

Interview with

Sid Shaw

October 18, 2004

by Lloyd O'Connell

for the

Highway 101 Association

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Interview with Sid Shaw on October 18, 2004 at his home, 661 Melba Road, Encinitas, California. Interviewer: Lloyd O'Connell of the Encinitas Historical Society. Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne

Lloyd: Here we are at Sid Shaw's. It's October 18, 2004. I'm going to ask Sid some questions and we're going to get some interesting stuff on the 101. Okay, please state your full name and current address.

Sid: Sidney M. Shaw, 661 Melba Road, Encinitas, 92024.

Lloyd: When and where were you born?

Sid: In Los Angeles.

Lloyd: What are your parents' names?

Sid: My mother's name was Emma Milford Shaw. My father's name John Marion Shaw.

Lloyd: How did your family come to Southern California?

Sid: My mother was born in England. She immigrated to Los Angeles when she was about 18 years old from England. That was about 1898. My father was born in Logansport, Indiana. His parents immigrated in 1859 and they were on a wagon train and they were massacred somewhere between Indiana and Oregon. They left my father alive. They hid in the wagon train. They massacred everybody and burned the wagon train but he and his brother and his sister, which I've never located. I did this through the Mormon genealogy. How he ended up in California, I don't know. He came across to Oregon and then he came on down. He was a veterinarian at the time he died. He was quite a bit older than my mother. He died in 1929. He was 73 years old at that time and I was just 8 years old.

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

Sid: We used to come down during the summertime at the Stop Over Auto Court, which is where the auto parts place is now on J or K Street. We came down several summers because my step-dad liked to fish. My mother remarried to George McClure and they went surf fishing. It was very popular down here. So they walked down the steps at the Swami. They bought the property from Milt Smith's mother who owned the--it's the Java Hut now. They bought that about 1935. I was going to school in Los Angeles and my step-dad retired and they moved down in 1935 or the first part of 1936. I didn't want to move down because I was going to school. I tried to live with some neighbors. It was during the depression. I had a job at the dairy but they went broke so I didn't have a job so I was forced to come on down here. I came down in 1937. In 1937 we were going to high school on the Cozens' property and down at Pacific View. That's where I met Bob Grice, Fred Brass and a few people like that, Marianne Wood. They graduated in 1937 at the La Paloma Theatre. I graduated in 1938 when the new high school was being built at the time and that's where I graduated. I was the first class and graduated in June from there. I fell in love with the area and except for going into the service, the Navy, I came back and bought

Interview with Sid Shaw, October 18, 2004

Mrs. Payne's cleaning plant from her. That was founded about 1925. It's never been anything but a cleaning plant. I bought it in 1946 from her with Bob Anderson, another pilot. We flew together in the Navy, during the war. So we got started in 1946 and have been here ever since.

Lloyd: You were lucky. You were one of the first to be in the high school. That's terrific. And being at Pacific View is unique, too. That was Tent City, wasn't it?

Sid: The old school wasn't there but they had tents on the Cozen's property and we walked back and forth.

Lloyd: How old were you when you first rode on the 101 and where were you going? Do you remember when you came down in 1937?

Sid: The first time I came down here was about 1935 and we stayed at the Stop Over Auto Court. We came down for the summer vacation. My step-dad would drive back and forth during the week and come down weekends. We'd stay there for two, three or four weeks.

Lloyd: Do you remember the first trip driving the 101 yourself?

Sid: I remember coming down. When we left Los Angeles we had to come from Long Beach to that great big roundabout and then you came 101 and then up San Clemente we called it the "bean route". It took off. It wasn't the highway 101. It went around, circled around the hills, which is Camp Pendleton now. Then you came back out and you went through downtown San Clemente. That was the old road. Then we took off and you could always see the interchange there around Camp Pendleton. You came back to the 101 going to Oceanside and then you came down old Highway 101 all the way. But you came down to Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach and it was about 4 ½ to 5 hours trip. It was a long trip because you couldn't go very fast and you went through all of those towns.

Lloyd: Can you recall any of the businesses, or buildings or restaurants that you remember at that time?

Sid: There used to be a restaurant down by Don Hansen's, right in front, I forget what it was called. But it was there and it was up on kind of stilts. There was also a restaurant in the slough that was up on about six foot pilings. They finally had a big high tide and it just about destroyed it so they never did rebuild one there. They talk like these high tides on the 101 are something. I remember going down putting sand bags all around. I worked for Milt Smith and he had a sand plant and we as kids, he'd pick up all us kids. We'd be down at the pool hall, we hung around there, and he said, "If you want to go to work for 20 cents an hour stacking sand bags." We'd stack them up and run like that and when the waves would come in the sandbags were gone. I've seen it come over old Highway 101. It's still doing it. We've always had rocks on the beach. Every year they had the beach opening at Moonlight Beach. We had the Chamber of Commerce at the beach opening and they'd go down there and they'd push sand up all over the rocks, just covered them up and have a beach opening. And when the tide would come in sometimes those rocks would disappear and sometimes they'd come back.

Lloyd: So we've always had the rocks, I guess.

Interview with Sid Shaw, October 18, 2004

Sid: Yes, always had rocks.

Lloyd: What about some of the buildings that you remember early on?

Sid: Well, the building across from the La Paloma Theater, that's been there a long time. That used to be a car agency at one time. I think Danforth's building has been there quite some time. The drug store used to be John Sturdivant's Drug store when I came here.

Lloyd: Around the corner across the street from the La Paloma, right? That's on G Street.

Sid: Yes. Years ago, back in the 30's, late 30s and 40s, we had four drug stores downtown. We had one on each corner of D and E Streets and there was a drug store about two doors from Sam Miller's, a small one there.

Lloyd: Was there any particular person associated with this stretch of road that you remember? Any particular person that you can recall that was prominent and that used the 101 at that time?

Sid: I remember President Roosevelt was running for office and he'd go in an open car and he came through Encinitas and everybody was out there. He went down the 101 and that was a big thing. Seeing all these cars and they went through at about 50 miles an hour, which in those days was pretty fast. I don't think they'd ride in an open touring car like that today.

Lloyd: Were there any changes in the early road prior to Interstate 5 that you remember?

Sid: Well, in the late 1930s, I think, they widened the road on the west side. They took 20 feet off of every piece of property because they wanted to have a larger highway. The highway was real narrow. They had angled parking back then, if you look at the old pictures, it was angled parking but it was a narrow road. The Surf Cleaners was built on a 25-foot lot. The State wouldn't give you any money. They took property off my mother's place, which is the Java Hut. They put a new cesspool in for her and they put a new roof on it and they plastered it and that's all they did. On Mrs. Payne's place, they bought the lot next door, cut the building in half and you can see where they moved it back 20 feet and moved the other around and she ended up with a fifty foot lot. That's the way it was when I bought it and then I remodeled it. But everybody downtown had twenty feet taken off. The lots all on the west side are all 80 feet deep instead of 100. See, they're all 50 x 100 lot spaces.

Lloyd: What happened to the buildings between D and E? Those buildings are quite close together, were they pushed together, too?

Sid: No. There was a service station there and then on the corner there was a restaurant but they were sitting back on the road but they took it off more. The Daily Double they had to cut the front but they got some remodeling out of it. They cut front off and then they went right down the street and in some case people didn't want their buildings moved, or couldn't, so they just cut it off. And they remodeled some of them for them and they put in a new cesspool in each one, things like that. No money changed hands that I know of. The Standard Oil Station was where the hamburger place is on E Street, well, they took twenty feet off that, they shortened it. No garage on the back--they lost that garage because they needed more room. Next door to Surf

Interview with Sid Shaw, October 18, 2004

Cleaners there was nothing there. When I bought Surf Cleaners, there was nothing on that whole lot until somebody bought it. There was a station across the street, Chet Heltibridge, I think he owned the property at that time. I worked for Neil Conrad who had a Texaco station, where the auto smog control is, that was a Texaco station. They took twenty feet off that side. They put a sidewalk in, too, bits and pieces of sidewalk. Across from Safeway, there was nothing developed, that whole lot, down across from Hansen's, that big new Safeway they built some time in the 40s and they built that whole block up. There was nothing in there so they didn't have any trouble taking the property. They didn't try the other side because the railroad owned all that. See, at first they were going to cut it off on both sides. People on the east side, nothing happened to them.

Lloyd: Were you here when Safeway came in between D and E? Were you here or was it already there?

Sid: They were already there.

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

Sid: Well, at that time we had just one sheriff and that was for the whole district. Tom Willis was the early sheriff. Lee Young, was an old time realtor in town. He had an office just south of the Encinitas Hotel. Tom had a desk in the back of the office. McDermitt was the sheriff when I was a kid.

Lloyd: What was his first name, do you remember?

Sid: I forget what his first name was. He was the sheriff and he always rode a horse in the parade every Christmas, not on the highway. No parades were allowed on the highway. We didn't have any signals here so back when the races started we had a difficult time getting around. The traffic was backed up.

Lloyd: I understand that during the races you couldn't cross the 101 during the weekends.

Sid: No, you couldn't. We finally got a signal on E Street and then we got a signal from The Division of Highways. In the 40's I was active in the Chamber and we tried to get the signal on D Street. They said, "no" they hadn't killed enough people. The Division of Highways in Sacramento. There was a guy, I can't remember his name, an older gentleman. He went across the street and got a prescription and he came back and got hit by a car. So I called up and I said, "Would you like me to call the press and talk about this or would you like to talk about a signal?" And we got our signal!

Lloyd: That's the way to go!

Sid: We needed it. There was a stop sign there but nobody used it.

Lloyd: What about the flower parade? Where did they go? They didn't go on the 101?

Sid: No, they had to go down Second street. They started on Third Street and came down to

Interview with Sid Shaw, October 18, 2004

Second. We took Bob Cozens' big truck and flat bed that he hauled his tractor on and we decorated that and had Santa Claus on it. The kids all lined up and we'd give them each a bag of candy. It was kind of fun. We did put Christmas lights up. We added a strand. We got up to about five. We had wires donated by the San Diego Gas and Electric. We strung a wire across and whoever had the string paid for the lights. They decorated the big fruit tree that was the Cozens' property.

Lloyd: What Cozens' was that with the property on the 101?

Sid: Bert Cozens. Bob's dad. Bob graduated from High School in Oceanside. Bob had an older brother, Tom. His younger brother Dick went to school with me in San Dieguito. He was a class behind me, I think. Tom and Dick both got killed in training. Believe it or not, we killed more pilots in training than we did in the war. The guy that taught me how to fly only got his license about three months before he taught me.

Lloyd: Let me drop back to Dr. Novak. What was Dr. Novak's first name?

Sid: John.

Lloyd: John Novak.

Sid: John Novak and Dr. Lindsay. Dr. Lindsay lived up in Leucadia and had his own building up there and he and Dr. Novak moved from Rancho Santa Fe. They got together and bought the property there on D and Second street and they built the medical building and they went into business together.

Lloyd: Now, Lindsey was on the 101?

Sid: He wasn't on the 101 at first. But I think about 1945 he moved over—I think when he went in business with Dr. Novak.

Lloyd: Do you remember where Lindsay was in terms of the 101?

Sid: Do you know where the time clock place is?

Lloyd: Yes, I do.

Sid: He was in that little office there. He moved from there and went back to his house. His house, I think it's still there, isn't it?

Lloyd: It is. Now, do you remember any destinations that you liked to go there on the 101?

Sid: They used to have a big casino dance floor up in San Clemente and for us kids, that was a big thing to go up there. They had big bands in San Clemente. It was only about 30 miles from here, but boy, it was about an hour or so drive. That was a big thing for us to go up there on Saturday nights. The building is still there, I think the Elks own it. We knew a lot of people in Oceanside and Carlsbad. Originally Carlsbad didn't have a high school and they went to

Interview with Sid Shaw, October 18, 2004

Oceanside. They used to call it Oceanside Carlsbad Union High School. Mr. Larrick and Burkholder, they got together and they formed a school district here, the San Dieguito. They were the original board members. Prior to that he was Solana Beach Lumber, he founded that. At that time we had two or three lumber companies. We had Seaman Lumber behind the La Paloma Theater and we had the Encinitas Lumber across the street from Sturdivants and we had the Solana Beach Lumber. All three of them were big. They were busy, very busy. We don't even have a hardware store downtown anymore. Then we had Western Auto downtown, that was there for years.

Lloyd: Do you remember any bad accidents that happened?

Sid: The worst accidents happened after they completed the 101 and made it a little wider. One of the worst ones just going into the entrance to Solana Beach on there 101. There were several people killed there.

Lloyd: Why was it dangerous?

Sid: Too fast and it was kind of a bad curve and people would just go too fast. A lot happened at night and they would fall asleep.

Lloyd: Did they have the three lanes at that time?

Sid: Yes.

Lloyd: That was another bad deal.

Sid: Well, on the other side of Oceanside, on the 101, they called it Suicide Row. We used to put flowers and crosses for everybody and the Division of Highways didn't like that. It was a good reminder though and make them realize that something had to be done.

Lloyd: Let's talk about Interstate 5 and how it was brought into being. Remember they wanted it along the coast?

Sid: Dr. Miller, the head of the Highway Division, he had a route he wanted to go, right down on the bluff all the way through Solana Beach and we had a real battle over that. A lot of people in those days wanted to sell out because they owned property in Leucadia. "Well, they're not going to build it for a year or two and we'll rent it back for a dollar a month and get all the money." They weren't going to pay any taxes on it. It was kind of a town battle. That's when they came up with the inland route and they said that was too long and too many curves and too hard to build. They struggled on this one here. They had quite a battle. In fact, Mr. Larrick was the head of the Highway Selection Committee. It was a bunch of us who got together. The State said, "Well, we're going to put it where we want to if you don't come up with a better idea." So we worked with the Division of Engineers and the State and the County. Mr. Larrick was the head of The Highway Selection Committee and he did a good job. We worked with Jacob Dekema who was the head of Division of Highways at that time. I think they've got a highway down in San Diego that is named after him. He was a very fair person.

Interview with Sid Shaw, October 18, 2004

Lloyd: He was the Highway Engineer?

Sid: He was the head Engineer of the Division of Highways for the San Diego County area. The divided highway in Leucadia? Well, the State built that. We were giving them so much trouble and they said we're just going to build it and we can't turn left. That was built to the original freeway standards. The divided highway went right up to Leucadia and then quit. It comes in handy now. They built that ahead of time. It wasn't too bad here.

Lloyd: No, they built right behind our house. That was kind of a little valley, wasn't it?

Sid: They kind of chopped up 101 in Carlsbad a little bit. You get on the Highway 101 now it's a continuous road and it's very well used. At that time I remember when the bridge--we had a big storm and it washed the bridge out.

Lloyd: What was the date on that?

Sid: I think it was about 1936 or 1937. It just collapsed the undercarriage, underneath the bridge and several cars went into and just disappeared. Went in mid air and hit a stone wall and were killed. We said, "what if we have a real problem? How are we going to get from Camp Pendleton from San Diego?" We need to keep the 101 intact as a secondary road because if something happens on the freeway. This morning they had a bad accident down there that just stopped at the freeway at Del Mar. But they route them into the 101.

Lloyd: Okay, was the first traffic light installed at D Street?

Sid: No, that was the second one. The first one was at E Street. They wouldn't stop they just came right on through. We needed two of them because nobody could get across the streets.

Lloyd: Now the service stations, gosh, we had about five or six.

Sid: Oh yes. One on every corner.

Lloyd: We still have that one down next to Hansen's, the old one.

Sid: That was run by Mr. and Mr. Barr. They ran it for years. It was a Texaco Station. We had two down there. Texaco was there and then the one the end that Don Hanson owned. That was Hickock's, I think.

Lloyd: They were on the east side.

Sid: They were both on the east side. The last station in town was the one that's still there in downtown, across from what used to be the Texaco station.

Lloyd: Then, of course, Leinhart's took over the Union Station?

Sid: That was a Union Station.

Interview with Sid Shaw, October 18, 2004

Lloyd: That was at B and First?

Sid: Harry Bunyard owned that property. Harry Bunyard owned the property from Highway 101 all the way to Second street in back of that.

Lloyd: What did they have on it?

Sid: Nothing. They had a building down by where that big, brick building is. Down across from Hansen's, that used to be the Safeway. And they had a building on that selling houses that they were building. When they got through selling houses Harry bought it and moved it and that was originally the building on there. Jack Harrington was there and they had one office and they had an office on the other side and they had one secretary for the both of them. That building is still there. Harry finally sold it to them.

Lloyd: Anything else that you can remember? I think we've covered everything.

Sid: I think it was about 1937 Hershell Larrick and Bob Grice and Fred Brass, we got together and we went up and they had a tomato ranch up there and we went and picked up all the rotten tomatoes. We got in our Model A Fords and we'd go by, one guy would be in a rumble seat and throwing them at the other guy! We'd go up and down the street! Somebody called McDermitt, the sheriff, and he came down and he said, "Okay, you've had your fun now. Now you're going to clean up." We missed the cars and tomatoes hit the windows and all that, between D and E streets. He got some buckets and soap and water and brushes and we cleaned up the whole street, both sides. I didn't get home until about three o'clock in the morning and my mother didn't know what happened and why I was out that late. I told her, "Well, some vandals threw some tomatoes downtown and we were just helping clean it up!" The Coast Dispatch wrote an article about "this is the cleanest Halloween we've had. There was no soap on any windows." Because we cleaned it! He said, "Well, I could take you home and talk to your parents." Bob Grice didn't want to have his dad get after him and I didn't want my mother get after me.

Lloyd: What was the date on that, do you remember?

Sid: I think it was about 1936 or 37.

Lloyd: When you first came down?

Sid: Yes. We were in school and we all had Model A Fords.

Lloyd: That was the last time you did that.

Sid: Oh yes. We used to steal the senior bench. We used to steal that and hide it. Different people would do things like that, but nothing big.

Lloyd: Just a kid thing. That was a good story.

Sid: We laughed about that for years.