OSCAR "BLUE" HABY

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Alsatian Customs and Traditions

B31

OSCAR (BLUE) HABY - 1903

PREFACE

This tape was producted by the Castroville Public Library Oral History Project B. Madeline Boubel Koepp conducted the interview at the home of Oscar Haby, about fourteen miles northwest of Rio Medina.

Oscar "Blue", as he is known, grew up in Haby Settlement. His parents were Alex Haby and Mary Schott, who had seven children. Blue went to school in the Rio Medina area, going to Castroville one year to receive instructions for Communion and Confirmation. When Blue married Alma Saathoff, he was a rancher and farmer, but began a meat market business in Rio Medina in 1939. After ten years he bought some property on Hwy 90 close to Lackland Air Base and built a grocery store, bar, and cafe, and later a trailer park. He raised his three daughters after his wife was killed in an automobile accident, living in Castroville. He sold the business and retired, and in 1978 he moved back to his ranch above Rio Medina, where he lives today.

In this interview, Blue tells about social customs of early Haby Settlement, and those when he was a young man, and into the 40's.

in writing, from the Oral History Office, Castroville Public Library, Castroville, Texas.

Tape # B31
50 min.
transcribed

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Oscar Haby
Tape # B31
Sides 1-2

Side 1

Side 2

Wedding p. 26

This interview is the product of the Castroville Oral History Project B. Madeline Boubel Koepp is the narrator. The interview of Oscar "Blue" Haby was conducted at his home on his farm above Rio Medina, Texas on June 10, 1981.

Q What the library wanted me to interview you on mostly was recreation, things you did as a young person and an older person for fun. The places you went and things you did. But first I want to get some family background. What were your parents' names?

A Alex L. Haby and Mary Schott.

Q And when were you born? What date.

A 1903.

Q And the date?

A May the 18th.

Q How many brothers and sisters do you have, Blue.

A I got three sisters and three brothers.

Q And what are their names?

A Amelia, Amanda, Selma and Cornelius, Floyd and Clines.

Q And where were you born?

A I think at home. I know at home.

Q At home, well where did you live?

A Haby settlement. Our midwife was always old lady Mueller. She was a cousin. Was a cousin, first cousin, to grandma.

Q To your grandmother Haby?

A Mrs. Mann, your grandmama and you know Grandma Haby was a Mann. And this Mrs. Mueller, their mother was a Mann. So they was first cousins of ours. And Mrs. Mueller was

our midwife.

Q Well, where was she from?

A LaCoste.

Q LaCoste.

A The Muellers down there from LaCoste, yeah.

Q So she delivered the babies then?

A Oh, yes.

Q Always?

A She delivered practically all of ours.

Q Uh-huh. Are you the oldest in the family or --

A No, I'm about in the middle.

Q About the middle.

A Uh-huh.

Q Well, what did your dad do for a living?

A Farming and ranching. Mostly ranching, yes.

Q Do you -- you mentioned this grandmother who was a -- married a Haby and her maiden name was Mann. Do you remember her?

A Oh, yes, I remember Grandma Haby, yeah.

Q Can you tell me anything about her?

A No, she was small like most grandmas, like Grandma Schott, just small little women. They all died when I was pretty young.

Q Did she ever tell you any stories about the old country.

A No, Grandpa Schott used to tell stories. You see he lived with us several years.

Q Oh.

A Yeah.

Q Do you remember anything he told you?

A Oh, yeah, he liked to talk about the old country. Like one time he told me, he says, he figured his grandpa was a big farmer. He said sometimes he had about 20 acres of field and he said sometimes he had as high as maybe 20 men hired. I said what did the men do. Spade over the field with a spade. And I says well, what did you plant then in that field. He says potatoes. And I said what did you usually eat, potatoes three times a day.

Q Do you know it hasn't changed yet.

A Yeah, still eat potatoes.

Q Right and they still have the little fields in Alsace.

A Yeah, the little fields, yeah.

Q With a lot of people working.

A Yeah.

Q When -- what kind of recreation or fun things did you all do at home as kids, young people or what do you remember?

A Well, my children used to ask me, Daddy, what did you do at home when you had no radio and no TV. I said we worked till dark. And after dark we went to bed because we had no lights. Kerosene lights that's all. There was not too much recreation. And Sundays, well, I remember my old buddies like A. O. and Tony Haby and them, well, Ralph is still living yet, on Sundays we had no money. We'd get together and maybe a few dogs with us and we'd roam the country, hunt mesquite tar and mesquite beans and anything

that was sweet, we'd eat. Along the river we'd find mulberry bushes, big bushes and that's how we spent our whole Sunday afternoon, running around.

Q You said mesquite tar?

A Yeah.

Q What did you do with that.

A Oh, just eat it, it's as sweet as sugar.

Q Really?

A Uh-huh. I haven't seen any in a long time. Sometimes you get a lump that big and it was just as sweet as sugar. It's got kind of a hard shell around it.

Q Uh-huh.

A And inside the juice --

Q Well, is it sort of like a sap out of the tree?

A Yeah, sap out of the tree.

Q Uh-huh.

A And we'd find that and we'd find mesquite beans and yellow berries and everything we could find that's sweet, we'd eat.

Q And that was your Sunday?

A Yeah, Sunday afternoon because we had no money. You could have throwed the whole bunch upside down and not even a nickle would have fell out.

Q Well, did your family, did your parents have a lot of company or did they do a lot of visiting?

A Not too much, once in awhile somebody would come in a buggy, you know. I remember sometimes, you know, relatives like out of the hills kinfolks would come and we kids was shy.

When a buggy would drive out, we'd hide behind the barn.

Q No kidding?

A Yeah. Finally later on they'd call us. But always the company would eat first. That was them days, that was a must. And after the company was through eating then they'd go sit in the living room or on the porch and then they'd call us and then we kids would eat. Now the kids usually eat first.

Q That's right.

A Yeah.

Q Well, where did you go to school, Blue?

A The first two years at Rio Medina.

Q Was the name the Rio Medina School?

A Uh-huh. Between Four Seasons and Darvine's on the left.

Q Right, and then after that?

A After that they decided the survey line runs that we belong to Yellowbanks. At Rio Medina we had a road to walk, plain road. When we went to Yellowbanks, we had to go through the brush, pastures. All brush pastures we had to walk all the way.

Q Well, now see that Yellowbanks School is where Clarence Huegele lives, lives, it's across from the old Huegele home.

A There's where I went till I was about in the 7th grade. My dad told me to stay home and plow.

Q So that was your education, through the 7th grade.

A Yeah, uh-huh. Not through, about halfway through the 7th grade.

Q Well, how many months of the year did you go to school?

A Oh, we had off all summer, probably nine months.

Q Nine months?

A Uh-huh.

Q You said you went --

A Wait a minute --

Q The full nine months probably?

A Yeah.

Q Through the winter?

A Yeah.

Q You said your dad told you to -- I mean you said you had to go through the brush. Did you have to cross the river?

A Yeah, they chopped down a cypress tree and shaped it a little on top so it was flat and that we walked across.

Q Oh.

A The Isidor Haby kids and us. Me and Amanda mostly. We all walked across that log, every morning and every evening. Water wasn't too deep about so deep, we never fell in that I remember.

Q About maybe two or three feet deep.

A Yeah. I don't think we ever fell in. I don't remember. But all just brush and trails, no opening or nothing.

Q Did anything ever happen to scare you like a snake or anything like that?

A Oh, yeah. I know one time we were coming home, me and Amanda from school and we come running along and she says I can outrun you from here to over there at that tree and she was outrunning me she bet and there was a great big

rattlesnake laying and I can still see her yet. She seen it in time and jumped over it and the snake struck at her but she was too high.

Q Oh, my.

A Anyhow I bet we throwed rocks at that snake for a half an hour. It was in the brush and we couldn't hit her right, cause she'd get in that brush, great big old rattlesnake.

Q But nobody ever got hurt really or anything?

A No and one time we had little fishing tackle laying along the river there and we'd fish a little in the evenings. You know grasshoppers. I got a fish hook in my finger.

Q Oh, dear.

A And we had to walk all the way home but Amanda bit that string off, you know, and I held that finger all the way home.

Q How did you get it out then? The fish hook.

A My dad just taken a plier and forced it through and chopped the barb off and then pulled it back.

Q Oh, I see.

A It hurt a little.

Q Yeah, but that was one way to get it out.

A Yeah.

Q Without going to the doctor.

A Yeah.

Q So then, okay, when you got older then and you started to go out say to dances or something like that, where did you go?

A Well, the first dances I remember we would go to this, Albert Becks had a truck, flat-bed truck, a Model-T flat-bed truck. And A. O. would get that ruck and we'd drive and maybe one or so would sit in front with him was about all. There wasn't much room and the rest would sit in the back and hang their feet down. You know on them dirt roads, you know how clean we were when we got to the dance.

Q Did he take all the neighborhood kids?

A Yeah, whoever wanted to go, oh, yeah.

Q And then where did you go?

A Castroville.

Q Castroville, what hall did you go to?

A Well, I think it was the old Wernette's Garden in them days. It's so long ago. I remember we'd go to that dance on that flat-bed truck. Well, maybe we didn't dance much, mostly stood around.

Q How often were those dances held?

A They weren't so often, maybe once a month or something like that.

Q And when you say the old Wernette Garden, are you talking about where Koenig Park is now?

A Yeah, uh-huh, yeah.

Q Well, did you ever go to the Tragesser Hall?

A Yeah, later on then, but by then already we were grown up a little better.

Q But what you're talking about now was when you were say 16, 18 years old?

A Yeah, pretty young. Just past the knickerbockers, you know. Where you wore long pants.

Q Well, what age was that when you got to wear long pants?

A I think probably, don't you think about 15 or so, when you got past 12. You usually had to wear them knickerbockers till about 12 years old in them days. And finally you got to wear long pants and boy, then you stuck your chest out.

Q Really grown up, huh?

A Oh, yeah.

Q Okay, then, by this time you were, you said working. Were you helping your dad on the farm?

A Most all the time.

Q Uh-huh.

A Then later on, well, the way I made enough money to accumulate an automobile my own was thrash pecans. Rent pecan bottoms and thrash pecans. Made enough money to buy a car. But otherwise mostly worked at home and break young horses for spending money.

Q Was this pecan, you said you rented pecan bottoms, was that a pretty big business around here?

A Well, when the price was good like 1936, I believe it was yeah. The pecans were 13 cents a pound and I made enough money in about six weeks time to buy a new Model-T, about $750. That was good money. But then later on I may have gathered pecans and you barely made expenses.

Q Uh-huh.

A I know the last year in '33 I gathered pecans, '32 we got

a nickel a pound for pecans. I didn't make no money at all.

Q Was that you said in about 26 (1926) when you had that good crop?

A Yeah.

Q Okay. And you broke horses. Who did you do that for?

A Everybody. Your dad broke one.

Q Oh, really?

A Yes. That's why I always say that I held Madeline on my lap till I first -- yeah. Yeah we went up there me and Wiess Sittre to get a gray mare to break.

Q For dad.

A Yeah.

Q Well, I'll say.

A And you was seven months old at that time. I never will forget it.

Q Okay. Then after, then when did you get married, Blue, how old were you?

A In '33, I was 29.

Q 29 years old. And what was your wife's name?

A Saathoff, Alma Saathoff.

Q Alma Saathoff and did you all have any children?

A Yeah.

Q What are their names?

A Janice and Laverne, Janice and Sharon, Janice Laverne, Sharon Ann and Arlene Marie. Three daughters.

Q All right. When you went courting Alma what did you all

do for fun, places to go.

A We'd go to lots of dances. Oh, yes, Quihi, Bandera, Castroville, we'd go to dances.

Q Well, did you all ever go to anything like box suppers, did they have those, do you remember that?

A Yeah, they were a little bit out of style already when I went with Alma. Before that it was awful bad, the box suppers.

Q Did you go to any?

A I went to some, yeah. But usually the guys with the most money got the girls, you know. Sure.

Q Well -- how was this done, did they just --

A Well, the girl fixed the box, you know and like Gabe Hans, I remember one time at Louie Burell School was, right across from old Louie Burell house.

Q Yeah, I remember it.

A You do?

Q Yeah, I remember that little building there.

A Yeah, box supper and them guys, well they had it in for Gabe Hans but he was going with Fannie and they aggravated him and they pitched together money. I believe they made Gabe Hans run up to $25 or something like that for Fannie's box. Just for meanness you know.

Q That was sort of -- I think a lot of them were trickish around here, pulled tricks like that.

A Yeah, you know, they could have got another box, probably three, four dollars but they just kept running Gabe all the time.

Q Well, did they have a dance when they had these box suppers or how was that?

A I don't remember whether they danced for sure or not. I think at some places then they danced a little, I don't know.

Q Well, when you and Aunt Alma married where did you live then?

A Upat Saathoffs.

Q At the Saathoffs, where was that at?

A Up on Verdina, on the Verde Creek.

Q The Verde Creek.

A You see her mother was an invalid for 21 years.

Q Uh-huh.

A So we had to live there.

Q And that's near Hondo?

A Between Hondo and Bandera, just about halfways.

Q What did you do for a living then?

A Well, we raised turkeys for a little spending money and run cattle, that's all and worked out. Whoever needed help, a man to work, I was ready.

Q Uh.-huh. Well, how many years did you stay there on that farm then?

A We lived there seven years till the Rio Medina butcher shop opened and we had a chance to lease that one.

Q Uh-huh. Oh, so that's how you came to move to Rio Medina.

A Yeah, come back to Rio. Riley Sittre came up there and you know his brother killed himself, Johnny Sittre and

Riley came on up. He says we need a butcher, we need a man. And just before that my mother-in-law died. Maybe a month before or so she died. We didn't know where we want to go but we know we ain't gonna stay there, we want to leave and Riley came on up and Riley made us that proposition and said we'll build you a house. So they built that little house there at Cora's and we went down there and we butchered there ten years.

Q So you stayed there at Rio Medina ten years.

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay, now you're probably doing better financially. You've got a business and --

A Then I wanted to buy Rio but Cora wouldn't sell it, so I went out on Highway 90 and looked for a piece of land and found one at Louie Kriewald's.

Q Uh-huh. Okay, now, let's get back to the Rio Medina market. How many days a week were you open?

A Well, at first we were open mostly everyday.

Q Sundays too?

A Sundays after church, oh, yeah, that was a good morning after church people come from church to buy meat.

Q Uh-huh. So you grabbed that trade as it went by too. All right. How -- where did you get your cattle from that you sold in your market?

A From the neighbors.

Q Well, did you have to butcher them yourself?

A Oh, yes. What they call scaffold kill butchering, under

any tree.

Q Did you do this yourself?

A Oh, yeah, butcher 'em, just shoot 'em and butcher 'em under a tree there.

Q Uh-huh.

A One here and one there. In them days most people had milk cows yet and they had milk calves. Grain fed and milk and when they were ready about ten months old. They said we got a calf, want it, all right, butcher it.

Q So you didn't have packing house meat you just went out to the farms --

A Just went out and butchered 'em where ever there was one, I butchered it.

Q So you didn't have any help, You did all of this yourself?

A Oh, once in awhile like Buddy Bendele worked for me twice before he went to war and afterwards.

Q Uh-huh.

A Johnny O. Wurzbach worked for me. Quintin Bendele worked for me and one time Lester Boehme, J. T. Boehme, all them kids did work for me you know. Well, the first year we peddled meat yet. From one house to another.

Q Well, tell me about that.

A Well, that's a doozie. First you know your meat's not cooled out too good. Like we peddled twice a week. Then you get up at two o'clock in the morning and you start cutting that by hand, we didn't have a chain saw in them days. Cut that meat by hand and you had to leave before daybreak to

go from house to house and then you had a little hanging scale and you had that meat in a box and you know good and well dust accumulates, but everybody was waiting for the butcher. Buy some meat.

Q Well, you had a -- what did you put the meat into after you had it cut what did you do with it?

A Just in plates, plates.

Q All right, but did you have a pickup truck or describe what you put it in.

A Well, we had one Chevrolet, kind of made like a little pickup and a Model A, just taken the back thing out, the rumble seat or whatever and made a little box back there and put the meat in on platters and then when the people come to buy meat they come with a dish, with a pan.

Q Well, did you have ice in it?

A No.

Q No ice?

A No.

Q Really. Okay. I thought they would have ice but it kept, I guess it was real fresh meat.

A Well, them women had to have the stove ready.

Q Couldn't wait till supper, huh?

A No, I went all the way towards Quihi and then I went up through there to Cliff and come by where Raymond Haby lives and over in there, the Raymond Habys and then a little further up I think is where I crossed, no, by Clarence Haby I crossed and by all the Steubings and

Benkes on down and then the Potranco Road and home again.

Q Well, I'm pretty sure now that you mention it I think you came by our house, I believe I can remember that a little bit.

A Oh, yeah.

Q Yeah, I think so.

A I think it was first was Oscar, then Ludwig, Sylvester and so on down the line and then Benkes. And I amde that route and muddy sometimes, oh, boy, that was in 1940, that was the first year. We only peddled one year.

Q Uh-huh.

A And then the war broke out and we didn't peddle any more.

Q Well, okay, now you said you stayed there ten years. Okay. During this time what, where did you go then? Did you go to dances, did you go to horse races, what did you dor for entertainment, yeah?

A Oh, we'd go to Cora's place and Riverside, they were the two hot spots. Oh, yeah, then we'd go other places, too but those were the two hot spots.

Q That's Cora Burrell's place. Okay, well and that -- what went on there?

A Honky-tonking.

Q Honky-tonk. And dancing?

A Beer, yeah. Beer was cheap them days you know. I still remember yet when we -- you know always between every set somebody wanted to buy, how about a round. Well, I'll split one, you want to split, yeah, then you'd split a

bottle. But no cups just you drink and then I drink.

Q And how late did these get-togethers last?

A Sometimes till pretty late, almost daylight. See them days they could sell beer all night. And sometimes it would be two, three o'clock and I remember up at Medina Lake they had dances. I think it was Rural Murray's. And we'd go up there to a dance and well, see Janice was little and they had a room there you lay them babies in there. And I still wonder why nobody came home with the wrong kid sometimes, cause everybody was pretty drunk.

Q Everybody was having a real good time.

A Oh, yeah.

Q And Riverside you said was a hot spot?

A Oh, yeah, Riverside, that was a hot spot for while too.

Q That was --

A Cora's place and Riverside.

Q Well, did you go to any of the dances at the Mayflower Hall?

A Not much, where at Rio?

Q Yeah, at Rio.

A Yeah, because Satch was running the hall that time.

Q Uh-huh.

A Satch, and I helped Satch sometimes.

Q Satch Beck?

A Yeah. And Johnny Hoffmann was floor manager. They run it because his boy played in it once. Johnny Hoffmann was floor manager there for while.

Q Well, what did a floor manager do?

A Well, kind of keep peace.

Q You mean he had to keep peace?

A Well, sometimes, you know like for instance, you know if there was a boy, maybe I shouldn't mention the name but he was one-eyed --

Q Well, don't mention the name, tell the story.

A -- you know, he had a bad eye. You know Gee Beck all your life.

Q Uh-huh.

A He's dead now. And they were standing close together and all at once Gee knocked him down and Johnny Hoffmann came out and he says Gee why'd you hit that boy. He said he looked at me so crooked. Well, I guess so, the other boy had a bad eye.

Q Well, were there a lot of fights?

A Not so many as Quihi was the main fighting place years ago. Had lots of fights at Quihi.

Q What was the reason for the fights?

A Well, I think mostly that they wanted to fight.

Q So, in other words, they just looked for it?

A Yeah, just looked for it, yeah.

Q Well, would it be rivalry between towns or something?

A Well, like Castroville there was used to be bad fights. That was more rivalry you know, one town against the other. But at Quihi usually I don't know every time you went there, there was a fight and it seemed like nobody tried to prevent it. She says you all want to fight, go down to the

creek and we'd shine with flashlights and they'd fight.

Q Well then the law didn't interfere.

A No, law didn't interfere, no. You want to fight, fight and you know what, lots of them decided they didn't want to fight.

Q There was nobody there to hold 'em, huh?

A No, huh-uh.

Q Did you ever go to any masquerade dances?

A Yeah, I remember some of them. I didn't care for them.

Q You didn't. You didn't mask.

A I masked once or twice but I just didn't like it.

Q Well, did that go on very long, those masquerade parties?

A Not too many years. No, I tell you what went on awful long in my younger days is house parties, house dances. Where Carle and Slim Haby and Joe Riff, they were the musicians.

Q Oh.

A Yes, Slim played the violin and Henry Carle the flute and Joe Riff the guitar. "Snow Deers" we called 'em, that was their leading, what they used to start the dance off.

Q Oh, that was their theme song? Snow Deer.

A Snow Deer, we called them Snow Deers, and we'd play say -- they'd notify you like for instance like your house we'd say how about at your house next Saturday, all right. Then you'd already have the furniture out and the rugs rolled up and you had a room there to dance in. Then we'd dance sometimes till two, three o'clock in the morning. Then

we'd go to the next neighbor somewhere.

Q So you did a lot of that then for entertainment, going just to the neighbor's houses.

A Yeah, it was in the probation you know. Prohibition started in 1918 or something like that. I know we, well you might say we usually gave the musicians each one a quarter or something like that a little bit but if you had 50 cents or six bits you could have a hell of a good time.

Q Well, you said house parties. Were they ever surprise parties. Were there ever any surprise parties?

A I don't think they were surprise. I think they usually notified them ahead of time.

Q Uh-huh.

A And Josie Hans they lived up there close by the syphon, oh, Clemens Haegelin I believe owns that land now.

Q Uh-huh.

A And they lived up there, Joe Hans in a small frame house and that time the Lindy hop was special and we were up there and we were dancing that Lindy hop and I guess the whole house almost turned over anyway the old people came in and says hold that down a little, we're trying to play dominoes and the dominoes fall over.

Q You must have really been dancing.

A Yeah.

Q What other kind of dances did you do besides this Lindy hop?

A Well, it was mostly, well later on then we done Schottish

and all that stuff but for awhile most of it was Lindy hop. But you know in a little room you can't waltz with a whole bunch of people.

End of Side 1

Q No, not really. Okay you told me earlier then that you had this meat market at Rio Medina for ten years and then you bought a piece of property on Highway --

A From 1939 to 49, ten years.

Q At Rio Medina?

A Yeah.

Q And then you bought a piece of property from a Mr. Kriewald?

A Yeah, Louie Kriewald on Highway 90.

Q Okay. And what kind of business did you operate there?

A Well, we built a building, residential on top, two-story and we had a, well mostly first we had a barbeque place and grocery store and a bar, and then later on we run a full cafe there. First we only served barbeque. Later on we served fish, anything you want. Cafe and then well I had five acres of land and then I built a trailer park in the back.

Q So I guess you did quite well over there.

A We done all right.

Q And how many years did you operate that?

A Oh, well in all till I sold finally, about eight years.

Q Did you -- were you open every day of the week?

A First we were every day and every night, the first year.

Q Ooh.

A But then we finally caught up with the debts and stuff and then we were -- closed on Sunday, yeah. But we had a good business and we enjoyed running it, it was good customers and everything and then later on well, the highway. One reason the highway was cutting us off. They were putting us on an access road. And there's where I started leasing out right away. I said I know that's coming and I'm going to get out of it and then I sold it because if we'd have been on the right side of the road our access would have been better yet for the beer joint you know. People spent their money on the way home, not on the way in.

Q True and you were on the way in.

A Yeah.

Q Well, then you lived in Castroville for awhile and now you're ranching again.

A Yeah. I lived in Castroville from '56 to '78, quite a number of years.

Q What made you decide to buy a ranch again?

A Well, when my children were grown, see I'd have moved out of town before. But I hardly couldn't not with trying to raise, you know I was a widower with three little girls and I had to raise them. But no more Arlene was finished school when I told the kids, I said I want to move out of town.

Q Still a country boy.

A Yeah.

Q Well, how many acres of land do you have now?

A I got 234 acres here and 305 up there on the other place.

Q It's all ranch land?

A Yeah, all ranch land because whatever farm land is I plant it in oats or something. I don't farm, harvest the stuff.

Q Okay, let's go back to your young days. You said your father was a farmer and a cattleman and what -- about what years are we talking about. Are we talking about like 1915 to 20 when you would be a young man and be able to help?

A Yeah, I remember helping drive cattle to San Antone. Them days they didn't have no trucks yet. Like I say Highway 90 was no gravel on it yet. It was just a dirt road and we drove cattle from, then we'd camp maybe at a, what in the hell was that guy at that time down there, I forget now what his name was, the same place you know where the Talango, where Steve Talango used to be. That was before Steve Talango. Hoyt, Hoyt was there. And on the Culebra Road ff we'd go in that way on Hilltop, you know where Hilltop is?

Q Yes.

A Conway had that saloon. See his wife was a Schuchart.

Q Oh.

A Conway had that saloon and then from there there was no houses. You cut straight for the stockyards, cut straight southeast. And I remember looking up north, I was riding in that brush driving cattle and I says what are them two buildings up there and my uncle says, well one of them is Peacock College and the other one is St. Louis College.

Q And they were way out in the brush?

A In the brush, way out in the brush and now St. Louis is

St. Mary's now, isn't it?

Q Yes.

A And what is Peacock now? That was a military college.

Q It was a military college for a long time and I can't -- it's still some kind of a school.

A Yeah, but I don't know the name, it's not Peacock any more.

Q It's close to the Woodlawn Lake, right? In that area.

A A little more north though.

Q But in that area, yeah.

A It was a little further in than St. Mary's, I believe.

Q Okay, now you said you drove cattle to San Antonio. First I suppose did you round up?

A Yeah, we had to round 'em up up at the ranch.

Q Uh-huh. Was it just your family that drove cattle or did more ranchers go together?

A Well, mostly Uncle Otto. My dad and Uncle Otto were together.

Q Well, were they related?

A Brothers.

Q They were brothers.

A Yeah.

Q So tell me how this whole thing went from the time you started rounding up till you got where you were going.

A Well, first we'd go up in the hills and we'd round up and sometimes we'd go from there straight in, with the cattle and then sometimes we'd bring 'em home to Haby settlement. And keep 'em in the pen and the next day leave first, going

maybe to Potranca Road.

Q Well, how many cattle would you drive in one group at one time?

A Oh, I don't know, maybe 50, 60 head.

Q Did you have to take a chuck wagon along or wasn't it far enough?

A No, just on the saddle.

Q Just carried lunch on your saddle.

A Yeah, old homemade bread and stuff like that, you know.

Q Did you ever get into any rain storms or anything when you were doing this?

A Sometimes we got a little wet. It was usually in summer when we drove 'em in. I don't remember in icy winter or anything.

Q Well, how long would it take you to get to the stockyards?

A Well, we usually went in one day and we'd camp this side of San Antone, either at -- or at Conways or Hoyts and the next day go on into the yards and then probably spend the night in that hotel and then the next day first start home again.

Q Well, what were cattle bringing in those days. Can you remember that?

A Well, I remember my daddy had some two-year old heifers that were really fat, big and they brought $20, I remember that.

Q Per head?

A Uh-huh, yes, we had to drive 'em all the way in because

we needed money to pay the taxes. And taxes was usually around a hundred dollars so it taken about five of them beef just to pay the taxes. But credit was good them days. I remember like Courand's Store in Castroville, he was the most, the biggest you know creditor around here. And I remember my dad bought a cultivator from him and I believe it was around $30, $40 and the next year he went down to pay his grocery bill and he told him that he couldn't pay that cultivator this time. That's all right, leave it till next year, no interest or nothing.

Q But they trusted each other.

A Yeah.

Q And did they usually always pay their debts?

A Oh, yeah, they always paid their debts and you see the factory backed the wholesaler and the wholesaler backed the retailer, that's the way it was. And the retailer backed the farmer. So you didn't ever have to worry about it even if you had a grocery bill and you had a complete failure. That was all right. Pay it next year.

Q You said Courand's Store in Castroville. Now you lived here above Rio Medina, Haby Settlement. Was there any kind of a store in that area?

A Later on Alex Boehme you know and Fritz Rihn had the store here. Later on.

Q What -- about what time did that open?

A Well, when the dam I think started. About that time. But before the dam there was no store up here no kind, of no kind.

Q So all the people from Haby settlement went to Castroville?

A Always, yeah, with wagons usually. They had a hack but maybe once a week, maybe every two weeks. They buy everything in big lots like a hundred pounds of flour and everything was in big lots.

Q Did they have to buy many things or did they have a lot of it --

A Well, flour and coffee, stuff like that. I remember my dad yet when I was a little kid he shelled off corn and at that time the mill was going yet at Castroville and he'd take that sack full of corn by the mill and they run it through that grinder and they'd grind it on half. Then he come home with a half a sackful of corn meal.

Q And where was this mill?

A Where the old mill is right now where Miss Lawler you know she gave it to the --

Q Behind the Landmark Inn?

A Yes, down there below.

Q Oh, that was the mill?

A That's the mill, that old grindstone run by water.

Q Well, who was operating the mill?

A I don't remember who was operating the mill.

Q Were there other stores in Castroville besides Courand's?

A Well, later on there was Haller and Mangold and Tondre and Keller but they were all a little later on. Courand's was the main thing for years and years. But Haass had a store, I don't remember that though. Sonny Haas's daddy had a store there. But the main store I remember is Courand's.

Q Did you ever do any freighting, you know, hauling with the wagon?

A No, not freight, no.

Q Okay. Well, you said you went through the 7th grade in school at Rio Medina. Did you make your Solemn Communion? You are Catholic?

A Yeah.

Q Did you make your Solemn Communion?

A And confirmation.

Q And where did you do this?

A In Castroville. We had to go to school for one year in Castroville.

Q Well, did you go from Rio Medina every day?

A No, I stayed at Aunt Christina Karm. You see her first husband was Uncle John Haby and he died. Then she married Karm and there's where all of we kids stayed to make our communion at Aunt Christina's. She boarded us.

Q And where was the school at that time?

A Well, that old building there where Dr. Sharp lives, catty-corner, that two-story, right there.

Q Did you --

A They had a board wall between the girls and the boys. Them girls played on one side and the boys on the other.

Q When you all played at recess?

A Yeah, recess, yeah you couldn't even play together, no. And if the board had knotholes and Sister Marcella caught one looking through a knothole he got a spanking for it too.

Q Oh you were one of Sister Marcella's students also?

A Yeah.

Q What can you tell me about her?

A Oh, she was a good teacher but boy she was strict. Oh boy she could slap them hands they'd pop like a firecracker and that made them ears stand up. You had to behave. But there was no monkey-shine between the boys and the girls there, huh-uh. And when we sat in school we had to sit separate, too. Boys on one side and the girls on the other.

Q Did you enjoy that year getting away from the farm and staying in Castroville?

A Yeah, I enjoyed. I was more, Clarence and Gabe they had that house rented, their mother you know where Dr. Sharp lives now. Well and we were only two blocks down south. I spent more time with Clarence and Gabe than I did down there with --

Q Oh, you went the same year they went.

A Yeah.

Q Oh, all right.

A And you see Gabe he was so stubborn and you reckon he would pray. He always told the teacher, he says I pray silently. Then one day she run him home. I could still see him yet. See we were upstairs and she told him and I could look out a window and I could see him walking across the corner home there. But then Aunt Lilly made it up with the teacher and he went and finished school anyway. He was hard headed.

Q Yeah, I know they were characters, both of them.

A Yeah and Clarence wasn't so bad then yet. He was younger but that Gabe, God dang, he was hard headed.

Q You said your father had how many brothers and sisters did he have, your dad?

A There was only two girls, Uncle Mike Ripps married one, Aunt Theresa. And then Charlie Wurzbach married one, Aunt Kate. That's all the sisters they had. But them brothers was Uncle Leopold, Uncle Gregory, Uncle Raymond, Uncle Guido, Uncle John, Alex and Otto, seven boys.

Q Well, did they all stay around Rio Medina?

A Well, Uncle Leopold lived up at Medina Lake. Uncle Raymond moved to Uvalde, Uncle Gregory moved to Arizona and Uncle Guido had moved to Uvalde but he died, him and his wife both died real young. That was Steryl and Bonnie Haby's mother. Their parents died at two years apart. The children were little so the grandmas raised them children. And then Uncle John and my dad and Uncle Otto, they were the youngest three. So they were together in the ranching here and then Uncle John died. So it left it up to my dad and Uncle Otto.

Q Well that property they have at Rio Medina now was that that property that they got --

A From their parents.

Q Their dad and mother came from Alsace, right?

A Yeah.

Q And that was some of the land that they had, right?

A Yeah, all that you might say from Fritz Stein north, on this side of the river. That was all Haby land that they taken mostly as State's land when they moved in here. See each child, each person was allowed 640 acres and they come in here, two of 'em. First Uncle Francis Joseph's the oldest one and Nicholas. They come in here in 1844 with Castro and they went up the river and they found that spring there what Frank Zinsmeyer is, that land. So I don't know if they staked the land out then already but I guess they did. And Francis Joseph stayed here all by himself and Nicholas went back. It taken him about three years I believe something like that to come back with the family. Brought the whole family with him and then they staked out that whole country up till to the hills.

Q I think they came back in '46, so he was gone two years.

A Two years, yes, something like that, yeah.

Q I know as you drive along you know from Steins all the way up every place you go through was Haby at one time.

A Yeah, was Haby at one time, you know, and six Habys I believe married Beck girls, well it was the only girls around. I told Selma one day I said they had no choice. The Beck girls didn't have no choice they had to marry Habys and the Habys had no choice. So they all married Becks and like August Koenig land that he had. Well you see Mrs. Spettel was a Haby. Mr. Spettel died so she married old man Koenig and they had August Koenig.

Q Oh.

A So he inherited that from his mother August Koenig, yeah. So all of that was Haby land but it just --

Q Well these Becks that were here at Rio Medina, where did they live? They were the ones you said had all the daughters but where were they located?

A I don't know where their homestead really was. I don't know maybe down there where Ralph and Selma live or some place there. See where Ralph and Selma lived that was a church. The sisters used to live there.

Q Uh-huh.

A And that was their school for a long time. The only school they had up in here. But now where, I never did find out, I don't even know where the old old Habys first lived when they came. Like Francis Joseph and Nicholas.

Q I don't either.

A Father and mother, because they're buried here, they come here.

Q Well, I know that the old man, I found the old man's grave. Did the mama come too?

A I think she did, I ain't sure.

Q Now, I'm not either.

A But I wondered which was the oldest home. Now maybe where Zinsmeyer lives now, I don't know.

Q I don't know that either.

A And you see Grandpa Schott married a Haby girl.

Q Oh, uh-huh.

A And she died in childbirth but the baby lived. I think

she was around, I don't know, 12 years old and he married a Boozer from San Antone and this child gotten diptheria or something and died in San Antone and some of them Habys they wanted to take the land away from him but they couldn't because he inherited his daughter you know.

Q Uh-huh, then who did he marry --

A He married a Boozer. Yeah, you see that Schott land, that was Haby land at one time too.

Q Uh-huh.

A And the Sehorp Spettel, well Louie Sharp married a Spettel and her mother was a Haby.

Q This grandpa Schott you're talking about now, let's see, your mother was a Schott but she was a daughter of the second wife, the Boozer or was she a --

A The second wife.

Q She was a daughter of that union?

A Uh-huh, yeah. If not, she and daddy would have been first cousins, you know.

Q Yes.

A I think he came from Switzerland, the Boozers. They had relatives in Medina Street there, Uncle John Boozer and the Andersons. You ever heard 'em talk abou the Andersons?

Q Yes, I've heard that name.

A Their mother was a Boozer.

Q So they were from over there, too.

A Yeah.

Q Well can you tell me anything about your Grandpa Schott?

A I know he lived with us for about seven years till mother died.

Q Did he live to be an old man, very old man?

A Yeah, 96 going on 97. Strong. Yeah, he was still a strong man when he died but he got kidney stones and he taken too many pills and instead of dissolving them forced them into the veins and the doctor said he was too old to operate. Nowadays they'd operate. But them days they couldn't operate on a 96 year old man, but he was strong yet.

Q This Grandpa Schott you mentioned, did he live very far, did they live very far from your home as a kid?

A Their Grandpa Schott's home is there where Johnny Hoffmann lives now.

Q Oh, that Schott place.

A That's the Schott home, uh-huh.

Q Well, did you all visit back and forth as children? Did you ever go visit your grandparents?

A Oh, yeah. They used to always tell my sister Amanda says that mother sent her down, he's says you help clean the house for Grandma and he says don't charge her anything. So when she got through Grandma Schott had 50 cents in her hand and she says here Amanda I want to pay you and Amanda says I don't want anything.

Q And held her hand out? Well, your Haby grandparents, where did they live?

A Up there where Gabe and Jollie live.

Q Oh, in that house.

A Yeah, that was the Haby house, yeah.

Q Well, do you remember your grandfather?

A No.

Q No. What about your grandmother?

A I remember her well.

Q What kind of person was she?

A Well, she was a little woman.

Q Nothing about her personality that you remember? No incident?

A No, we was young kids when she died.

Q Well, I think we've covered your life pretty well and the things you did for fun and everything so I guess I'll just say a thank you for letting me do this interview and appreciate it very much.

A What you going to do with it now?

Q Well, it'll just be on record at the library for people to listen to for information.

End of Interview

INDEX

Oscar "Blue" Haby
Tape # B31
Sides 1-2

ORAL HISTORY OFFICE AGREEMENT

I, HABY OSCAR F., volunteerly
interviewee's full name - last first
give Castroville Public Library the full use of the information recorded on tape on the 10th day of June, 1980, in return for which I will receive a tape of the interview.

O. F. Haby
Interviewee's signature

I, MADELYN BOUBEL KOEPP, the interviewer of OSCAR F. HABY hereby release all rights, title, literary or copyright interest in the interview conducted on 10th day(s) of June, 1980, to the Castroville Public Library Oral History Collection.

Madelyn Boubel Koepp
Interviewer's signature