

Amber Holland
Kelly Smith

Azelea Cuneo

Interview 1
4-10-97

Um, okay. We're going to do a biographical sketch about you, if that's okay. Just ask you your name and your date of birth and things like that.

About me? Okay.

What's your full name?

Azalea Margureta Cuneo

Are you any relation to the Cuneo's out on Clinton Road?

Yes. Albert Cuneo was my dad's first cousin.

Who's that?

Alfron and Ebluns father-in-law. He setteled where Eblun was. Albert and Della.

Do you remember Della at all? That was his wife.

Margaret's husband and Evelyn's husband were both sons of Albert Cuneo.

And he was your uncle?

Dads cousin. There fathers were brothers.

Is your address 61 Elm Street?

I get my mail in a box, I don't get any mail here you know. Sixty-one's the house.

Built in 1901.

What is your P. O. Box?

We'll probably send you something in the mail. Sutter Creek, right?

Yes. 95685

What is the telephone number?

267-5931

You don't work anymore?

No.

What's your date of birth?

December 18, 1914. Eighty-three years ago.

Were you born here?

Right in this house.

Oh wow!

The same bedroom I use.

Ummm... Date of marriage?

Never married.

Never married. Okay.

I worked at the Bank of Amador County for forty-two years.

Okay, so subjects occupation, Bank of Amador County, forty-two years.

Not Bank of Amador, Bank of Amador County. That's a different bank, in

Jackson.

What was the name of your mother?

Theresa Molfino

Do you remember your mother's date of birth? The year or anything?

May 11, 1879

Wow, you have a real good memory. Was she born in Italy?

Jackson, on Molfino Ranch, right above You Name It.

What was her occupation? Was she a housewife?

She went to San Jose Normal and was a teacher for two years. That was unusual in those days. They usually chose the smart one in the family and sent them off to school. My mother went to San Jose Normal, taught two years and then married my dad and raised a family. She tutored all her children.

What was the name of your father?

Lawrence L. Cuneo

Do you remember the date of his birth?

Slav Christmas, January 7, 1872. As a boy he rode the oxen team to his house on a single tee like this (Referring to a picture.) and on their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary flew by jet to Hawaii. He saw that change in transportation.

Amazing. Ummm... Where was he born?

On a ranch. French Garden.

French Garden Ranch?

No, French Garden is two miles out of Jackson on Highway 88. It's where they wanted to put that golf course in on the highway.

What was his occupation?

He worked for years, from fourteen up till twenty-eight, for the Blue Lakes Water Company which was, is now PG and E.

My great-grandfather, I think, was out there with him. I think. Wasn't he? They built the dam.

Way up Blue Lakes. Up Hope Valley.

Yeah, wow.

For years he came down, well he came down to court my mother because he heard that she was going out with other people. He thought he'd better give up his job and get closer to mother. Then he bought out Tuckers plumbing shop.

So he's a plumber? Okay.

There were only three indoor bathrooms is Sutter Creek when he bought Tuckers in 1901. When he became a plumber he picked up a wrench and a hammer, never had it before in his life but he just learned.

So you didn't have any children?

No, I had brothers.

Okay, what were their names?

Leland, Stanley, Russell, but I had three who died. And I forget those. Three living brothers.

Right now?

No, no.

The other three died when they were babies?

Before I was born.

Who were the brothers?

Leland, he lives in San Francisco. Stanley lives in Jackson Gate, married to a Chicozola girl. Russell worked for the city of Sutter Creek.

Do you remember any of their births?

Leland was first born. Probably a 1902 baby, March 1, I think.

Are you the youngest?

No, Russell is younger.

But you were the only girl?

Yep, I was a tomboy.

That's cool. Did you go too, so your mom was your tutor correct?

Well during school, I went to Munseun Secretarial School in San Francisco.

Was it secretary work?

No, bussiness administration. Got out just during the depression. Went to work for the Bank of Amador County in 1936.

So your profession was banking?

I was secretary to the President. I didn't handle any money.

Civic and Community activities. I know that you're involved in the church aren't you?

Immaculate Conception Church.

Have you ever done any other community things besides church?

I was secretary for the Red Cross. I was secretary for the Native Daughters, Friends of Music. I'm in ten different organizations. Right now I'm a Charter member of Soroptimist, I attend all the meetings.

Are there any more?

What have you got?

I've got , Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Red Cross, Native Daughters, Friends of Music and Soroptimist.

Sutter Creek Womans Club

Is that the one on Main Street?

In the Auditorium.

Didn't it used to be right on Main Street though? Wasn't there a sign painted on a window?

At the side door we go up the steps. The door is open first Tuesday of the month.

Were you ever Eastern Star?

Not being Catholic, that's Methodist.

Oh, because my Grandpa was a mason.

That's Eastern Star, that's Methodist.

Okay. Ummm... Do you know Larry Danilovich?

Yes.

We interviewed him and his sister Delores. Is there anything else about your personal life? I mean not your personal life but...

I do a lot of traveling. I went to the World's Fair and Alaska in the past three years.

I went to the World Fair in 1986.

Where?

In Canada on the West Coast, in Vancouver.

Have you been to the wheels?

Yes. The class hasn't but I have.

There is a lot of information there. It would be a big help. It tells you how it works. Katie Morel knows a lot too.

Have you gone by the mine lately? They are giving tours on the weekends. You can go by and they'll tour everyone around. They're reconstructing everything.

Isn't this a beautiful picture? People came from all over to take this picture.

Unfortunately Wheel Three is down I think.

Next time we contact you do you have any pictures of your childhood that we could see? We don't need them now. Well, what we can do is make an appointment to come back to ask you these other questions and when we come you can have them ready?

I just took some yesterday and made copies.

(End of taped interview)

Amber Holland
Kelly Smith

Interview 2
4-24-97

Azelea Cuneo

A typical day, let's see. I would wake-up, you could hear, this is grammar school days, and here this mill was going all the time. It just became background, like a bird tweeting or something or other. It was always there.

Uh huh.

Pounding and get ready for school. I always walked down by the bakery. That was the bakery right down by the creek. Pinotti's Bakery there, it's now an antique place. Oh, that fresh bread, my nose would go up in the air. I'd slow by it and then I'd go to the pump, which was up about four doors from the bakery and pump a cup on a chain. Everybody drank out of the same cup. On to school. If we got to school early there was a lot of equipment. Rings, remember how you used to go like that there and pull rings. They also used to have a merry-go-round. I don't think they have that (now), it was a pull with wires coming out and then you grabbed on it and you ran and then swing so hard that your feet would go out from under you. If you'd let go from one of those you could really get hurt.

They took it out a couple of years ago. It was still there until a couple of years ago.

Really, we always used that.

Did you ever fall off of it?

No, no, no, no.

Oh good.

I wasn't that brave. I wouldn't go that fast. The faster you run the farther your feet would go up in the air, you know. The teachers, we always listened for our instructions. The children really wanted to learn in those days. We really wanted to learn. We were very courteous to our, to our teacher.

That's good.

Yeah, it is. We had discipline when we needed it. Put out your hand, pull a ruler, and you got it. No pulling away. It could go three times, she hit it finally. Anyways, and some students even came home for lunch. We walked to school and walked back for lunch, hot lunch, and no buses. I never rode the bus in my life, even to high school.

How long would you get for a lunch break?

I don't know. I thought it was nearly an hour.

Really.

Twelve to one, I think. That's all I remember because we had plenty of time.

Let's see. Then I have travel next. Nineteen fifteen Dad worked at the new high school and he put in the cornesuses on the new high school. That's when we got our first car, an Oberland. It had a round top, kind of a canvas top and we put on the sides. You'd snap them on. Snap them here, snap them there. It would take us two hours to get to Sacramento, usually. I don't know, around 35 mph. We always had to pack an axle in the

back seat. It was one of the weaknesses, it would break an axle. We could always get a mechanic to put in the axle. We just had to make sure we had the axle. I remember putting my feet on this axle riding down all the time. Then we got a Pontiac after that. I don't think there were many cars before 1910, 1915.

Before then you used to go down to Rabb Livery Stable, where now is the auditorium, about the same size as the auditorium. Right over the side on the creek he would wash his carriages, put them out on this little rack and turn the hose on them and the dirt goes, would drop all down into the creek. He had a good livery stable. He took good care of his horses. Then you would rent a horse and buggy. It would take nearly an hour to get to Jackson. A good horse could go steady nearly four miles an hour. So that was about it, and to go to San Francisco most people took the Amador Central Railroad. My mother and dad even did going on their honeymoon in 1901. They caught the train here at Martel, went down to Ione, and got the Southern Pacific, which was a faster train and went to San Francisco and stayed at the Palace Hotel.

Oh

My mother told my dad she wanted to get a formal picture by a photographer down there and to get her some flowers. He went and brought her back tulips.

Oh

For a brides bouquet, I remember her always telling about that. (Reading her notes.) And Jackson, Ione, San Francisco, Palace Hotel.....

Entertainment - Nearly every weekend there was a local baseball teams. Every town had its own team. There was team keen rivalry. You, they would even bet, \$5.00, not big money these days. Those days \$5.00 is big money. They would bet on their teams. My dad was kind of manager of the Sutter Creek Team and he said one time they were a little sluggish in playing so he sent down town and got a keg of beer. Everybody who made it to third base got a scooner of beer. He said those guys would dig their feet in and run so he'd get to third base. There was a Sparky Ardeedo (spelling?), from Amador City, who pitched for Jackson. When there was a good hitter up he would deliberately hit that man with a ball.

Oh

My dad went out to him finally and he took a bat and spoke real loud so everybody could hear "Sparky, if you hit one of my players intentionally this game this bat's going to hit your head." So everybody could hear it. I think he kind of stopped that but, that was kind of that was kind of baseball.

Every town had a band. It'd be surprising how many old timers could play horn and drums. So they'd, the band, would even sometimes lead the procession from the Danerias Mortuary, which was up ther by the across from the Post Office. That's

were Danaries started. They had a mortuary there. Then the band would lead the procession up to the cemetery, tooting away. Dad said one time he was playing the drums, the man in front had a piccalow and his head was like this and they made the turn someplace and the piccalow player went straight up the street because he was so enthoused playing and his head was turned he didn't realize. My dad had to yell at him "Hey, come back, come back." Anyways, that was the band and everyone enjoyed the band. The Italian Picnic, there was all kinds of bands, music all over.

It sure has changed, the Italian Picnic.

Yeah, a lot of people and everybody brought their lunch, even we who lived here. We took our tableclothes and a big basket of lunch and sat up there. All the neighbors would go together and talked. "Here try my turda, try my cake, try my salad." It was wonderful, just wonderful. Then the Saturday night dances. Oh gosh, they were good. Good dances!

Were they?

Sometimes, old times during my dad's days 1919, they did the Virginia Wheel and those one, two, where the couple would lead. The man would hold his hand out and the lady would put hers on top of his. That's all they had. Then she, they would start the Grand Parade. Then there would be twos, then fours, then they'd break-in and dance then there would be a time when they'd have to go back. Eights together, then sixes, and fours. It was beautiful. I used to sit in the balcony and watch them do these dances.

Neat

Then they always and a big supper. The magdolones and spaghetti. I have in my book of the Sutter Creek Women's Club. Did you find out who has that was?

No, we put it up on the board. We put a message about it. No ones talked to us about it yet. It might have been actually from the other high school.

Georgia Fox told me.....so I have all that data there about the dances.

Then we also had Women's Club and Native Daughters and my church. I had a church organization too. We took part in all that. That was our social life. I know the Women's Club would have readings and little plays, all kinds of things. That was the way these women got out and had any social life, raising families, you know.

Did you go to Amador or Jackson High School?

Why would I go to Jackson living in Sutter Creek all my life?

I wasn't sure.

I went to Sutter Creek Grammer School and Sutter Creek High School, in those days it was called.

Your Dad taught at Amador?

My Dad was a plumber.

What was the teaching thing?

No, my mother was a teacher.

Oh, okay.

She taught at Milaport School on the Molfino Ranch for two years before she got married.

Oh, okay.

And then, of course, she tutored us all our lives too. That's the only part with schools.

Her dad went to work with Blue Lakes water Company at the age of fourteen and he worked there for twenty years before he came to That was way up in Hope Valley.

That was far away.

That sure is. Every Saturday night they'd go down to Ham's Station or West Point to go dancing, walk back and work all day. Oh, that's another story.

The industries. Of course, mining was the industry during my day, mostly. It was closed down in 1941, because of the war. And there was some large cattle ranchers. Then the PG&E put in that big power houses. That took a lot of men. Jesse McGlafflin and John Huberdy used to take a \$4000.00 payroll up in a satchel from Jackson up to Salt Springs every payday. Never had any problem. They always thought that was very unusual that some goofy guy didn't try to hold them up. And that was a lot of income for Jackson.

Phone rings - break

Okay, there was the PG&E and they hired a lot of people to haul freight up to them. Picardo's made all their money by hauling freight up to the construction at the power houses.

George Allen was the biggest cattle man. He owned from here to Ione, beautiful land.

The Allen Ranch, I heard there was a little boy, I guess, would have to be his granddaughter, great grandson and drowned in the Mokelumne River a couple of years ago.

Uh Uh

They tried to bury him out there and they wouldn't let them do it.

They had, George Allen had a big spread and he'd always take the cattle to the mountains up around Tradegey Springs and Lower Corral Flat. That was there hang-out. Drive them, all of there. Sometimes it would take them four days to drive them up, that's fifty miles. Cattle - PG&E

Mining brought groups of different types. They called them different names. The English were called Cousin Jacks. I don't know why, I forget. There is a story about some man and he was an English man. He wanted to go back to England and he said he had a

cousin that could come out and work in his place to save his job for him. He said, "My cousin Jack can come out," and work in his place to save his place to, "save my place." So they started that, that was what I was told, the story was they called him Cousin Jack.

The wives made wonderful muffins. The kind of muffins, yellow, saffron. Saffron buns! Oh they'd make good saffron buns.

Okay, they used to work the coal mines in England so they were very good miners. Of course the Serbs were real big, strong individuals. I know when it came to the contracts, the Serbs always got them, because they could put in a tunnel faster than others.

Now the Italians, some of them worked in the mines but, three-fourths of them raised produce and sold it to the towns. There weren't any markets. No Safeway, no stores like that. They'd just go on their wagon from house to house. They'd fix their wagon up the night before and wet a damp sack and put it on top of it, go around peddle. That's what my grandparents did for their living, raised their family. Of course you raised everything on the ranch too. To eat you had your cows, your pigs, your chickens. Then you raised your animals, your vegetables, and your fruits and all.

So, Chinese, my Dad did not mention to much about the Chinese. He came here in 1900 and they talk about these Chinese walls right here, like in Martel. Dad says those where just Italians clearing the grounds so they could plant hay. He doesn't remember the Chinese making any of those walls. There was some Chinese.

That was the thing. We have those terraces all over our ranch and I don't think we've had any Chinese live out there, so.

That was it. They did a lot of sluicing from the creeks. They did the work when they first came in, when the top stuff was first down. But, no deep mining, I don'tthey're too small of an individual to do deep mining.

Each nationality had their own little settlement. You know, well they'd go to relatives and they'd settle near there. They kept there.

My weekends we would go to visit our relatives. We'd go and maybe sometimes for dinner and sometimes for lunch and sometimes just stay all day. Everybody would drop in, we'd always have salami and cheese or something and wine. Of course my Dad liked his wine.

Now the gambling. When I went to work at the bank at Amador County in Jackson, gambling was still in effect 1936.....

.....And they were at the bars. Pioneer Rex had its little side wheel, poker table.....

.....Jackson and they were by local people. The local man had his rollette wheel, another was dealing out twenty-one that night. Very well handled. The Louver was down from Bank of Amador, down to the right of the Bank of Amador. You went down the steps and there was Louie Giraldie, he greeted you in the black suit. He tried to

turn you over towards the bar but this side was the respite. I always went to the respite but if he saw anybody being noisy or anything he'd just go up to them. He'd say, "Come on let's go to the restaurant and get a cup of coffee." To stop it from getting rowdy you know. And then on the other side of the bank was the Bank Club. They didn't have a restaurant but they had an active bar. Pioneer Rex and across the street was the Wells Fargo Club but they didn't call it Wells Fargo then, Folger or Volger, some other name. All local men ran these. There were no killings, no one beating up somebody and all that sort of thing. The state closed them down in 1950.

Grocery Stores - we had many grocery stores. Safeway was even here in the Galenno Building, that's right above the creek there. You could see the name on the building. That was Safeway's first stop. Then came Maltestas, that was the corner of Main Street and Eureka. Lukoos Store, they had a grocery and dry goods store. Richards, that's where Daniel has his jewelry shop. Sorocco Store is the stone building on the east side of the north of town. On the west side of the street there was Bridnolles. They used to have large freight wagons, covered wagons coming from Sacramento. And there was big initials BB written (What was his first name?) anyways BB was their initials. I have pictures of that someplace but, I couldn't put my hand on them. They used work horses, bring the freight, down/up from Sacramento up to Amador County. Mrs. Gill, that's Eleanor Bitalias, the teachers grandmother, she had a nice little store right next to the Chatter Box there. They owned that building.

As I said, there were seventeen saloons on Main Street. My Dad had said that most of the saloons always had a bottle on the end of the bar. Someone coming from a night shift had the right to take a swig and go on to home. They knew they'd put in a days work, that was their courtesy.

Gasoline, well we had a 50 gallon drum and we would draw from that. I don't know about going to a service station. I think Onetto Brothers Garage down there, were Amador Motor is, there was a garage there.

Phone rings.....

Gasoline. I was talking about how we had a Louis Secal, first he was a blacksmith. Then when the cars came, he became a mechanic. It was a natural, just do it. He had the first three wheel automobile. He made it with some kind of a little washing machine motor or something. The horses would go wild when that came down the Main Street. All the boys would run along side of it because they new in time they'd have to push it back. It would always stall or get stalled someplace. But it was a start. It would run

....Pup..pup..pup.

And the doctors, well Dr. John Wakefield, he was down at the corner house, that brick house right next to Amador Motors, to the south. That's the Wakefield home and he had a nurse, Ann Casagrande. His office was upstairs in the Galena Building. Stairs like this, I'd hang onto the rail to go up there. If you couldn't find him in his office call Bellotius cause he would be playing poker there, playing cards.

Now, where did I buy dresses? My mother made my dresses. She could put a piece of paper across me and make a pattern like nothing, nothing fancy, but anyways.

Yeah. They worked.

Sure, they worked. And we'd send away to Sears for underwear or maybe sometimes Lukoos Store had some of those.

Boarding Houses - Pucinni, he had a boarding house where Eureka Street hits Broadway, along the creek there. That was the Pucinni Boarding House. They even had a bocca court here. Do you know bocca? Rolling the black balls?

Uh huh.

There was a little ball they rolled out first and the idea was to roll the bigger balls as close as you can. If your opponent, was pretty close, the idea was to hit his ball away from the little ball. Oh, they'd get so excited. La la la la la la la That was bocca.

Then Native Son's Hall upstairs was a hotel and that was boarding. And of course Bellottis was always, has been there for years. Then there was the Central House, that boarded men. That's right next to Dr. Hobsons. They had good food there for the men, and room and board. And they always served good food, mostly. The cooks where Italians. There were many, many boarding houses along Jackson Gate Road, being close to the mines. The young single men would....

I did tell you, I don't know if I've got it down but, (see if I have this slip of paper).
Katie Morrals, she lived near, down by (What do you call it?) where the Wheel Inn is.

Amador City?

What, no. Jackson Gate, Wheel Inn.

That's right there by the tailing wheels. Okay.

The men would always walk to work with their lunch, single file up the trail. She could see them out the kitchen window. When they came home at night they had to use their carbon lights for lamps because there weren't any street lights. Coming home at 1:30 in the morning, down the hill, they had to use that.

Oh well. She said the Kennedy Mine Superintendant's house, at that time was Mr. Sinclair, he was superintendant. I guess at that time was the 1930's, I don't know. But under the west side, below the superintendents there were three framed boarding houses, and the Rajali Family operated them. So I'm sure they provided a meal and bed for them, each man had a single bed in a room. But they're gone. They must have been just plain single boards, because there's no foundation or anything of those three boarding houses.

They always paid by the month, end of the month. The men that board and room, they paid a \$30.00 a month, whatever it was. They paid when they got their pay checks. Same with the stores, the Chicozzola Store handled everything for a miner. They handled groceries, clothes, shoes. They would put John Doe would come in he'd want a

shirt, they'd put it all on a little tag, give one, the original to the man and keep a copy. Then the end of the month they'd add up all these tags and the man would, when he got paid by the mine, he'd come down and pay his grocery bills. Chiccozzolas started, Chiccozzolas store started the year 1850.

Wow

That's a long time ago. The building is still there. Let's see, what else was I talking about, oh there was an Italian, Gianninii, they called him. I don't know how you spell it, but Jeannine. He took care of the gardens up in front of the two story, three story stone office building.

Jeannine, Gan or Jan, I don't know. It was most likely a nickname. He was the gardner. He had landscaped all in the front with lawns and terraces. In the backyard there was this small white picket fence, not to high, about three, four feet high. Katie used to walk up there and look over that fence. She thought she was in heaven, all the blooming flowers that he had in there. She said it was just delightful to see it.

What was his, didn't he have a nickname?

Well I think that was the nickname, Jeannine.

There was another one, wasn't there, because everyone who has interviewed has mentioned him. You're the first person who's had his name.

Well maybe she called him Jeaninine, that's the way she remembered him. Saturday he'd go down with a big bouquet for his girlfriend. He go down the walk past their place with this big bouquet.

You didn't go near the mill in those days it was so loud. They had those stamps. That's the way the wheels turned you know, to bring up the skip. They had to crush the rock first.

There's a building from the stamp mill. Oh, here we go. (Referring to book.) This was where they dumped out the ore, into the stamp mill which was down here, is that right?

No, that went to the wheels.

Yeah, that went outside (to Kelly) the mine.

There is a good picture of the stamps. That's the plates where they shook and got the quicksilver. This (book) tells all about the Argonaut Mine Disaster. I think it shows the stamps and crushing the ore and then the ore would Well anyway, they came up and down like large hammers. They had levers and the levers were hooked on to something to raise it and then dropped it down to crush the ore. That was the first step in getting the gold in mining.

Tape malfunction - end of interview two.