

TAPE #33

AMADOR COUNTY HOSPITAL

Taped: April 1979

Subject: Early days with Linda Cuneo, Lili Vicini and others.

(Conversation with a lady who moved to Fiddletown from Marin County.)

(Why did you come to Amador County?)

My daughter and her husband moved here. She's a nurse. Then they wanted me to come live with them. I moved to Fiddletown in the winter; it's nice then. I'm from Inverness in Marin County and I like the cool weather. I'd never seen snow before; I used to see it on Mt. Tamalpais, but I never got close to it. So, when we had snow here, my daughter woke us all up at 5 in the morning and the grandchildren and all of us went out and played in it. We built a Santa, and we didn't have a hat so we put a coffee can on his head. This was about fifteen years ago.

But when summer came, it pretty near cooked me. I didn't mind it at 90, but when it got up over a 100 it was too much. You'd eat a good breakfast and lunch, but it was too hot to cook dinner or do anything.

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(Now, Suzie, when did you move to West Point?)

It was in 1937. We took up a claim.

(How did you do that?)

It was easy. You had to do your assesment work; I think it was a hundred dollars worth every year.

(Did you build there?)

Yes, my husband and I built a cabin there.

(Where was your claim located?)

Near the creek that goes through West Point.

(What kind of road did you have?)

We had to cut out a road. But not all the way; about half way to it. It was a gold mine we had.

(Did both of you work the claim?)

We did to a certain extent. It was 23 acres, and then we sold it. I think that was in 1938.

(What did you do then?)

We bought 80 acres. Then we built a saw mill. It was hard work, but it was satisfying; you accomplished something.

But my husband's health gave out, and so we went travelling. We went to Mohave and down to Arizona. I'd sure like to be there now!

The desert is in full bloom.

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(Linda Cuneo is next.)

You'll see a curbing and a well down at the end of Main St; in Vogan Alley. They had a first class house with girls there.

I was in a situation where I couldn't say anything. Listen, those days were wild around here I'm telling you. Drinking and everything.

I hope never to see any more days like those!

(What was the New York Ranch?)

Listen, I used to dance there, and they had an orchestra there.

And there were 22 couples on the dance floor. It was also a way station, and there was a place to put the horses and the mules.

And the men slept there too, and they were fed. Oh, it was quite a place. I'll tell ya, to build a hotel like that---it was all double walls---you couldn't do it today.

(Do you remember the name of the place?)

It was the New York Ranch Hotel. There was a gang there all the time.

We lived on the Climax Road, and the other one, it was built by the Handleys and it was a toll road. They call it the Climax Road, but they don't know what they're talking about. And the houses that are being built; it's terrible. They get some tourist to pay the price though. But I guess you gotta get it while you can! Too bad we have that attitude, ain't it.

We had 176 chickens and we sold peaches. And people would buy them by the case. And the chickens; I dressed those pullets and sold them to the MacDonald Logging Company; got 25 cents a pound.

(What was your maiden name?)

Trabucco. Judge Trabucco, ever hear of him? Don't say a word against him, or God help you. He was my relative.

(What can you tell me about the Galli Hotel?)

Azalea Cuneo's aunt and uncle used to run that place.

(Did you work there?)

Sure. They'd have 450 people at the dance hall there, and I worked from 11 until 2 in the morning. I'd put the food on the tables. You didn't see that any more today.

(Was the hotel a way station?)

That's where the stage would stop. It would go from Volcano to Pine Grove and from there to Jackson. The stage drive would get groceries for you. You'd pay him something and he'd get them for you.

And that Climax Mine; it was really something then. Taves owns the property. He's got cabins all over that property.

And you know the Guinn Mine? We'd go through there to get to the Catholic Church in Clinton. The church still stands over there. It was a wild place. If you didn't do what they wanted you to do, they'd beat the hell out of you, and leave you on the ground.

I went to Sunday School in that church. And listen to this: Nick Cuneo was almost beaten to death out there; he crawled and dragged himself home!

(Who beat him?)

Listen, your guess is as good as mine. Someone was bootlegging or high grading. Listen, they beat this man to death, and the three main doctors in the Sutter Hospital called me there at ten in the morning. Dr Arthur, Dr. Dendrum, Dr. Harris did the autopsy.

And they wanted to know what relation he was to my daughter who was in the hospital. Well, I said a cousin. And the doctor said, Well. they beat that man to death. He probably wouldn't stand in line with the booze people so they gave him the works! High grading, bootlegging, moonshining, and women; that was tough stuff.

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*Janet*  
(~~Robert~~ Smith---she had a dry goods store where Woodburys is now. This was in the early 30's.)

(What was the name of the store?)

Jackson Dry Goods. I had it from about 32 or 34; I forget exactly.

(How long have you been here?)

A long time. But it's a much larger store now. It can handle more merchandise. We handled general merchandise.

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(Tiny ~~XX~~ Roberts, ex-guard at Preston School comes over.)

Ever hear of Muletown?

(Where was it?)

It was above Preston; above Ione.

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(Back to Janet Smith.)

(Can you tell us about bootlegging?)

No. But I knew people who were into high-grading. There was a lot of it going on.