Minor-Haas and Thompson-Folger Corp. We have Gwerder Properties Corp., which is the Galt Ranch on Dry Creek. We have a small seventy-five acre ranch, which is part of my grandfather's original ranch on the Steamboat Slough and the Pump House Ranch area. Then the children, we have gifted them stock in Thompson-Folger, and stock in our Gwerder Properties Inc. They are now the majority owners of the limited partnership through our gifting. So we are trying to transfer, so that we become minority owners in all of these companies for tax purposes. Our current family corporation is Goodwin-Gwerder Co.

Quivik: Inheritance tax purposes?

J. Gwerder: Inheritance tax purposes.

Quivik: Is the title to each of those places in the name of one of these corporate entities, or in the name of individuals, and individuals own various shares of the property?

J. Gwerder: Yes, well Minor-Haas is a partnership, so that is still in individual owners' names, Carol, and her sister, and the Haas family. In our Gwerder Properties it's a corporation, so there are shareholders. Then in the limited partnerships, they are a direct partner.

The other reason, our reason for keeping them directly involved, through the advice of our tax attorney and accountant--that they keep speaking of additional tax advantages for family farms. Our advice is that they stay actively involved. As the accountant says, you can't be more actively involved than writing all of the checks, and reviewing the bills for each one of these entities--so that it proves that they are in fact part of the family farm. So that's why we have done that with the allocation of bookkeeping for these different companies. They do them, and they know exactly what is going on. It's a good education for them.

Quivik: Jim is, as I recall, you said he has taken over much of the operation that you were doing.

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

Quivik: Are either of your daughters involved at that level on some of these Gwerder or--?

J. Gwerder: No. Because of their families, they don't really have time.

Quivik: So theirs is mainly on the business end that they are involved?

J. Gwerder: On the business end, yes.

### Working with Farm-Labor Contractors

Quivik: I asked you about some of the changes in fertilizers and pesticides over the time that you have been farming. I've got some other things that also are sort of umbrella questions about operations. Another one has to do with seasonal labor hiring practices. Are there --can you describe what some of those change have been? Well, we have already covered the fact that you rely less on seasonal labor now because of mechanization. But I'm thinking more of the actual, I am not sure if I should call it institutional relationship, or business relationship. You've talked about hiring through labor contractors, and it's on that level, to the extent that you do hire seasonal employees, how has that changed from when you first went into farming as a young adult, to the present?

- J. Gwerder: We've always worked with contractors, but not to the extent that we do now. Now we are totally dependent on that. I think that we use larger crews now for a shorter period of time. In other words, for example, tying the grape vines—they will bring in twenty or thirty, where in the old days you'd have ten, and work for a longer period of time. Now they come in and move through quickly, and you are billed for the hours and for supervisors, and for the transportation, and everything's part of the—they take care of the time cards and make sure they're not overworked, and get their breaks. Their facilities in the field are all furnished by the contractor. So it's just something that we don't do any more, and we depend more on a contractor.
- Quivik: Are there changes that you have observed in the ethnic makeup of the seasonal workers across those years that you were farming?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, I would say in my era it has been mostly Filipino and Hispanic. There is now quite a crew of Hindus that are coming from the Marysville area, and are doing the hoeing now in the tomatoes, and that type of thing, as opposed to the Hispanics, which is—they are Sikhs, and they have come over here through church affiliation. Prior to my getting into it, why, they were of course the Oriental, the Chinese, and Japanese were doing a lot of the work, and they have all moved on. So it's mainly Hispanic.
- Quivik: Most of what I have read about the organizing efforts in the sixties by the United Farm Workers, Cesar Chavez, and so on, was in the southern part of the Central Valley, the San Joaquin Valley. Was any of that organizing effort felt in these areas?
- J. Gwerder: Not really. They made some marches coming from down there to Sacramento for an appeal to the legislature, but not really. We never had any particular labor disputes or confrontations, or any strikes or anything. We never have had that in this area.
- Quivik: Are there, or have there been any labor unions that you've worked with, whether it's for seasonal labor, or perhaps pesticide applicators, in any of the kinds of work that you've done? Have you dealt with labor unions?
- J. Gwerder: No. Never have had any affiliation or—I've never, just never worked with any labor organizations.
- Quivik: Has it been a factor in the delta area?
- J. Gwerder: No, it has not.
- Quivik: One of the things that—during that period of United Farm Workers, the grape boycott—and there was a lot of national attention being paid to the poor living conditions, lack of schooling, poor sanitary conditions, a lot of things for a lot of migrant workers in a lot of different parts of the country—are there changes in some of those conditions that you have witnessed in this area, in the delta area?
- J. Gwerder: Oh, I'm sure there are, although I think that this area has always been, I think very fair. I don't think they have ever tried to abuse any labor. What labor camps they have had, have

all seemed to have been maintained in the proper standards. They certainly, the contractors we use, it's just part of it, we just expect that to be a first-class operation, as to the field toilets, and that type of thing. It's an important part to--it has to be maintained and available.

We use--one thing that's interesting, is in this last vineyard that we put in at the Galt Ranch, the contractor we use has a crew of twelve ladies, and they do the young vine training. It's wonderful. They are so much easier on the plants. When they're first planted, and they come up, and you make your first ties on the stake going up, they just do a wonderful job. We just always request that they come back on any new plantings that we're doing, because they're just easier on the plant itself.

Quivik: Hispanic women?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

### Changes in Marketing Farm Products

Quivik: Then how about changes in your marketing methods, marketing your product? Can you think of trends or changes that you have gone through as a grower in that regard?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It is quite dramatic. In the grain business we have seen probably from the ten or twelve companies we did business with, there are probably four left now. Continental Grain had a huge facility in Stockton, we used to sell a lot of our grain through them. They have closed and moved on. Cargill is around. All of the others, it seems that all of the smaller ones are now gone. The Continental facility has been picked up by--another independent company from Fresno. It has come up and is operating that. But that was one of the export--the port of Sacramento, and the port of Stockton. Now with the loss of Tri-Valley, to which we never belonged, but it was the one that recently went into bankruptcy, and which included the tomatoes, the pears, all of the canned products, that's gone. The tomato paste business seems to be reducing in numbers, fewer and fewer companies that are buying. Now that sugar beets, they closed the last two plants last year, so that commodity is gone. So it's a concern that we are losing our--and we, fortunately our seed business and our safflower--we do business with a co-op, Cal-West Seeds, out of Woodland, which we have great confidence in. They have done a wonderful job for us, and have good reserves built up, they have good grower relations. So we are pleased to still be able to do that.



**Effects of NAFTA on Farming**

[Interview 3: June 20, 2001] ##

Quivik: This is Wednesday, June 20, 2001, and I'm back at the Gwerder residence in Walnut Grove, ready to begin another interview with Joe Gwerder. Good morning, Joe.

J. Gwerder: Good morning.

Quivik: When we left off last time you were talking about changes in the way you market your products. I'd like to pick up again there. Let's start off this morning talking in particular about changes that NAFTA has brought to your operation.

J. Gwerder: The NAFTA free trade agreement is becoming, I would say, a real problem for us, because we are now in direct competition with Mexico and Canada. And there are so many things, particularly with Mexico, that are so different: they have no minimum wage, they have no minimum hours, they have no such thing as workers' compensation insurance, they have a total different use of chemicals than we do.

Typically when there is a chemical or a spray that is outlawed in this country, typically they will come in and buy it, and use that same product. Now they are going to be able to haul products in their own trucks, which is a big concern of the people in Arizona and Texas, because they do not have the same driver restrictions, the same licensing of drivers, the same quality control of the trucks--that is to weight loads, and brakes, and typical safety concerns that we continually have to meet.

This also is true of the equipment that they are able to use that we can't. We need to have equipment that is, number one, safe for the employee. Many of the pesticides and herbicides that we use, they either have to wear the proper equipment, or they are in a cab that is air conditioned, and safe for many of the materials they are using. The other countries don't have to comply under the same restrictions that we do.

Now as far as Canada, they have many of that type of restriction, but they still can come in with wheat, oats, canola, the type of grain crops that they can grow in the upper latitudes. And they are highly subsidized by the Canadian government, because their main market is the United States. So they come in with hogs, beef cattle, and then all of the grain crops, which they do a fine job of farming, and have excellent crops.

So we are also in competition now with the South American countries, Chile, Argentina--many of those countries come in now with product. They are able to fly them in converted 747s that can fly in particularly the fresh vegetables and fruits, that can be provided just as fresh as the ones that are grown here. So it's certainly going to be a challenge to compete.

- Quivik: You've talked about how it will be a challenge to compete. Is your overall outlook on NAFTA--and now there is talk about a comparable kind of agreement that is hemisphere-wide, the entire western hemisphere--is your overall attitude that that's good for, well, both the agricultural economy in this country and the country as a whole? Or would you as a farmer just as soon see some of the old trade restrictions that we once had?
- J. Gwerder: Well, I think the trade restrictions are fine if we could compete on a level playing field; in other words, if they have to provide the same things to their employees: if they have a minimum wage, or minimum hours. Or the new thing that they are talking about now is any of our employees, that if their wife has a baby, they're going to have ten days of paid vacation for the first ten days, so that the baby and the mother can be properly cared for. Well, there's no other country that we do business with that would have to provide that. All it does, it is just a continual increased cost of operation. And that's where we are going to have a difficult time competing, because they can--you know, it's just cheaper to farm in those countries.
- Quivik: Oftentimes, when benefits for employees are introduced to the workplace in the United States, agricultural employees are exempted. Is that something that is becoming, in your experience, less and less the case, like this requirement that fathers be given paid leave? Is that something that you see happening in the agricultural sector?
- J. Gwerder: I think it is going to. As you have stated, up until now, many of them we have been exempted from. But as of now, our minimum wage is \$6.25, which is the same as the total labor force in the United States. But they're talking about going to eight dollars, eight and a quarter. In Mexico that's a typical day's wage, what we pay for one hour, and with none of the benefits that go along, that we have to furnish in order to keep good employees.
- Quivik: You talked about the regulations pertaining to equipment in this country that don't apply in Mexico. Are there any of those regulations that affect the way you operate and your equipment, or is that more on the level of the contractors that you work with, for instance the sprayers, or the applicators?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we still have our grain we have to spray ourselves, and so we have to compete on the same--there are certain crops that need certain equipment that apply to it, and so it does affect us.
- Quivik: And you own that equipment, and your employees apply those fertilizers and pesticides?
- J. Gwerder: Right, exactly. Fertilizers, herbicides, but not pesticides. So it is part of it that we have to deal with.

### Effects of Mechanization on Farming

Quivik: That helps us lead into the next topic that I would like you to talk about, and that is changes that you've seen in your career as a farmer here relative to the mechanization and industrialization of agriculture. You just mentioned the kinds of equipment that you have to own and operate yourself-- or your employees operate with grain, at any rate--is that type or equipment, and what you can do, with regard to fertilizing, and applying herbicides, different from what it was when you started out farming?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It's quite different. Mainly, our equipment has gotten larger. We try to move quicker, to cover more acreage per day to reduce our costs. That has been, so far, the most efficient way we can handle it, to get larger and faster equipment. And that seems to be the way we'll continue to go. Of course there's a limit to that. When you get so large that you can't move from field to field, why, there is a limit to how large you can use your equipment.

Quivik: Let's be specific. Let's think about applying fertilizer to grain, for instance. Can you describe what your typical routine was when you started farming, and what the routine is now?

J. Gwerder: When we started farming, typically we would have a ten- or twelve-foot grain drill, which would put the seed and fertilizer on at the same time, and it would be a single application. We would do it totally ourselves, hauling the fertilizer on a small truck, possibly a twelve-foot bed, and it would haul three or four tons of fertilizer. We did all of that ourselves.

Today, most of our nitrogen fertilizer we put on prior to planting, and we use a twenty-one to twenty-six foot application, using our own primary source of power, our own tractor. And then we use a gas,  $\text{NH}_3$ , which is a nitrogen gas that's put on with this applicator. We can cover sixty to seventy acres a day, where with the old system we would be possibly twenty, if you had a really good day.

Then when it comes to seeding, now our method is to put beds in, sixty-inch beds, and then we apply the seed with a broadcaster, which, again, will cover twenty-one feet. And then we cover it with a light set of harrows, that type of equipment, just to barely cover the seed. That's our application now.

Quivik: Does the harrow--harrows follow right behind the broadcaster?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It just covers it enough to give it coverage from bird damage, or that type of thing.

Quivik: So in the old system you are applying fertilizer and seed in one pass, here you are talking about two passes--

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: --but because the--

J. Gwerder: Speed.

Quivik: --acreage you can cover in a day is greater, is the sum total--?

J. Gwerder: The efficiency is better.

Quivik: It is better.

J. Gwerder: Because it takes less labor, and it is much quicker. If there happens to be a change in the weather, with that large equipment, you can cover tremendous acreage in one day. The other thing with that, we order seed from our source, our provider of seed, and it comes in truck and trailer loads that are bottom dumps. And they are put right into our broadcaster. So nobody ever touches it. It used to be totally sacked in seventy-five- or 100-pound sacks, that all had to be put in one by one. Now it's totally bulk form, which is put in.

Quivik: In that earlier system, you were applying fertilizer in solid form?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: And now it is applied in gaseous form?

J. Gwerder: Gaseous form, the fertilizer. The seed is the same, but gas is the way we put it on now.

Quivik: Right. And how do you obtain the fertilizer in gaseous form, what's the system there?

J. Gwerder: The distributor or the dealer, they deliver that in tanks. So that is part of the purchase price. It's delivered to the ranch.

Quivik: And then is there a transfer, or do you pull that tank behind your applicator?

J. Gwerder: We do both. Typically, if there is nothing going behind the applicator, then we pull the tank. But if we happen to have a broadcaster or something on the same unit, then we transfer it into the unit, and then it's put on at the same time.

Quivik: Are there any ways that--you are by and large out of the livestock business now?

J. Gwerder: No. We're still in the livestock--

Quivik: Oh, in the Galt place?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Okay. Are there any ways that mechanization has changed the way you conduct your livestock business?

J. Gwerder: Not like the grain or row crop business. Pretty much the same way we operate it. I will say that we have changed our corral system, the way of handling them, to a more efficient--just

strictly by the way it is designed, you are able to move cattle without as much help, and without as much stress on the livestock. You move them, and have gates, and everything is positioned the way they—they move quite easily. We don't do any roping the way they used to, and dragging them on horseback to the branding place. We do everything with a mechanized corral system.

Quivik: Do you still brand your cattle?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Yes we do.

Quivik: And that is still done manually?

J. Gwerder: Yes. But as far as moving them, we try to do it with the least amount of stress on them. It's much easier on them. And vaccinate them, and brand them at the same time in a squeeze chute, a mechanical chute.

Quivik: But one of your employees is still actually holding the branding iron, and pressing it up against the--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, he is. But we don't have a big fire. They are electric now, and so a very intense heat—and it makes just a wonderful, clear brand, in fifteen seconds. And that is the other thing, where before every branding iron, every steel iron you used, was a different temperature, and you wouldn't know whether you were going to have to hold on longer, or shorter, or anything, now it's just an automatic—to put the brand on. But it still takes a man to do it.

Quivik: What is your brand?

J. Gwerder: We have two. We have a rocking JG. My grandfather, when he came, he started with the JG. And then I applied for that brand, and it had been taken, so we put a rocking figure under it, so it is a rocking JG. And then we also still use my father's brand, which was a bar G, and so we still use those, either one.

Quivik: And how do you decide which brand to put on a given steer?

J. Gwerder: Well, the rocking JG brand is only registered for the right hip, and the bar G, my father's brand, is registered on either side. So if you happen to buy cattle, and have another right-hand brand, then we use the bar G and put it on the left side, so that you don't have two brands in the same area. It's easier for the brand inspector. And we can do it on either side.

Quivik: Well then, let's shift our attention to the kinds of row crops that I'll call vegetables and things like that, rather than grains. How has mechanization changed your operation in that class of crops?

J. Gwerder: Besides land preparation and the planting, they are approximately the same. Although—and we have not done it in the last few years, there are more and more people going to transplanting plants that are raised in a hothouse, and put into the ground, and carried from there.

The irrigation has changed somewhat. We used to do a lot of what we call rain machine, put on with sprinkler pipe, so it would take, typically, three men to a crew to move that pipe every four hours. So you would move three times a day in the twelve hours. And you have basically a diesel engine that is providing the power to create the pressure to put the water on.

Now we have gone totally to furrow irrigation, where we use a small siphon pipe, and run it down the rows, which is put in when we cultivate--put a small furrow in --and use the siphon pipes. And so one man can take care of, maybe, 400 siphon pipes a day. Then we move them basically twice, or sometimes late in the season just once a day. But we like to go twice if we can.

So again, it has been a way of cheapening our cost. And there are still some people that still use the rain machine, but they've gone to more pipe, and smaller pipe, so that they only have to change it once a day, which reduces the labor cost.

Now, the new thing is coming, which we have done on our grapes, is the drip system. And they are out now with a new type of drip system that goes under the row crop that you are planting. And so it is all irrigated without labor. It's just a dripping under the soil, and then the water soaks back to the root zone, so you are able to eliminate a lot of labor by using that system.

Quivik: Is that a system that's installed seasonally, or can it sustain the equipment running over it?

J. Gwerder: Well, some of them are trying to put deeper now. We have not. I have not experienced -- haven't tried it. But they are trying to put some down now, approximately two feet, and leaving it there, so that crop after crop you can use the same irrigation system. And that seems to be working very well.

Quivik: In the two systems that you have used--the rain maker, and the siphon flooding the rows between the beds--can you describe the differences in the ways that you prepare and plant the bed for the crop?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Originally, when we used sprinklers, the land had not been leveled to a grade, to a set grade, and that's the only way you can do it with a row crop furrow irrigation. It has to be on a definite grade. Otherwise one end of the field gets too wet, or too dry, and the other end gets too wet. So the first thing we had to do to go to this new system was level all of the land, which is a matter of using carry-alls, and actually moving dirt to make it a set grade. And then leveling the head end of the field, so that you can carry the amount of water you want and distribute it across the field.

Quivik: The job of leveling, and the equipment to do that, is that something that contractors--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, we contract that all out.

Quivik: And they specialize in that kind of work?

- J. Gwerder: They specialize in that, and go most of the year. If you need to do some on your grain land, why, they'll come in after harvest, and do it prior to the planting of the next crop. So it's kind of a specialized procedure.
- Quivik: With the rain maker, was there not only sort of an uneven elevation throughout the field, but also a difference in the seed bed itself? Or were you using beds then?
- J. Gwerder: No. Typically it was just flat.
- Quivik: It was.
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Because the irrigation out of the rain machine gives every part of the field the same amount of moisture. But then in our own, where we are furrow irrigating, we still, every year, in preparation on the next crop, we have to go in with our own equipment, which are land planes that are sixty feet long, so that they take the small variations in soil out of it from the previous crop. And so you start out as level as possible, for the furrow irrigation to work.
- Quivik: How wide is the blade on a land plane?
- J. Gwerder: Twelve feet.
- Quivik: Twelve feet?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. You can get a lot done in a day with it, moving along quickly.
- Quivik: And is that a piece of equipment you own, or you contract for that?
- J. Gwerder: No, we own that. One of the advantages now, as I mentioned, the drip system, for whether it be vineyard, or your orchard, or row crop, or anything, is we put our fertilizer and our supplements to the land in. In other words, if you need gypsum, or any one of the basic elements, you can put it in through the drip system. And then we are able to put our potassium, our nitrogen, and our phosphate, all as you need it. We do a lot of testing, furrow testing to make sure we have what we want. And then we can add what we want. And the fertilizer company furnishes those, their pumps that sit on these tanks that I was talking about earlier, and you put it right into the system.
- Quivik: And so far, you're only using that with your grapes?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. We're watching it to see how it works. It's still relatively new in this area.
- Quivik: Then is it--let's move on to herbicides and pesticides. First of all, is it worth talking about them separately?
- J. Gwerder: No, it is pretty much the same thing.

- Quivik: So can you talk about ways that application of those products has changed from when you first went into farming and now?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, it's changed. We use anything that we can buy in bulk, rather than sack, because you get the volume with less labor involved. And most of our applications now of pesticide are put on by plane, or helicopter, whichever one depending on the fields, how it fits in. Whereas we used to have small dusters, or equipment, and put it on ourselves. But now we do it with bulk delivery, and put it on by plane or helicopter.
- Quivik: And when you say small dusters that you put on yourself, what kind of a piece of equipment is that?
- J. Gwerder: Well, that was just a fan with a bulk hopper, and you pushed the open sack into the hopper, and then you would go along and dust the crop, particularly tomatoes, or any crops like that. Now it is put on by plane.
- Quivik: This fan, is that something you were pulling behind the tractor?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right. And it would cover--would be an outlet on each row, and blow directly on the crop.
- Quivik: And that was a dust?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right.

### Spraying along I-5 Kills Joe's Grapevines

- Quivik: That reminds me--when we were out driving around your places, you told me a story of some herbicide, I believe, that the Department of Transportation was applying, and a problem you had. Can you tell that story for us?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. That was very interesting. It was along Interstate 5. It's a product called Garlon, which is to kill the brushy trees and vines that come on the edge of the highway. But it has definite restrictions on it, because it becomes very volatile in warm temperatures, and it will drift. So you are not supposed to apply it on temperatures over 85 degrees, or with more than a five-mile-an-hour wind.

So they, Cal Trans, were proceeding down Interstate 5, and there was about a twenty-mile-an-hour wind, and it was 98 degrees. And so the drift from that hit our vineyard. All of a sudden the vines started to fold up, to die. And what it was the product, if it kills trees, it will kill grapevines.

So the other interesting thing--we complained to the state, and they first came back and said, "Well, our people say that it was not that temperature, and the wind wasn't that



bad," and everything. Well, fortunately, we have monitors in the vineyard, that we take a daily average temperature, and also the wind for the evaporation rate--because we set our drip systems, so that we compensate for the loss of moisture for that day. So we had everything recorded. I mean, it was all on tape. So anyway, they finally came back.

Then, the grapes happened to be contracted to Gallo. Then Gallo immediately said, "Well, we will not take them. If they've been sprayed, we don't know what the end result of this herbicide spray might be on the grapes. So we will wait until harvest, and then we will check every load that comes in separately, to make sure there is no residue that could affect the wine or the safety for the public." So everything was held up again until we harvested, and fortunately there were no residues that carried on. So they were able to take the grapes.

Then we were hesitant to agree to any settlement, because we didn't know what the next year, what the vines would be like after the shock that they took--because the leaves just shriveled up, and like the plant had totally died. Actually, it took two years for the vines to come back, and they were fine. The state insurance company, they settled with us based on our normal production. We had to show them the average for that variety in that general area, and for the price that--

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Quivik: I think at the end of the tape you just said that you got that settled with the state?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We were compensated for what our normal return would be.

Quivik: As it turned out, you didn't actually lose any vines? They did eventually come back?

J. Gwerder: I'd say possibly 200 vines we lost, and those were the first ones that were hit, on the edge. It got a definite blast, and they just didn't come back. They came back as a very weak vine, so we just replaced them rather than going on with the weak vine. We just replaced them and started again.

Quivik: What year was that, when the incident happened?

J. Gwerder: I would say '95 or '96.

Quivik: You said you've got monitors in your vineyards. Are these scattered around in some kind of a grid?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We do them one on the center of each block, which is acreage, kind of, by variety. In other words, if we have a block of Cabernet or a block of Chardonnay, in the center of that we will have a recorder just to record the average temperature and wind. Then we can monitor that.

Quivik: How large is a block, typically?

J. Gwerder: Typically would be about 100 acres.

- Quivik: How far do you suppose your monitor was that recorded the weather conditions from I-5?
- J. Gwerder: It happened to be in the middle of the first block, which was probably 600 feet. So it was relatively close.
- Quivik: Very good evidence.
- J. Gwerder: Yes. There was no questioning that.
- Quivik: [chuckles]
- J. Gwerder: In fact, they even checked some of our other monitors to make sure that something wasn't wrong with that one, that the temperature was approximately the same, the wind was approximately the same--
- Quivik: And they checked out.
- J. Gwerder: Yes, definitely.

### Government Regulations on Application of Chemicals

- Quivik: Are there herbicides or pesticides that you apply to your crops that have to be applied under comparable kinds of weather restrictions?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, definitely. And we have to--everything is done through the Department of Agriculture. We sign up every year what crops we are going to grow. On the permit, we name the crop, and then we have to get a permit on each material we might want to use. Whether we use it or not, we have to have a permit to use it. The applicator, if we don't do it ourselves, or even if we do it ourselves, we have to go through the Department of Agriculture to make sure that we are using it on the crop that it is designed to be used on, and in the proper amount, so that the dosage isn't too heavy or too light. So we are permitted on every application.
- Quivik: On a given day when those materials are being applied, who is responsible for being sure they're living up to the regulations? You, or the applicator, or both?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we are the one that is ultimately responsible, so we work with the applicator to make sure that he isn't using the material in the wrong way, in the wrong temperature, or the wrong wind speed. So we are the ones that are responsible.
- Quivik: You as the grower?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.

- Quivik: Are there any other aspects of this question of mechanization and industrialization that it occurs to you that has brought about significant changes in your operation, in your career?
- J. Gwerder: Well, one of the things that we have to be very careful of now is our drainage water—that if there is any residue from any of these that we put back in as drainage water, back into the water system of California—we have to be very careful of that, to make sure that we're not putting a residue from one of the sprays that could then go to the neighbor, and do some damage to his crops.
- Quivik: How do you monitor that, and how do you control it?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we try to control it before it becomes a problem by not doing it when we are irrigating, so there is no runoff proceeding through the field at the same time. So that is the main way. We just try to coordinate everything when we are not irrigating, because that's the easiest way to get a problem, to do it while you have the water running through.
- Quivik: Are there any sorts of monitoring stations established at outlets from your property?
- J. Gwerder: Typically the reclamation districts, the drainage districts are the ones that continually check to make sure that they are covered. We are also now checking the water coming in, because if you happen to have it coming in and going out, maybe you're not responsible, but if you don't check what's coming in, you might get somebody else's problem, and put it into your drainage ditch. Then when it's tested on the way out, why, it could be a problem, so we're trying to protect ourselves.
- Quivik: Is that testing that you and your employees do, or do you contract those people to do that?
- J. Gwerder: Typically the employee of the reclamation district does the testing. They do that as part of their job.
- Quivik: Is there any way you can think of that mechanization has changed the way you get your crops to market?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Definitely. It's the size of equipment and capabilities of the truck hauling. We used to go more to the Port of Stockton or the Port of Sacramento for export. For example, Continental Grain closed their plant in Stockton, they're no longer using it for export. And Sacramento is not exporting much wheat any more, which they used to do. They still export rice.
- A lot of our grains go directly now to the end user, like Foster Farms, people right down the valley. They go by truck down where they are raising their poultry, and it goes that way. Or like Harris, the beef ranch, on Interstate 5, they take a lot of it. So it goes from here down there in trucks, deliver it there.
- Quivik: How about the grapes? How do they get from your vineyards to Gallo's, say?

J. Gwerder: On those, Gallo furnishes its trucks. They give us so many loads a day. We harvest at night, and they are put bulk in the field right into their—which are liquid-tight containers, so that you don't lose any juice. Then they travel to wherever they want to crush them. They can go to their main headquarters which is Livingston, or lately ours have all been going to Gallo of Sonoma, which is a crushing plant over there. So that's how that is handled.

We harvest at night because it makes a better product, keeping the grapes cool, and then they're crushed the next day. It's so warm to do it during the day that they get warm, and they don't have the quality that they do by going at night.

### Changes in Skills and Education Needed for Farming

Quivik: Okay. Let's shift our attention now to the kinds of skills that you have needed as a farmer, a grower, an operator here. I'd like you to talk about the ways that you personally have learned the new skills that you've needed to keep up with these changes in agriculture. There are new kinds of crops that you have turned to in your fields, there are new kinds of equipment, new kinds of fertilizer application methods, herbicide, pesticides, et cetera. What has been the process that you have gone through to learn what you need to learn to be a grower of those new kinds of crops, or using those new methods?

J. Gwerder: It's a never-ending education that we are in. Everything that comes out, a lot of it is done by the farm advisors, USDA. Certainly with the pesticide, herbicides, and that type of equipment where we depend on what their recommendations are. Then the rest of it you kind of just have to pick up by watching other people, and also working with your suppliers. And also working with, for example, the wineries on what they don't want you to use. It might be a wonderful idea, but if they don't want it, they are the end user of the product, so you have to consult with them, the field man, to make sure they are agreeable on taking a product that is sprayed that way. But it's just a continual learning process that you are faced with every year on what crop you grow, and what's needed to make the quality and quantity that you are trying to achieve?

Quivik: Are there times when you have gone to what I would think of as classes? Were you and some of your fellow growers, or--?

J. Gwerder: Yes, very definitely. In fact now, like Jim, my son, has to have so many hours of education per year to have a knowledge of what to use. Also, they now have hours that you have to put in into your labor force, too, as far as restricting use of pesticide and herbicide by employees, if they do--what type of personal equipment they have to have, whether they wear a suit, or rubber gloves, or face masks, or whatever, depending what the product is. So he now does that whole process. I don't do that any more.

Quivik: And what agency monitors that he and his employees--?

- J. Gwerder: It's the USDA, and the farm advisors, they put on these clinics. Then the other thing we have to do is send our employees to one clinic a year. It just reminds them of all the safety things they have to do. As I was saying, it's wearing the proper equipment, driving the equipment, always thinking of safety--the power take-off equipment that's running all the time. Just basic things. It just reminds them that they have to do this. They put the clinics on in both English and Spanish, so our Mexican operators all get it in Spanish so there is no point that they don't understand. It's something that they have to do.
- Quivik: Are these big clinics in a town like Stockton, or do they come to a place like Walnut Grove?
- J. Gwerder: No, they all have it--like Walnut Grove. They usually have two or three so that people can get to them on the date that they have, so that there isn't just once a year. And there will be, I would say, seventy-five employees maybe to each one. They just remind them, also with charts and everything like that, just good safety habits.
- Quivik: Then you talked about learning new things from field men and that sort of thing. Is that a one-on-one experience out in the field, or in your office?
- J. Gwerder: It is typically in the field, and it is one-on-one, or usually Jim and I do it together--so that we don't miss something, particularly in new varieties, new seed stock that we might be changing to. It's a never-ending learning process.
- Quivik: And then what role does written material play in that learning process?
- J. Gwerder: The University of California, out of Davis, put out a--through the local farm advisor's office--they put out a letter every two weeks. It includes some of the new procedures, and new type of chemicals that are available to be used for different crops. Also varieties. They do any number of controlled tests on new varieties. For example, corn seed, they would have maybe twenty different varieties from different seed producers. Then they carry them the whole season in test plots, and then they record the moisture, the weight, the ton-per-acre, and the quality. So it gives you an option, a choice of their recommendation.
- Quivik: Is there a time of year when you have spent more time than another time of year in reading this kind of material, or is that spread across the year pretty evenly?
- J. Gwerder: Typically it is more in the late fall and early spring before we start planting. That's when people have time to spend doing that. After the fall harvest, that's when all this information comes out, and is published and available to us. So that's the time of year that we do that.

### The Trend Toward Tenant Farming in the Delta Area

- Quivik: You now conduct a lot of your farming, actually, in a relationship with a tenant, who is the actual operator on your ground.

J. Gwerder: That's correct.

Quivik: Can you talk about that relationship? [Tape interruption] All right, we just had a little interruption there. We were just turning to the tenant operator situation.

J. Gwerder: We have turned in that direction, because we just have so many things going. There are certain tenants that now concentrate on certain crops. They are able to stay on it better than we are. They have the specialized equipment, also the know-how, and the sources of information that they might need. It's just hard to know all these different crops. So we have decided that that's the best way to go. Except for the ranch at Galt; we're still doing all that ourselves.

In fact, the first time you were up, we were looking at the onions that were being planted, and they were just harvested this last week, the red onions. It was a beautiful crop, and the tenant that we have over there specializes in more of those, I would say--not the usual thing for this area, like the melon seeds that he had last year, and cantaloupe, and that type of thing. So we just leased it to him, and we are on a percentage lease. That's the way we like to go with all of our tenants.

Quivik: And when you say, "We," now, you mean you and Jim?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Right.

Quivik: Does that tenant, or your tenant who operates the vineyards, do those tenants also have crops that they are growing on other landowners' land?

J. Gwerder: Yes. Most of them do. Some of them have large--and for example, the one that we have over there, on the Thompson-Folger Ranch, that had the onions, he has his own farm. But he doesn't have enough acreage to really--he has two sons that are coming into the business, and so that's why he wanted to expand the amount of acreage to justify the newer equipment, and also to be able to work with his two sons.

Quivik: On your side of the equation, you and Jim--you say the livestock operation is the only thing you are conducting as an operator?

J. Gwerder: No--and our grapes, the 160 acres of Cabernet grapes.

Quivik: Oh, that's right.

J. Gwerder: And then we have the other 600 acres of farming land on the ranch that we farm.

Quivik: That's the grains, and--?

J. Gwerder: The grains mainly, yes.

Quivik: Is that a trend throughout the delta region, that there is growing to be--it sounds to me like it is--on the one hand there are landowners who have lots of land, but different pieces of the

land are suitable for one type of crop or another--and then there are tenants who specialize in one of those kinds of crops.

J. Gwerder: That is very true. For example, tomatoes is one of the more specialized crops, because they try to get their canners--they have their own harvesting equipment, and they have to have enough acreage to justify that. And their planting schedule has to be such so that all those fields aren't ready at the same time. So they have to stagger their planting. And the canneries like that, because then they get a staggered flow of end product, so they can keep their canneries going. So it has become actually more of a specialized thing.

The asparagus is another one that has become very specialized, because of having to have a place to pack it, since they are not canning any asparagus out of this area any more. It all is for fresh market. So typically, you have your own packing shed where the product goes. It's washed, sized, and packaged into fresh crates, and then on to the fresh market. So that's another specialized crop.

Quivik: Do you know of any of your neighbors in this general area who own a comparable amount of land, but they're still being the operators of such a diverse array of crops?

J. Gwerder: There probably are, but I don't know any offhand that would be that type of an operation. Most all of them, as we do, do our own grain, and livestock people do their own livestock. And grapes--as we don't do the Thompson-Folger grapes, that's a tenant that does those. But I think it is going that way, more specialized.

Quivik: When did that system first begin to seem like it was going to be the prevalent way of conducting business?

J. Gwerder: I think in the last six or seven years. As the cost of equipment is so expensive, you just cannot own everything for every crop, because--some of the people that specialize can have that equipment, and use it for a longer period of time, because of a greater acreage, or a planting schedule that allows them to use that equipment a long time. Same way with our grape harvest. We have that done commercially, because those people can start down in Merced, and have a month of harvest prior to getting to our area. So they have a greater use for that equipment.

Quivik: Are the tenants almost always individuals, or family companies, whatever, who have a basis in some land that they own, and then they've spread their operation from that?

J. Gwerder: Yes, generally they did--just to try to justify the cost of acquiring the equipment is the main thing.

Quivik: Do you see any sort of, I'll call it bifurcation, between folks who are tenant operators and folks who are landowners in the delta area--developing sort of two communities of interest?

J. Gwerder: They just kind of commingle. I don't think there is any set way, that the industry is going either way.

**Effects of the Williamson Act on Farming**

- Quivik: As a landowner, a farmer with considerable acreage, you've talked about the Williamson Act. I'd like to ask you how the property tax structure has changed and affected the way you conduct your operations.
- J. Gwerder: Well, the Williamson Act is very beneficial to us, because of keeping our taxes down.
- Quivik: Let's start by describing, what is the Williamson Act?
- J. Gwerder: The Williamson Act is an act that was passed so that the value or the tax that you pay on your land is the value of the land itself, not all the other influences that affect land values such as subdivision. We are taxed on production agriculture, land that is producing. Prior to that it was getting commingled with somebody on the edge of town that would subdivide. And so we are now taxed as agricultural land. And actually different values now, because we still are under the ag. evaluation.
- Quivik: When did the Williamson Act pass, roughly?
- J. Gwerder: I would say probably 1970, middle of the seventies. I think that's the reason that everybody was for it, is to keep the agricultural land in agriculture. So now if it's sold and moves on into something else, you are not eligible for the Williamson Act taxing limitation.
- Quivik: That means that the speculative value of land does not play a role in the tax basis?
- J. Gwerder: That is right. If we were to sell it off in small pieces, they would all assume higher value.
- Quivik: It all would?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: For a particular parcel, or your entire land holding?
- J. Gwerder: No, it'd be parcels that--because you are actually changing use on it, so it would be a different basis on it.
- Quivik: What effect has that had on agriculture in this area?
- J. Gwerder: Well, I think it has helped to keep the area in production agriculture, as opposed to splintering off lots of small subdivisions and that type of thing. It's still basically an ag. land area.



- Quivik: Is the potential source of change in land use and land values, would it be that Walnut Grove, for instance, could have become a bedroom community for Sacramento? Or what would be the potential change that the Williamson Act has protected agriculture from?
- J. Gwerder: I don't know that Walnut Grove has--it has not grown, we are still basically the same size. But if you take the Elk Grove area, with the proximity to Sacramento, it has changed completely. It is becoming a bedroom community.

So many of those ranches are all split up and subdivided. Just because of the pure pressure of population growth, you know, they need to change the use of some of that land. But here in the delta with the flood hazard, for one thing--it doesn't lend itself really to total subdivision. There are small parcels, but typically it won't be that.

### Effects of Conservancy Groups on Farming

- J. Gwerder: Now the new influence we have is the influence of all the conservancy groups. They in this area are just expanding. They started with about 2,000 acres they bought. This is a Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited. And then the Department of Water Resources purchased 700 acres--

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- Quivik: Okay, we were talking about the conservancy changes in land use.

- J. Gwerder: Yes. They are acquiring--they have up to approximately 8,000 acres in this general area, and I'm speaking within ten miles of Walnut Grove. They have now purchased a 10,000-acre farm, the largest farm left in the area, and it should close at the end of the summer. It's in the due diligence realm of closure right now, just to check out everything that's involved.

So that will put them 17,000 acres in this general area. That has a tremendous effect on lots of facets of the farming business, because their main issue is habitat. So they have a different view of what's going on than we do. They lease a small part of it, maybe 20 percent now, and in fact they spoke with me about possibly being a tenant on it. But they wanted to only grow organic crops. They wanted to only farm the land every other, or every third year, so that it would provide habitat for the water fowl. And also, they are now trying to flood part of it as a spawning ground for the salmon.

So they have quite a different outlook and an emphasis rather than the way we manage our property. Because we are farming. And we feel that we are still the true environmentalists because it is our land, we own it, we're not going to abuse it because we are third, fourth, fifth generation now with all the children. And we're certainly not going to abuse it in any way, because it's our livelihood, and it's our life.

So it's becoming a limiting factor in the area though, because if you take that much land out of production, to some farmers, it limits their capabilities. Maybe some of them would have wanted to buy 500 acres, or 800 acres, or something like that, to expand their farming thing. And anything that becomes available now, they [the conservancy groups] seem to be able to immediately fund it, they have no problem.

Then they change the use to fit their agenda, and not what we feel is the best use. Because we are having a problem now on the confluence of the Cosumnes River and the Mokelumne River, which is about four miles from our ranch at Galt. And because of their emphasis on habitat, they are letting it return to what we call a jungle: blackberry bushes, willows--and it is going to hold the water back, because they are doing this in a floodplain that was designated floodplain, and had a limit on the height of the levees. The California State Bureau of Reclamation set limits, so that before any of the higher land goes, those lands go underwater. That's what they are designed for. They have chosen not to always just lower areas always grazed or farmed. So there was no blocks to holding the water back. Now they are letting it just grow wild. And someday there's going to be extensive flooding that is caused by their lack of maintenance in the area, because they have a single consideration, that's habitat. So they are going to let it all grow.

Quivik: Can you describe how that flooding would be caused by their--?

J. Gwerder: It just holds the water back. This whole area, it is designed in the high water to flood, and then the water eases out and goes down. And with all of this growth that was never there, and never intended to be there, in any of the State Reclamation Board, or any other plans, it's going to hold that water back. And as it holds it back, it gets higher and higher. Then when it finally does break lose, why, there is going to be a tremendous flow that is going to come down, and there will be some real damage in the area.

Quivik: When you talk about break loose, you mean that holding the water back will cause levees to break loose?

J. Gwerder: Sure.

Quivik: Okay, I see.

J. Gwerder: Yes, it could very easily.

Quivik: When you say this land was designed, you mean design in a formal sense by the Reclamation District?

J. Gwerder: Well, as we spoke earlier, the Reclamation District set up and developed the levees on the island. But the concept was then also--the state legislature got in to help finance it. They also put controls in, which was to control this, so that one island wouldn't take all the water every year. I mean, it would be an actual plan on how these high flood years, how the water would move through the delta with the least amount of damage. And I just feel that they are no longer doing that. They feel their single concern is habitat, and so they seem to have total disregard. And on our ranch at Galt, we flooded in February last year, all of about 400

acres, 500 acres of the river bottom. And it was not typical, it wasn't a large storm, and so we felt that it was part of this habitat area--that the trees and everything that they have planted is starting to hold the water back, rather than letting it flow through like it should. And their immediate reaction was to come immediately and want to buy the land, or offer us an easement so that we can't farm it.

And then the third one, they came back, and offered us an easement if we would not put orchard or vineyard--just we could farm it, or graze it in livestock, but we couldn't put orchard or vineyard. We just don't feel that that's what we want to do, is give them a right to run our farm. We want to be able to do what we want. We know that grapes are one of the good crops in the area, and so we don't want to give that up. But that seems to be their agenda now. Because if you complain to them, they want to buy you out, and then they have it themselves, and that's what they have been able to do.

Quivik: When you mentioned that flood in February, the way it came out, it sounded like that was something that you did intentionally. But as you have been talking, it sounds like the flood happened, not through any decisions that you made.

J. Gwerder: Well, no.

Quivik: Okay, I wanted to get that straight.

J. Gwerder: No. It was, just, the way they are operating, they are creating these areas where the water doesn't flow through, and it's putting back pressure. So we have come to a little compromise on that. They have never done any water measurements on Dry Creek, which is a tributary of both the Cosumnes and the Mokelumne Rivers. And so as a result of our objections, they are now going to start measuring the flows, so we can see if in fact it is affecting the drainage in the area.

Quivik: When--under these conservancy purchases, let's explore a little bit who the "they" is. First of all, when a purchase is made, like this 10,000-acre ranch, who actually purchased that land?

J. Gwerder: Well, I believe it is under the new Cal-Fed program, which is a joint state of California and federal. But I believe--and I don't know, because we haven't seen what the end effect is going to be, because they are still in their due diligence process now--but I believe that Cal-Fed is putting up most of the money, and Nature Conservancy will probably be the operator. And the other preserve, part of it the Bureau of Land Management came in, and they were the operator.

And at the time, when that was announced, we thought that was good, because they would probably graze it, typically they manage grazing land. And they're not choosing to do that at all, so they went into this organic farming type thing.

Quivik: Is Cal-Fed a program for purchasing land?

- J. Gwerder: No, not necessarily. It's to operate the delta to the benefit of everybody. A lot of it is a fishery, to make sure that they have spawning ground, and the flows of water are right for them. It's a total kind of a management thing. Because of the needs of drinking water, the delta is a very important part of that, and will be.
- Quivik: Is Cal-Fed then a consortium of state and federal agencies?
- J. Gwerder: Correct.
- Quivik: Okay. And is that short for a longer name, Cal-Fed? It sounds like an abbreviation.
- J. Gwerder: That's what they call it. It's California Federal, I don't know what the total name is.
- Quivik: And do you know what state and federal agencies work together in Cal-Fed?
- J. Gwerder: No. Not offhand.
- Quivik: But it sounds like they also have a budget for acquiring large parcels of ground?
- J. Gwerder: Right. And I guess they have multi-sources, where it is. They are talking about--as we toured the property, the Thompson-Folger Ranch, the west end is where we had the onions planted--the next island is called Canal Ranch, and it's bordered by the south fork of the Mokelumne River--they are talking about returning that to tideland, which would be buying it, taking all the levees out of it, and just flooding it. If they do that, then we are definitely going to have a problem with seepage, because it will fill that land back up, and we are the next neighbor at that point on the Thompson-Folger Ranch. We are about four feet below sea level. So if they take those levees out, the pressure from that water, that land being under water, will start subbing underneath, and coming up on our property. So we are watching that very closely.
- Quivik: Do you have any way of protecting yourself legally?
- J. Gwerder: If there are damages, I guess we'll have to pursue that. You can't really do anything until you're damaged.
- Quivik: I would presume that 10,000-acre place was a member of the reclamation district?
- J. Gwerder: They have their own district. And the district is the one that takes care of the drainage, the levees, and all of that. So if this goes, which I assume that it will, they want to keep the existing manager on for another year and a half to continue to farm the property. Then apparently their plans are to flood it in the winter for habitat, and then drain it off, and stay in that sequence.
- Quivik: So that 10,000-acre place was a district unto itself?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: I see. Who was the owner of that 10,000 acres?

J. Gwerder: The owner is the State of Oregon Teachers' Retirement Fund, I believe. I have not seen that in writing, but that's what I understand. It is managed by a group in Portland, Oregon, a real estate management company.

Quivik: Did they manage it by having a variety of tenants come in and--?

J. Gwerder: No. Just one operation, one single operation.

Quivik: What kind of operation was it?

J. Gwerder: It's corn, wheat--and then that operation would lease parcels of it out for tomatoes. A couple of years they had a tenant come down, and came in and grew potatoes. At one point in time they used to grow a lot of celery. It was developed and owned by a family from Piedmont, M&T, and this retirement fund bought the property from M&T Company. Moffit & Towne was the name of the company.

Quivik: How long ago did the retirement fund purchase it?

J. Gwerder: About, I'd say, eight years ago. And there was also--it was a family corporation, but there also were four or five buildings in downtown San Francisco, some downtown building property, and in Reno. There was a construction company in Marysville. There was another 10,000 acres just outside of Chico. And they had purchased the whole thing.

Quivik: This is M&T?

J. Gwerder: No. M&T had developed all--

Quivik: Yes, all of those--and then the Oregon Teachers' Retirement Fund bought the entire system, I guess you could say.

J. Gwerder: And then they sold off a lot of it.

Quivik: Under the M&T operation and the Oregon Teacher's Fund, was the 10,000-acre property near here being run as a conventional part of the agricultural community?

J. Gwerder: Yes, oh yes. Very definitely.

Quivik: So you didn't notice significant change when it went from M&T to Oregon Teachers'?

J. Gwerder: No, not at all. They left the same management in charge, and the same type operation. They just continued on. As I was saying, they want to continue on, at least Cal-Fed or Nature Conservancy, whoever is the operator, as they are [doing?].

Quivik: For just another year, you said?

- J. Gwerder: Well, that is with that same management. No, I think they will continue to operate it, because it's a wonderful, natural area for all of the ducks and geese on their traveling south--because they flood most of it in the winter, and they don't have to pump the water, it is all below sea level. So they just have siphons that they prime, and just fill it up, and then pump it out in the spring, and farm it.
- Quivik: And they were flooding it before?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. They've always done it in certain places, yes.
- Quivik: I see.
- J. Gwerder: And they have always grown either corn or wheat, which makes wonderful feed for the birds on their way south. So it is quite a habitat area.
- Quivik: Now, the way you've just described that, I'm trying to get it clear what the change will be, since they always had been flooding it, and migratory waterfowl had been stopping off in there before? Is the change that prior to this, once the drained it off, they planted crops, and now they are going to let this, I'll call it a jungle, the blackberry bush grow in?
- J. Gwerder: Well, we don't know. We think they'll probably operate it the same, but it has always been available to a lot of local duck hunters, including myself. And they have always stated that they would continue, even on the other 7,000 acres they had, they would continue the use of it. Well, other than a very small area that they have developed for handicapped shooters, there is typically no hunting allowed on conservancy property. So it's just habitat for the birds.
- Quivik: You say that the 10,000-acre property was a reclamation district unto itself?
- J. Gwerder: Still is.
- Quivik: Still is. Is there a way that reclamation districts in this area coordinate with each other for their mutual benefit?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, very definitely. In fact, there is--I don't know that it is even in writing--but there are so many unwritten laws. In other words, if you decide that your island is ready to flood, and you are going to have to flood, and this happened in '86, you don't do anything until you contact all the downstream reclamation districts, and meet with them, and tell them what your plans are. Because you could make one move that would effect a domino incident down river. And so, everybody works very closely together.
- Quivik: But to your knowledge, that isn't overseen by some state or local authority?
- J. Gwerder: You are always overseen by the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Quivik: It is.

J. Gwerder: Yes, State Bureau of Reclamation.

Quivik: So within that oversight of the Bureau of Reclamation, is there an avenue for you and landowners like you, as well as the reclamation districts that you're a part of, to work with the Nature Conservancy or Cal-Fed? If it looks like their management of this 10,000 acres may adversely affect your agricultural regime, is there an authority under which you can try to negotiate with them?

J. Gwerder: I don't know who it would be, whether it would be Cal-Fed, or whether it's through the reclamation board--the state reclamation board has been the one that has really been in charge of everything. And all of your permitting, if you want to put additional rock on your levees, or if you want to do a set-back, or a rebuilding, you have to do all the permitting through--well, now, you have to get approval from everybody, Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife, that Endangered Species Group, because of the Endangered Species Act--that you're not dislocating some bird or something. So the permitting process now is very expensive before you can do anything.





## VII ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH JOE HAS WORKED

### Farm Bureau

Quivik: Okay. I think we're ready to turn to some of the organizations that you've been a part of unless you have any--I think we may come back to some of the environmental issues later. But let's do that.

As a farmer all your life, you've been a member of quite an impressive list of organizations. I'd like you to, for each of these, talk about what role that organization has played in your work as a farmer, and then what your role in the conduct of that organization has been, and see how we can go both ways with that. Let's start off with the Farm Bureau.

J. Gwerder: I think Farm Bureau is one of the, certainly the lead organization in the--total agriculture, more of the farming, as opposed to the California Cattlemen's Association, which would be the livestock association that you would look to for help, information. They do a lot of lobbying in favor of the group, whether it be farming, or ranching, or anything. They work very closely with the agencies so that our position is always represented. And just overall, both of them have done a wonderful job keeping us informed, because when you are farming day-to-day, you just don't have time to attend all the legislative hearings--the new legislation that is proposed, and how it might affect agriculture. And this is the position, that they--they really help agriculture.

Quivik: So Farm Bureau is mainly an intermediary between individual farmers and government agencies, would you say?

J. Gwerder: Yes. That is true. Because most everybody belongs, you're paying dues, so it gives them a source of financing to do this type of work, which individuals cannot do. It takes a group like that.

Quivik: Does the Farm Bureau in any way play a role as an intermediary between individual farmers and other kinds of industry or corporations? For instance, if, just thinking hypothetically, you thought that fuel prices for farming were too high, would the Farm Bureau try to work on your behalf, or is it strictly the government?

- J. Gwerder: Well, they would probably, maybe in the way with attending hearings, and representing agriculture--so that we do have a knowledge of what is going on, and even a position, if it's something that's contrary to the good of agriculture.
- Quivik: You're a member of the Farm Bureau?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: You pay dues? And are you as an individual a member, or is your farm operation, your family corporation a member?
- J. Gwerder: Both.
- Quivik: Both.
- J. Gwerder: And we pay dues. They have local associations where they have directors that represent the local area. And then it goes on from there. They have state conventions, and that's where they pick their directors and the management team that goes along with that.
- Quivik: What is the name of your local group?
- J. Gwerder: It is the Sacramento County Farm Bureau.
- Quivik: It's on a county basis?
- J. Gwerder: Typically it is. Some of them are tri-county, some of them will be three counties. That's more typical of the Cattlemen's Association, because the northern California counties are so spread out, why, typically two or three counties will get together and are represented by one group.
- Quivik: Is membership or part of the dues based on your acreage, or some sort of measure of your scale of operation, or is the dues the same for every farmer regardless of size?
- J. Gwerder: No, they're different. I don't know exactly whether it's on acreage, or whether it's participation, I am not quite sure of that--
- Quivik: Are virtually all of your neighbors around here members of the Bureau?
- J. Gwerder: Oh yes.
- Quivik: So it is a fairly ubiquitous-type membership organization?
- J. Gwerder: Right. Yes.
- Quivik: And do you attend meetings regularly?
- J. Gwerder: Just by being a member.

- Quivik: Did the Farm Bureau play any other role besides this intermediary between farmers and government agencies? Like, did it have a social function, or anything like that?
- J. Gwerder: Well, yes--they have an annual meeting, dinner meeting where the members are invited, and their wives. So that part of it would be the--and then they have a state convention, and you know, all that would go with it.
- Quivik: Does the Farm Bureau have any kind of a regular magazine or newsletter that you receive?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, they have both. They have a magazine, and a newsletter, just to keep everybody informed.
- Quivik: Is that part of the regular reading that you would do? Did you consider that--?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. At least glance through it to see what might be our next problem. [chuckles]

#### California Cattlemen's Association

- Quivik: All right, the California Cattlemen's Association.
- J. Gwerder: That's the same thing. Very similar to the Farm Bureau, about the same thing, representing the industry. They have an office, and paid personnel that attend the hearings and meetings and all of that. It's another statewide organization--very similar to the Farm Bureau--operates much the same way.
- Quivik: But with a specific interest, that's cattle raising?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Right.
- Quivik: Were there instances where the interests of cattlemen was either similar to the interests of another sector of the farm economy, and so these groups would work in concert, or perhaps where the interest of the cattlemen was at odds with the interests of some other sector of the agriculture world, and you might be at odds--working at cross-purposes with them in lobbying the legislature?
- J. Gwerder: Typically, the Farm Bureau and the cattlemen--
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- Quivik: You were saying, the Farm Bureau and the cattlemen work well together, but--talk about a problem with the wool growers?
- J. Gwerder: Well, at times, the cattle and the sheep industries have a problem with grazing, might have different ideas on it. So I wouldn't say that they are opposed to each other, but they each

have their own group to represent, and sometimes there is a difference of opinion between the sheep industry and the cattle industry.

- Quivik: Has there ever been an issue that has pitted the cattlemen and some sort of vineyard association against each other, since it seems like a lot of the vineyards are moving into areas that once were grazing?
- J. Gwerder: Right. The way the industry has gone, I would say that's a voluntary thing, because it's just a higher and better use for the property if you can go from livestock grazing to grapes. And I think the biggest single factor that caused that was the drip irrigation, because those lands were never able to be farmed or put into vineyards without drip irrigation. Now it's made the efficiency of pumping water, and dripping on the vines, to just a higher and better use for the land.

### Western States Angus Association

- Quivik: You are a member of the Western States Angus Association.
- J. Gwerder: Right. We've been with that all the time. My father was president, and I followed as president of the association. That was seven states, so I did some traveling for them to annual meetings of the different state organizations. It was an association to promote the breed, and also the beef cattle industry. We also provided some leadership, and we had paid staff. They would plan and publicize livestock sales, provide a market for mainly registered cattle. We also represented some Angus, straight beef cattle, but typically it was a registered breeding stock organization.
- Quivik: Did that organization maintain the registration records?
- J. Gwerder: No. They were done through the National Angus Association, which did all of that part of it. It's strictly more a sales and promotion--sort of thing.
- Quivik: Did the Western States Angus Association also get involved in some lobbying or working with government agencies?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, right. In any large issues concerning beef cattle, they would get involved.
- Quivik: Are there comparable associations for other breeds, Hereford?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Almost every breed has one association representing their own areas, because the national associations mainly are running the performance testing, the breeding, the registration, all of the documentary things that are associated with the breed. So the local associations do more of the promotion.
- Quivik: Are those other breeds represented in this area?

- J. Gwerder: Yes. Most all of the associations have an office near Sacramento, just because of the state, and the legislature, so that they are able to have input into any legislation or laws concerning the livestock industry.
- Quivik: What would you say is the relationship you would have with some of your neighbors, who might be members of those other breed associations?
- J. Gwerder: You like to promote your own breed, but they are still all beef cattle, and that is the main thing that everybody is interested in.
- Quivik: Would you call it a friendly rivalry?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. That would be the way you would call it, because particularly in the interbreed competition--would be like the, for the grand champion steer at any of the shows--that is an interbreed competition. And then naturally you want to win for your own breed. But as far as the breeding stock themselves, it's no competition. Well, it is competition, but I mean, it's not direct competition.
- Quivik: Would it have any way of expressing itself in a public forum? Like something that comes to my mind is making jokes about the other breed, or--?
- J. Gwerder: Oh, sure. [chuckles]
- Quivik: Can you think of some examples of that?
- J. Gwerder: Not offhand. [chuckles] Not really.
- Quivik: Then, there are some grape growers' associations that you're a member of.
- J. Gwerder: Yes. Jim has done more on that than I have. He is involved in those, which also involves the university. They'll have workshops for the grape industry, and then these different associations that are represented there too--as far as varieties, and problems, whether it be cultural, or quality of fruit--and he is the one that attends all those.
- Quivik: Does there tend to be like a Chardonnay association and a Merlot, or do they break down on different lines?
- J. Gwerder: No, they--typically it is more of an area, like the Woodbridge area would represent here, and you have Napa Valley, and Sonoma County, and then the north coast, up in Upper Lake County, and Ukiah--that seems to be the way these groups work, more of an area--and everybody is trying to promote quality of your area, of all the varieties, not necessarily one variety.

Cal-West Seeds

Quivik: The Cal-West Seeds is a co-op that you have been a member of.

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Can you describe what that co-op does?

J. Gwerder: The co-op represents growers from—I believe they are in three states, California, Oregon, and Washington. Anyway, it is grower-owned. They are crops that are grown through the Crop Improvement Association, so that's where they get the certification for export, or to have a certified label on it. So they help with the examination of the crop, starting with the basic seed stock, controlling any weeds. These fields have to be examined two or three times a year, and that's done through the Crop Improvement Association. It is important because—mainly to the export. And that has been a great market for Cal-West Seed, mainly in the Sudan, grass seed which we grow, and the Medino clover, the red clover, the alfalfa, all of these forage crops. And it is sold with their certification, and it's a very well-run organization.

Quivik: So this is a co-op of seed producers—?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: --as opposed to a co-op for purchasing seed?

J. Gwerder: Right. It is producers. They have the rolling-payoff system, where you leave a percentage of the proceeds of your crop in the co-op, and then it rolls out over seven years. So it gives them the operating capital that they need to carry on the promotion, and also they have all of their own cleaning, and storage, and bagging, all of the facilities for those crops. They also are now into the oil seeds. We ship our safflower to them, too. They are in the same thing. They are in the process of handling that now with the same facilities that they have for the other seed. They export all over the world.

Quivik: Under a Cal-West label?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: So other farmers, when they are buying seed from that co-op, know they are buying Cal-West seeds.

J. Gwerder: Right. They will be different varieties, but it will still be under the Cal-West—because they all, they have to be in charge of the handling of it, the germination, the purity, and all the technical things that have to go the label before they can be—and that's why the University of California, Davis, is such a large help in the Crop Improvement Association, because they take over the quality control from that. So it is something that is accepted by other nations, they know that they are getting a quality product, that they have no fear of getting some

noxious weed--the germination is all tested on it, which is an important part of the seed business.

Quivik: And is it primarily forage crops and oil seed, or other kinds of seeds as well?

J. Gwerder: No, it is mainly the forage crops.

Quivik: Does that co-op compete with seed companies--?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: --like, I suppose, Cargill, Northrup King?

J. Gwerder: Yes, sure. Germaine's, any of those. In fact, some of them buy product from Cal-West, and then put it under their own label, because they don't--they all don't have the capabilities of developing and testing the varieties that they have.

Quivik: And does Cal-West have its own capabilities, or does it rely on the university for those kinds of things?

J. Gwerder: It relies mainly on the university, at least for coordinating--the quality standard is set through the university.

Quivik: And does it also work with the universities in Oregon and Washington?

J. Gwerder: I believe so, yes.

Quivik: As a landowner, a grower of crops that you are producing for market rather than producing for seed, did you have any sort of preference for seed that you might get from comparable co-ops? Or how did you decide where you would get your seed?

J. Gwerder: Certain seed companies tend to concentrate on certain varieties, but in the end, usually new varieties are developed by the University of California, Davis. So you can see the testing before you purchase that, particularly a new variety. They can show you three years of production record, so you can see whether it's a wet year, a dry year, or an average harvest. So those are the statistics you rely on. But we have no particular single source for the grain crop.

Quivik: Does Cal-West, as a co-op, have any kind of difficulty that you know, competing with some of those large, corporate seed companies?

J. Gwerder: I don't believe so. I think they--and they do have a lot of competition in the alfalfa seed. But I think they have always done a good job of quality control and merchandising.

Quivik: Then I see that you are a member of Ducks Unlimited.

J. Gwerder: Yes. That has been one of the things that we have supported on our ranch at Galt. They came out about ten years ago requesting farmers who, if they didn't have the need, to leave

what stubble remains after the crop is harvested, and not working the ground--just leaving it through the winter months when the birds were coming through and feeding, and then working it in the spring. So we joined that program, and have done that ever since. It's kind of beneficial. I mean, we get nothing out of it. There's no payment or anything like that, but it does definitely give them a chance to have feed on the way south. So, that's a good group.

Quivik: Can you talk about the difference in the approach between the way that Ducks Unlimited operates in this area, and the way that the Nature Conservancy is?

J. Gwerder: Well, they work very closely together, and Ducks Unlimited has also a part of the Conservancy land over there. The difference is, the Ducks Unlimited, they have staff that actually take counts, the birds are banded, and so they follow them down the coast, or down the valley, to see where the population is. And they keep records on hatch, and that's more, as opposed to the Conservancy.

Quivik: Are you an actual member of Ducks Unlimited?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We join every year.

### Reclamation District 1002

Quivik: And Reclamation District 1002?

J. Gwerder: That was a reclamation district of which I was a trustee. And it is on Snodgrass Slough down to where the Mokelumne and the Cosumnes come together. We manage the drainage and the water system on it. That's the main job of the trustee. The district flooded in 1986. And on the eastern line, our district line is a railroad track, and next to it is Interstate 5. The levee broke from a huge flow down the Cosumnes River, and flooded all of that. So it was quite interesting. We got a call from the National Defense Council saying that Interstate 5 was a national highway that went from Mexico to Canada, and please get the water off.

Quivik: [chuckles]

J. Gwerder: And here we are totally under water. There was six or eight feet of water. Our pumps were all under water. And so, as I spoke earlier about notifying other reclamation districts, we decided that the quickest and fastest way to get rid of the water as it went down was to cut our own levee, and let it drain back into the system. So as I say, we had to then call a meeting and get all the reclamation districts downstream to tell them exactly what we were going to do, and make sure that they had an input, and knew it was coming, and could be ready.

We brought a rock barge in on a huge dredger and had it sitting there. In case something went wrong we could plug the hole back up. Then we were very fortunate. The Boswell Ranch in Bakersfield, which is a large ranch, it has a set of diesel pumps that they



use for their own flood problems. We were able to call them and rent these huge pumps. And the way they rent them is--the rental price is minimal, and you use them. But when you use them, you immediately restore them back to brand-new, so that they are delivered back, and they are sitting there waiting for the next problem that might occur. It was Miller and Lux Ranch; Boswell was the name of the company that owned it. It's a wonderful help to other people in the area.

So anyway, we were able to eventually get the water off the highway and satisfy everybody involved. Then we applied for state and federal aid to pay for all this. It was a huge cost for getting the water off. We were able to get it all off in about twenty days. And some of the crops that were under were pear trees, and apple trees, and they just can't stand too much water. We were fortunate, we were able to get it off, and none of the trees were lost.

Quivik: What was the source of the water, in that instance?

J. Gwerder: The water was coming out of the Cosumnes and Mokelumne River.

Quivik: Due to a seasonal high water?

J. Gwerder: Yes. In February it was a huge snow pack and a warm rain, and it came down. It just went, you know, cross-country.

Quivik: That reclamation district embraces the Thompson-Folger place?

J. Gwerder: No.

Quivik: The Galt place?

J. Gwerder: No. It was another ranch that we were farming at that time. We had 730 acres right along Interstate 5, just above Twin Cities Road. That's the ranch we were farming at that time. We have since sold it. Then you have to be a landowner to be a trustee, so when we sold it, I resigned.

Quivik: What was the origin of that place? How did you happen to be farming that?

J. Gwerder: We bought it. It was a cattle ranch that belonged to the Kuhn family, and as we had trouble with Thompson-Folger where they put Interstate 5 through, it went through his ranch. They would not give him a cattle pass. So he just said, "I'm not going to haul cattle across there," so he sold it. So we bought it with funds from the sale of some of the Goodwin Farmington property, and turned it from a livestock ranch into a rice ranch. We grew rice until we were approached by a developer in Stockton who wanted to put a golf course in and a retirement-type housing project, and so we sold it.

Quivik: What years was that, that you owned that ranch, roughly?

J. Gwerder: About--let's see, about '72 to '90. And it worked very well. We had water rights out of the Mokelumne River, so our water was cheap for the rice. It worked very well.

Quivik: And what years were you a trustee for the reclamation district?

J. Gwerder: That same time.

Quivik: The entire span?

J. Gwerder: No, I went on about the third year we were there, and stayed until '90, I think. If you didn't have the land, you couldn't be a trustee--

Quivik: You were, at three years, still relatively new to that area. How did you happen to be elected so quickly?

J. Gwerder: [chuckles] Well, it just happened that there were only three trustees, and one of them I knew very well from the livestock business. He was chairman of the board, and he just wanted to pick people who knew what it took to keep an island, you know, the levees up, and in good shape. So I guess, because of my experience, he asked me to--we had to run, it was an election of the landowners.

Quivik: And did you serve in an at-large post, or did each of the three trustees represent roughly a third of the reclamation district?

J. Gwerder: No, it was at-large.

Quivik: At-large.

J. Gwerder: The three represented the whole thing.

Quivik: Have you served a similar position on any of the other reclamation districts around here?

J. Gwerder: No. That's the only one I have.

Quivik: How many reclamation districts total have you been a member of then?

J. Gwerder: I would say four.

Quivik: Can you name those?

J. Gwerder: There was Ryer Island, and Grand Island, and the Reclamation District 1002, and the Canal Ranch Reclamation District, up in Thompson-Folger, next to that. I guess that's it, I guess four.

Quivik: Four. The Galt place, is that part of it?

J. Gwerder: No. We don't have a reclamation district there.

Quivik: Does that Reclamation District 1002 maintain any sort of reservoir upstream?

J. Gwerder: No.

Quivik: No. Or dam for flood control?

J. Gwerder: No. Strictly an island within itself.

Quivik: Right.

J. Gwerder: So it's water coming in, and water being pumped out.

Quivik: Can you describe the general location of that 1002 district?

J. Gwerder: Yes. The south levee is on Lost Slough, the west levee is Snodgrass Slough, the east line is the Western Pacific Railroad, and then the north line is Lambert Road. It then moves up, the water goes up towards Sacramento. So part of the drainage comes through from up there.

Quivik: And roughly how many acres or square miles does that cover?

J. Gwerder: I think we had about, I think 9,000 acres.

Quivik: And how many property owners, approximately?

J. Gwerder: I think there were about twenty-two.

Quivik: Okay. And then the California Wheat Growers' Association?

J. Gwerder: That is--I was never very active in it, but we belong, because it was helping to promote California wheat. And they were also involved in the new variety selection, and that type of --quality, for milling wheat. That was their main thing.

#### Various Finance Organizations

Quivik: The Federal Land Bank Association?

J. Gwerder: I went through all of that in our other interview, of financing the vineyard--so I think we've covered that.

Quivik: Okay. River City Bank?

J. Gwerder: Same thing. We covered that before, too, I believe.

Quivik: Federal Production Credit Association?

J. Gwerder: Sacramento Valley Farm Credit, we have done our financing with them. That's another farm credit co-op type operation. We currently are still financing the vineyard with them.

Now they have a new program of equipment leasing, and so we're leasing some equipment through the Production Credit Association.

Quivik: Is that something that you can participate in by becoming a member?

J. Gwerder: Yes. I used to be on the advisory board, while I still had an interest in it. We used to have meetings, and just review the needs of the members, that was our main thing. So it would be a larger group than the board of directors, but we were able to advise them on what we thought the needs were.

### California Flood Control Association

Quivik: Okay. The California Flood Control Association?

J. Gwerder: That's an association of, mainly, reclamation districts from above Sacramento clear to the San Joaquin County. It's a group that watches what the Reclamation Board does, when the engineers are doing--from the federal side--any levee set-backs or rocking, or--decisions that are made for the whole delta. What it is, is a group of--I think we had twenty-two directors. I was a director of that. We would meet once a month. I think more than anything we were watching legislation and how it would affect us--water transfer, and also the drainage, and the maintenance that was done on the levees by the federal government.

Quivik: So you were a director of the flood control association?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

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Quivik: Okay, back after lunch--Joe, we were talking about your work on the California Flood Control Association. I had just asked you, and the tape ran out, when you were one of twenty-two directors there, I think?

J. Gwerder: That's correct.

Quivik: Did you represent a particular area then?

J. Gwerder: I was one of the three directors from the general Walnut Grove area, not with any specific reclamation district, but just a resident farmer in the general area.

Quivik: And were you elected by your neighbors, or asked to serve by the existing board, or how did that--?

J. Gwerder: Yes. I was asked to serve by the board, and served about four years. Then I resigned.

Quivik: What were some of the tasks that that association took upon itself?

- J. Gwerder: It is an association representing landowners and reclamation districts, and it is involved basically with all elements of water, with water supplies, water quality, drainage. It involves the whole, total water plan. It's a group that meets to kind of analyze pending legislation, if there is any as to water quality, drainage, or where the funding is for levee building and rocking, and how the drainage is treated. It starts south of Tracy, where the San Joaquin River comes in, represented by farmers from down there. So it's kind of a commingling of both the Sacramento and the San Joaquin water systems.
- Quivik: Did you deal with agencies like the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, all of those people. We had engineers that were part of the group, so they had the outlook from an engineering standpoint.
- Quivik: They were on the board with you, or they were staff?
- J. Gwerder: They were on the board with us.
- Quivik: And did you have a staff as well?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. We had a two-man staff, and we always seemed to be able to hire one of the Army Corps of Engineers individuals, who had recently retired, and then would come to work for us, representing us, but with a full knowledge of everybody in the Army Corps of Engineers. And that gave us a great insight of what their thinking was.

#### Woodbridge Irrigation District

- Quivik: We've talked primarily about your role on Reclamation District 1002, and then some of the other reclamation districts around here regarding drainage. You've mentioned that the Thompson-Folger place, you use irrigation there. And you are a member of Woodbridge Irrigation District?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, correct.
- Quivik: Did you ever serve in any capacity on that district?
- J. Gwerder: No, I didn't. Carol's great-grandfather, I believe, was one of the people that started that district. I don't know exactly the year that it started, but the intention was to put a dam and reservoir in on the Mokelumne River, for summer water only. In the winter it would flow right on through. And then they built another outlet dam, and a series of canals, to supply water to the Woodbridge district, mainly west of Woodbridge. All these laterals were put in so that everybody could be a member and draw fresh water straight out of the Mokelumne River for irrigation purposes.

- Quivik: Now, just to be sure that folks understand the difference between a reclamation district and an irrigation district, can you describe that for us?
- J. Gwerder: Basically, the main job of the reclamation district is to provide drainage. Then if there is water that can be used both for irrigation and drainage, it would cover the water use for irrigation, but typically it is strictly drainage. The irrigation district is--the main function is to supply good quality irrigation water.
- Quivik: Did the Woodbridge Irrigation District have any drainage facilities?
- J. Gwerder: No. Everything flowed through the natural drainage channels of the district. The other thing that they had, they have some of the first water rights on the Mokelumne River, that are actually owned by the district. So they cannot be curtailed. After Woodbridge then you come to the East Bay Municipal Utility District, which has rights, and other users have filed for rights. But one of the original rights is the Woodbridge Irrigation District--which gives them priority, and if there is a short supply, gives them priority to the use.
- Quivik: And so they even have priority over East Bay MUD?
- J. Gwerder: Yes.

### Agricultural Extension Service

- Quivik: Okay. Well, those are a number of the private, and I suppose we could say, quasi-private organizations that you've been working with. Now, let's turn to some of the government agencies that you have to work with as a farmer--or get to work with, I suppose you could say. [chuckles]
- J. Gwerder: [chuckles]
- Quivik: First of all, there's the [University of California] Agricultural Extension Service. Can you describe how that fits into the system of agencies, and how you worked with the Ag. Extension?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. The Ag. Extension Service is the agency that hires the farm advisors for the different counties, and they have, generally, a specialist pertaining to each one. In other words, a grape area would have a farm advisor who specializes in the production of wine grapes and is educated to give the advice necessary to produce that. Then you go into the livestock, they have livestock specialists, sheep, and cattle.

It is just a valuable source. They put out publications, they do studies of quality and cost control, and publish the results. And that is dispersed through the farming community. So it's a great source of information. They do test plots for varieties, as to quality and production. So you have that to go on every year. They also do cost studies for the input costs into a crop. For example, wheat: they would take what a typical cost would be to

produce a crop. So you have all your accounting methods to look at before you plant, to see what you might expect as a return, from their cost study.

Quivik: Where is the closest Ag. Extension office, to here?

J. Gwerder: We have one in Sacramento, and one in Stockton—for each county. And some of the counties—they will perform the same service in two counties. Particularly livestock specialists seem to be able to handle more than one county.

Quivik: Are they sort of an extension of the state university at Davis?

J. Gwerder: Yes, it is.

Quivik: And is it through that Ag. Extension that you began working with Professor Omo?

J. Gwerder: Yes, right. Through the farm advisor, the grape specialist in San Joaquin County.

### Farm Service Agency

Quivik: Another government agency that you work with is the Farm Service Agency. Can you describe that one?

J. Gwerder: Yes. The Farm Service Agency is an agency that is the record keeping for acreage of each crop grown. They do it every year. You sign up for your fall crops and your spring crops, so it creates a history for the county. During the time when we were getting high subsidies, why, it was always based on your planted acreage. In order to get the subsidy, you were required to stay within the history of your acreage planted. They kept all the records to be sure that it was correct. They also fly, at times, the county, and measure fields, and also make sure that the information you are giving them is correct.

Quivik: Is that a federal or a state agency?

J. Gwerder: It's a state agency. But it's funded by the federal government. All that subsidy was from the federal side.

### Farm Subsidy Programs

Quivik: What period is that, when you are talking about when you were receiving subsidies?

J. Gwerder: Oh, that was mainly until the Freedom To Farm Act, which was four or five years ago. Up until then, we were getting direct checks from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a subsidy on different crops.

Quivik: And pretty much throughout your whole career as a farmer?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: And for specific crops--?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: --but not others?

J. Gwerder: No. There would be none on, for example, tomatoes. There was on corn, wheat, oats--those basic commodities are nationwide, they are the ones that were paying the direct subsidies.

Quivik: Did the availability of subsidies for some crops and not others at all shape your decisions in which crops to grow?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It certainly did. It was an important factor to zero in--

Quivik: How well do you think the subsidy programs did in targeting which crops needed to be encouraged, and which didn't?

J. Gwerder: I think they helped, I really do. I think it was an additional cash flow to your operation that came in a direct payment. And even at times during the eighties, you were paid *not* to farm certain crops, you would leave the land fallow. But we no longer have any program like that now.

Quivik: In the eighties, what would have been a crop that you were paid not to grow?

J. Gwerder: Sugar beets for awhile were in the program. And of course, corn, wheat, oats. I believe, even though we never grew them, soybeans had a program, cotton had a program. Those were the crops that were involved.

Quivik: And during the eighties they were encouraging you not to grow those crops?

J. Gwerder: Right, the ones that were in surplus.

### Environmental Protection Agency

Quivik: We've talked about a variety of environmental protection angles, but we haven't, I don't believe, mentioned the EPA in particular. Can you describe how you work with the EPA?

J. Gwerder: Well, it's something that I think--the EPA is Environmental Protection Agency, and it's something that we seem to keep running into, with all kinds of different facets that they're in. Part of it, for example, is--environmental protection is getting into the emissions of our



equipment. That certainly is going to affect us, what kind of emissions they have. And they talk about wanting to update all our diesel engines, retrofitting them so that they'll burn cleaner.

It just seems to be any number of things that we have to consider now. EPA also gets in, we're not involved in it, but the dairy and beef feed lot industry, with the manure that comes off, that's all part of the Environmental Protection Agency. Also the burning, they now restrict the burning of any of the remnants of the year before's crop, which we used to do. We no longer can do that without a local permit from the Air Resources Board, and that is only a few days a year that you have the right to burn, and then you're limited. You have to put your name in prior and designate the acreage. And then they call you when you are able to burn. They only allow so many acres a day.

That was one problem we had when we were growing rice, that we had to put up with this, because that's the best way to get rid of the straw in rice, is to burn it. Because if you plow it back in, then you are subject to some disease that then, over winter, and when you put that back in rice the next year, you are back in with a problem, before you ever get started. But they now have gone to re-flooding, to rot that out, and it seems to be working fairly well, although it's very expensive.

Quivik: Is the Air Resources Board a state agency?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: And is it like that with most Environmental Protection Agency regulations, that your experience of them is actually through state or local boards? Or do you--have occasioned a deal directly with the EPA as well?

J. Gwerder: No. We don't deal directly with them. It's just some of the things we have to manage.

Quivik: And that comes about through regulations that the state will pass, that are in compliance--?

J. Gwerder: Right, that you have to comply with.

### Endangered Species Act

Quivik: I think you have mentioned it before--the Endangered Species Act?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Can you describe how that affects your agricultural practice?

J. Gwerder: Well, it's something that we keep running into, and we have a very serious problem with it now. We have a ranch in San Joaquin County, that is 776 acres of rolling grazing land, originally part of the Goodwin property. We had researched the opportunity to put grapes

in, because there are grapes across the road from us, and there are a lot of grapes in the area now. And then San Joaquin County passed an ordinance, that in order to do any ripping, or moving any dirt, you have to get a permit. This land was not pristine rangeland, because it had been farmed in the thirties. We felt we had no problem.

But we were denied the permit, because of an endangered species, which is the fairy shrimp, which is only there for the period of time the water would stand in any low-lying area. We were turned down because of that. So we have continued to rent it out for people to run cattle on. We are now in the process of trying to sell it to San Joaquin County. They are interested in purchasing it to show the public that you can protect the endangered species, and operate a farm without any particular problem. We don't seem to be getting very far on it, but we had it appraised twice, and they have appraised it once, and we just got word today that they now want to appraise it one more time. So we don't know. We have been working on this project for approximately three years, and we don't seem to be getting any place.

We had a neighbor next door that did the same thing. He went ahead and planted the grapes. He was fined, and he was probably wise to pay the fine and go ahead and put grapes in. Now, you couldn't get by with that. You are just not allowed to tear into it and farm it. But we are going to see if we can finish this project, and get out of it.

- Quivik: Wetlands and water quality, any of those kinds of environmental features that you deal with other than what we've talked about already? We've talked about the Conservancy stuff, and also monitoring of outflows.
- J. Gwerder: Right. The only other one we have that's in the record is, on the Galt Ranch we have approximately two miles on Dry Creek, which is a free-flowing watershed between the Mokelumne and Cosumnes. So Sacramento County is now planning to put a trail--horseback, or bicycle, or foot trail--down Dry Creek. If they do, they will come in and condemn, and take the property, to put this--it will be a multiple-use trail. The big concern with that is the element of people being there with our farm equipment: the noise that might bother somebody's horse, or we'll have to be very careful of any spraying that we're doing, or any dusting, or anything, because you are not notified when people are coming. They're going to be in there whenever they want. Then we just know they're going to have setbacks. You know, to use a certain material, you'll have to be 600 feet away, or something. The other thing we're very fearful of is cattle, running cattle down there. If they might excite them, and go through the fences, why--we have real concern if they propose to go ahead and do that.
- Quivik: Okay. Well, I just remembered one last question I have about the Farm Service Agency. You mentioned things that they were doing during the period of subsidies. Are they still in operation doing that?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, they are. And one other thing that they do that I forgot to mention, is they also have programs available--for example, if you had been using an open ditch and would like to go to an underground pipeline, or if you have rangeland that has no water--if you wanted to develop water for a new area--they have a small subsidized payment that you can get to help proceed with those projects, to pay for them, to make a better use of your property. And

now, we still have to record all our acreage that we plant, so they keep a running record of what your farming practices are. So they're still moving along.

Quivik: Now that you're no longer receiving subsidies, are there other ways that you benefit from the records that they keep?

J. Gwerder: They have a payment now that goes on, that's called an EPD payment. It is a small amount on the crops that we used to grow, like a combination of grain crops. You still get a small subsidy. But our largest problem right now is all the commodity prices: corn, wheat, soybeans, everything is--we're all in twenty-seven- to thirty-year low prices. So that takes us back to the seventies, that price, and there are very few things that we can grow now and really make a profit on. It's a very difficult time.

Quivik: We've talked about your year-to-year work with those various agencies, some of the records that they are keeping based on your work. You have to pay taxes, and so there is a certain amount of bookkeeping involved there--my next question has to do with your operation, farming, from a business, and administrative, and bookkeeping point of view. Do you do, and have you done all of that paperwork yourself over the years?

J. Gwerder: No. Typically, we've had somebody that comes in once a week. Then we have a CPA firm that does our quarterly statements--and then naturally, our year-end and our tax return. We now have--my two daughters, they come down at least a half a day a week, and each one keeps a set of books, so they do our own accounting. We are computerized now, and they put everything in. They know how to categorize it, as to crop, and cost. So we do all our cost accounting, and payroll taxes--workers' compensation insurance is based on wages--so they do all of that, they do that whole thing.

Quivik: Is there software that is specifically designed for the agricultural sector?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: Do you remember the name of that software?

J. Gwerder: The name is Peachtree Systems.

Quivik: And you said someone comes in once a week, were you referring to your daughters, or is there someone else as well?

J. Gwerder: No, this was prior to my daughters getting involved.

Quivik: I see.

J. Gwerder: Now they do it. They now can just, through the computer, print out our monthly statement. It goes right to our CPA, and then he prepares quarterly statements, and then our year-end too.



## VIII THE WALNUT GROVE COMMUNITY

### Changes Along the Sacramento River

Quivik: All right. I think that about wraps up discussions of the business of farming. I'd like to take us back now to an earlier part of your life and talk about some of the community aspects of farming here in the delta area.

First of all, I'd like you to talk about the nature of this area around Walnut Grove and some of its features, as you remember them. The first thing I want you to think about is the Sacramento River. Can you talk about the role that the Sacramento River played in the life of this community, say, when you were a young man just beginning in farming, and how that has changed over the years?

J. Gwerder: Well, the river has always been a huge part of the delta because of the source of water, but also the transportation. Early days, all the crops went out by water. There was still some grain going out when I started farming, but not as much as--at one point, it was all, alfalfa, everything was loaded. Beans were loaded by hand, and all of the truck crops; asparagus, my grandfather's cheesemaking, everything went out by boat. So it really was a big part of the local area. Today it isn't as much. There's no transportation use on it, but there is still, naturally, the flow of water.

Quivik: What kinds of vessels were those, that you can remember, that were carrying farm commodities up here?

J. Gwerder: They were riverboats, barges, flat barges, towed by tugboats. So they would go--they could go either to Stockton, or on down to Oakland and San Francisco and the Bay Area, be shipped out of there.

Quivik: Is there anything now, other than pleasure craft, or some of these tourist boats, that travels on the river? Any kind of commercial vessels?

J. Gwerder: Out of Sacramento they have a deepwater channel now that goes to Rio Vista, and they still ship some rice out of there. But down the Sacramento, or Steamboat Slough, there's

currently no use other than, as you say, recreation and the tour boats. That's the only thing that is left that uses the river.

Quivik: When you were either a child or a young man, can you remember experiences with some of those tour boats that are perhaps indicative of a former era from our own?

J. Gwerder: We had the *Delta King* and the *Delta Queen*, which were paddle wheelers, that were tour boats, from Sacramento to San Francisco. They would go on odd days. It was one of the highlights of my year, on my birthday, to always go to San Francisco. We would stay overnight, and then come back the next day, on the paddle wheeler.

Quivik: The whole family?

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Quivik: Did the whole family go?

J. Gwerder: Yes. My father, mother, and sister, we would go down every year. That was my favorite birthday present of the year. Then recently, Carol and I went back to the Mississippi, because one of the boats, the *Delta Queen*, that went by has been restored, and it now, it goes up the Mississippi. So--

Quivik: You rode that?

J. Gwerder: It was fun to take a tour up the river and down back to New Orleans.

Quivik: Does it seem like the same boat?

J. Gwerder: Oh, it is, exactly the same, just everything is the same.

Quivik: Where did you stay in San Francisco on those trips?

J. Gwerder: I believe that we always went to the Palace Hotel, where we would go down and stay overnight, and then get back on the boat the next day, and come back up-river.

Quivik: Any other kinds of activities in San Francisco?

J. Gwerder: No, just, you know, we would go out to dinner, or whatever, depending on what our time was.

Quivik: Just about across the river from here is that marina. I wonder if you could describe what that structure used to be, and what role that played in the life of the river along here?

J. Gwerder: That was a packing shed. It was one of the first with a lift out of the top that could be loaded, and then let down to boat height. Then whatever it was, whether it was grain, potatoes--they shipped a lot of asparagus, naturally--celery, onions--a lot of those were shipped out. And the boat would pull alongside, and tie up, and they would just lower the produce down to the ship level, and then be loaded and shipped on to San Francisco.

Quivik: Did workers in that building--it's called a packing shed--did produce come in in bulk form, and they packed it into boxes?

J. Gwerder: Right, yes. It was washed, and, for example, the celery were the outer leaves, and the asparagus was sized to length, and ready for the retail sales, and then put back on, and lowered, and shipped on to--San Francisco was the main market.

Quivik: When did that cease operating as a packing shed?

J. Gwerder: I think, it must have been about--right after the war. They were still packaging some things, prior to, probably '44, '45--about that time they quit.

And at that time, they were still shipping gasoline to Sacramento. A ship every other day would take fuel to Sacramento.

Quivik: Did you ever have occasion to see the operations inside that packing shed?

J. Gwerder: No, I never did.

### The Chinese Community at Locke

Quivik: Do you know who worked there, what kind of people?

J. Gwerder: I think there were naturally Chinese, because of the town of Locke. It's right at the town of Locke. Locke was a Chinese community. So I'm sure a lot of the employees would have been Chinese.

Quivik: Did that packing shed sit empty for awhile, before it was converted to a marina?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It did. In fact, part of it burned. The whole north end of it burned, and they were able to put it out before it burned completely down. Then it was converted about 1950. They used the original lift that they would take the produce on. They just made it a little longer, and you would back your boat and trailer on, and they would drop it right down in the water, and come back up. So it became a storage facility to launch boats.

Quivik: And it has been that ever since?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: You mentioned the Chinese community of Locke, and Chinese working at that facility. Can you remember experiences of interacting with the Chinese in this area, especially in your younger years?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We went through school with them. We had, actually, the Chinese community in Locke, which was all Chinese. And then we had a Chinese community in Walnut Grove. Also a Japanese community, and a Filipino community, all in the same general area. We went to segregated school until after World War II. Then, because there were two separate schools, one became the first, second, and third grade, and the rest went fourth through eighth grade.

Quivik: How was it segregated? What was the basis of segregation?

J. Gwerder: It was the Caucasians--and then the Filipinos, Chinese, and Japanese were in the other school.

### Japanese-Americans during World War II

Quivik: Do you remember what happened to the Japanese during World War II?

J. Gwerder: Very definitely. They were sent to internment camp. That's when the whole school system was put together. The interesting part of it is, many of the Japanese wanted to go. They wanted to get out of Walnut Grove. The Filipino community at that time was mainly single men. They had left their families in the Philippines and came over here to work and do a lot of the field work, the cutting of asparagus, and picking of pears, and all that type of thing. When World War II broke out, the violence of the Japanese army in the Philippines, the killing, and the massacring of people--the Filipino men were very hostile to the Japanese. And when they announced the internment, many of the Japanese were there the day before, because they were fearful of what the Filipinos might do. And there had been some murders, and they would write their signs of why they did it, because their wife had been killed, their children had been killed, and it was a very serious thing. So many of the Japanese were happy to get out.

We had--my grandfather had two Japanese foremen and their families. So, as they left for the internment camp, they had a lot of their own family treasures, samurai swords, and plate inscriptions, and just a hoard of Japanese--lots of them were very expensive--stones in them--knives, swords, and shields. Anyway, they brought them all over to my father's house. We had a large basement, and they said, "Would you take these? We don't want them, we don't ever want to see them again. We just want to get along, this is our home, we want to be here. We don't want to *ever* see any of this again." So my father put everything away, and labeled it. After the war, they came back, and couldn't believe that everything was still there. And of course they relished the fact that they could have it back. There were also very fancy costumes that they wore for their ceremonies and all of that. Really an interesting collection of artifacts.

Then we had--the other foreman, when the war broke out, he had a son that was nineteen years old, who, I believe, was in junior college--city college, Sacramento. Anyway, he went down and enlisted in the U.S. Army. So his parents and sister didn't have to go to an internment camp. They sent him [the foreman] to Colorado, and put him on a



farm back there, and he farmed the whole time during World War II, because his son had felt so strongly that he enlisted in the U.S. Army. And he [the son] became one of the group that went to Italy. There was a whole Japanese regiment that went over there, and he was one of them, and spent his whole time during the war in the service.

Quivik: Did they come back to this area after the war?

J. Gwerder: They came back to this area, and--there are very few left. There are two or three families that are still farming, Japanese, and the rest seem to have all gone on to be engineers. All of the ones in my class--and there were probably fifteen or twenty of my age--there isn't a one left in the Walnut Grove area. They all went on.

Quivik: Before the war, were there any different slots, niches, that the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Filipinos filled, or were they all doing the same kinds of things?

J. Gwerder: No. I think by then the Japanese were doing a lot of farming themselves. They were tenants, and--more than the Filipinos, they were doing more of the--and the Chinese were kind of both. There were Chinese that were farming, and had become tenants. At that time, it was still illegal for aliens to own land, so they couldn't purchase land.

The other thing, my father and my grandfather stored a lot of equipment for these tenant farmers, and they came back after the war, and everything was still sitting there.

Quivik: And then the Filipinos, what role did they play in the scheme of things?

J. Gwerder: After the war?

Quivik: Before the war.

J. Gwerder: Oh, before the war they were mainly the field workers, cutting asparagus, and celery--and then also working in the packing shed. There were a lot of them that worked in the packing shed. But, as I said, they were mainly single at that time. And then as time went on, they brought their families over. So we still have a small Filipino community here. Very few Chinese in Locke, I think there are four left, or something. And there are a few Japanese that are still farming here.

Quivik: When you were growing up, was Locke a place that you and your family would ever go for any reason?

J. Gwerder: Sure. We used to go over for Chinese food, it was wonderful Chinese food. We would go over there quite often. Some of the kids working in the family restaurant were in my class, so it was always fun to see them.

Quivik: Then thinking of Walnut Grove, are there businesses that used to exist, say, around the late forties, early fifties, that are now gone, that would symbolize the change in the economic structure, community structure?

J. Gwerder: The most important thing that's gone--at one time we had four automobile agencies. We had a Ford agency, a Chevrolet agency, a GMC truck agency, and a Plymouth agency, right in this town. And they all had their own shops for repairs and everything like that. There's none left.

Quivik: Now where do you go to buy an automobile?

J. Gwerder: Either to Rio Vista, to Sacramento, or to Lodi, but there's none, not a one. We do now have a John Deere agency, which we didn't have at that time.

### Links between Joe's Fraternity (Delta Tau Delta) and Walnut Grove

Quivik: Well, we talked about your going off to University of California, and you and Carol meeting, and getting married. I wonder if you could talk about the--aside from the farming practices--the early years of the beginnings of your family, and where your family moved to, where you lived, your children, et cetera?

J. Gwerder: When we were at Berkeley--one thing I did want to mention was, coming from a small school, I went into a fraternity, Delta Tau Delta, which was a house of about sixty-five members. One of the reasons that I enjoyed the group so much--there were six agricultural economics majors in the house, so that was one reason. But it was a great experience, because of going from a high school of 200 to 23,000, why, it was something that kind of took you from one limit to the other, from being so small to being so large.

Quivik: Did you live at that house?

J. Gwerder: Yes, I lived there all four years.

Quivik: And where is that located?

J. Gwerder: It was on Hillside Avenue, which is just up from Channing Way in the round circle, two blocks up there. We had a beautiful old house.

Quivik: Is the house still there?

J. Gwerder: Yes. It was sold during the time when all fraternities had such a terrible time, why, with a lack of memberships, twenty or more years ago. Anyway, they lost the house. They are back on campus now, down on Channing. It was a beautiful four-story family home, beautiful. All hardwood interior--

So I was in that. I was president of the house for a year. It was wonderful. We did all the work between the dean's office. If anyone got in trouble, we would be called, to go down to see the dean, grade-wise, or any other involvement that they had. So I spent a bit of time down there [chuckles] in the dean's office.

So, anyway--and the other group I was associated with at Berkeley, since we are doing this history, was Skull and Keys, which was a senior men's organization. These were students from fraternities, Bowles Hall, ones that were active in sports, or rally committee, or anything--it didn't make any difference. It was just kind of a group that would meet once every four weeks, and just relate to the campus activities and what was going on.

Quivik: What is Bowles Hall?

J. Gwerder: Bowles Hall is the men's living quarters, not a fraternity. At one point it was where all the football players lived. It's right up next to the Greek Theatre. It's a beautiful building up there. Quite a few members from there. It was an interesting group to belong to.

Quivik: Did you take all your meals at your fraternity house?

J. Gwerder: Yes.

Quivik: When you were president of the house, does that mean that you were in charge of supervising the staff, so to speak?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We had a house manager, but we did all the financing, we did everything. We had our chapter advisor who was an alumnus who would help us. But other than that, we did everything, as far as running the house.

Quivik: Was it good food?

J. Gwerder: It was excellent. At the time I got down there, I was very disappointed in the meat they had, so by the second year I had made arrangements with our packing plant in Elk Grove that we sold our cattle through. And so I arranged that we could have our own fed beef delivered to a packer in Oakland, and they would cut and wrap all the meat for us, and that we served at the house. So I made sure we had good beef.

Quivik: [laughs] That's great!

Well then, the early years of your family?

### Raising the Gwerder Children at Walnut Grove

J. Gwerder: Then Carol and I were married, and we moved to the ranch at Galt, where we had had a Quonset hut that had been converted to an area where we could entertain customers for our cattle. So Carol and I lived there, and our oldest daughter was born when we were there. And then we moved to Clampett Tract, which was a little subdivision in Walnut Grove right across from the Catholic church. There our son and second daughter were born. We lived there, and then we proceeded on to start our plans to build the home that we live in now, which I think Carol has spoken about.

But anyway, the interesting thing--when we were there, since we were so close to the church, Sunday became the meeting place for the family. My cousins, my sister, everybody after mass would come, and we would have coffee, or whatever, because we were two doors from the church. It was hard to be late or behind.

Quivik: Could you name your children and the dates they were born? [chuckles] [tape interruption]

J. Gwerder: Our oldest daughter, Carrie, was born July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1956, followed by Jim, our son. He was born January 24 of 1958. Ann, our youngest, was born October 7<sup>th</sup> of 1961.

One of the highlights of living there, too, was the Fourth of July was an annual parade and get-together of the whole community. So we would try to build floats, or whatever. Every family did something so that we could make a parade. Of course it was naturally led off by the Fire Department with the sirens going and all that. So it became a great day in Walnut Grove, and still does today. They still have the annual Fourth of July day.

Quivik: Was that the family of you and Carol who would make a float, or the extended J. Gwerder family?

J. Gwerder: No, at that time it was just us, just the five of us. We would work out something.

### The Gwerders' Present House

Quivik: Approximately what year did you move into this house?

J. Gwerder: We moved in this house in 1964. So we started about early '63 with the plans to build a house. I believe Carol covered that.

Quivik: She described it from her perspective, the things that she worked on with the architect. What role did you play in that planning process?

J. Gwerder: When Carol originally spoke of this friend, her family friend, [William Wurster] that we might get to do our plan for us, I was kind of overwhelmed, because he had been dean of MIT, and then dean of the architectural school at Berkeley. So I just couldn't imagine that he would have time. He was just doing the Bank of America building in San Francisco, and I just couldn't believe that he would have time to do this. So I accompanied her as we went down and talked about building this home. And I was really taken back, because it was like she was his daughter or something. I mean, he just couldn't be nice enough, and just wanted to get right on it, and get going, and what we wanted--it was a wonderful feeling.

We were very fortunate, because he was not doing homes at the time, just commercial buildings. He just dropped everything and did our plans. And he had done another house in the area, and he knew our contractor, so he said, "What I'll do is sell you the plans, because I'm not going to have time to come up and look at it. And I know your builder, so I don't think you need an architectural inspection, because I know the quality of his work." So that is what we did.

And then I was able to find, through a mill in Sacramento, all of the redwood lumber in our house, which had come from the dismantling of the Yolo causeway, which is a causeway from Sacramento to Davis. It was constructed of sixteen-by-sixteen clear, heart, redwood timbers. So we didn't have our plan, and we didn't know what to do, but anyway I bought all these timbers, and just put them in the barn until we had our plans ready. So we were able to use that for the construction.

Quivik: This house sits on ground that has been in the Gwerder family for some time. Can you describe the way this area along the river has been subdivided?

J. Gwerder: Yes. My grandfather built every one of his children a home, although when he bought the Walnut Grove ranch there was an existing house where my father and the family moved. I was born and raised in that home. So every one had a home to live in. But he decided that he wanted to gift the frontage along the Sacramento River, the frontage of his farm, six lots, one to each one of his children, a two-acre lot, that we own through to the water. And the levee, and the highway has an easement on top of it, so we actually own through the low-water mark. So he had these all deeded out.

And an interesting part of it is, when we went to Sacramento to apply for a building permit, they said, "No, you can't build on that, that zoning is 'Agricultural 80.' You have to have eighty acres in the area to build a home." And I said, "We have a map, a subdivision map, they have all been deeded out, the six two-acre lots." And they said, "Oh, that can't be--" So when they looked back, my grandfather had done this prior to zoning or any planning. So there was no problem. And so an aunt and uncle built on one, we built on the next, and since then there've been four more that are not now owned by any of our family, as they have all been sold.

Quivik: Are there any sorts of experiences that come to mind, having your children grow up in this house, that kind of characterize what it's been like living here?

J. Gwerder: The house has aged well and lent itself to our various activities and our children's, and now our grandchildren love to visit and swim and skateboard on our long porch.

### Passing on the Gwerder and Goodwin Family Farm Operations

Quivik: Well, you have described how your son Jim is working with you in the farm business, and your daughters help out with it as well. I wonder if you could contrast the differences

between the way the transition went from your dad's farming operation to yours, and now yours to Jim's. What's different about those two sets of transitions?

- J. Gwerder: I think, actually, it's very similar, because my father started farming with his father, and so Jim has started with me. My father, he had one sister that lived with my grandparents, and so there has been kind of a caring for everybody within the family. So it is very similar.
- Quivik: Okay. So even though there are these changes in farming methods, and the number of government agencies you have to work with, in terms of just the family transition, that is pretty comparable?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, it is.
- Quivik: Okay. Well, one thing that's been interesting, I've heard you describe over the years the sort of fluid relationships that you've established between you and your sister, and now you've got your son and daughters involved, and different ways of incorporating--and I don't necessarily mean that in the legally incorporated--but drawing together parcels of property into one farm operation, and then splitting them off with other families--could you talk about how your family has sort of conceptualized that over the years?
- J. Gwerder: I think we have to attribute part of all these ideas to a wonderful accountant that we had that was in Stockton who had come from a large farming family.
- Quivik: Is this your dad's accountant?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. He kept saying that there's only one time to do these things, and it is right now. Before everybody gets out of the mood, now is the time to split things, and then you have your own, to do what you want with. And Carol's sister Alice Lenz and her husband were of the same attitude, because he was also their accountant. So that's why, one by one, we have deeded the properties, separated them, and yet, we still, as the Thompson-Folger, we still operated together, even though that's the only farm that remains together. My sister and I split. Carol and her other cousins, they split up the Goodwin company. The only one that really is left is Alice and Carol and her other cousins in the Thompson-Folger. And that's a corporation, so it is stock, it is not physically land, it's the stock that represents land. But all the land we have split, and now everybody has their own. We don't have to do it again.
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- Quivik: I was asking, when your father left these various properties to you and your sister, did he offer any kinds of guidance to, years down the line, how he expected that you might split them up?
- J. Gwerder: No. He left it all in a corporate entity, and we were all stockholders. He had gifted some stock, so we had an equal ownership. No, actually, my sister and I, we kind of just negotiated ourselves what we wanted. She and her husband were in the pear business, so it was natural that they take the pear orchard and the property on Steamboat Slough. And

because of my interest in livestock, and I had also acquired the 190 acres next door, it was natural that I take that. So that's the way we split it.

Quivik: Before the split was officially consummated, how much time do you suppose you spent negotiating how you would split it between you?

J. Gwerder: It was really not very long, because prior to this my sister was doing the books for our corporation, and it was in our office here in this home. So we discussed it many times before, that we wanted to split it.

Quivik: Had you been discussing it over the course of several weeks, or several months, or several years?

J. Gwerder: I think probably a year we talked about it. We also split the equipment that was applicable to each property. The sprayers for the pears, and the irrigation system, and all of that, we had that all pretty well worked out.

Quivik: Okay. Well, in the course of talking with you, Joe, I have also learned about another place that we haven't got on tape yet, and that's the San Andreas place. Can you describe where that is, and what it is?

J. Gwerder: Yes. This was a ranch that my father purchased in Calaveras County. It is approximately halfway between Copperopolis and San Andreas, on what's called Bear Mountain. It was 2,600 acres of kind of rolling, oak-studded grazing ranch, and on it it had a couple of reservoirs. The previous owner had developed 26 acres of irrigated pasture in it, that was irrigated with a sprinkling machine. So we ran cattle up there. My father loved it, mainly because it had wonderful quail hunting and deer hunting. Our children were--as we all have been--interested in horses, so we had horses up there. We would go up and spend lots of weekends riding. We would work cattle together, and gather, all on horseback, because there weren't enough roads on it to do it any other way.

Quivik: What became of that place?

J. Gwerder: We ended up selling it. We really didn't replace it. My father was not too well at the time, and we had so many other things going on, and we thought it was just best to sell it.

Quivik: When was that, about?

J. Gwerder: We sold it in about '76.

Quivik: And you mentioned to me what's going on on that place now.

J. Gwerder: Yes, it was interesting. Before we sold it, we were approached by a repeater telephone company, a local one up there, that wanted to put a station on top of the mountain. On top of the mountain we could look and see the whole valley. And so they wanted to put this repeater-sending station up there. So we negotiated the lease. They were paying \$100 a month for the right to set this repeater up there.

I had not heard much about it until last year--this is something else I meant to bring out, that the state of California, through the State Fair, has a 100 Year Club. That's for all farms who have been in business over 100 years. And since my grandfather started in 1892--so last year, at the induction ceremony, I ran into our neighbor, who was next door to this ranch in Calaveras County, and was going into the 100 Year Club. So I asked what had happened to our property, and she proceeded to tell me that the person, the most recent buyer of the property, who was a country western singer, had made a deal with Channel 36 in San Jose. And they put up a repeater for Channel 36, because they could bounce a signal from San Jose directly to the top of that hill, and then back to the whole east side, from Orinda, to Pleasanton, to Livermore, that whole thing, with a direct bounce. And anyway, she proceeded to tell me that they were now getting \$2,200 a month from just the top of the mountain, for the site for repeating telephone and commercial broadcasting.

Quivik: An easy way to make a little money.

J. Gwerder: Yes, that's right, doggone it.

Quivik: The place that you owned and operated during the time you were on the board of District 1002, we also didn't get the name of that on tape.

J. Gwerder: Oh, we called it the Circle K ranch.

Quivik: Where did that name come from?

J. Gwerder: The name came from the man, the individual, or the family we bought it from. It was the Kuhn family. And the reason he sold it is the same difficulty we had with the state and federal division of highways on the construction of I-5. They would not give him a cattle pass for his cattle. And so, rather than have to haul the cattle around, he just sold the ranch, and we were fortunate enough to buy it.

Quivik: Are there any other ranches or farms that we haven't talked about yet?

J. Gwerder: No, I think that's it.

### **Joe Gwerder: Horseman**

Quivik: Okay. [chuckles] Well, another thing that you do these days is do a lot of trail riding with your horses. I wonder how long you have been doing that sort of thing?

J. Gwerder: As long as I can remember. I've always loved horses, I've always had horses, and my father before. Several years ago, I joined a polo clinic at UC Davis and then played with the Greenbriar and Modesto polo clubs for two years. And my grandfather--because he was killed in an automobile accident when he was eighty-six, and he had just bought two new horses to [break to his buggy?] so that he could continue to look at the crops, why, with his horses.



Quivik: This was your grandfather?

J. Gwerder: My grandfather, yes. So I guess I inherited it. But anyway, we have always done a lot of trail riding. And there's one organization that I wanted to mention to you that I'm a member of. It is called Rancheros Vistadores. It's approximately 450 members from all over the world. One common interest they're not necessarily ranchers or farmers or anything, but they are all horsemen, they love horses.

The history behind it, it started in 1930, and it was a copy of the way the rancheros used to gather their cattle between missions. They would all get together cattle, drive them to the closest mission, and then they would separate them, and each rancher would take his cattle. If they weren't branded they would brand them then, and then go home. And after it was all over the riders would then gather at the ranches going home on the way, and have a dinner and then ride the next day.

So this group put this back together. It started in 1930. We meet once a year, the first week in May. We get together on the DeLasalle Ranch in Santa Ynez, and we have an encampment there. It starts always on a Friday. Then Saturday morning we have a ride on the DeLasalle Ranch, which is beautiful. It has a golf course, and beautiful country club, and everything on it. But we just use the grounds for our trail ride. We get back about lunch time, and then we ride into the mission at Santa Ynez. And this is the tradition from the old rancheros, that every mission they went to, they always had a mariachi band, and all the costumes. So we ride through the middle of Santa Ynez, parade through--this is 400 to 450 horses. Then we end up--the mission has a huge courtyard. We end up in front of the courtyard, and the padre from the mission gives us a blessing every year for the ride. They have entertainment, dancers, and all. It's a big festival for Santa Ynez. So it takes maybe an hour and a half or so. And then we ride back to our camp and stay there overnight.

Then the next day we take a long ride, which is about twenty miles up to the permanent camp of the Ranchero Vistadores, which is a deeded camp, and the members belong to different camps, different members in each camp. We're there for the next five days. It is a competition: roping, cattle sorting, cattle cutting, horse races, and also trap shooting. There's any number of different team events that are all put together. So it just is all involving horses for the next five days. Then have a big closing ceremony, and everybody goes home until the next year. It's a wonderful event.

Quivik: And you do that every year?

J. Gwerder: Yes. And now--oh, I meant to say that Carol's dad became a member in 1936, five years after it started. And now, the nice thing is, Jim my son is now a member too, so we go down together even though we're in different camps. We go down together. But it is a great organization.

Quivik: Then in the spring there is a trail ride you go on in Nevada?

J. Gwerder: Yes. We go to McDermitt, Nevada. It's a cattle drive. A good friend of mine owns the ranch and the cattle. We help drive them. We drive them a total of sixty miles in three

days. We take from 1,400 to 1,800 mother cows, and we go across country. They accompany us with two pickups, which take the food and all of our bedrolls, and all that. And we let the cattle go. There are line shacks on the way, and they are shacks. They have wood stoves in there, and they cook on the wood stove. And then we get up at four o'clock in the morning, and we have breakfast at four-thirty. We have to go catch our horses because we do this in February, about the 24th or the 25th in February, and it's usually between ten and twelve degrees in the morning. So we have to saddle them up so that the leather will warm up enough that you can tighten your cinch. So then we go back and have breakfast, and at five or quarter after five, as soon as it's daylight, we leave, and drive the next twenty miles, and stay overnight the second night. And then the next day we do the same. We get up and drive another twenty miles and stay overnight. And then we come home. It's a wonderful trip.

Quivik: How many of you are driving that 1,500 or 1,800 head of cattle?

J. Gwerder: Usually about thirteen or fourteen--which is a--I mean, that's a lot of cattle. And the ground is frozen in the morning, just frozen solid. Then by afternoon it warms up, and your feet usually thaw out by that time. It's a real experience.

Quivik: How many years have you been doing that now?

J. Gwerder: I think about fourteen years. We each take two horses, because one can't go the sixty miles, because of all the riding in between. So we take two and ride one, and then they drive the other ones. But with no riders, they kind of rest for the day. And then the next day you change, and ride that one, and rest the other one. Then you ride that one. And if you get caught back in there where you can't trailer the horses out, then you have to ride out. I don't do that any more, because the ranch cowboys ride out. They can take a little shortcut, it's about forty miles in one day. But the horses have to go out that way.

Quivik: How many horses do you have now, you personally?

J. Gwerder: I have five.

Quivik: And when you are not on these cattle drives or other special events, how often do you get out to ride your horses?

J. Gwerder: Oh, we still check our cattle horseback, and we ride every time we work them. We still work them all horseback. So it's--maybe two days a week for a half a day or something like that. It's not a long ride. Just so that they remember who we are.

Quivik: [chuckles] Well, that sounds like it might wrap things up. Should we get to the joint part?

J. Gwerder: Let's do it.

## **IX JOE AND CAROL GWERDER DESCRIBE THEIR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE**

### **A General Outlook on the Future**

Quivik: Okay. [tape interruption] Now we are at a new phase of the interview. I am here at the Gwerder home at Walnut Grove with both Carol and Joe. We're going to talk about their outlook on the future of agriculture in California in general, or particularly in the delta region. To launch into that, I would like each of you two to just give me a general sense of what you think the prospects for the future are for agriculture around here.

C. Gwerder: Well, we, in our family and our friends in agriculture, feel very gloomy about the future, because of overproduction and we feel we cannot compete with foreign imports, and we have escalating energy costs, and escalating restrictions. We understand a lot of them, but it still makes it very difficult and very unprofitable in many ways. The farmers historically have been independent and efficient, with lots of ingenuity and hard work. But it is felt that they may not be able to sustain themselves at this time through all of those attributes. We have several friends who have just had to give it up after three generations.

Quivik: Joe?

J. Gwerder: I think, as we look to the future, we're going to have to be very flexible, changing crops, vineyard to orchard, orchard to vineyard. There has to be some place that we can make it. I certainly have no idea now how we are going to do it. So far the vineyards have been very good. It probably is going to be overplanted, but fortunately we have some long term contracts, as far as that phase of it, that we can probably continue to operate.

### **Effects of Energy Costs on Agriculture**

J. Gwerder: Nobody knows this energy cost or fuel cost. Those are things that we cannot even budget for this year's harvest. We don't know what the cost of electricity for drying the grain

crops, or what the fuel for our deliveries of crops are going to be. So we are kind of in a guessing game right now of what might happen.

- Quivik: Well, let's remind folks in the future that we're in the year 2001, and this is the year that California is having what some people are calling an energy crisis. The availability of electricity has come into question. It is the, what--four or five years into a scheme of deregulation that the California legislature initiated back in '96. And also natural gas prices have begun to escalate. How are those two kinds of energy looking to you right now in your farm operation?
- J. Gwerder: The natural gas is definitely a serious problem, because that's where our source of nitrogen is. All of our crops, regardless of which one, we need to fertilize with nitrogen. As I mentioned earlier, we have no way of even guessing at what they might be. Now, Governor Gray Davis is not as restrictive now on some of the operating plants that are giving off pollutants. I don't think that he would ever do that for agriculture--but to get him out of his immediate political situation, that might be an answer for him. But it's the same problem that is facing us. If we have to re-equip our diesel tractors to be cleaner burning, I don't think we could afford to do it.
- Quivik: And how about electricity? How does either the increase in cost--increase in price, I should say--of electricity, or uncertainty of supply, affect your operation?
- J. Gwerder: We intentionally did not plant any corn this year. We have our own grain facility, with our own dryer, that is fueled by natural gas. All of our internal equipment is all run on electricity. So we didn't plant, because there's no way we could be assured of, not only of price, but the availability. If we were to be cut off in the middle, with wet corn, it would immediately swell and sour. So we didn't feel we could take a chance. Every one of the people who we sell to, be it a winery, be it Cal West, they have all the some cost struggle to go through, because of the increased cost of energy. And all these products have to be handled, and it's just an additional cost. They can't give me an answer either.
- Quivik: Do you have a sense of what you'd like the State of California to do to respond to this energy situation, or the federal government, or someone to do to help improve the situation, specifically for farmers in the delta area?
- J. Gwerder: I feel the main thing is we need more supply. We just can't keep kidding ourselves. We have to drill, we have to make the natural gas available. There are millions of cubic feet of gas available. And all we have to do is build a pipeline. And that's easier than trying to put it in container ships, oil, and bring it down.
- Natural gas is the answer. It's our answer for fertilizer, it's our answer for running the power plants. It is the answer, whether we get it from Mexico, the Gulf of Texas, Canada. Wherever it comes, it should be utilized. That's our only chance.
- C. Gwerder: And there was a thought of penalizing the larger users of power, which would include agriculture. So there would be an extra penalty for the usage when you are a large user of power. We are conserving here today, Fred, because it is 104 degrees, and you are sitting here without air conditioning. [laughter]

Quivik: Congratulations. [laughter]

J. Gwerder: But I don't think that conservation or anything is going to do it. And we can't—if costs go up, we either have to use it or quit. So we can't conserve. You can't conserve. I mean, at least we are doing what we can now. But if we cut down on the fertilizer, then there's no use planting the crop. When it comes time to harvest, a good friend of mine just went to buy his own generator, to make sure he doesn't get his elevators full of wet corn, and then they shut him off. So he is going to make the investment to assure himself of a way to process his crop.

Quivik: What's his fuel for that generator?

J. Gwerder: It's going to be natural gas.

Quivik: Carol, when you say that there are thoughts that perhaps large energy users will be penalized, does that refer to industrial users, or could that even affect individual farmers who are large users?

C. Gwerder: Well, it definitely could affect individual farmers. It's industry and agriculture primarily that would be the biggest users, and so there would be an extra surcharge, I think, there was talk about, on top.

J. Gwerder: And this year, with a short water year, our pumping costs could be higher, just in the lift out of the ground, as the groundwater goes down. So therefore, if they use the last two years as an average, and then you are penalized for more usage than the last two years—so much is weather related. I mean, this is not a typical year. We had in May, 104, 106 degrees.

C. Gwerder: We had a very warm spring.

J. Gwerder: Now we have it again in June. It appears that we are going to have a warmer than normal summer. And when it does, you have to put more water on it.

Quivik: And the water will come from a deeper level?

J. Gwerder: Yes. And it takes more energy, the deeper the water, to pump, more energy.

### Effects of Free-Trade Agreements on Agriculture

Quivik: Well, another area that you have identified as a looming problem for agriculture in this area is imports from other countries. Can you describe your outlook on that situation?

J. Gwerder: Yes. I think that it's going to continue to be a problem because we are not playing on the same field. We are not on an even keel with those farmers in Mexico, or down to Costa

Rica, or wherever else. They are not held to the same standards, they use different materials, they don't have the requirements of fair employment. The type of equipment they have to use--they don't have OSHA, or safety standards--it's just a whole different set of circumstances.

C. Gwerder: And they are well subsidized by their governments.

J. Gwerder: Oh, yes, certainly the Canadians. The foreign countries, from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, Spain, every one of them, they are subsidized to extremes, because they went through the shortage of food in World War II, and they will *never* face that problem again. I mean, they are so highly subsidized. They are paid, in England--our wheat market now is about \$88, \$90 [per unit?]. They get \$180. They are paid from the market price plus the subsidy they get. So it keeps them in business, and they have all the grain they want.

C. Gwerder: We feel it sort of frightening to think that we may allow ourselves to not be self-sufficient, to feed ourselves, that we will import so much that we will put agriculture, a great deal of it, out of business here, so that we will have to import more and more, and not be self-reliant, as far as feeding ourselves.

J. Gwerder: I mean, it is very similar to the energy. We have got to produce, to be self-reliant.

Quivik: And again, what do you see as possible solutions to that situation? [silence, then chuckles]

J. Gwerder: [chuckles]

Quivik: Would you like to see increased subsidies in this country, or some kind of way of eliminating subsidies in other countries, or something else?

J. Gwerder: Well, I don't think that will ever happen. They have tried that before, and we thought we were going to be able to do it until NAFTA. And now, from South America, they are talking about all the new trade agreements. Farm products are going to keep coming. And I don't know how we can compete, unless they pick up their standard of living, and all--

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Quivik: Okay Joe, you were mentioning the gratuities that you are asked to cover in your--

J. Gwerder: And one thing that I didn't mention earlier, is we furnish health insurance and dental insurance for all our employees. And we do it, not that we are required to, but we think it's--we are trying to keep our help happy. Even though it is not forced on agriculture. Just because of the competition for good employees, somebody else is going to be paying it. So in order to keep our people, we're trying to stay with what other commodities furnish, or whatever business it is, so that we can compete. And it is getting more and more difficult.

C. Gwerder: I guess we did talk about the chemicals that they are still all allowed to use, these very heavy chemicals, in foreign countries, that are no longer legal here. But we don't seem to

protest any of that as we do, say, the sweatshops of Nike. But we don't protest any agricultural misuse of people's health and welfare as we do in other businesses.

- Quivik: Is that an issue that for instance the Farm Bureau has talked about? Are there ways that you as farmers here in California can help people in other countries pass similar kinds of regulations?
- C. Gwerder: I would think it would be the consumer that would have to say they won't eat those grapes from Costa Rica. Something came out in the paper that the workers were being sprayed with cyanide and they were having terrible breathing problems. I think it would have to be a consumer oriented effort.
- J. Gwerder: Because that is the only place we could ever get the numbers to make a difference. Agriculture is such a small amount of the workforce now and the population, even in California. It's a very small percent. The consumers are the only way that we could make any strides in that area.
- Quivik: Do you see the Farm Bureau or other organizations trying to build those bridges with consumer groups?
- J. Gwerder: Well, our only real close tie is Ag. in the Classroom, which we are trying--
- C. Gwerder: That is a very good program. Our niece is head of that with the Farm Bureau in Sacramento, and it is called Agriculture in the Classroom. They educate teachers to go into the classrooms and just show the children where food comes from.
- J. Gwerder: Just discuss the issues we're talking about now, to make them aware of where the food is coming from. So many of them don't have any idea or any background. How would they, unless they are taught.
- C. Gwerder: So that is a very worthwhile program.
- J. Gwerder: That is something that we are strongly in favor of.
- Quivik: It comes from a store, and it is wrapped in plastic--
- J. Gwerder: Yes, exactly! [laughter]
- C. Gwerder: That's right.
- J. Gwerder: And the milk comes out of the carton. [laughter]
- Quivik: Well, you have also talked about subsidies by foreign governments. Do you have any desire to see subsidies returned, in the meantime, to help undergird the agricultural sector in this country?
- C. Gwerder: It is called the "s" word, isn't it? [laughter]

J. Gwerder: Oh, that is a very difficult problem, because I am not a believer in it. But I mean, you know, at some point we have to give a little, and if it's available, you have to take advantage of it. Everybody else is. We are going to have to take advantage of it. But there's been no push that way. I think, now, speaking as a banker--there is going to be a point in time when something is going to have to happen. Otherwise there will be foreclosures, and there is going to be--I mean, people cannot exist on the pricing the way it is now. Many of them are into their savings, borrowing now, and I don't see any way they can pay it back, the way they can pay it back. The lower interest rates that we're in right now, that environment will be helpful.

C. Gwerder: And from the bank point of view, you're finding that the bank is not very hot on agricultural loans.

J. Gwerder: Oh, exactly. No. I mean, they know. You just look at statistically what the return is per acre compared to anything else--and [we?] just cut back on the loans that are available.

### Farmers and the Environmental Movement

Quivik: Another set of issues that you have identified that are a potential cloud in the future for agriculture are some environmental issues. Can you talk about some of those that you see potentially having an adverse effect on agriculture?

J. Gwerder: Everybody seems to be interested in trying to do a better job, a use of less herbicides, insecticides, pesticides. There has been a move towards organic farming. So far, it's such a small part of the total ag. economy. But people that buy that way are willing to pay the price, and that's an interesting--and I don't know how far that will ever go. But you take a person who is only eating organic food, they will spend triple. And so the low end of the population, there is no way they could afford that type of food, so I don't know where--

C. Gwerder: We'll know more. Our son-in-law is going to go into some organic asparagus this year, so we will see how that goes. His cousin has had quite a good success with organic melons, so we'll see--

J. Gwerder: And tomatoes. He has been in this ten years now, and he has done quite well. But so far the demand is good because there are many people who are looking for that type of product. And we even now have--last year when we were visiting in Del Mar, we had a tour of the Del Mar racetrack with a veterinarian, and he was showing us a number of stables that now only feed organic hay. And this is--the price is unbelievable.

Quivik: [chuckles]

J. Gwerder: But those people that own the racehorses think it's the greatest thing in the world.

Quivik: These, the nephew and so on, are they relatively nearby here?



- C. Gwerder: This is our son-in-law who is growing organic.
- Quivik: Your son-in-law, yes.
- C. Gwerder: He farms up in the Woodland area, in Esparto, the Capay Valley.
- J. Gwerder: Yes. He also has organic alfalfa, too. And there are some dairies--there's a new dairy in Idaho that is going to be milking about--I just heard this the other day--4,000 or 5,000 cows. And they are going strictly organic, on grain and hay. They will feed nothing unless it's organic. They'll come out with their own bottling, processing. So they'll have milk, cream, butter, everything will be organic. It's an interesting concept. And the way the pricing is, there are people who are going to jump into growing that product for them, if they are willing to pay. And they can, if they get it from the consumer side. But you know, on a grand scale, it won't work.
- Quivik: Do you have neighbors nearby who are trying organic crops?
- C. Gwerder: Not in this area that we know of.
- J. Gwerder: No. Nobody in this area that we know of.
- C. Gwerder: I don't know how it works if your neighbor is not an organic farmer, and he's spraying over there--how much drifts over to you? I don't know how that's controlled.
- J. Gwerder: Well, that is an unexplained problem. [chuckles]
- C. Gwerder: It could be quite a problem.
- J. Gwerder: Unless you own enough land to buffer yourself, there's no way that you could--
- Quivik: Well, Joe and I have talked about the endangered species problems that you've had on the vernal ponds, and the fairy shrimp. Are there ways that you see that particular issue or topic further encroaching on, say, some of your operations closer by here, the Galt place, or Thompson-Folger--are there any effects that that set of regulations is having--or that are looming out there for you?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, there is one definite one, and it's called an endangered specie, which is the elderberry beetle. And it used to be in the Cosumnes-Mokelumne watershed, where we are. We have no elderberry, but because we are in the area where the native elderberry bush could grow, we are going to be under the same restriction that if you had elderberry trees. Because it could be where they might be. So that is one on Dry Creek.
- C. Gwerder: On the other side, we feel it's to our advantage, the fairy shrimp and the vernal pools in property we have, which Joe spoke of, the Farmington property. So we are hoping--we have been trying to establish that there could be more vernal pools there and more fairy shrimp. So it goes both ways, in our favor, and not in our favor. That is because we are now trying to sell the 800 acres at Farmington for mitigation, but the price will be much less than if it could be developed for vineyards.

- Quivik: Would that elderberry situation affect--is that a particular type of habitat where--?
- J. Gwerder: It would be any similar to what we have, any stream bed, with a proximity to a stream.
- Quivik: Riparian land?
- J. Gwerder: Yes, exactly. We have looked into it, and they'll say, "Even though you don't have it, and you don't have elderberry trees, that's an area that is native to the elderberry beetle." And you know what's happening in Sacramento--the Swainson hawk, and the giant garter snake, and, you know, some of things, that--I mean, they are still going to be there. You're not going to eliminate them, you can't. I don't know what the answer is.
- Quivik: You've talked about the monitoring that goes on now with water leaving your property. Is clean water another issue that looks like it is becoming a problem for agriculture, or do you also like having that monitoring because it is protecting the water coming onto your property?
- J. Gwerder: Right. That is another two-way street. And the one, the greatest problem right now, on the water issue, is the first rain in the fall. That's when every street in Sacramento, and every town in the valley, all of the oil comes out that everybody has dumped in there all summer long when they change oil in their car. And that takes all the rubber, all the slick off of all the roads. And it all ends up in the master drainage, which is the Sacramento River, the San Joaquin River, up the north coast. I mean, it's all over. That is one of the most serious pollutants we have now, is what the public does all year long. And it's cleaned out only once a year, and that is the first big rain in the fall.
- Quivik: And does that affect your agricultural operation?
- J. Gwerder: Well, fortunately we're not using that much water at that time, and with the first rain, why, we usually are not irrigating at that time. But they say now that the summer rains down in Texas, it's doing the same thing, it's polluting the water. There's such a petroleum base to tires, that that just washes off of every street, into every drain. It's a real problem.
- Quivik: And is that more of a problem around here than for the San Francisco Bay?
- J. Gwerder: Oh, absolutely, definitely. San Francisco, Oakland, or Berkeley, that whole area all just-- [makes a water sound] "shhhhh," right in there.
- Quivik: And then air quality issues, you mentioned the need to clean up emissions from diesel, tractors, and so on--
- J. Gwerder: Yes.
- Quivik: --and the restrictions on burning stubble. Are there others that you see on the horizon?
- J. Gwerder: Yes. The other one is the better fuel factors that they want on automobiles. All that comes down to is reduced fuel, but reduced horsepower, too. How is agriculture going to fit in

that? We are going to more and more horsepower to try to do the job more efficiently, and the way to do it is with more power. They are designing engines to do that now. But as far as converting what equipment we have now, there's no way it is possible. You couldn't afford it. It's again a price factor. And yet, we can't afford to buy a new one. Our tractors that we paid, the Stieger we have, we paid \$125,000. It is probably \$270,000 or \$280,000 now for a new one to do the same job. That tractor is about ten years old. But it isn't a-- it'll smoke a little, because it uses fuel to convert the power, and that's what we need. So it's another serious problem.

Quivik: One of the issues we hear about in general is the additives to gasoline to improve combustion in automobiles, and the requirement that exists some places that a certain amount of ethanol be added, to make a cleaner-burning gasoline. And that discussion always seems to revolve around ethanol production in the Midwest. Has there been any talk of California getting into that?

J. Gwerder: Definitely. To get rid of the MTBE first, because of our groundwater. And that is the most serious thing that should be addressed immediately, not just the few places like Tahoe and down in Bakersfield, a couple of areas that people are actually sick from it. But the whole state is--it will get in the groundwater. I mean, we know that, that has been proven.

Ethanol, they are talking now about--I just read this--the Spreckles sugar plant, that it just closed in Woodland, because they are no longer processing beets--they are talking about building an ethanol plant right now. And the greatest source of ethanol is corn. It would definitely add to our corn market to be able to sell it. We can't compete with the Midwest, but if we start producing ethanol, we have a chance. Right now, the corn products that come in, they come in--Foster Farms, they buy corn now in trainloads, 100 cars at a time. And they come out of Omaha, Nebraska, that country, one whole train just of corn for their poultry. And we can't compete with what they can do because of our irrigation. Back there typically they have summer rains, so that is one less operation.

C. Gwerder: And barley from Scotland, weren't they, Foster Farms?

J. Gwerder: Yes, they brought barley from Scotland.

### Exporting Food-Processing Methods Abroad

J. Gwerder: The other thing that is really a fearful thing, we have a new cannery that was developed about five years ago called Morning Star. It's at Willows, off Interstate 5. It's a very efficient system, because they take the total tomato crop, and the greens they make into a green tomato relish, the ripers go into tomato paste, and they utilize the whole crop. It's very efficient.

The gentleman that put that all together does the harvesting and the trucking. He owns all the harvest. So if you want to grow tomatoes for him, you do all of the things that he says. You have to farm within ten miles of the cannery.

He was just contracted to go to China, and they are going to build twenty of these canneries in China. They hope to take over the tomato paste world market in five years, because everything is going to go into fifty-five-gallon plastic bags, all handled by forklift, and they will come into this country, just load after load after load. It's another fear that we have.

Quivik: So that means if he's successful in China, he would be putting his own plant--

J. Gwerder: Absolutely. I mean, he'll be paid. He'll be the exporter or something. He'll fit into that program somehow. And apparently they have just beautiful land, water, and certainly all the help in the world.

Quivik: Yes. And they have done the same thing in the apple business. They have taken over the apple juice market for the world. In fact, there were just some restrictions put on, they were trying to come into this country--import restrictions on coming in with apple juice.

Quivik: So that gets back to our earlier discussion about competition from abroad.

J. Gwerder: Absolutely.

### Concerns about Costs of Land and Putting Land in Trust

Quivik: Another issue that can affect the viability of agriculture is the cost of land, the amount that the land is taxed, the way--if we are talking about agriculture surviving from generation to generation--the way it's transferred from one generation to another, estate taxes--how do you see that situation affecting agriculture in the coming years?

J. Gwerder: For a while we thought we were going in the correct direction. They were designating family farms, and there would be a higher amount allowed to be transferred to the next generation if it was a family farm. It would be higher than if it was corporate farm in order to keep--and small businesses, not only agriculture, but small businesses. And I have not seen the real workings of the new estate tax laws, the new tax law that was just signed, so I don't know how that fits into the program. But we had designed our, as I spoke earlier, our passing or giving property. Everybody is involved in it, because in order to confirm that you are a family farm, everybody has to be involved, which we are. Everybody is in the business. But I don't know how that's going to be addressed in the new tax bill. I have not spent any time on that.

Quivik: Well, Carol, you had said that at one time you thought agriculture needed protection from development and what that was doing to real estate prices. Now you are thinking that perhaps your views on that are changing?

C. Gwerder: Well, they are changing in the fact of just the discouraging losses and the decline of income. I would like to see our children enjoy some of the advantages that we have had,

and I don't feel that they are going to have the income. It's just not going to be there, from farming. Therefore, whom we once feared, were the developers taking over agriculture land. We now could possibly welcome some of that on some property, in order to insure the future generations.

- Quivik: Sometimes people who presently own property, in trying to ensure that a property will remain in agricultural uses, put some kind of an easement on it, that says it can only be used for agriculture?
- C. Gwerder: For agriculture, yes.
- Quivik: What's your outlook on that?
- C. Gwerder: We feel that that's a very unfavorable thing, definitely for our family. For one thing, you're dictating from the grave. Another is that you might be—you are restricting your property to be only agriculture in perpetuity. Therefore land could be developed all around you, and you're sitting in the middle of that, and you're required to use it for agriculture, but you are not making much money. And also you would be very restricted, I think, as far as usage, with so much development around it. So we just—I don't understand that at all. I know some people who have done it. I have had conversations with them, and I still don't understand the reasoning because I just feel you can't predict for your future generations what their needs will be.
- J. Gwerder: And many of the municipalities love it now, because then that will be designated open space. And so they feel that that will add to the attractiveness of their developments—if we have all this open-space land.
- Quivik: Well, given the difficulties of making money from raising crops, are there other ways that you think that the agriculture sector may be able to stay in business?
- C. Gwerder: Well, there have been years when we actually did sell some water to southern California, and that was quite profitable. And actually it turned out well, because you planted a crop, and didn't have to irrigate, so still had the crop, and still sold the water. So that was one of our better years. A friend whom we respect, as far as his judgment, feels that the key in California is going to be selling your property to Nature Conservancy, or some other organization of that type, and retain your water rights, and therefore you can sell the water. The water will become increasingly more valuable than agriculture itself in California.
- Quivik: So when you've sold water that you didn't need on your crops, was this water that you were entitled to in, for instance, the Woodbridge Irrigation District?
- J. Gwerder: No, not the Woodbridge. It was our riparian rights along the river, that we have rights to a portion to surface our land, which is the original water rights. And so it could be available to sell for the year, and possibly every year, and then plant a dryland grape crop, or a winter crop, a hay crop, or something that you could not use the water, and then sell it south.
- Quivik: If you did sell it south, how is that conveyed from this area, because that sounds like, sort of, an almost natural title process, that you use with the dikes and so on?

J. Gwerder: Well, it's interesting, because in the drought year, when we sold it, the Department of Water Resources, the state of California did the whole thing. And they, through their pumping plants, going down the canals to southern California, they knew exactly the gallon-inch and acre-feet. So that it would have to be something done with the state or federal government, either one. Because there is such a need for water in southern California, that they are willing to pay extraordinary prices. Because it goes then to a consumer directly, it doesn't go to another commodity.

**Jim Gwerder Continues the Tradition of Farming in the Family**

Quivik: Well, you've described some of the reasons that you have a gloomy outlook on the future, and yet your son Jim is working with you, and operating this place. I don't want you to put words in his mouth, but is his outlook, as far as you know, that he expects to continue farming?

C. Gwerder: I think he definitely would hope to, and I certainly hope that he can with the, as Joe said, the grapes--and now we have more grapes on our Galt property. So that could continue with these long-term contracts, at least for his generation, through that generation, I certainly hope so. He is the sixth generation to be on that property, the Thompson-Folger property, and it would be very nice to continue for even future generations, more generations. Agriculture is a wonderful way of life, and I think it's in your blood, the farmers, and you know the feeling.

Quivik: Yes.

C. Gwerder: That's why, with the environmental concerns, we always like to show that the farmers have been stewards of the land all through the years. They don't want to ruin the land, and so if we can work with environmentalists, and if we can work with all these other resources, we would be a lot better off. And I think that farmers are getting more into not being so totally independent, and cooperating with agencies.

Quivik: That sounds like a good note to close on. Thank you very much, Carol and Joe.

C. Gwerder: Thank you.

J. Gwerder: Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Addendum by the Gwerders:

We are most grateful to our dear friends, Helen and Beau Breck, for sponsoring this oral history project and for choosing us to be interviewed. For us it has been educational and interesting in that it required us to review our families' histories and to recall events and memories in our own lifetime as well.

Fred Quivik was a delightful and astute interviewer. He demonstrated a marvelous ability to grasp the various family relationships and places and to keep it all in order during our interviews. His own farm background and as an engineer and historian enabled him to ask the appropriate questions about water and agricultural practices and issues.

It is our sincere hope that this endeavor will provide some insight for the listener or reader into how the enterprising pioneers came to California and developed the land and water use and how this development has evolved through the perseverance and optimism of the generations. Our grandchildren will be the seventh generation to maintain the productivity of the land. We hope they keep in mind their heritage as expressed in words like these from Great-grandfather Rutledge's obituary, "A braver, nobler brand of men never lived, and what California is today she owes to the courage and fidelity of our pioneers." Our fervent hope is that American and California agriculture will prosper and that the family farm will be able to sustain itself in an uncertain future.





## TAPE GUIDE—Caroline Goodwin and Frank Joseph Gwerder

## Caroline Goodwin Gwerder

Interview 1: April 16, 2001	1
Tape 1, Side A	1
Tape 1, Side B	11
Tape 2, Side A	21
Tape 2, Side B	32
Interview 2: April 30, 2001	42
Tape 3, Side A	42
Tape 3, Side B	53
Tape 4, Side A	63
Tape 4, Side B	74

## Frank Joseph Gwerder

Interview 1: April 16, 2001	77
Tape 1, Side A	77
Tape 1, Side B	87
Tape 2, Side A	98
Tape 2, Side B	110
Interview 2: April 30, 2001	120
Tape 3, Side A	120
Tape 3, Side B	129
Tape 4, Side A	138
Tape 4, Side B	147
Interview 3: June 20, 2001	156
Tape 5, Side A	156
Tape 5, Side B	164
Tape 6, Side A	172
Tape 6, Side B	181
Tape 7, Side A	190
Tape 7, Side B	127
Tape 8, Side A	207
Begin interview with both Joseph and Caroline Gwerder	212
Tape 8, Side B	215



## INDEX--Caroline Goodwin and Frank Joseph Gwerder

- Agricultural Extension Service, 192-193  
 American Horsemen's Association, 48  
 Angus Association, American, 102-103  
     Western States, 182  
 asparagus cultivation, packing, 81, 170
- Barnes, Dr. Paul, 33  
 Boswell Ranch, 186-187  
 Boy Scouts, 98  
 branding of cattle, 160  
 Breck, Beau and Helen Bragg, 24  
 Brown, Alex, bank, 86
- C.D. Goodwin Co., 41  
 Cal Can, 114-117  
 Cal-Fed land conservancy program, 174-178  
 California Beef Cattle Improvement  
     Association, 103-104  
 California Cattlemen's Association, 179, 181  
 California Flood Control Association, 190-  
     191  
 California Wheat Growers Association, 189  
 California Women for Agriculture, 50-52  
 Cal-West Seeds, 155, 184  
 Campfire Girls, 42-43, 57  
 cattle breeding, 102-106  
 Church, Thomas, 37  
 College of the Pacific [University of the  
     Pacific], 45  
 cooperatives, farmers', 115-117, 155  
 Cornwall, Maude, School of Business, 42  
 Crop Improvement Association, 184  
 crop subsidies, 193-194, 197  
 Cub Scouts, 33, 56-57  
 Curtis Candy Company, 104  
 cyclamate sweetener, 114-115
- Delta King, Delta Queen*, 199  
 Delta Tau Delta fraternity, 99-100, 203-204  
 Delta Young Women's Club, 59  
 Depression, the Great, 15  
 drainage ditches, 87-89, 97  
 Ducks Unlimited, 172, 185-186  
 Durst, Fritz, 70
- Endangered Species Act, effect on farmers,  
     139-141, 195-197, 218-219  
 Environmental Protection Agency, effect on  
     farmers, 194-195, 219-220
- Farm and Industrial Supply Company  
     [FISCO], 19  
 Farm Bureau, Sacramento County, 145, 179-  
     181  
     Agriculture in the Classroom program,  
         51, 216  
 farm leasing, 169-170  
     equipment, 190  
 Farm Service Agency, 193, 196-197  
 farm workers, 128-131, 142, 148, 153-155  
     ethnicity, 73, 128, 201-202  
     housing, 74, 129-131  
     safety education, 168  
 Federal Land Bank, 107-108  
 Ferreira, Manuel, 129-130  
 fertilizers, 143-147, 158-159, 162  
 flood control, 80, 82-83, 87-93, 190-191  
 flood of 1986, 186-187  
 Foster Farms, 166  
 Fulton, Nancy, 6
- Gallo, Ernesto and Bob, 125-126  
 Gallo, Ernesto and Julio, 135  
 Gallo winery, 167
- Dambacher, Alec, 39  
 Delta Head Start, 57

- Galt Ranch, 28-30, 35, 85, 106, 112-113, 119, 169, 204  
 cattle, 102  
 irrigation, 88, 169, 185  
 vineyard, 151, 155, 223
- Goodwin, Nell Ralph, 49
- Goodwin-Gwerder Co., 41, 152  
 grain farming, 95-96
- Gwerder, Ann Elizabeth [daughter], 31, 70, 205
- Gwerder, Carol (Goodwin), 1-76, 100-102, 105-106, 204-205, 212-224  
 Goodwin family, 1, 10-15  
 Minor family, 1-10  
 Rutledge family, 5-7  
 Thompson family, 3-9, 17-18, 23
- Gwerder, Joseph, 24, 26-27, 29, 30, 33, 35, 45, 48, 77-224  
 forebears, 78-86
- Gwerder, Joseph and Carol  
 family, 28, 31-36, 48, 58-59, 69-71, 151-153, 167-168, 183, 204-205  
 family business, 14, 18, 41, 75, 151-152, 206-207
- Gwerder Farms Co., 68
- Gwerder Properties, Inc., 112, 151, 152
- H.C. Shaw Company, 14, 18, 67
- Haas, Edward Franklin, 23, 68
- Haas, Edward T., 68
- Hamlin School, 19-22, 44
- Harris Ranch, 166
- herbicides, 163-164, 165-166
- Holt, Benjamin, 13
- Humphrey's School of Business, 24, 42
- Hundred Year Club, 67-68, 209
- Interstate Highway 5, 121-123
- irrigation, 82, 86-88, 126-128, 131-133, 148, 161-162, 182, 191-192. *See also* Galt Ranch, irrigation
- James, Julie [Mrs. James Gwerder], 70
- J. F. Goodwin Company, 14, 41
- Japanese interned in World War II, 16-17, 201-202
- Junior League, Sacramento, 60-61
- Kohonomoku, Sargent, 48
- Lenz, Alice Goodwin, 14, 207
- Lenz, Howard, 18
- levees. *See* flood control
- Locke, CA, 200-201
- Madden, Patrick, 70
- Meriwether Society, 68
- Minor-Haas Ranch, 134-138
- Moffitt & Towne Co., 176-177
- Mosquito Abatement District, 111
- Nature Conservancy, 172-178, 186
- North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA], 156-157, 214-217
- Oregon Teachers' Retirement Fund, 176-177
- organic farming, 217-218
- Parent-Teachers Association [PTA], 54-56
- pear growing, marketing, 115
- "People to People" European tour, 48-49
- pesticides, 143-147, 163
- Pi Beta Phi sorority, 22-23
- Pinal Oil Company, 12
- Pozo ranch, 43-44
- Production Credit Association, 190
- Rancheros Vistadores, 210-211
- reclamation districts, 80, 83, 90-93, 166, 173-178, 188
- Reclamation District 1002, 186-189

River City Bank, 110  
 River Delta Historical Society, 66-67  
 rotation of crops, 124  
 row crops, seeding, 158-159

Sacramento Children's Home, 63-64, 69  
 Sacramento Debutante Committee, 61-63  
 St. Anthony's church, 34, 36  
 San Andreas Ranch, 35  
 Schorer, Mark, 24  
 Smith, Dr. Knight, 1  
 Society of California Pioneers, 68  
 Stockton Iron Works, 14, 17-18

Thompson-Folger Company, 4, 15, 68, 111  
 Thompson-Folger Ranch, 15, 88, 119-175,  
 223  
 tomato farming, 113-118, 170, 220-221  
 Twitchell, Jeffrey, 70

United Farm Workers, 154  
 United States Bureau of Land Management,  
 174-178  
 United States Department of Agriculture  
 [USDA], continuing education, 167-168  
 University of California,  
 at Berkeley, student life, 22-27, 45-47,  
 99-101  
 at Davis, crop research, 168, 184-185  
 beef cattle research, 103-104  
 Extension Service, 117-118  
 Upham, Charles, 39

vegetable growing, packing, 81-82

Walnut Grove, CA  
 Community Center, 53-54  
 community life, 30-36  
 Community Presbyterian Church, 33, 54  
 election board, 64-66  
 Williamson Land Conservation Act, 171

wine grape growing, 125-1265, 133-138, 151,  
 163-165  
 Woodbridge Irrigation District, 126-128, 191-  
 192  
 World War II, 16-18, 201-202  
 Wurster, William, 37-39, 205-206

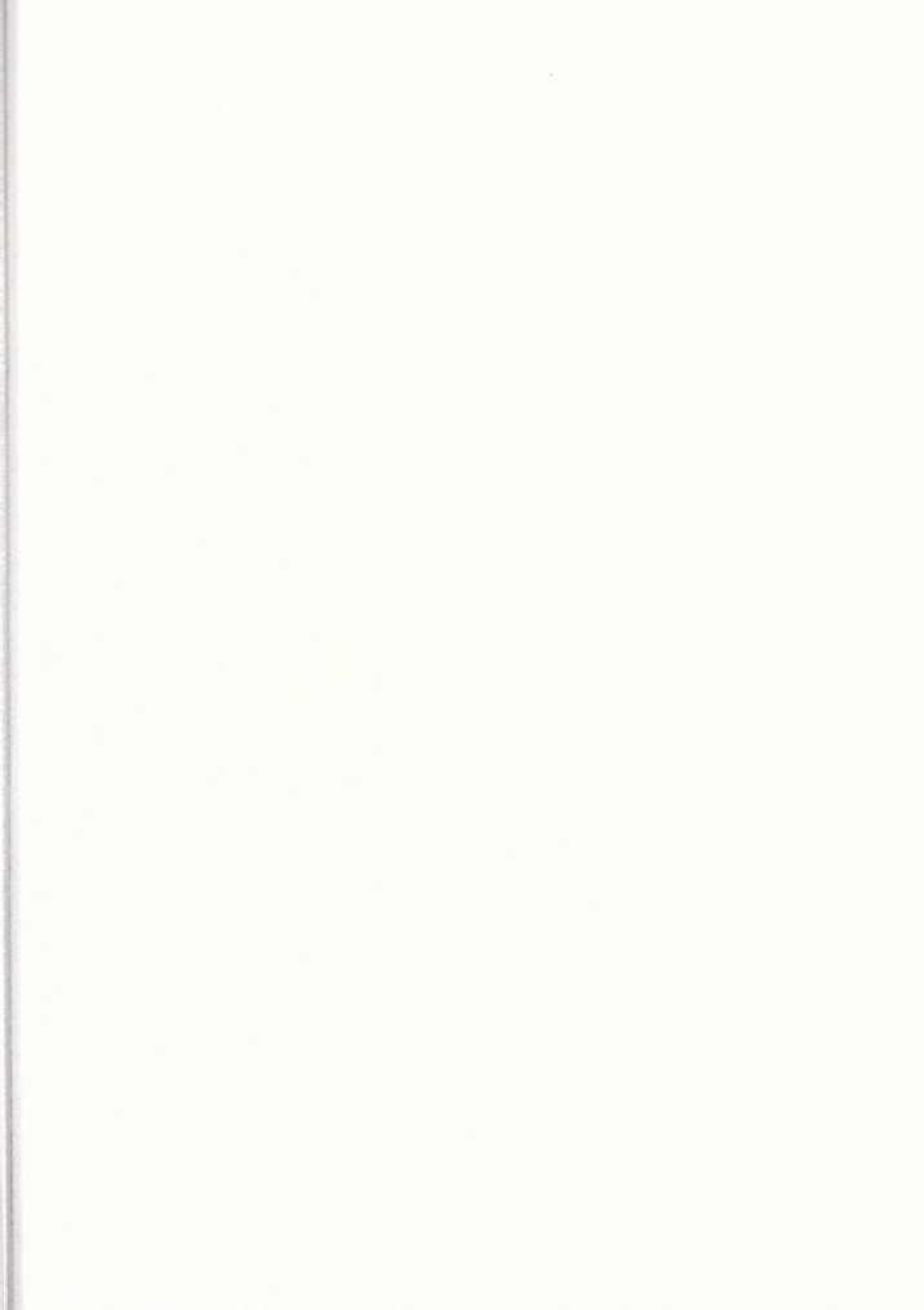


## Fred Quivic

Fredric L. Quivic works as a consulting historian of technology living in St. Paul, Minnesota. Much of his work is as an expert witness in Superfund litigation. While living in the Bay Area for three years, he also conducted oral histories for the Regional Oral History Office and was a lecturer in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program of the College of Engineering at U.C. Berkeley. A graduate of the St. Olaf College (B.A., Art) and the School of Architecture at the University of Minnesota, (B. Environmental Design), he has also earned an M.S. in Historic Preservation at Columbia University and a Ph.D. in History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. He is currently writing a history of the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant in Richmond, California, in support of the National Park Service's Rosie the Riveter World War II Homefront National Historical Park. He grew up on a dairy farm in southeast Minnesota, so he found the Gwerder oral histories to be particularly engaging.















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