

Interview with

Bob Cozens

November 23, 2004

by Lloyd O'Connell

for the

Highway 101 Association

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Interview with Bob Cozens on November 23, 2004 at his home, 16214 Via Pacific, Rancho Santa Fe, California. Interviewer: Lloyd O'Connell of the Encinitas Historical Society. Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne

Lloyd: I'm Lloyd O'Connell and I'm talking with Bob Cozens this morning and it's November 23, 2004. We're talking about old stories about the 101. Bob, would you state your name and current address.

Bob: My name is Bob Cozens and I live at 16214 Via Pacifica in Rancho Santa Fe, California

Lloyd: When and where were you born?

Bob: I was born in a hospital in San Diego. However, my mother and father were living in Green Valley along El Camino Real at that time.

Lloyd: What are your parents' names?

Bob: My father's name was Bert Cozens and my mother's name was Grace.

Lloyd: How did your family come to Southern California?

Bob: My father's family, my father's mother was one of the Hammond family who came to Encinitas in 1883, I believe. My mother came with her father from the state of Michigan. My grandfather came to California because he was having some lung problems and they came out around 1912 or so.

Lloyd: What period of time did you live on or near the 101?

Bob: Well, the family moved from Green Valley into downtown Encinitas about 1924 or thereabouts. I grew up right immediately alongside the 101 at First and C Streets, or 101 and C Street.

Lloyd: Can you tell me any outstanding events that occurred that were meaningful to you, relating to the Highway 101?

Bob: As a young boy around 1932 or 1933 I remember Franklin D. Roosevelt and the President's entourage came down the 101. It was quite significant in a young man's life. Another item, when I was 14 years old I took my driver's test on the 101. Leaving D Street, and I'm not quite sure, I can't remember how we did this, but the police officer was on the motorcycle. I obviously was not on the motorcycle. I don't remember whether he followed me on his motorcycle to see if I did all right.

Lloyd: Do you remember his name?

Bob: Oh, gosh. I can't recall, but he was well known by the people in the community.

Interview with Bob Cozens, November 23, 2004

Lloyd: Did he pass you?

Bob: Oh yes. And as I said before, I was 14 years old.

Lloyd: What were you driving at the time?

Bob: Oh my goodness. My father had an Oakland, I think, and it may have been that vehicle. Of course, further growing up in the family in the construction business, we had all kinds of trucks and so forth, so I have spent many an hour on the 101 in various vehicles.

Lloyd: How old were you when you first rode on the 101, before your driving test?

Bob: I would guess maybe four or five years old with my mother and father on a trip to San Diego, which would have been an all day trip down. I don't have any specific recollections, but I do remember the route then took us down through La Jolla and Pacific Beach back that way to downtown.

Lloyd: That was a long route.

Bob: It was a long route.

Lloyd: I can remember that myself. Do you recall any buildings, businesses or restaurants on the 101?

Bob: Well, of course, George's at Cardiff Beach. The Del Mar Hotel, the Carlsbad Hotel.

Lloyd: Is there anything significant about these buildings that you can remember? Like something that happened while you were there?

Bob: No, nothing specific. The Twin Inns, they just stand out.

Lloyd: Who were the particular people associated with that stretch of the road? Being close to La Paloma, you probably saw a lot of the early actors.

Bob: I don't necessarily recall any.

Lloyd: Did you ever see Charlie Chaplin downtown in his old garb?

Bob: I don't recall that.

Lloyd: Do you have any favorite memories of the 101?

Bob: None specifically come to mind.

Lloyd: Going any place from the 101, do you remember anything like that?

Bob: We enjoyed the boys getting together and driving to Los Angeles on a Saturday morning to

Interview with Bob Cozens, November 23, 2004

watch one of the USC Bruins football games. As I got a little bit older going the other way to the Mission Beach Ballroom where the big bands would play. I obviously had to travel the 101 to get there.

Lloyd: Who did you see in the big bands?

Bob: Oh golly. Tommy Dorsey, Gene Cropa, basically all of them.

Lloyd: That was a nice ballroom.

Bob: It was a nice ballroom, right on Mission Beach.

Lloyd: Do you remember any bad accidents along the 101?

Bob: I can't think of anything specifically. I do know when they went from two lanes to three lanes there were accidents that were caused. Trying to judge who's going to pass in the other lane before you'd try to pass. It was difficult. I had my first fender bender on the 101. It was a sideswipe of a vehicle when it was two lane and I know exactly where that was. It was between Cardiff and Swami's.

Lloyd: How about stories of patrol officers or traffic cops. Did you ever have a ticket or anything?

Bob: Yes, unfortunately, I was ticketed for speeding. I know where that took place. I was up north of Leucadia in the Ponto area. I was traveling and I got a ticket. As a matter of fact, the local Judge *McLaughlin* took my license away from me for thirty days and I guess I learned a lesson. Not that I didn't get a few tickets after that!

Lloyd: Judge McLaughlin, do you remember him specifically?

Bob: Oh yes.

Lloyd: I remember him being involved in the flower industry. He was the one guy that started it. Do you remember the speed limit at that time? You probably do!

Bob: Through downtown Encinitas, I don't remember specifically, but I assume it was 25. Out on the open road, I think it was 45.

Lloyd: Were there any celebrities or parades that you remember? How about the flower festival? Where was the parade were they holding it on the 101?

Bob: I remember the flower show but I don't remember the parade.

Lloyd: Do you remember any celebrities?

Bob: No, I can't recall. I know that obviously when the Del Mar racetrack opened there was tremendous traffic, particularly on Saturdays. But I don't specifically recall seeing any celebrity

on the 101.

Lloyd: Obviously you saw Bing Crosby and you saw Bob Hope?

Bob: Oh yes, and Pat O'Brien.

Lloyd: Do you have any stories that you remember?

Bob: No, but I do remember Bing Crosby, who at that time owned the old Juan Maria Osuna place, right across from the golf course, and I remember that my father did some type of grading for the family at that time. I was on the site and I don't know if I was introduced to him or not, I don't remember.

Lloyd: How about the service stations in town? We had about five or six stations.

Bob: Union on the north side of B street. Shell on the south side of B Street. On the south side of E was the Standard station. Those were the three major stations that I recall.

Lloyd: In your experiences with the division that you headed in Sacramento, did you have anything to do with the 101 when you were the director of the DMV?

Bob: No, we dealt basically with drivers and automobile dealers. We didn't have anything to do with the highway construction itself. That was under Caltrans, formerly the State Division of Highways, I think it was called. My father did have a contract widening the old 101 some time in the mid 1930s, I think. As it left town going down to a dip, heading north.

Lloyd: What did the state road look like?

Bob: Well, how far back do you want to go? Initially, it ran along, I have a picture of it in front of the house, and then it turned and went westerly down the slope, across the creek and then cut back up the other side.

Lloyd: Did it go into Third Street?

Bob: No, it didn't go quite that far. It went into Second. It went down to about Second Street and by then it was down at the bottom and it crossed over and went back up. I remember the widening project where they took some off of each side and widened that. At one time, too, they must have taken some of the dip out of it, I don't remember, they raised it a little bit so it wasn't quite as extreme.

Lloyd: Did you see any of the buildings moved? Because I guess they took twenty feet off of the west side.

Bob: On the west side.

Lloyd: Did they have to do the sidewalks again?

Interview with Bob Cozens, November 23, 2004

Bob: Yes.

Lloyd: I guess some of the buildings were turned or moved back.

Bob: Yes, I don't remember many specific details. An interesting observation, the State Division of Highways bought some additional right of way from my grandmother, the lots south of C Street, it angled through there. When it got to the middle of C Street and then went west 10 feet and went the length of 5 lots that my father owned and then it jogged back west again. For whatever reason the state never bought that ten feet, but they bought south and north of there. They made some adjustments with the city recently when they did the construction work through there and you may recall the moving of the huge palm trees that sat in front of the house. They moved them about a hundred feet or so and in the process we gave the city the land on which they moved the palm trees and in exchange they gave us some of the land south of C Street, so it worked out fine for them and fine for us. The question in my mind, why the state never bought the ten feet over the five lots.

Lloyd: Your dad moved the house that you had before, tell me that story.

Bob: My father was born in that house and it was up by Pacific View Elementary School. Around the time of 1900 the house was moved to its present location. The primary reason was to put a well down in an area below and it was then the first house in Encinitas that had running water.

Lloyd: It was the first house!

Bob: The interesting aspect of the move, it took a couple of weeks to move and I'm not quite sure how it was done. Whether it was on skids and a team of horses and pulleys and so forth, but it took two weeks to do it, but the family lived in the house while it was being moved.

Lloyd: I'll be darned! Isn't that something. I guess you were the first to have a bathtub, is that true?

Bob: Well, that's my understanding, the first house in Encinitas that had a bathtub.

Lloyd: The development of that area came in when the flower people came and then it became quite active. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Bob: Which area now?

Lloyd: The area behind your house, west. They built a building there for flower distribution.

Bob: Well, initially, the first building was a frozen fruit market. I can't recall specifically—they added on to it. The bulk of that activity took place after I was not living in that house. I was either away at school or in the service. When I got out of the service with my wife and children, we lived in the house that my grandfather built, which is right across, just on the south side of C street where the big pine tree was. I can't think of the name of tree.

Interview with Bob Cozens, November 23, 2004

Lloyd: Star Pine.

Bob: That house had been divided into a duplex and we lived on the north side of it. Our third child was born when we were living there so we spent, six or eight years there before we moved over to Neptune Avenue, so then again we were living right on top of the 101.

Lloyd: Are there any other things that you would like to add?

Bob: Well, racking my brain—one time I had been told that the stoplight in Encinitas on the 101 was the first stoplight south of the Canadian border.

Lloyd: Oh really, how about that? Where was that located?

Bob: I think it was at D Street.

Lloyd: So that was right there at the La Paloma.

Bob: I can remember traffic backing up at the stoplight way north of downtown during the races.

Lloyd: I remember that myself. What do you remember about the La Paloma?

Bob: I remember very much about the La Paloma. I remember—I'm trying to think of the moving pictures that they showed and it ended with the cowboy and the horse going over the cliff and then you'd go back next Saturday and pay your dime again to see how they survived that one!

Lloyd: I remember those!

Bob: It was certainly a beautiful structure inside and out in those days, so it was something rather magnificent.

Lloyd: Did you know Aubrey Austin at all?

Bob: To some degree. I came to know his son Aubrey, Jr. quite well.

Lloyd: He was quite a guy.

Bob: Yes. I don't know for sure what it was that attracted him to Encinitas in the first place, but he was certainly a great benefactor. They gave all that property down at Moonlight Beach. A great benefactor.

Lloyd: At the beach, has that changed much? Is about the same as it was before?

Bob: Well certainly the structural facilities have changed measurably over the years.

Lloyd: How about the ball field? You had a ball field just behind your house in the valley there by the creek.

Interview with Bob Cozens, November 23, 2004

Bob: Oh, yes. We built bleacher seats. We had cypress trees along the top and eucalyptus trees along the top of the slope and we built some benches up there so we could sit down looking down from the hill. I do remember an incident that took place when my father's sister Kathryn, who was half a generation younger than my father and about a half a generation older than I was, so I always look upon her as a big sister. She was in college at the University of California-Berkley and she met a young man who had been at Stanford. She brought him down and introduced him to the family and I was in my teens at that time, I think. My brother and I and a couple of other fellows we said, "we'll check this guy out." So we were playing some touch football on the field and we ran him ragged and finally we said, "I guess he'll be alright." He became a doctor and had a general practice. Another memory on 101, when I was in the service, Pat and were just married, I was stationed up in Spokane and then I was transferred in Rapid City and we had acquired a nice little Cocker Spaniel and Pat and the Cocker Spaniel came back to Encinitas to stay there for awhile while I was in Rapid City. Unfortunately, Susie got out on the 101. Later on we had acquired another Cocker Spaniel who also attempted to cross. It was too busy. We also, over the years when I was growing up in the house on C Street, we had chickens and cows and horses and so forth. Occasionally, someone would forget to lock the gate to the cows and the cows would get out. We lost more than one cattle on the 101 and more than one cattle on the railroad track over the years.

Lloyd: At one time it was really a farm community.

Notes after the interview by Bob Cozens:

I'd like to tell a story about my dad that I could never understand. A farmer friend of his went to the First National Bank on Friday. He took out a loan of \$500 and made a deposit. However, on Monday he discovered that the bank was closed and he lost his \$500. That was the result of the Crash of 1929.

I remember when I was going to San Diego State having used 101 in the morning and having to go through Escondido in order to get home. The bridges were washed out on 101. That was in 1937.

We used to go to Mission Beach Ballroom that was on 101 and danced to all the great bands like Tommy Dorsey and others.

The dances were also held in San Clemente. We went up 101 and traveling over the Camp Pendleton road was very winding. It was against the hill and not where I-5 is today. The reason for the road placement may have something to do with rivers extending from the ocean cliffs. Large earth movers were not used then.

I went to Oceanside High School on a school bus. We were picked up at the La Paloma. When I started it was in 1931. I played in all sports except baseball. For practice, while on the swimming team, we traveled down 101 to the lagoon near the power station. We had no pool at the school.

In 1936 I went to Black Fox Military Institute. USC would send their football candidates, who

Interview with Bob Cozens, November 23, 2004

needed more credits, to Black Fox. A few years later, some of those Black Fox students were playing for USC.

Since the school was located in Hollywood, many of the students were children of the Hollywood stars. Charlie Chaplin's twins attended.

We, four brothers and one sister, were really raised almost like farm children. At the house on 101, we had two cows, chickens, and dad used the lot behind the house for vegetables. He didn't own it but probably had an understanding with the lot's owner.

Dad grew oats and barley on a site near the present San Dieguito Academy along Santa Fe. As a boy with my brother, on my first job, we kept horses on the move going around in circles to run a hay bailer. We were paid \$3.00 each for the summer. The bailing was done at the Hammond Ranch, as well as Green Valley and Olivenhain and all the farmers participated.