

Q What is your name?

A Simon Amestoy. I am 100% Basque. Both my mother and my father's side were all Basques. I was born in 1903 in Los Angeles. My father at that time was manager of the Encino Ranch. When I say manager, I don't mean that we call them foremen. He was a foreman of the ranch. And, my father felt that, evidently, I threatened to give my mother a little bit of trouble, so they brought her into Los Angeles to the Pacific Hospital. So, I was born in the Pacific Hospital in Los Angeles on March 5, 1903. When I -- after a few days at the hospital, my mother and father took me back to the ranch where we spent the first seven or eight years of my life. My father was still the foreman of the ranch, and it was a large ranch which my grandfather bought from his son-in-law. His son-in-law was Mr. Gless, and Mr. Gless--actually, my mother was a member of the Gless family. So, I was doubly related to the owners of the ranch, both the Gless and the Amestoy people. Ah, we lived out on the ranch for -- until I was about seven. My sister who was about 2½ years older than I -- neither one of us were going to school. There were no schools in the near vicinity. In fact, between our house -- our place and Hollywood, there was only one building, and that was another ranch. That was, they called it, I think the Home Ranch. Anyway, the ranch itself was mostly -- had been used to a great deal for sheep. However, my father and his family decided that it was a good place to raise crops. And, in fact, the entire valley, the entire San Fernando Valley which consisted of about seven or eight ranches, among them being the Patton Ranch, the Lankershim Ranch, the Van Nuys Ranch, the Costa Ranch, and together they occupied the entire San Fernando Valley.

Q Any of those ranches you mentioned -- were any of those Basque owned.

A I don't believe so. No, there's only one. That's farther up, and that's Leonis Ranch. They're Basque. I know the Leonis Malberg, but we didn't have much to do with them because -- well, it was quite a ways from our place, and the only method of transportation we had then

was horses. The entire valley was devoted to raising of mostly grains -- wheat and barley. And in about 1918, the Southern Pacific put a railway through our property on the northeast section of the property, and we used to ship the grain. We'd always sack the wheat or the barley, and we'd ship by train to the Eastern market because the Eastern market was the best place to sell it. Oftentimes I know my father said we barely made enough expenses to pay the freight in sending it back East. But, anyway, we -- it was a large ranch, 4,460 acres, and as I said, the ranch was owned mainly by Basques from its beginning. Mr. de la Ossa, Mr. Gless, the Amestoys were all Basques.

Q And Oxarart?

A Oxarart was my mother's great uncle.

Q Wasn't Pedro Larre and your grandmother brother and sister?

A My mother's name was Larre. Pedro Larre was her father. Her mother was a sister to Mr. Gless.

Q To Simon Gless?

A Yes, to Simon Gless. Mr. Gless inherited the ranch from Mr. Oxarart. Mr. Oxarart got the ranch through a mortgage that he held against Mr. Garnier. Two brothers, the Garnier brothers who occupied the ranch before Mr. Oxarart. Mr. Oxarart got the ranch on an \$18,000 mortgage. There were 4,460 acres on the ranch at that time. When Mr. Oxarart died he left it, or at least Mr. Gless inherited the ranch. I think there was quite a lengthy court discussion because for a good while or maybe never they couldn't find a will and . . . but Mr. Gless was, I guess the nearest relative to Mr. Oxarart so he inherited the ranch.

Q We have his estate here and Simon did have his will, but he also had brothers and sisters alive to at that time. Did you know of them?

A Simon Gless had brothers and sisters?

Q No, Oxarart.

A I don't know anything about Mr. Oxarart's family. They say that Mr. Oxarart had an illegitimate son and my

mother said that he looked just like his father. She said that there was no question about it.

Q Wasn't that disproved in court?

A I think they paid the son; paid for him quietly.

Q His name was Francisco. You see, we've gone through the cases. Mr. Biscailuz was the attorney.

A Mr. Biscailuz handled the case. Well anyway ... Mr. Gless didn't keep the ranch very long. He kept it a short length of time. My grandfather, Domingo Amestoy, bought the ranch from him and paid \$100,000 for it. So, that was \$20, \$25 an acre.

Q Do you know the circumstances as to why he bought the ranch? Why your grandfather did from Mr. Gless?

A I think Mr. Gless wanted to sell it and my grandfather was in the real estate business, and the sheep-raising business, and he was a very active man. He was one of the founders of the Farmers & Merchants National Bank. And he was one of the first directors of the bank. And what he did . . . he sold his stock in the bank to pay for the ranch which was \$100,000. After he bought it, he didn't live very long. He only lived about . . . maybe a year. I think it was another two years that he lived. On his death he left the ranch to his family which consisted of eight people; five boys and three girls. I don't believe that Mr. Amestoy, my grandfather, ever lived on the ranch because he also had property in Gardena -- he had a ranch in Gardena.

Q Is that the one they called Rosecrans Ranch?

A Yes, the Rosecrans Ranch. That's where a good number of his children were born. I'm pretty sure my father was born in Gardena. Michel was born in Gardena. Tony was born in Gardena. Practically all of them were born in Gardena, because at the time that he bought the Encino Ranch all the children had been born. So they were born some other place. They weren't born on the Encino Ranch. So anyway, when Mr. Amestoy passed away the family decided that Mr. John Amestoy who was the second oldest boy would be the manager of the ranch, which he was for a good number of years. And then he was followed by my father. My father was there for 7 or 8 years or so.

Q What year did they switch? After what year did John Amestoy manage and then your father.

A I don't know exactly except that in 1903 my father was manager of the ranch so they had gotten the ranch in about 1890-91, around in there, from their father and so I presume that the only previous manager of the ranch was John Amestoy. He was followed by by father. I don't know whether you've ever been out to the ranch, but it's a unique place and I've read some history on it written by Father Krespie when they came over, and passed the ranch. There's a spring there that flows 20,000 gallons of water a day. It's mentioned in 1769, and it's still going.

Q Is that spring right outside the house there?

A No, that is the overflow. The lake there is the overflow of the spring. The spring is closer to Ventura Blvd. And there's a reservoir that's about the size of this room, and the water comes up there and is held in this cement block, and it rises to the top and when it gets to the top it overflows and goes down a ditch and makes that guitar-shaped lake. The water comes from 75 yards away from the lake. That is the overflow. It's been flowing since 1769 and I don't know how it was before. The water comes up warm. When we were kids we used to swim in the lake. And also we'd get under the overflow and the water would come out warm. It was warm by the time it reached the top surface, so it probably came from very deep. There was a same amount of water everytime whether it rained or it didn't rain. I remember when I was a kid, whenever we had visitors the women would always wash their hair in that water because the water was very soft. It would make their hair pretty.

Q Do you remember a woman who used to work for your family after you had the ranch? Her name was Anna Arrix. Arrix--that was her married name. Before that it was Mendionde. She used to be a domestic in your home. She says she remembers you when you were a very small child. She claimed the same thing: that they used to go out there to wash their hair.

A        There was a second little spring, or else it came off the first spring. I don't know which. But there are two levels. One is a spring about -- maybe twice as big as this table. And the water came up quite warm and the women used to do their washing there. It was covered with a ramada. They used to do all their washing. They very seldom had to beat the water. But they did for my clothes, because I was always the dirtiest one. Getting back to the ranch itself, we did not have running water in the house. We didn't have any bath facilities in the house and we didn't have any toilets in the house. They were all outside. The toilets were situated about 50 yards to the northeast of the house and it was one of those two holers that the families in the countryside, and I remember one thing particularly about the toilets: Whenever we had visitors and we felt they had the urge that they wanted to go, they would go over there, but we had a lot of geese, and I don't know whether you're familiar with geese, but geese are pretty ferocious animals if they had young, and the people would get in there and they couldn't get out because the geese would slap with their wings, and they can give you a darn good beating. And so as kids I remember watching people stay in there for maybe a half an hour or forty minutes. They only planned on a short visit, but they ended by staying in there half an hour. So anyway, we had a good number of barns. We had about 5 or 6 barns, and we had one large . . . it was shaped in rectangular form, and in it we had stalls for the horses. We probably had maybe 50 or 60 horses. And we did our own breeding. We had 3 stallions. I have pictures of these . I have a lot of good pictures. We had a white stallion, a beige stallion, we had a black stallion. And we used to keep them enclosed because a stallion when he sees a mare gets a little rambunctious. So we had to keep them enclosed at all times. Anyway most of the work was done by horses and mules. We had a few pieces of equipment that ran by machinery, but that was very much in the minority. Most of it was animal powered. During the harvest time my father would have, about, maybe 75 men working on the ranch. Maybe a hundred. And I remember of course we had maybe 10 or 15 men that worked there

permanently; all of the time. But during harvest time he'd come into town, and they had some sort of a hiring hall, somewhere in Los Angeles. I don't know where it was at Spring Street or Main Street. But anyway, he used to come to town, and maybe bring out 8 or 10 men at a time. We had all nationalities. We had French, Spanish, Basque. We had Italians. We had every race you could think of working on our ranch, including Indians. We had Indians, too.

Q Which would you say was the most prominent?

A I would say probably the French.

Q More French than Basque?

A Well, when I say French, I mean French-Basque, too; mixtures . . . a lot of people were . . . in fact we had Spanish Basque and we had French Basques. Anyway, the fellows were engaged in planting, in harvesting, and in packing. There was a machine to cut - a thrasher - to thrash wheat and barley. And then they'd sack it. They had a man on the machine sacking, dump it out. Somebody else would come along and pick up the sacks. We stored a good amount of our grains, however awaiting shipment to the Eastern market. The barns were bigger than this house. And a lot higher too. And I remember we used to go into the barns because some mice were in there. And we tried to kill the mice, by trying to hit them. That's how I became the ballplayer. I played baseball for the University of California -- UCLA. I played shortstop at UCLA. By the way, Joe Amestoy was a very fine handball player. It seems to run in the family, like I have a cousin now Louis who is 73 years old and I doubt anybody 20 years old could try to play handball with him.

Q He is a cousin of yours?

A He's the son of my oldest uncle. And I might tell you about the family too. There were 8 children involved. However there were others who died at an early age. There were two sets of twins. My father was a twin. And one of my uncles was a twin. But neither one of their partners lived. They both died. So the oldest one of all was a girl by the name of Juanita, and then was Tony.

Q While you're going through these names, if you do remember how old, or rather when they were born. That is if you have any idea, or even when they passed away.

A Yeah, I think I have some record of their deaths. I'll go back and show you. My father passed away in 1949. My uncle Bill passed away in 1950. And then the others we'll have to look up because I don't recall. Anyway, the oldest boy was Tony. Now, Tony is the father of this boy that I tell you is a good handball player. He's about 73 or 74 now. And he's tough to play. His name is Louis. But the best handball player of course was Joe.

Q Your uncle?

A My uncle. And one of the Gless boys was a very fine handball player, Constant Gless. He was the oldest of the Gless children, and he was a very fine handball player. And some of the others were very good handball players.

Q Where did you guys play handball?

A We didn't play out on the ranch because we didn't have a court. But my uncle joined the Los Angeles Athletic Club. That's where they have good handball courts, at the Los Angeles Athletic Club. We played handball. That's different from the regular pelota. You know the regular Basque deal. And I had one uncle on my mother's side whose name was Simon Larre, and he was very good with the chistera, and all these various contraptions they put on their hands to throw the ball and catch it. I've seen them throw a ball a half a block. I remember playing with my uncle one time. He let me catch the ball and he used the basket and so we're playing up against the garage. It was a big garage. He squatted down. I was behind him and he squatted down like this, and he looked around, and I threw the ball and hit him square in the eye with this ball. You know, those balls are heavy, and very strong, durable, and hard. But, it didn't stop him -- he was a tough boy.

Q Typical Basco!

A Yeah, tough! That didn't stop him. He had us scared to death that I put his eye out.

Q So there wasn't a local pelota court?

A No. There was one in down town Los Angeles, but I don't recall the name of the street.

Q Between Commercial and Aliso?

A Yeah, probably in that area.

Q I know your grandfather owned that area, and I was going to ask if you knew he built it or not. But if you didn't even know it was there I doubt . . .

A He owned that lot? I didn't know that. He built a building on Main Street, right across from the City Hall. And the City Hall condemned on us about 25 years ago. In fact, he had another lot on Los Angeles Street, a larger lot, and they condemned that one too. He went to court and lost the case which you'll find if you're ever involved with the City -- you pay. The City takes it. It cost us \$20,000 to defend ourselves. And then they took it away from us at their price. I had an offer of \$125,000 for this one piece of property, and the City offered us \$40,000. We got \$60,000, and we had to pay \$20,000 for the attorneys. So, we ended up with \$40,000. We might as well not have gone into court at all. Anyway, let's see, where do we want to get back to?

A So back to the family then. So, Juanita was the oldest. Tony, Antoine. Anyway, after Tony it was John, Jean Baptiste. And the next one was Louise. Louise became Mrs. Sentous. Sentous is a prominent French family here in Los Angeles. In fact, there's a street over there by the Convention Center that's named Sentous Street. And there's also a school over there on Pico Street that's Sentous Street School. And that was named after my uncle by marriage who married to my aunt.

Q It was named after him or his family?

A His family, I think. Yes. It was because his family were involved in the butcher business. And they were located in that particular area. So I presume it was named after, maybe his father. After my father came, Michel, Mike. I gave you Louise didn't I? Then Michel, then Joseph, then Elizabeth.

Q You have them now in order then?

A Yeah, right. And I think there was about two or three years difference in their ages. Say, Juanita



was two years older than Tony. Tony was a couple of years older than John, and John was a couple of years older than . . . my grandfather -- I looked it up and I saw that he didn't get married until he was about 38 or 39 years old. So, he really worked hard to get this big family of his on the road. So, they had the children in quick succession. I think that my father and John Amestoy were the only two that ever ran the ranch; my father and John. We did hire one man at the time my father left. A Scotsman whose name was Alex Hadin and he was married and had two children, a boy and a girl. And he was a very good man. He was well versed in raising the sheep and in farming. Anyway, well, let's see what we get to now.

Q Do you remember any of the Basque people that were hired at the ranch when you were young?

A Yes.

Q Some names?

A I remember part of their names like we had a man whose name was Minjuke (Sp). I don't know whether that was his last name. But he had a very fine voice and you could hear him miles away. He'd be singing. Practically, everybody worked out at the ranch at some time or another. All the Basques used to come out there at some time. Why, my mother's brothers were all Basques. She had three brothers and they all worked out at the ranch. And, of course, they were French-Basques.

Q I want to get to your mother's side, too. In other words, your mother's father was Simon Gless's brother?

A No. On my mother's side. She was related to Gless. I think she was his sister because my mother always referred to Simon Gless as Uncle Simon. So, I'm pretty sure they were brother and sister.

Q Yeah. Juana Gless was Simon's sister. That would be, I think, your mother's mother. Was your grandmother's name Juana? Did you know her?

A Yes, it was. Yes, I knew her. She died when I was about maybe ten years old. She died in the home at Boyle Heights, which was the Gless family home. I have pictures. The Gless home was located at First and Boyle

Street and it occupied the entire block on First through Second which was a real long block. I thought it was the most beautiful house I've ever seen. Anyway, on my mother's side the oldest one was Simon. My mother was next. My mother's name was Marie Constance.

Q Did they used to call her Mariquita?

A Yes, we called her Mariquita. And the third one was another girl. And her name Clemence. And the next one was a boy by the name of Bazil. And the next one was Pierre, Peter. There were five in that family. All the boys in that family worked at the ranch.

Q These names came in but I didn't know how they were related, if they were brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. They all came into Domingo's Estate. I was working on that. Anyway, so there was five brothers and sisters, right?

A Yes.

Q Was your mother born here or was she born in France?

A My mother was born in Capistrano. Actually, she was born in Trabruco Canyon. It's right outside of Capistrano Mission. My grandmother on my mother's side was born in the same area.

Q She was born here?

A Yes. On my mother's side. All the others . . . all my grandparents were born in France with the exception of this one. My mother's mother was born in the United States. And her father had sheep in the Trabuco Canyon.

Q You wouldn't have any idea when he passed away?

A No, I never knew him.

Q That was years before, because her mother had remarried too, because Arroqui . . . remember that name?

A Yes, that's right.

Q So, we're talking about Marie Arroqui and Gracian Gless. She remarried Jean Arroqui.

A That's right. They're buried at the Calvary Cemetary. At least some of the Arroqui family are buried in that area right next to where my grandmother is buried. By the way, the Amestoys have a very large monument there.

By the way, we just had a death in the family 3 or 4 days ago. Juanita Gless who was married to a man by the name of Jack Baur. He was a Casting Agent for the movies. He went from 190 pounds to 109 -- emphysema. He was a very avid smoker. Juanita Gless and I are double cousins because we're related on both sides. Her grandfather was my mother's uncle. Simon Gless was my mother's uncle. And he was a grandfather to Juanita, Juanita Baur.

Q You wouldn't have known brothers and sisters to your grandmother, Juana Gless other than Simon? Were there any others that you knew of?

A I don't know.

Q I think there were five.

A I didn't know very much about my mother's family. In fact, most of them were gone except her immediate brothers and sisters. I knew all of them, except the grandmother on my mother's side I knew because she lived in Boyle Heights. I remember the night when she died. We had moved into town. I was ten then.

Q How old was she?

A I think she was fairly young. I doubt that she was 60, maybe.

Q It says she was born about 1860. I think she died around 1913. So you didn't know your grandfather on that side at all?

A No. In fact, I didn't know my grandfather on my father's side either because he died before I was born in 1890 or 1891, and I was born in 1903.

Q You don't know much of Domingo Amestoy or your grandmother on that side?

A I only know what I've read about by grandfather and grandmother on the Amestoy side because my father used to talk about them. I just found some papers from Michel Amestoy. Michel is the son of Michael Amestoy and he lives out in Beverly Hills. I have some written literature, by the way, in French. I have documents on a lot of this stuff I think would be of interest to you.

Q You guys actually stayed in the old de la Ossa house?

A We used that, that was for sleeping quarters. My mother never cooked a meal. We'd go into the main kitchen

which was the Garnier Building, and my mother never touched anything in the kitchen. She was an excellent cook, by the way.

Q She never cooked like before she married your father?

A She probably did. But as long as we lived here on the ranch she didn't do any cooking, because she always had one or two helpers. We lived in the de la Ossa house, and often when girls would come from France or Spain they'd end up at the ranch working for my mother. She had one, sometimes two girls who did all the work. My mother would just watch us kids that's all, which was quite a job, because on 4,400 acres we could sure disappear.

Q What I have here is the estate of your grandfather, and through their . . . I don't know if you heard how it was run, his estate after he died because some of your aunts and uncles were under age; your father was under age, and so he didn't want any of his property distributed until they were of an older age. So, he had the executors which would have been Juanita Gless, Tony and Jean Baptiste Amestoy run the whole thing. So what they did . . . every year they had to give an annual account of the runnings of the ranch; who they paid in wages, and things they did on the ranch.

A I would like to see something like that, but I've never been able to come across it. I understood that was the case, but I've never been able to find anything in writing to show the distributions of, say assets, or whatever money they made or whatever they lost.

Q I'll show you this as soon as I go through it in a minute. We just took down the Basque names, but it is down in the archives down in L. A. if you ever wanted to go through the actual whole thing. There's like a Pilario, Laurent Pilario.

A I know some Pilario's right now.

Q Oh, yeah. He seemed like one of the foremen out there since you've been running it.

A Pilario? This could be. I don't know.

Q If you remember any of these names or anything about them. I'm just going to read out a few of them I

found quite a bit on them. How about Ordoqui? They used to have a hotel in L. A.

A I didn't know that; but the name is very familiar. I've met some of the Ordoqui boys. I think there were a couple of boys around. But I haven't seen them in 50 years.

Q How about Hiriarts? Blacksmith . . .

A My aunt who married Tony, her name is Hiriart. She had a brother whose name was Alexander. And, she had a sister. A sister named Genevieve.

Q Genevieve was her sister?

A Genevieve was her sister. My aunt's name was Terese.

Q She had a sister named Genevieve. Did she marry a Luc?

A She married a fellow at the bank . . . that wasn't the name.. I remember Domingo Pilario. He and Camille Sentous, and my father, and Mr. Duarte used to play Whist. It's a card game. He has a niece living now. Mr. Duarte has a niece.

Q Oh, Mrs. Allegre. She works in the French Hospital now.

A Yes.

Q We have to get together with her too. She's a daughter to that Lorent Pilario. I was just mentioning who worked out on the ranch quite a bit. During that time they had to take care of a lot of your father's college bills. He went to Woodbury's Business College?

A Yes. Yes, he did.

Q He went to two different colleges, I recall.

A He went to Saint Vincent's College.

Q Did he?

A Yeah.

Q Did he graduate from there?

A I don't think so.

Q How about Espinal? Does that name sound familiar?

A Who?

Q Espinal.

A No.

Q Salles?

A Yes, but I don't know very much about them.

Q How about Dornaleche family?

A Dornaleche? Yes.

Q Do you know much about them?

A I don't know anything about them, but I knew the name.

Q Oh, yeah. Because they were out in that same area; the San Fernando Valley. Bidart's?

A I remember that one too.

Q La Cuna?

A I don't recall.

Q Sallaberry? He was a shepherd at that time.

A Sallaberry. I know his daughters. They lived near Vermont and Washington Street. They're both dead now. Neither one of them had any children.

Q He was also a shepherd out there. This went through 1890's right at 1900. How about Juan POCO? ApesteGuy?

A Apalateguy?

Q ApesteGuy.

A I knew Apalateguy, but not ApesteGuy.

Q Apalateguy's from the Santa Barbara area?

A Well, this one's from Santa Monica. It could be related the other Apalateguys. He was a very fine mathematician.

Q How about Ardans? He was another shepherd out there.

A I've heard that name, but I don't know where.

Q Even here it shows your aunts and uncles took trips to France, and they paid through the estate, too.

A My grandfather took three of his children when they were born to France, and that was Juanita, John and Tony. They went to France. I just discovered this, but I think that my grandfather's father's name was Pierre. I'll show you some records here.

Q During that trip, Louise was born there, right?

A I think that's right. I think Louise was the only one who was born in France.

Q During that trip. 1864 was the year, because they came back with another family.

A My father was born in 1870. Louise wasn't that much older than my father.

Q We do have the ages. There's only a three year difference here.

A Yes. They're close together. One other thing that I found out when my grandfather had gone back on that trip to Grance. He bought three homes, and he gave them to his relatives. I just found that out two nights ago. And I'm getting pictures of the homes that he bought.

Q Do you know where they were over there?

A One they called "Pinaki."

Q Was that the one your grandfather was born in?

A I don't know for sure. I think it was Pinaki. And there were two others. One was "Tialleur" and the third one they didn't have a picture of. They had pictures of two of the houses that he bought and gave to his relatives.

Q And, these homes were all in St. Pierre d'Irube? Where your grandfather was born?

A I think, yes. Yes, it was in that same area. They were large homes. They were about as big as this house. Houses over there are pretty good size houses.

Q How about a Borda family? Did you know them?

A I've heard that name, but I don't know anything about them.

Q Because they were some cooks there, too. Oh, D'Ospital? Gratien d'Ospital?

A How do you spell it?

Q D'Ospital. How about Labourdette?

A Labourdette? I know that name.

Q Do you have any idea if they were Basque or French?

A I'd say they're Basques. I'm just wondering about the Garniers. I've heard that they were Basque, but I don't think so because Garnier is not a Basque name.

Q No. We're finding that they probably were not Basque, but we read also somewhere that they were. The thing is that they said they were Basque.

A They were French.

Q You didn't know any of the Garnier family, some of the later ones? Some of the descendents?

A Oh, I knew a Garnier family, but I don't think they were . . . they're not related to the Garniers that were at the ranch. There are some Garniers living right

now, and I'm quite positive they're not related to the Garniers on the ranch.

Q Did your father ever mention anything that he went up to Alaska to the mining fields?

A Yes.

Q Because they had paid him over \$1500 out of this estate for him to go away to the mine fields.

A Oh, is that right? I didn't know that.

Q Yeah. It says he came back after that and went to work on the ranch. This is right after he came out of college.

A That's before he got married. He went up there, and all he caught was pneumonia.

Q Why did they send him up there? Was that part of the operation?

A No. He wanted to go. A good number of people went from Los Angeles, here, and I think that some of them were . . . I don't know whether it was the Larronde's, or the Etchemendy's. I think some of them went with him. I think there were maybe five or six fellows. And none of them ever found anything; I know my Dad never found anything except pneumonia.

Q What do you know about the Larronde family? Did you know them quite well?

A Larronde was my father's godfather. Everytime he'd come to visit or any celebration, he'd give my father a \$10 gold piece.

Q Do you know who the godmother was?

A I don't know.

Q That was Domingo Larronde? Or, Pierre Larronde? There was a very rich family of Larrondes.

A Yes.

Q The Etchemendy-Larronde.

A Yes. Etchemendy-Larronde were very wealthy people.

Q Right. Pierre, yes.

A They were very wealthy. They lived up in, well not in Boyle Heights, but Bunker Hill. You know where they're putting all those new buildings? That property in there belonged to the Larrondes and Etchemendys.

Q That was a daughter, right?



A Yeah, Antoinette.

Q Oh, Elissetche?

A No.

Q Okay. Etcharts? There's a few Etcharts around.

A I've heard the name, but I don't know them well.

Q Oh, John M. Larronde was a witness at your mother's wedding.

A That's right.

Q That's Pierre's son.

A I saw John Larronde a couple of times, but I don't remember much about him.

Q Do you ever remember him having a bakery here in L. A. area with John Lifur?

A Well, I don't know which bakery they owned, however my two undles, Joe and Tony were part owners of the Franco-American Co. which was on the corner of College and Vogue Street.

Q That's the one. See, in this particular book, it says that Lifur and Larronde were owners in the Franco-American bakery.

A And later in L. A., John Doray, a Frenchman. He wasn't Basque. I have a picture of them.

Q How about Duhalde's. Are there any Duhaldes here?

A I know the mane, but I don't know when they came out

Q In 1896, the City Directory claims that your father was an attorney. Had he taken any law courses?

A I don't think so.

Q Okay. Then after all the children had reached age they formed a corporation. The Amestoy Corporation.

A Yeah, I don't know whether it was a corporation or whether it was a company, but they did form it so that it was undivided. They all were equal owners. They all owned a part of everything.

Q Yeah, it was a corporation, because they had given out 3,200 issues of stock, and each of the brothers and sisters got 400.

A I didn't know.

Q I was hoping you might have, because I would like to see if somebody still had one of those stock

certificates around. It would be interesting to see.

A I've never seen them.

Q There's a copy of the will, too.

A Will of Domingo Amestoy?

Q Yes. A photocopy of it. In fact, we're pretty certain it was written out by Simon Gless. It looks like his handwriting.

A Pretty good handwriting. Yeah, because my grandfather didn't write very well. In fact, he had very little schooling. He went away from France when he was 14 years old. After Argentina, he stayed there for 14 years. And then in 1851, he got a passport to come from Argentina to California. And one of my cousins has that passport.

Q Which relative?

A Michel. This is not my grandfather's handwriting. It's somebody else's.

Q No. We have other writings by Simon Gless, and it's very similar. It seems like it was written right after your grandmother died. It was about the same time, because she died a year before him and that was written about a year before.

A Yes. That's right.

Q Then he might have gotten ideas that he had to do something about his will.

A This doesn't even look like my grandfather's signature here on the end. On the things that I've seen him write, he had a very poor handwriting. You want to see some pictures?

Q Why don't we go from there?

A By the way, I remember seeing when the Southern Pacific, as I say ran through our property, and one day I was out there, this was when I was growing. I must have been 15 years old, and a pullman car went by with our name on it. My cousin has a picture of that. He's going to send me a copy of this picture. A regular pullman car that says "Amestoy" on it. They say that they still have the car in storage.

Q When you were younger did you associate with the Bastanchury family?

A I know the Bastanchury's. I knew Domingo best

because he was in school with my brother. My brother, who passed away. He's been dead for 20 years. He's younger than I, by about 7 or 8 years.

Q Is your sister still alive?

A No. My sister was killed in an automobile accident on Christmas Day about 25 years ago.

Miscellaneous Comments:

A I was baptized at St. Mary's in Boyle Heights. Evidently, the doctor who delivered me didn't make a record, so I had no record of my birth. So, I went to the St. Mary's Church. They had a fire and lost all their records. So my Father had to go down, and swear that I was born.

Q Who are your godparents?

A My godparents were . . . let's see. They died when I was a youngster. Now, Simon Larre was my sister's godfather. But I don't know who mine were. I never knew them.

Q Did you ever have any weddings like out on the ranch? Anybody get married out there?

A I don't think so. I don't remember anybody getting married. There have been a lot of weddings since then on the ranch. In fact, many people who live off in that valley get married there.

Q Did you know Celeste Save

A I knew the girls, yes.

Q Did they speak Basque? Was their father Basque?

A Oh yeah, they spoke Basque. Also, my grandfather, my mother's step-father, Arroqui, Jean and Marie.

Q She was a sister to that Gaston Ozerart?

A Yes. I think so. Royere's father had the biggest boot . . . the biggest wholesale liquor store in Los Angeles. Royere's wife was a Ballade. Noeline Gless was about 25 years old when she passed away. Her brothers were Domingo and Constant. There were two families living on the ranch; Peter and John Amestoy and families lived in the same house. There was a storage place for dried fruits: apricots, peaches, raisans. The Chinese used to make pies for us.

Q Did your family ever kill pigs on the ranch?

A Oh, sure. I don't have the picture with me now, but I gave it a fellow.

Q Did you make blood sausages?

A Sausages? My mother did.