



November 2017

Wageman, Mavis Interview

Unidentified

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/witw>

Recommended Citation

Unidentified, "Wageman, Mavis Interview" (2017). *Delta Women Oral Histories*. 33.
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/witw/33>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Americana at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Delta Women Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

by Sally Miller

WAGEMAN, Mavis (Australian)

No Date

Interviewed by Unidentified Female

Transcribed by Robert Siess

**[TAPE 1, Side A]
[Begin Tape.]**

INTERVIEWER: This is Mavis Wageman. Okay, first let me ask you, can you tell me about your early life? That is, before you came to America?

MAVIS WAGEMAN: Well, I was born in the city of Perth in Western Australia. And I lived there until I came to this country. You want to know about my growing up situation?

INTERVIEWER: You said you were born in Perth?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: And how long did you live there?

WAGEMAN: 24 years.

INTERVIEWER: And this was a country or a city or...?

WAGEMAN: Perth is the capital city of Western Australia, which is a state of Australia. Perth is right on the west coast. It's a similar situation to San Francisco.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and what was your birth date?

WAGEMAN: January 29th.

INTERVIEWER: Did you come to the U.S. directly?

WAGEMAN: I came directly to Elk Grove. I came under the Fiancées Act after World War II. Came to be married to an American citizen.

INTERVIEWER: And was he from here?

WAGEMAN: He was from here.

INTERVIEWER: That must have been interesting. So how did you meet him?

WAGEMAN: He was stationed in Perth, or a suburb of Perth, during World War II, for three years. And I met him during that time.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, how interesting. And then he asked you to marry and you both came back here to be married?

WAGEMAN: Well, he came back after the war, and then I came over about a year and a half later.

INTERVIEWER: That's so neat. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

WAGEMAN: I have one sister and three brothers.

INTERVIEWER: And are all of them here also?

WAGEMAN: No, they're in Australia. All my family's in Australia.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, gosh. That must have been a big move then, to pick up and leave everyone, huh?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, it was.

INTERVIEWER: Were they very happy about that?

WAGEMAN: Not very.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever go to school back there?

WAGEMAN: I did all my schooling back there.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go on to college back there also?

WAGEMAN: No, I went to high school. And the school situation at that time was a little different from here. It's similar, I think, to Canada or the British schooling. We had primary school and secondary school, which is similar to your elementary and high school, only we have a different situation as far as grading. And I was graduating from high school at 14, and I went to work at 14. I don't know if you're interested in what the school setup was then, or if you want to hear what it was like.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, sure.

WAGEMAN: In the high schools I went to at that time, and of course I'm saying this is back when I was there, because it has changed. It's similar to here now. But at that time, when you went into high school, I went to an all-girl high school, and the boys had theirs separately. And the boys had a technical college. That's another high school. And for the girls, when you went into high school, they had three areas to go into. They had professional, commercial, and domestic classes. If you were going into the professional fields, such as science or medical or any of those things, you took professional courses, which gave you the subjects you would be needing to go into those areas. If you took commercial, which I did, I was thinking of going into secretarial work or something like that. And then domestic would be if you were going into clerking or factory or that type of working. Then you would have more subjects. They would give you cooking and sewing and more of these fields.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see. So you really have to decide before you get into school what you want to do.

WAGEMAN: Into high school, to give you an idea of what you want to go into, yeah. So I took commercial, so I graduated at 14. I got through fairly early. Most of them were around 15 I think when they would get out. Then that gives the opportunity – then you would take what they call a junior exam, which would enable you to go into – it would be similar to a junior college I would imagine. And then from that, you take a leaving, which gives you the opportunity to go into university. And I think they still have those exams, which are quite tough. But I didn't go on, because I became a florist instead. And so I was a florist before I came here.

INTERVIEWER: And so this was common for everyone to either go on to college or else work with your family.

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Was it hard during that time for your family to make money?

WAGEMAN: Well, my dad, they weren't in the florist business. That was the trade I went into. But my dad drove what you'd call a streetcar here. Tram. And my mom was at home.

INTERVIEWER: Was it common for mothers to be more their place in the home then?

WAGEMAN: Yes. At that time, yes. For quite a few years, once they were married there, women didn't work, even as school teachers. They were just the single women or widows, women who worked as school teachers at that time. But as I say, this has changed.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember your mom saying that maybe she wanted to get out and work instead of being just at home?

WAGEMAN: No. She was...

INTERVIEWER: More content in the home?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm. She had her activities outside the home, social activities.

INTERVIEWER: So when you came to the United States, did you go back into the florist business?

WAGEMAN: No. I didn't work until my children were in high school.

INTERVIEWER: That must have been a nice rest then, huh?

WAGEMAN: Well, I came from the city to a farm, which was different. Because I was raised in the city, and my husband had a dairy here.

INTERVIEWER: That must have been quite a change too then, huh? Was there much country life where you were brought up, or was it more everything in the city?

WAGEMAN: Where I was raised, it was city. But there's a lot of farming in Western Australia. I don't know if you know about Australia at all, but it's a primary products country. My sister lived on a farm after she was married, so I used to go down there. So I had opportunities, but I hadn't ever lived on a farm.

INTERVIEWER: Do you ever visit where you came from?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm. I've been back five times.

INTERVIEWER: When was the last time you were back?

WAGEMAN: '76.

INTERVIEWER: Has it changed much?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm. Just like here. Perth is similar to Sacramento in size, maybe a little bigger. And it's expanded the same way, with subdivisions all over.

INTERVIEWER: So you went back, and were things as modern as they are here?

WAGEMAN: They have pretty much the same. The climate is similar to San Diego where I come from. I'd probably say a little nicer, because we have the warm Japanese current from the ocean. It's warmer than here. I was raised by the ocean.

INTERVIEWER: I love the ocean.

WAGEMAN: Yes. I do too. That's the one thing I missed when I moved here.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Didn't you want to live by the ocean when you got here?

WAGEMAN: I went on my honeymoon down to Santa Cruz and Carmel and those places. Got in the water and went swimming, and stayed about five minutes. It was so cold, I couldn't stand it.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel when you were leaving the old country?

WAGEMAN: Well, when you're younger, I was just excited about coming.

INTERVIEWER: And how old were you when you came?

WAGEMAN: 24.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's not very young.

WAGEMAN: No. About ready to get married I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Did your feelings change once you got here?

WAGEMAN: Yes. Then I was a little homesick.

INTERVIEWER: Did your parents call and write a lot, asking you about what kinds of things you were doing here and what it was like?

WAGEMAN: Yes. My mother wrote to me every week, and I wrote back every week up until she was in her 80s.

INTERVIEWER: Gosh, that would've been neat. Did you save all her letters and stuff?

WAGEMAN: No, I didn't.

INTERVIEWER: That would have been neat to look over now. What did you like most about your life in the old country?

WAGEMAN: Well, I think Australia is very... an outdoors type people. I enjoy swimming and tennis. A lot of tennis is played in Australia. And beaches. They have such beautiful beaches there that I think that's what I enjoyed most. Outdoor activities.

INTERVIEWER: What about when you were in high school? That's mostly what their extracurricular activities...

WAGEMAN: That didn't have as much when I was growing up. As I said, the high school situation was a little different. Our social activities weren't too much connected with school. School was school. And when we'd go home, our activities were with our own friends. They had about one afternoon for a week for about two hours that you did sports. I played tennis during that time. And they offered tennis for girls. They had tennis, basketball... It'd be similar softball. Hockey. And then they did have, in primary I think it was, when we had swimming classes. We have a big river that runs right through Perth that swimming was done there. They have what they called a baths. It's similar to a swimming pool. It's an enclosed area on the river.

INTERVIEWER: Was there anything about the old country that you didn't like? That you like better here?

WAGEMAN: Well, I think at the time I was growing up, there was quite a class-conscious situation. Mainly, the biggest percentage of the people are British, and so there was a definite... how would I put this... the other nationalities, we had some, but not a lot, as you do here. This has also changed since World War II. A lot of nationalities are there now. But at that time the British were I think a little more class-conscious. And that's one thing that there was more class-consciousness in Australia than you would've had here. At least I thought so. I was really surprised when I came here. I had always heard of America being, you know, everybody is the same and so forth. So I was a little surprised when I did find the prejudices here. I thought that would be from our country than here. So that was one thing that surprised me.

INTERVIEWER: So most of your neighbors were around the same nationality as you.

WAGEMAN: Biggest percentage. European anyway. We did have quite a lot of other nationalities there, but not a big percentage.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any groups or anybody trying to get everybody more integrated, rather than being so separated in your country then?

WAGEMAN: Not at that time. Now, just in recent years, the Aborigines have started similar movements to what the Indian people have here. They are trying to reclaim lands that have been taken over by the government and so forth. So you do see these things. I think they do tend to copy the Americans a lot in this respect.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a big difference in governments?

WAGEMAN: Yes. They're a monarchy. Australia has a parliament. It's different from here.

INTERVIEWER: Were they a lot stricter in that sense?

WAGEMAN: The government owns a lot more things than they do here.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about life most when you first came here? The difference of class-consciousness, or what was the biggest?

WAGEMAN: Well, my situation, it was kind of a drastic change for me, because my husband's parents were from Dakota, and they still spoke the German language quite a bit. And I was out on the farm, and this is where I tend to get homesick. You know, they'd be speaking German all the time, and I didn't understand a word of German, so I got very lonely. So I really didn't have a very broad outlook as far as my first few years here. This has changed, of course, since I've integrated more.

INTERVIEWER: So your husband spoke German also.

WAGEMAN: Yeah. He could speak German. He did as well as English. German was spoken in the home mostly.

INTERVIEWER: So I bet he had a lot of translating to do to you, huh?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, it's a little difficult at first.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of things did you expect to find besides the more non-prejudiced people in the United States?

WAGEMAN: Well, I think we were influenced a lot by movies.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't have as many then?

WAGEMAN: Oh, movies? Yeah, we had most of the American movies, so kind of the lifestyle you expected to find was what you had seen in the movies. Which wasn't quite the way it was.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of movies did you see back then?

WAGEMAN: All the reruns you watch from the '40s. *Gone with the Wind*. Of course that wasn't. But a lot of them had been wartime movies too. Ben Johnson, Clark Gable, and all those.

INTERVIEWER: And now you're starting to see them again?

WAGEMAN: Yes. Right. Reruns on 40.

INTERVIEWER: So you settled here when you first arrived?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: And was it easy for you to get to know the people here? Was your culture different?

WAGEMAN: The people were very nice. I had to admit, I think that's one thing I like about this country. The people, most of them are easy to get to know, and they're kind. They were very good to me. I can't complain about that at all.

INTERVIEWER: So there was more people in your country that were more... Gosh, how can I say it? More enclosed to themselves, not as open?

WAGEMAN: Well, from all I hear of people who visit Australia, they think the Australian people are very friendly, which is true I think, but I think we're a little more reserved. The British people are a little more reserved. It's a little harder for us to be outgoing. Of course, you have personality differences too. But the general is that they're a little more reserved.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find your own personality changing towards more of the American-type things? Or your cultures, was there a big difference in that that made you change to be more American? Was it kind of difficult to do that?

WAGEMAN: There are a lot of similarities between Australians. Because Australia is a little different from England, being a colony. It's a younger country, and it has a lot of similarities to the United States. And they tended to pattern themselves after the United States, I think, more than England.

INTERVIEWER: So they kind of look up to the United States?

WAGEMAN: They did. They always admired the United States, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of things were different in that respect?

WAGEMAN: Well, I had mentioned about government-regulated things a lot more than here.

INTERVIEWER: What about the families? Were the people there closer families than they are here, or were they more open with other people? Like they say a lot in older countries that their families seem to be closer-knit than they are in the United States.

WAGEMAN: No, I think they're very similar to here. I think you're thinking like the nationalities where the family kind of involves all the relatives. Is this what you're talking about?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yes.

WAGEMAN: No, you don't have that feeling too much in Australia.

INTERVIEWER: So it's pretty much the same?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, I would say the same to here.

INTERVIEWER: Did your family ever want to come back here once you got here, after you had told them all about it?

WAGEMAN: No.

INTERVIEWER: You said you had one sister?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: And she did move to America?

WAGEMAN: No. They're all in Australia. All my family's in Australia. She visited here.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. I thought you said she'd gotten married here.

WAGEMAN: No. She lived in a farm in Australia.

INTERVIEWER: So you lived in a neighborhood mostly with people from your country there? No real immigrant people from maybe the United States or somewhere else?

WAGEMAN: No. But of course, during the war, we had so many different nationalities coming in. Perth is on the ocean, so we had a lot of ships coming in. So as far as that, we had been open to meeting a lot of nationalities, and we did have different nationalities. We had Italian, German, and quite a few nationalities that I had friends before. But not to the extent... The biggest majority were British.

INTERVIEWER: I always hear on movies and things how when people come here, they have so many problems getting in here, and papers and everything, switching over to a new country. Was that a big problem for you?

WAGEMAN: No. They had a special act for fiancées that I came in under, after World War II.

INTERVIEWER: What was that like?

WAGEMAN: I had a special visa that enabled me to come in, and I had to be married by a certain date. That visa was only good for a certain time, as all visas are. Also, the act was only good up until I believe it was the end of June in 1947. So I had to be married before that date, or I could have been deported. And then also, we were able... I think it was we could take

citizenship out after two years instead of five or something. We had some special privileges. But we did have to take our citizenship exams.

INTERVIEWER: How did your husband send for you? He wrote you a letter and said, "You can come now," or what did he do?

WAGEMAN: What we had to do, there really weren't too many ships coming between Australia and the United States at that time. So we just had to put in our application, we went down to the American consulate, and they had all the papers. They had to get all our background and know everything about us back there before we could come. And then once your papers were finalized, it was a case of you getting space on a ship that was available. And so I think there was only one more shipload came over after I did. Now the war brides, they were shipped over by the United States in their shipping. They didn't have to pay. But we came under private shipping, and my husband had to put up a \$500 bond, which was a lot of money at that time, to cover it in case I had to get shipped back. And his parents had to write a letter that they would sponsor me, that they'd be responsible for me up until the time I was married.

INTERVIEWER: What was the ride over here like?

WAGEMAN: On the ship? It was a long one. At that time, it took three weeks from Sidney. I came by train, which was five days across Australia, and then three weeks on the ship.

INTERVIEWER: Three weeks! Oh, goodness. Was the food really bad? You know how you hear it's really crowded and stuff?

WAGEMAN: Oh no. Not on this ship. It was good food.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, it was?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. It wasn't like being on a pleasure cruise that we go on now. It was a converted troop carrier, I think, but it was being run by one of the shipping company from here. I can't remember whether it was Preston Lines or what. But see, most of the ships had been used for troop carrying, even cruise ships, during the war. Everything had been used for the war, and so they were converting things back. And so this particular ship, if you could call it a cabin, it was a big room. It had 40 of us fiancées, and you had bunk beds two high. Where I guess when they were carrying troops, it would have been five high. You've seen pictures of the troop carriers. So it wasn't very fancy...

INTERVIEWER: But it was comfortable?

WAGEMAN: Yes. Right.

INTERVIEWER: So you had a lot of other fiancées with you then, huh

WAGEMAN: Oh yeah, yeah. A lot of them.

INTERVIEWER: Was that interesting being with them? Finding out their different stories?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, it was fun. We had a lot of fun.

INTERVIEWER: Three weeks, gosh, that just seems like the longest time. Did you know it would take three weeks when you got on there?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm. But it was interesting. We went into New Zealand and then Samoa, Fiji before we came here.

INTERVIEWER: I bet when you arrived, you were so excited then, huh?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm. We came into San Francisco.

INTERVIEWER: And then your husband had lived here in Elk Grove?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. He's lived here since he was about eight years old.

INTERVIEWER: I think this would have been a good town to come to also when you first come here, because it seems like the smaller towns are closer and stuff.

WAGEMAN: It was nice. I haven't really any complaints.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of religions were prevalent back then?

WAGEMAN: Well, the state church is Church of England, which is I think similar to the Episcopal here. And they have all the similar religions as here.

INTERVIEWER: What religion was more dominant then?

WAGEMAN: The Church of England I would imagine had the most members. Catholics were strong. They would have been the strongest at that time. Catholic and the Church of England. But they didn't have as many... Now, here, if it's a Baptist, you have nearly every nationality has started the Baptist I guess, and you have all these different Baptist denominations. Where back there, there'd probably be one. They'd all be under the same conference as far as if it was a Baptist. And Methodist would be the same. You wouldn't have like a Chinese Methodist and a Japanese Methodist. It would be all under the same conference.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see. Did you ever have people live in your household with your family, that maybe was there visiting or something?

WAGEMAN: Not from other countries.

INTERVIEWER: You never had your grandparents or anybody else live with you?

WAGEMAN: Yes. But my grandmother who lived with us was born in Australia.

INTERVIEWER: I see. And she was the only one besides your family.

WAGEMAN: That had lived there? Well, I had a great-aunt, but she was from England. And another friend, but she was Australian. Friend of my mother's lived with us for quite a while.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember what it was like having them live with you? Was it better do you think?

WAGEMAN: To have them live with us? In some ways. As far as my grandmother was concerned, it was really nice I would say. But the other two, we did have some problems.

INTERVIEWER: Did you as children, with your sister and them, did you find you had a lot of chores and things to help around the house when you were younger?

WAGEMAN: I'm afraid not.

INTERVIEWER: No?

WAGEMAN: I didn't, no.

INTERVIEWER: Oh really? That seems strange. Was that unusual for a family then, or was that pretty common?

WAGEMAN: Well, it would depend, I imagine the same as here, what type of situation you were living. I imagine people living out in the country on farms and things would have chores. But being in the city and going to school, that took most of my days. Our school day was longer. Primary school, we went from nine to four. So you really didn't have much time. Summer vacation, we had six weeks I think, where you have three months. But no. Maybe I'm not typical, though I think most of my friends were that way. We just played. And even when I went out to work, maybe I was spoiled. I didn't do anything.

INTERVIEWER: So the only job that you worked outside of your home was the florist?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: And you were really content with that job?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a lot of other girls your age that also worked with you maybe?

WAGEMAN: No. None of my girlfriends. They were in a different occupation.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of jobs did they have?

WAGEMAN: Some were office jobs, some were factory. What else did they do? Of course, I was in my teens when World War II broke out, so a lot of girls went into the service. Because everybody had to be in some kind of war-type work.

INTERVIEWER: What was it like for you to be supervised by an adult all the time? Did you find yourself wanting to get out of the home a lot? Like a lot of teenagers now find that they want to just get out on their own, you know?

WAGEMAN: I think you go through a stage. Most people do. One time I know I had kind of wanted to go to Sidney. Sidney would be kind of like going to New York from San Francisco. But my parents weren't too happy about that prospect, so I didn't do it.

INTERVIEWER: So how long were you with your fiancée before you married him?

WAGEMAN: It was nearly a year I knew him in Australia. And then of course, he was shipped home here, and then I came here a year and a half later. And then we were married two months after I got here. I stayed with his family during that time.

INTERVIEWER: Besides the language, were they very hospitable to you?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, I would say so.

INTERVIEWER: How many children in your husband's family was there?

WAGEMAN: There were three boys and one girl. But in the home when I came, it was just the one brother.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of income was your family living on then? Was it more middle-class income would you say?

WAGEMAN: In Australia? Yes, we were middle class.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a lot of poverty around you though?

WAGEMAN: No, I don't think that was as pronounced as you would see in other countries.

INTERVIEWER: So you were pretty well off for that time?

WAGEMAN: For that time. We didn't have a lot of money, but you didn't have – it seemed you always had plenty to eat, and...

INTERVIEWER: So material things weren't as big of a deal as they are now?

WAGEMAN: No. Unh-uh. Not as much as today. And even Australia's changed in that respect too.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find a big difference on that when you came here, that there was a lot of material?

WAGEMAN: That's one thing, yes, I did notice that.

INTERVIEWER: That must have been hard to adjust to, huh?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: So what kind of home did you live in back then? What was your house like?

WAGEMAN: Well, it wasn't a very big house. I couldn't tell you how many square feet. It was a typical house at that time. Most of your homes in Australia are brick, with either a tile or a galvanized iron roof. Ours was a galvanized roof at that time. It had three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen. The kitchen was kind of a dining room and a kitchen together. Then we had we called them verandas. They'd be like porches. We had a full veranda across the front and one in the back. And quite big lots.

INTERVIEWER: So you had a backyard-like area?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Were most houses like that?

WAGEMAN: Typical middle class, yes.

INTERVIEWER: In the more poverty – well, not poverty. You said it wasn't as well-pronounced there. But maybe the lower-income people, what were their homes like?

WAGEMAN: They were usually what they call weatherboard. They were board and asbestos, and then a tin roof. The city has an ordinance that they can only be built in certain areas. Most of the homes have to be brick.

INTERVIEWER: What is Australia like? Is it like mountainy?

WAGEMAN: No. No. There's only one area where there are what you'd call mountains, and that's in the southeast. Western Australia, I think the highest would be about 3,000 feet. And there's a big desert right in the middle of Australia. And so most of the population is around the coastline.

INTERVIEWER: What types of people lived in Australia? Do you think they were mostly all from Australia, not many minorities?

WAGEMAN: Well, you have the Aborigines, who are black. And they weren't integrated too much. They were mostly still out in the outback.

INTERVIEWER: So speaking in fractions, how much...?

WAGEMAN: What percentage would they be? They're a small percentage. I couldn't tell you.

INTERVIEWER: Were they the biggest of the minorities?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. Uh huh.

INTERVIEWER: What other types?

WAGEMAN: Well, as I said, Australia had for many years a White Australia policy. Nobody was let come in the country that wasn't white or Caucasian. So your biggest percentage of people were Caucasian.

INTERVIEWER: When did they start easing up on that so others could come in?

WAGEMAN: I think since World War II. You've had a lot of Asians come in now, particularly as students. You've had a lot of Asians come into the universities.

INTERVIEWER: Did the war make a big impact on your family?

WAGEMAN: Yes. Well, all the families in Australia, because most of the men were shipped overseas. Not my dad, but all the young people growing up. That's why I think so many Australian girls married guys from overseas, because all the Australians were shipped overseas.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, because there was hardly anyone left, huh?

WAGEMAN: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get along well with your parents?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm. Yeah, we got along very well.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have any real big disagreements when you were growing up that caused problems?

WAGEMAN: No.

INTERVIEWER: Was there anything like the war that made a big impact on your family, that maybe was a critical period in your life and your family?

WAGEMAN: Critical only in the respect that my three brothers were in the service. Two of them in pretty serious situations.

INTERVIEWER: All three of them went?

WAGEMAN: One didn't ever go overseas. The other eventually had a physical reason for being discharged. But one of them was in the Middle East at that time in the thick of the war. He spent his 21st birthday over there.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find a lot of other families around you went through the same type too?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. And a lot of the families lost people. We were very fortunate that all my brothers came home, but nearly every family lost someone.

INTERVIEWER: I bet you were always just hoping and praying that none of that would happen to you, huh?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. Right.

INTERVIEWER: Oh gosh, that's really fortunate then.

WAGEMAN: Yeah, we were thankful that they came home.

INTERVIEWER: Did that really draw families closer together, the war, because it had taken away a part of everyone's family?

WAGEMAN: Well, yeah, I think you learn to appreciate your family more. But as I said, a lot of the girls, too, were in the service and shipped overseas too. It broke up a lot of families in that respect.

INTERVIEWER: What if any customs or practices from the old country do you remember observing in your family? Any holidays different from here?

WAGEMAN: Yes. We have what we call Guy Fawkes Day on November 5th, which is a celebration of I guess this Guy Fawkes tried to blow up Parliament the one time.

INTERVIEWER: What was the name?

WAGEMAN: Guy, G-U-Y F-A-W-K-E-S.

INTERVIEWER: And it was a man?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. And I don't know, but the celebrations are in the vicinity of the Fourth of July, because that's when we have our fireworks and bonfires, and they usually build what we call Guy Fawkes. It was like a scarecrow or dummy-type thing to put on top of your bonfire and burn.

INTERVIEWER: And this was to celebrate what did he do?

WAGEMAN: Tried to blow up Parliament or something. I'm really not too sure. As kids, all we enjoyed was the fireworks. We didn't really care what it was for. We don't have Fourth of July, of course, because that was when you were freed from the British, so they don't celebrate. But otherwise, yes. They have ANZAC Day, which is April 25th, and that's celebrating the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps. It was something to do with World War I. And so I'm not quite sure what that is either, whether it was some particular battle or just a general celebration after World War I. Oh, and they usually have a holiday for the Queen's Birthday and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any specific traditions or customs that you went through at home? Any rituals or things like that?

WAGEMAN: The only thing that's really different is Christmas, because it's summer in Australia for Christmas. And yet we still had the traditional Christmas dinner with plum pudding and stuff. You know, it might be 105, but we'd have a hot Christmas dinner. We usually spent the rest of the day at the beach or something.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of foods did you have there?

WAGEMAN: At that time, they were traditionally British, I'd say. We didn't have the variety that is here now, and which we tend to have in Australia now. As I say, there's been a lot of changes since I left. And we would have like meat and potatoes and vegetables. We did have salads though in Australia, because Australia grows a lot of fruit. From the temperate zones in the tropical, we grow bananas and pineapples, down to the apple country, so we have a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Which is similar to California, so it wasn't a drastic change in that respect.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that we had a lot more sugar added in our things? And salt?

WAGEMAN: That's one thing, the sugar content I think I noticed. Our cakes and things, we don't have quite as much.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that you had three meals a day just as we do here?

WAGEMAN: Except where you would have a coffee break, they call it morning tea and afternoon tea. Tea is the main beverage rather than coffee.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so what kind of foods did you have stocked? You said more meat and potatoes?

WAGEMAN: They eat a lot of lamb. More than beef here, where beef is prevalent. Back there, lamb would be more their dish.

INTERVIEWER: Did they have a lot of restaurants there that your family maybe would go to?

WAGEMAN: We didn't eat out much at that particular time. There were restaurants. As families, you didn't seem to go out and eat at that time. They have what they call tea rooms a lot. A lot of women go to town shopping in order to have lunch...

INTERVIEWER: Sort of like a coffee shop?

WAGEMAN: Yes. And that too has changed. There are a lot of really nice restaurants now. People go out a lot more, I guess same as here.

INTERVIEWER: As a child, do you remember any kinds of games you played? Maybe with your parents or other friends?

WAGEMAN: I don't know if you know, but in Australia, eucalyptus trees are similar to what your evergreens would be here. Eucalyptus are all over Australia and all different varieties. We used to like to play hockey, and this particular eucalyptus had a fairly big... We called them gnats, but like a blossom or whatever that forms. And we used to call them hockey nuts, because we'd take those, and we'd also cut a branch off the gum trees as we'd call them, with a hook on them that was like a stick, and we used to play hockey with the sticks. That's one thing we used to do.

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't find you had a lot of homework to distract you?

WAGEMAN: No. No. We had a certain amount, but we didn't have TV or anything in those days, and also it seems we didn't have the toys. We had to do a lot of improvising, I think, which was good. We had to use our own imagination for games, and I think this is an asset. I feel today the children have everything made for them, and they just don't get to use imagination.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a big thing when you came here too, that you found the American children had a lot of their things that you made up yourself?

WAGEMAN: Well, yes, and that's changed too. Back there today you have TVs and toys and things the same as here. And another thing I noticed when I first came here was, most of our

young people were active. As I said, they played a lot of tennis. So instead of being onlookers at sports, we were active ourselves doing things, I think, more than here.

INTERVIEWER: More exercise-type activity.

WAGEMAN: Yeah. More athletic I would say at that particular time.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever bring your friends home with you after school and stuff?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a real best friend when you were younger?

WAGEMAN: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What was she like? About the same as you?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, I would imagine. Yeah. Probably the same, as far as middle class, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find you shared a lot of your secrets and imagination with her?

WAGEMAN: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How did your parents feel when you brought friends home? Were they pretty welcome to them?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. There was no problem.

INTERVIEWER: So you think they were pretty easy-going? Not real strict?

WAGEMAN: No, not in that respect. I had a good home situation.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of groups did you belong to when you were growing up? Maybe a swim team or something like that?

WAGEMAN: No. The only thing I did was church activities. We had a girls' group that met in the church, and most of our friends were – I was Church of England at that time, and most of my friends were from the same church. But we had activities like the church had two tennis courts so we played tennis. Then in the winter we played badminton and had teams that went around and played the other churches and things like that. Well, it was different too. We would do things like on a Sunday afternoon, there was what we called bush at that time nearby, so it was just fun for the whole group of us to go walking in the bush. So things like that were fun.

INTERVIEWER: Most of your friends were the same religious and ethnic background?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. Most of them.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever remember meeting maybe a foreign child, different from your country?

WAGEMAN: I had a couple of girlfriends in high school who were Jewish, which is different because the Jewish people retain their culture wherever they are, it seems like.

INTERVIEWER: How were they different from you? Did you see any prevalent traits maybe?

WAGEMAN: Not really. Just in their religious holidays and things like that. They were friends in high school, and as I said, we didn't get to see them away from school. It was a different situation, because we didn't have cars and things to go around. We used to use the public transportation if we went anywhere. So you didn't have the traveling that you have today. So going to high school, I had to go right into the center of the city, so if they didn't live in the same suburb as you, you didn't really see them outside of school. So most of my friends were from the same suburb.

INTERVIEWER: Did your parents ever set rules about seeing boys or dating or anything?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, I had a curfew time.

INTERVIEWER: When was the first time you dated? What age were you?

[End of Tape]

[TAPE 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape]

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so the first time you really dated, you dated with more a lot of friends?

WAGEMAN: We usually would, you know, four girls, four boys type thing. They'd walk you home, but as a boy and girl. And this was probably from fifteen on. We would walk home with them, but to just go out two, I was probably seventeen.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the guy you first went out with?

WAGEMAN: No, I don't.

INTERVIEWER: What was your curfew then?

WAGEMAN: Twelve.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's not really much different than people now. Maybe it's a little latter.

WAGEMAN: It was twelve because the last bus would get me home by twelve. Otherwise you'd have to take a taxi.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, and that was a lot more expensive, wasn't it?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, a lot of the boys couldn't afford taxis.

INTERVIEWER: Did your parents have anything to do with who you married? What's your husband's first name?

WAGEMAN: John.

INTERVIEWER: John. Did they really...?

WAGEMAN: No. Not really.

INTERVIEWER: Did they like him a lot?

WAGEMAN: They didn't know him too well.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find yourself trying to impress his parents? Or him trying to impress yours?

WAGEMAN: No, I don't think so. We were old enough that our decision was... You know, we were adults. Our decision was accepted I think.

INTERVIEWER: Was it helpful to have brothers and sisters when you were growing up? Do you think they helped you along with school, or maybe just with your friends and stuff?

WAGEMAN: No. We got along very well, but we really didn't do a lot of things together. We each had our own individual friends I think. I heard where people – now, my sister was a few years older than I was, so I was just the kid sister. And she had her friends and I had mine. And we really didn't do a lot of things together that way, no.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever feel discriminated when you got here? As being Australian, other than American?

WAGEMAN: No. No, people have always been very nice about it.

INTERVIEWER: You don't remember anyone ever saying something, a smart remark or something?

WAGEMAN: No. No. The only thing was, a lot of people didn't know where Australia was. They thought I would speak a different language. I had a different accent, but I still spoke English. So that made it easier for me than it does for some countries. But that was the only thing that I found different was they'd come to John and say, "Well, does she understand when we talk to her?" you know.

INTERVIEWER: So you felt like you must have fit right in.

WAGEMAN: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Did you participate in groups when you got here? Or did you start going to the Baptist church right here in Elk Grove right away?

WAGEMAN: I went with John. Yes, I wasn't a member, but I had always gone to church. My dad played organ for the church for over fifty years. So we had always attended church, but as I said, it was Church of England, which is a more formal church than the Baptists. So that was different. Everything was different from what I was used to. But that's where I started making my friends, and that's where most of my friends have gone.

INTERVIEWER: Was your family a Christian family back where you lived?

WAGEMAN: Well, there you can put it in...

INTERVIEWER: [laughs]

WAGEMAN: There's your definition of Christian again. It was not like a Baptist, the born-again experience type situation. I thought I was Christian. I believed I was until I came here and heard different, you know. So my family would be under the same situation.

INTERVIEWER: Do they think you're any different now that you've arrived here?

WAGEMAN: Well, they've seen differences.

INTERVIEWER: Do they think for the better?

WAGEMAN: They've never been critical. They've supported me. So I really can't complain in that respect.

INTERVIEWER: So how long ago was it that you became a U.S. citizen?

WAGEMAN: I think '51. That's 30 years.

INTERVIEWER: How did your husband's job compare to the jobs that they had back in Australia?

WAGEMAN: Well, he was a dairyman.

INTERVIEWER: So it wasn't very common back there?

WAGEMAN: Well, yeah, there were a lot of dairies, but not where I was. I mean, out in the country there is. And Australia has always been fairly advanced as far as your primary things, so their dairies would compare with here. I hadn't had anything to do with the dairy before, so I couldn't say too much on that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you like living on a farm when you got here?

WAGEMAN: Once I adjusted, yes, I enjoyed it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you still live in the same place as when you were married?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really? Where do you live now?

WAGEMAN: On Bristol Road. That's about ten miles out.

INTERVIEWER: And how many children did you and your husband have?

WAGEMAN: Two.

INTERVIEWER: And their names are Norm...?

WAGEMAN: Paul and Norm.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I've never met Paul.

WAGEMAN: Haven't you met Paul?

INTERVIEWER: No. I know Norm, but not Paul.

WAGEMAN: Well, he's been gone ever since you came to the church. You may have seen his visits once in a while with the Marine Corps.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I heard about him, yeah. Do you find that Norm and Paul asked you a lot of questions about Australia, what it was like?

WAGEMAN: They have been back. The last time Paul was there, he was fourteen, and Norm, when he was in the Navy, spent 45 days with his relatives there. So he knows quite a bit about it. They've kept in contact with the relatives back there quite a bit, so they're pretty familiar with it.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that your marriage with John would be much different from the marriage back in Australia? Maybe more equal now than it would have been then? For instance, you've said women back then were more in the household, and now maybe they're more working.

WAGEMAN: Yeah. I really don't know. Not having been married back there, I don't really know. Going back now, I still have... Ones my age, a lot of them still don't work. And they have kind of a nice life really, the wives back there. I think probably easier than we do here in that respect. I don't know. Some of the things they do I think I would enjoy.

INTERVIEWER: Are you more content working in the household than maybe out working with a job?

WAGEMAN: As I am now? No, I think – because I didn't start working out until after the boys were in high school.

INTERVIEWER: You work full-time or part time now?

WAGEMAN: Full-time. Here you mean?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

WAGEMAN: Yeah, I work full-time. This is my 14th year.

INTERVIEWER: Oh gosh, you have worked here a long time. So you found that when you were married, both of you usually participated in making the decisions for the house and raising the children and stuff?

WAGEMAN: Right. Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the way it was back then, or did you find your dad was the one who made the decisions?

WAGEMAN: The general way is, the Australian men are quite... How would you put it? Dominating I would think, to a certain extent. And that isn't really a truth, because you still have personalities involved, so you would find some who are and some who aren't. But the Australian man is... I know they have always thought the American men spoil their women more than the Australian men do.

INTERVIEWER: You said it wasn't common for a wife to go out and work? Her place was more in the household?

WAGEMAN: At that time, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: When you would see a woman go out from the household, was it maybe talked about, about that woman because she had left?

WAGEMAN: I don't think they were criticized, no. No.

INTERVIEWER: You and your husband, how do you resolve your differences? Do you ever argue and maybe have conflicts because of the way you were brought up being different from the way he was?

WAGEMAN: Over the years, I've gotten to understand more. You have to get to know about a person's background to be able to understand. There were lots of things I didn't understand at first. The German background is very strict. My husband had very strict type upbringing, which I couldn't say – my folks were strict, but in a loving kind of a way, a different type strictness from his. And so I have found this took me a while to understand that. And the resolving differences... We usually can discuss things, and my husband is fairly easygoing, but if he really is against something, then he is definite on that. And so I've come to realize that, and can give to that point too. Because he's so good to me that I understand, when he definitely doesn't want to do something or doesn't feel something should be done, I'll go along with it, because he's usually pretty sensible about it.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of qualities do you think that you have are really dominating? Do you find you're kind of stubborn in some ways?

WAGEMAN: Well, I'm the type of person that likes things very organized. My husband doesn't tend to be that way. And so this can be an irritant. And I've had to learn to accept his ways the same as he has to accept me. So you do have times that you get a little irritated, but nothing that's ever been a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that you divided the responsibilities between you two?

WAGEMAN: Raising the children, I think that was the advantage of being on a farm, raising particularly boys. Because John was at home during the daytime, where men who are out working don't have that opportunity to start training their children. I think farms, for boys, are great for raising. And it also takes a lot of responsibility off the mother having to raise them, because they spent a lot of time out with their dad.

INTERVIEWER: So you found that your home environment was the kind of environment you wanted your children up in?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, I don't think I'd ever say...

INTERVIEWER: You didn't ever conflict about cultures in any way, like that you wanted a certain way?

WAGEMAN: No. Oh, no. No.

INTERVIEWER: Are your childrearing practices different from your mother's?

WAGEMAN: I think we tend to emulate our parents quite a bit in respect to the things they have done. Particularly the good things you've seen that come from your parents, you try to do the same with your children. And I think then when you see your children growing up, you see the same thing. They'll choose the things that they felt have been good about their upbringing and try to do the same. I think so.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think was the happiest time in your life? The happiest period?

WAGEMAN: Oh. Each time seems happy. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: So you find that you were really happy all through your life?

WAGEMAN: When you say happy, no one is happy... But I've been content, let's put it that way. You're not always happy.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, and I realize that everyone goes through some bad times.

WAGEMAN: But I haven't been able to complain about my life, no. I think the hardest part of my life probably was the adjustment when I came here. Because I said the culture of his folks, it wasn't the American culture. It was the German culture that I found hard at first.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any experiences of that?

WAGEMAN: Well, there again it might be personalities, because not everybody there would've been the same. But as I said, it was a very strict household, and a very blunt way of speaking, which I wasn't used to. And I'd get the feeling they were mad at me all the time. And it wasn't until I learned to understand that I knew they weren't. And I had lived a fairly sheltered life, as you can tell, and a very loving type family, where John's family don't show any affection. And see, this was hard, difficult for me to understand at first. So I would say that probably, if there was any unhappy period, and that seems strange to say when you're first married, but those first years probably were my unhappiest.

INTERVIEWER: How old were your parents? Or how old are they now?

WAGEMAN: My mom just died this past year. She was 93. My dad is 90.

INTERVIEWER: Boy, that was really a long time, huh?

WAGEMAN: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How old are your brothers and sisters now?

WAGEMAN: Well, two of my brothers have died too. My one brother died about a year ago. He was 65.

INTERVIEWER: Were they both older?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. I was the youngest in the family. The baby.

INTERVIEWER: And your sister, is she still living back in Australia?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. Mmhmm. I had one brother and... What is she? She must be 60 now. She's over 60 I guess. That's terrible when you can't remember their ages. But she's in her early 60s, and my younger brother just turned 60. He just retired.

INTERVIEWER: Are they both really happy with their lives right now in Australia?

WAGEMAN: Oh, I think so. And my brother just retired. He worked for the government. See, there the post office was run by the government. He worked in the post office, and now he's retired and moved about 300 miles away. Where they used to have a vacation home, now they've built their home, and they've retired by the ocean.

INTERVIEWER: And you said he was married also.

WAGEMAN: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever used to go shopping with your mother when she did her weekly shopping?

WAGEMAN: No. At that time they didn't have supermarkets. We had a little grocery store about a block or so from where I lived. And we could just go down and mom would give us a list or something, and we would shop for her, or if she was gone, she would shop. We didn't go together so much. She wanted things from the store, we just went down and got it. But at that time, see they had your grocery store, then they had what they call a greengrocer, which was your vegetable store, then they had a butcher shop, so it wasn't all together when I was growing up.

INTERVIEWER: So she'd usually tell you and you've have to go three or four different places, huh?

WAGEMAN: They were right in the same vicinity, but they were different stores, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Were prices really high then?

WAGEMAN: No. When I was growing up, things were really cheap. And then when I first came here, things were much cheaper in Australia than they were here, but that's changed now. The inflation in Australia's higher than here, and now you'll find the costs over there probably higher than here.

INTERVIEWER: Families didn't own cars back then?

WAGEMAN: Some did. But my mom and dad really didn't need to. We had no need of cars really, because they had good transportation. But my brother owned a car.

INTERVIEWER: Were they big luxury?

WAGEMAN: Most of them were American cars at that time. There were some British, but most of them were American cars. Which is different now. They manufacture their own and they import a lot of smaller ones. And the American companies, there's so much duty imposed on the American cars that most Australians can't afford them. Because Chevrolet builds their own car out there, which was a Holden, built by Chevrolet. So most people buy that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any stories, like your mom or dad ever telling you about when they were younger, what kind of things they did?

WAGEMAN: My grandfather was a policeman, and of course, when he was a policeman, that would've been back in the 1800s, and he was stationed out in the Outback. And they'd be the only white family, and he had blacks working for him. And she had some really interesting stories.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any in particular?

WAGEMAN: The one that I remember is, Lord Forest was one of the explorers in Australia that traveled across exploring Australia. And I guess one time he stopped by their home and stayed, which was quite a big experience for them. And my great-uncle had traveled with Lord Forest in his exploring too. And one of the police stations where my grandfather was is now a historical place, and we visited that when we were back there.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really? Gosh, that's interesting.

WAGEMAN: Yeah. But my mother, evidently someone interviewed her and made a tape, and they put it in a museum in Perth, talking about all her childhood and stuff. I haven't heard it, but I imagine it's interesting.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Were your children very demanding on you as you were raising them?

WAGEMAN: Well, I don't know what you would mean by demanding.

INTERVIEWER: Did they say things like that they didn't have as much as anyone else, or that they wanted something. Did it seem like that always wanted things?

WAGEMAN: We didn't have a lot of money when they were growing up, so they really didn't probably have as much as some children, but they accepted it quite well, really. I'm sure there were times they wanted things more than what we could give them, but actually they really accepted quite well that they weren't able to have them.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that that was the reason why you really only had two children? Because you wanted to give those two as much as you could?

WAGEMAN: That's partly the reason. Partly we wanted to take trips back to Australia, and it's much more convenient with two children. With a large family, we probably wouldn't have gotten to do it.

INTERVIEWER: When you went back to Australia, did you find that your friends had changed?

WAGEMAN: Well, a lot of my friends I wouldn't even see anymore, because they've scattered so much, married. But there are some I still keep in contact with. And yes, they've changed the same as here with the times. They have a lot more things, like see, growing up, we didn't have washing machines and refrigerators and all these things which are quite common now. They have all the appliances that everybody else has now.

INTERVIEWER: What was your greatest concern as a mother?

WAGEMAN: I think I tried to train them to be honest and good citizens. I guess that was one thing that always impressed me about the United States, particularly during World War II, was the patriotism. And so I guess I probably trained them up to be patriotic.

INTERVIEWER: What jobs do they have right now? I know Norman is a policeman.

WAGEMAN: And Norm's in the Marine Corps, so I guess that rubbed off some when I was training them, huh?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And what is Paul doing now?

WAGEMAN: He's going to test pilot school right now. He's going to be in test pilot school for a year, and then he'll be a test pilot in the Marine Corps.

INTERVIEWER: So you find that you were really happy with the way your children were raised, and you felt maybe you had accomplished something good then.

WAGEMAN: Well, they haven't caused me any trouble, and in today's society, I think I have a lot to be thankful for. They never have been a problem. They of course went through certain times when they started to show their independence, which is natural. You want that with kids. You don't want them to be acquiescent. So there were the times when we were chin to chin about things, but on a whole, we have nothing to complain about, the way they grew up. No.

INTERVIEWER: What was it like during the war back in the old country?

WAGEMAN: Well, we were short of a lot of things. Rationing was prevalent, the same as here. And that was one reason I didn't learn to drive a car, because my brother had a car, but they didn't have the gas. He had enough to get to work and back and things like that. So I didn't learn to drive until I came here. We had blackout. Everything was blacked out. All the store windows were boarded up rather than glass.

INTERVIEWER: Why was that?

WAGEMAN: For bombing. In case there would be bombing or anything. We didn't have it fortunately down where we were, but we had to be prepared.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find your home situation was always kind of tense?

WAGEMAN: No. We didn't. I think probably when you're young... It was exciting more or less. I don't know. It didn't affect me in that way at all.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you during the war? When it first began?

WAGEMAN: About 16.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find there was a lot of hardships during the war?

WAGEMAN: I think maybe if I had been a homemaker at the time, I may have noticed it. My mom probably, because meat was rationed. Everything was rationed. But just being a young person, you know, my mom had a meal on the table, so I didn't even really...

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't really notice much, huh?

WAGEMAN: The only thing was, as far as clothes. You only had so many coupons to get yardage or to buy clothes or shoes. You didn't have as many clothes and things as you would've liked to have had.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find your mother made most of your clothes then?

WAGEMAN: No. We usually had a dressmaker or someone where we had our clothes made.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't that fortunate for those times to be able to have that?

WAGEMAN: No, that was more common I think in Australia than here, having your clothes made for you. Most of the men had their suits tailor-made. You didn't just go by the store and buy a ready-made suit and stuff like that. At that time, you went to a tailor.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of clothes did you wear when you were 16 or so?

WAGEMAN: You've probably seen the '40 movies. Like you've seen the old '40 movies? That's about as we wore. The two-piece swimsuits were just coming in and that type of thing. Not bikinis, but two-piece. And you wore a lot of evening gowns if you were dancing or weddings and things like that. We wore long gowns usually.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of activities do you remember attending when you were younger?

WAGEMAN: Well, I loved to dance at that time, and I spent most of my spare time either dancing or movies or swimming. And tennis I guess.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of dances did you dance then?

WAGEMAN: At that time it was what we called a modern waltz. It was a slow waltz. And of course a lot of jitterbugging. That was the big thing. They'd have what they call modern dancing, where you'd have the jitterbug and fast dancing, and then they'd have old-time dancing, like your regular waltzes, and not square-dancing like you have here, but they were done in sets some of that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find there was a lot of things in the old country that you missed? That we didn't really have here?

WAGEMAN: I came, as I said, to this situation, and particularly going to Baptist church at that time. At that time, the Baptist church seemed to be negative on everything I had done before. Like dancing was out, movies were out, makeup was out. And I thought every sermon was preached at me, because it seemed every Sunday I had something I was doing that I shouldn't be doing, you know? So that was different. But that was only because I was in this particular society. It wasn't the U.S. in general.

INTERVIEWER: That would be kind of an indirect way, huh?

WAGEMAN: And that has also changed. The church situations have changed a lot too since that time. So as far as social life, when I came here, I didn't really have too much. And that was very different, because I had been very active before I came here.

INTERVIEWER: Was there ever someone in your life that you remember that was kind of a mentor? Someone you looked up to a lot or took a lot of advice from maybe?

WAGEMAN: Hmm. I can't think of anybody.

INTERVIEWER: No one in particular?

WAGEMAN: No. Probably mainly my parents.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember having a favorite movie star then?

WAGEMAN: Oh yes. Carrie Grant.

INTERVIEWER: Carrie Grant. He was a big one for a lot of people then, huh?

WAGEMAN: Yes. He was my idol for quite a while.

INTERVIEWER: Did you see a lot of his movies?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. All of them, several times.

INTERVIEWER: What was your favorite pastime during all of that? Was it mostly the summer outdoor events, like swimming and tennis and stuff?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. Mmhmm, mmhmm. Yeah, I liked out-of-door things.

INTERVIEWER: Had any historical events affected your family besides the war that you can remember? Any Depression-type...?

WAGEMAN: No. See, I was probably born during the Depression, but I wasn't aware of it. As I said, we always... Probably my parents had to make their money stretch, but we always had a comfortable home, and a loving home, and I think that was more than having a lot of material things, because I wasn't aware of being poor or anything.

INTERVIEWER: What year did you say you were born?

WAGEMAN: '23.

INTERVIEWER: So you were just kind of in the middle of it?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. Uh huh. Historical events, I can remember the first year I started school was the Australian centennial. I mean West Australian centennial. That's a hundred years. And I remember they had a special event for the school. We went out to the park and had races and a big deal, got a big medallion saying the centennial and all that kind of thing. Things we remember when you're kids, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any experiences that were kind of fun things? Like I think I'll always remember a week that I spent at a camp one time. It was so fun that I'll never forget it. Do you remember anything like that, like maybe with your friends or something? A time that was really fun that you were going through?

WAGEMAN: I don't know what age you'd want. There are different things I can remember.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, just any time. Anything you can remember that was really...

WAGEMAN: I had an uncle who lived out of town. It was what they would call a market garden. I guess it was vegetables and things, and then they would ship them into the city. And I would go out there periodically and spend a few days or a week or something. But I was only very small then. But I really enjoyed that. I always remember that. But then growing up, I think of times like a group of us girls would rent a cottage at the beach or something and spend long weekends or something like that. Those kinds of things were fun.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any stories about maybe how a great fortune of money was lost somehow?

WAGEMAN: Yeah. The closest beach to us is called Scarborough. And I guess my grandfather used to take his family out there when it was just a dirt track, in a horse and buggy, out to this particular beach, which he probably could have bought up with five pound at that time. Pounds sterling. And my mom often used to say he could have gotten that for practically nothing, and now it's just so valuable, all that land. So that would be one instance, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What were some prices in those days? Like how much would it be to buy a dress, or have a dressmaker make a dress for you?

WAGEMAN: I don't remember. I wouldn't think very much. I don't know what the dollar value was back then. I think it was three and a quarter dollars to the pound... Oh, probably five or six dollars. That would be I'd buy the yardage and they would make it.

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't have American money back then.

WAGEMAN: No. At the time it was sterling. Pounds, shillings, and cents. But they've converted to the dollar now in Australia. At that time they didn't.

INTERVIEWER: So did it seem your money could buy more in Australia than it could here?

WAGEMAN: Right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Does your family ever hold reunions now?

WAGEMAN: No.

INTERVIEWER: When you go back to the old country, or when your mother and father were alive and most of your family, do you remember seeing your relatives?

WAGEMAN: Oh, when we would go back, we'd all get together. I guess that'd be a reunion, yes. Usually at the airport we'd have about 40 people meeting us. My nieces and nephews and cousins.

INTERVIEWER: What did your sons say about that? Did they think that was a neat thing also?

WAGEMAN: Yes. They enjoy Australia. Norm and Lynn were supposed to be going in March. They were going to go back, but then Lynn was pregnant, so that canceled that.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that's right! I remember Lynn saying something about that. And she was so excited about that too.

WAGEMAN: Yes. And Norm thought, "Oh, there goes my trip!"

INTERVIEWER: Did you get pregnant right after you were married?

WAGEMAN: Yes. I came home with Paul on my first anniversary. It wasn't planned that way. But I feel that that was one of the best things that could have happened to me, because up until then, I had felt like an outsider. But when Paul came, it made me feel I had something here of my own. It really did. So I felt it was really probably best.

INTERVIEWER: So that must have been one of your better experiences in life, huh?

WAGEMAN: Right. Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any recipes or anything that your mother would always make that you didn't have here?

WAGEMAN: I mentioned the plum pudding. That's one thing I still think about at Christmas time. I really enjoyed that. Steam puddings and things like that, they have a lot, which you don't see here very much. I enjoy those.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of devices did she use mostly then?

WAGEMAN: For cooking? Well, she didn't have an electric mixer. She mixed everything by hand. She didn't have a gas stove. You know, when I was growing up we had a wood stove for baking. My mom didn't have too many mechanical things at all.

INTERVIEWER: What about a refrigerator?

WAGEMAN: Yeah, but when I was growing up we didn't. We had what we called iceboxes. You probably saw those here too.

INTERVIEWER: Did it seem she made a lot of things by hand then?

WAGEMAN: Everything, yeah. Most everything. We didn't have cake mixes and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: There was nothing that came frozen or anything?

WAGEMAN: No. No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember seeing a lot of photographs of your ancestors that maybe your mom had saved?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Did they seem a lot like your family was then? Or were generations before you were there a lot different?

WAGEMAN: Yes. Quite different. My mom's pictures when she was younger. Everything was different.

INTERVIEWER: I guess so. Clothes and everything. Do you remember someone being close to your family that wasn't a relative?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: Who was that?

WAGEMAN: This one particular lady I mentioned who stayed with us for quite some time. She was all alone, and so my mom had asked her to stay with us. She was a girlfriend of my mother's.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think that just about covers everything. I don't know if this would have anything to do with any of these questions, but do you remember any nicknames that your family ever had?

WAGEMAN: Mmhmm. You don't want me to tell you. I think all of us had nicknames. My dad had nicknames for all of us.

INTERVIEWER: Were they bad nicknames?

WAGEMAN: Strange. But I think they probably came from... My sister's, I think, was the way one of my brothers had said her name when he was little. It was Boomba. Her name was Thelma, but then he got Boomba, so my dad kept that up. Well, that was one.

INTERVIEWER: And what was your nickname? Do you remember?

WAGEMAN: I don't really remember too much. I always got Mae. Mazie. That's an abbreviation of my own name. I'm still Mae to a lot. M-A-E. My girlfriends when they write still say that.

INTERVIEWER: Well gosh, this has been really interesting to me.

[End of Tape]