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February 13, 2005

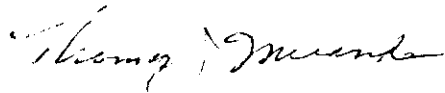
**Helen MacCarthy
Campbell-Warburton Law Offices
111 West San Carlos Street
Suite 440
San Jose, CA 95113**

Dear Madam;

Enclosed are two copies of "Apricot Pie Boy and other Tales" for the California Pioneer Contest.

If you have any questions, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas J. Miranda".

Encl.

**TOMCHEM@EARTHLINK.NET
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APRICOT PIE BOY and other tales
Thomas J. Miranda

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PREFACE

A year after we had witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, my family moved to 52 Foote Street in Campbell, California to live with my grandfather Manuel Miranda. Having flunked my first year of high school in Honolulu I now found myself enrolled in Campbell Union High School in a totally different culture and setting. Campbell was in the center of the fruit growing and processing industry that included a lot of prune and apricot farmers, a large dehydrator and Drew's Cannery. Drew's Cannery was a source of good summer employment for students as well as local residents. The following tales reflect on some memories the author had during World War II and several years after while living in Campbell.

APRICOT PIE BOY

When my family and I moved from Honolulu to Campbell, California I decided to find some work in this small prune-apricot town. My first "executive" position was in retailing at the local Sprouse-Reitz 5 & 10 cent store where I swept the floor and kept the warehouse in order at a whopping salary of 25 cents/hour.

As I got older I was able to use my executive talent in the Food Processing Industry. Across the railroad tracks from Foote Street stood Drew's Cannery. The cannery processed apricots, then peaches, pears and fruit cocktail in the summer and spinach in the fall. The executive position I accepted was that of a Pie Boy. Mac Martin, Roy Zimmer, Lawrence Hartley, Jerry Finch, Ray Flagg and Bob Hall also held various executive positions at Drew's Cannery and worked the night shift.

In canning apricots, the apricots are moved about on conveyer belts to rows of pitting stands where women would pit the apricots and feed the apricot halves to another series of sinks where women washed and sorted the apricot halves and separated the fruit from pits. Halves that were not suited for canning were set aside in pans and placed on conveyers by the Pie Boy. These were packaged for pie apricots used by bakeries and food preparation kitchens. Another conveyer carried the pits to garbage from which the pits were sent to a recovery plant in Los Gatos where Jack Vitale worked. As the ladies filled these pans with apricots or pits, it was time for executives like me to dump the pans onto the proper conveyer.

I worked the night shift that starts at 6 pm and ran to 6 am. The ladies were quite bossy and disrespectful to the Pie Boy executives and usually gave us a hard time. As the evening wore on it was easy to get tired and sleepy and one could lose control of the sequence of dumping the correct pan onto the correct conveyer. In order to prevent an occasional pit from being mixed with the good apricots, a woman was seated next to the elevator conveyer to remove any stray pits. On the night shift this task was done by Mrs. Silva who was the wife of the night foreman, Joseph, whose brother Frank Silva, we used to call him Fluffy because of his thick hair, was the Plant Superintendent.

The job of watching for stray pits did not require much skill and was a source of extreme boredom. It was interesting to watch Mrs. Silva, half asleep picking an occasional pit from the moving belts. All is well so long as the Pie Boys did their jobs.

Well, one night about 3 am, I was working my way along the aisles picking up pans and dumping them onto the proper conveyer, when I took a pan full of pits and dumped them onto the conveyer containing good apricots. For a few seconds I stood

there watching the pile of pits move downstream before I realized what I had done. Suddenly I ran down the aisle toward Mrs. Silva just as the pits reached her sleepy post. She began to frantically pull pits from the conveyer, but was soon overwhelmed and had to push the emergency stop for all the conveyer belts. The maintenance crew came running over and Ross Borelli, the foreman, proceeded to chewing me out for screwing up.

Unfortunately, I would have an opportunity to repeat this fiasco later on during Peach Season.

FRUIT COCKTAIL

When I was in high school we lived in Campbell, California near Drew's Cannery. This cannery was later sold to Hunt's Foods and continued to package fruit. The fruit-canning season went something like this. Apricots were the first crop to be canned, then when peaches and pears came along the cannery would can peaches, pears and make fruit cocktail.

Students always looked forward to getting summer employment at the cannery and eagerly awaited the opening of the canning season. One problem was the union. In order to work at the cannery we had to join the union, pay dues and receive the benefits of higher wages. The union representative was Lou Genaci who also ran the steam boilers for the cannery.

Well one summer it appears that the cannery did not want to package apricots so the union called a strike. (Probably a little collusion between labor and management). So

we did not get summer employment during the apricot season. Therefore, the farmers had to dry their apricots.

At the end of the apricot season the strike was miraculously resolved and we got hired to work canning peaches. With my skill as a Pie Boy, I was gainfully employed again. The procedure was essentially the same as with apricots, except that peaches need to be peeled. Peaches were sawed in two, the pits removed then peeled by dipping them in hot lye to remove the fuzz. The ladies sorted the good peach halves and the not so good ones (size or shape) were designated for fruit cocktail. The pits would go into a separate tub to be dispensed like the apricot pits were onto the waste conveyer.

Fruit cocktail was made from diced pears and peaches, Thompson seedless grapes and maraschino cherries. Peaches that were not fit for halves or sliced were carried up on a conveyer to a hopper and dropped into a dicing machine consisting of a square pattern of steel blades that diced the fruit. The big problem was the pits. If a pit got into the dicing machine it would shatter the blades and shut down the dicer until new blades could be installed. This was costly and stopped the production line.

Well sure enough here was Mrs. Silva again at her station alert to an occasional peach pit. And of course history repeats itself and I dumped a pan of peach pits onto the wrong conveyer. Before I could run to where she was, the pits were overwhelming her efforts to remove them and sure enough they went into the dicer and ruined the dicer.

Lucky for me I did not get fired and the next summer I got a job as an electrician so I did not have to do the mentally challenging job of being a Pie Boy.

CLOSE ELECTION

When I first came to California from Honolulu, I was quite confused since the culture from which I came was so much different from that in California. I never thought I could ever assimilate with that crowd since many of the students had grown up in the Campbell area and I felt like an outsider.

Campbell was a small town surrounded by prune and apricot orchards, the principal crops supporting the economy there.

At Campbell High School I noted that some of the popular students became members of the Student Council, the top job being the Student Body President. I used to daydream about being able to someday get elected to the student council, but that was a very remote dream.

Well, when I was a junior, I was elected to the student council and the next great step was to be the Student Body President.

One of the important students at Campbell High was Paul J. Meyer. He was a very serious individual and excelled in everything he attempted. When he was a student in Cambrian Grammar School, he and his good friend Ray Flagg made a pact that when they got to high school, Paul would run for Student Body President and Ray would be his campaign manager.

Ray Flagg, a talented artist was also a very good friend of mine. Ray was also creative and would be a formidable force in any campaign for election. So when election time came up, Ray apologized for not supporting me explaining his pact with Paul.

So, I had to find another campaign manager. Larry Lewis turned out to be a good manager, who was also very artistic. We also enlisted the talents of Emily Von Gunden to do the artwork.

Ray set out to create attractive signs that he put on the bulletin boards and around the school grounds. We heard that the day before the election, Ray and Paul were planning a big surprise. So I had to come up with something to counter their big offensive.

I asked Larry Lewis' mother to sew a flag made from an old flour sack with the word TOM on each side of the flag. Then my brother Paul made a flagpole with a pulley at the top with a cord to raise the flag.

I played saxophone in the school band so I got the band organized to do a march on the day of the big surprise.

Well, behind the school building was a large parking area where the busses unloaded the students. This was where my brother Paul mounted the flagpole.

What were Ray Flagg and Paul Meyer up to? That was the big question. Well, we found out the next day.

Ray had painted the words **PAUL MEYER FOR PRESIDENT** on a large roll of paper and stretched it across the lawn behind the library so that the students getting off the bus could see this huge sign.

Well, I borrowed a 1910 Dodge Touring Sedan from David Keesling who parked it in front of the school. During lunch hour I then had the band march around the main building parading a sign reading TOM. Then as the band marched around, David Keesling drove the sedan with Mac Martin; Larry Lewis and I sat in the back. David then

drove into the area where the busses parked and Larry Lewis and Mac Martin got out and raised the flag as the band played. The whole student body watched with their backs to Ray's big sign. Then I gave a speech, got back into the car and drove off.

The next day the elections results were in: Paul Meyer 85, Tom Miranda 512.

Years later Paul started Success Motivation and was its Chairman. He became a very successful businessman and a great Christian.

PICKLES

When I moved from Honolulu to Campbell, California in September of 1942, the first thing I did was to obtain a position as a "retail executive" at the Sprouse-Reitz 5 and 10 cents store. This important position involved sweeping the floor and taking care of the stock room at the back of the store. This position paid 25 cents per hour.

On my first day on the job, the manager went to lunch and left 65 cents in loose change on top of his desk to test my honesty. When he returned from lunch the money was still there and I noticed a different attitude toward me.

I held this executive position for a year until one day the manager told me that they couldn't afford my high salary and was going to promote me out (English for firing me).

In my exit interview he told me that the Red and White Store across the street, owned by Ray Mathis, could use me, so I went there and assumed another executive position, now in the food business and a whopping salary of 50 cents per hour.

Like my previous executive position, I was required to keep the food warehouse clean and in order and it was a tough job. One of my tasks was to help the butcher make hamburger or slice lunchmeat.

In the warehouse was a large barrel of dill pickles and I had to keep filling the butcher's pan with dill pickles when it was empty. Now these pickles were very delicious and when I was cleaning the warehouse, I used to reach in and grab a pickle and eat. If I heard someone coming I would throw the pickle back into the barrel (not a sanitary thing to do).

I worked there for about a year when a new owner took over the store from Ray Mathis. The new owner recognized my executive ability and kept me on. As the summer wore on I did my usual warehouse chores always relying on the pickle barrel when I was in need of a snack.

One day the butcher asked me to go out to the warehouse and fill the pan with pickles and you guessed it...I was in real trouble. Every time I reached into the barrel I came up with a partially chewed dill pickle. You see over the summer I had eaten quite a few pickles halfway and never kept track of the level in the barrel. After a frantic search I finally found enough pickles to fill the tray. Lucky for me summer was over and I went back to school and had to quit my job.

I wonder what that butcher did when he found a barrel loaded with half eaten dill pickles?

TOOTHACHE

When I lived in Hawaii we were on welfare and had to depend on charity healthcare. One of our problems was getting dental care. Some of our early experiences with dentists were at Palama Settlement. Palama Settlement was on School Street near Kalihi Heights and we would take a streetcar from Awaiolimu Street down to King Street then up Kalihi Street and get off on School Street. (Many times we walked all the way there and back or got a ride from our Uncle Martin, who lived nearby). From there we walked over to Palama Settlement and got to see a Doctor or Dentist.

If we had a cavity we would go there and get our teeth filled with a lot of pain since they didn't use anesthetics for drilling or filling. Another place we went for dental care was next to Our Lady of Peace church on Fort Street in Honolulu and one time the dentist slapped my brother Paul because he was moving around during the drilling from the pain. My mother never took us back there.

One of the problems we had was that our fillings would come out leaving a hole in the tooth. While this did not result in an immediate toothache, we faced a bigger hazard....guavas!!

Guavas are a delicious fruit that grow wild in the hills and have hard seeds. We were always looking for ripe guavas and would devour them as soon as we found one, but there was a real price to pay. As we chewed the guavas, usually one of the hard seeds would find its way into our open tooth cavity and then the sparks flew. The guavas seed would stick fast in the cavity and then we had a perpetual tooth ache until we could get to the dentist again.

After leaving Hawaii, we moved to Campbell, California and there we encountered the famous Dr. Wyland R. Morgan, DDS. He had a dental practice on

Campbell Avenue next to the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and across the street from Drew's Cannery and he was the only dentist in town. Everyone in town owed him money. He did not use novocaine and having to visit him was like a trip to a torture chamber. Most of the Campbell natives were stuck with his professionalism and torture. Kent Clark, whose father owned Clark's Drug Store, finally found a solution and snuck of to Los Gatos for dental care....we couldn't afford that.

I recall one memorable afternoon after school. It appears that two of my molars, upper and lower had cavities. Well, the torture started as he drilled into my lower jaw with smoke pouring out of my mouth and a lot of pain. Then he found that he needed to place a paste over the nerve before filling the tooth. This involved shoving a piece of paste down into the cavity and nearly pushed me onto the floor. As I wallowed in pain he set a time clock for 90 seconds to see if the pain would subside. If so, he could then fill the tooth. Well, the pain receded and he filled the tooth. Next was the upper molar and I went through the roof as he pushed paste into the upper cavity. By the time I left the torture chamber, I was completely exhausted.

Most of our family had the privilege of accessing dental care from Dr. Morgan. His office waiting room was full of old National Geographic Magazines. Reading these magazines was usually interrupted by shouts of pain from the resident victim sitting in his infamous chair.

After Dr. Morgan retired, his chair was placed in the Campbell Museum and I had the pleasure of seeing the chair on a visit to Campbell a few years ago.

Thinking of Dr. Morgan's famous chair and the consequences of sitting therein, is a very helpful reminder to practice good dental hygiene.

BILL WAS SICK

When one is growing up he may meet a lot of people on the way up. These include family members and friends and acquaintances in school. Some become lifelong friends while others are those who are just passing through and are never seen again or remembered. On the other hand some of the people you would never think about become quite famous and you would not have imagined that they would become important in later life.

Here are some examples:

When I was a student at Campbell Union High School in California there were some friends that I still remember to this day. Paul J. Meyer was a good student and accomplished at athletics. In fact, everything he did he did with the goal of perfection in mind. Once his father bought an old junk car and took it apart completely laying all the parts on a tarp on the driveway. Then he told Paul that if he could assemble it, it was his. Well, assemble it he did and drove it off.

Another student was Bill Wilson better known as Billy Wilson who was an outstanding athlete. He excelled in all sports and was an end on the football team. He was one of the big stars when Campbell High won the division championship. Bill later attended San Jose State College and was later drafted by the San Francisco 49ers. There he became a great star and played with such champions as Y. A. Tittle, J. D. Smith and R. C. Owens, who was known as "Alley Oopp" because he would leap high into the air to catch passes from Tittle. It was said that when Billy Wilson went out for a pass he would catch the ball wherever it was.

One of Bill's pals was Roy Zimmer who lived on Milton Street just behind the Campbell High stadium. Roy and Bill played on the football team and it seemed that everywhere Bill was there was Roy. Roy was a real big time operator who after graduation ran a gas station on the corner of Winchester and Campbell Avenue.

The weather in Campbell was great. There was no rain from Memorial Day until early October. As a result the hills became golden in color as grasses on the hills and mountains dried out. When the rains came, the entire Santa Clara Valley was ringed with a beautiful carpet of green as the new grasses grew. Looking East from Campbell Avenue was the foothills and in the distance Mt. Hamilton where the Lick Observatory is located. Sometimes in the winter snow fell on Mt. Hamilton and it was a great treat to go there and play in the snow.

Well, one day it snowed and some of the students skipped school, including Bill Wilson and Roy Zimmer. There was nothing wrong with skipping school, but when you returned you had to face **Miss Nielsen**. She was an Assistant Principal and Student Councilor and a real tough lady who did not put up with much nonsense.

So when Bill and Roy came to school the next day, their first stop was Miss Nielsen's office.

"Bill, why were you not here yesterday?" she asked.

"Well, I was sick" said Bill.

Then she turned her eagle eye on Roy and asked him why he was not in school.

"Well, Bill was sick so I went over to his house to keep him company", was Roy's honest answer.

With that it looked like they were off the hook. Miss Neilsen showed some apparent sympathy for these stalwarts and asked a few more questions before dismissing the pair. But, just before they left, they noticed a folded copy of the San Jose Mercury News on her desk. She asked them if they had seen the morning paper, which they had not.

There on the front page was a large picture of Bill Wilson and Roy Zimmer playing in the snow on Mt. Hamilton.

DIRTY MOVIE

When I attended San Jose State College I worked my way through as a movie projectionist. My first job was in the Campbell Theater when I was in high school. I used to run the movies and got paid \$4.00 a night for this work. This was a good source of income and it lasted until I graduated from Campbell High School. After graduation I worked as an electrician in Drew's cannery and still kept my job in the Campbell Theater.

After starting college, the projectionists formed a union and I became a member of the I.A.T.S.E. Local 796. The Campbell Theater job went to another man, so I was sent to the Cinema, a theater in Mt. View showing Mexican films. Later, I moved to the Sunnyvale Theater until I graduated from San Jose State College.

After graduation, I started teaching at San Jose State College. The attitude toward bad behavior was much stricter in those days and if any faculty member was caught doing something bad, the faculty member was fired.

Since teaching was a full time job, I quit the Sunnyvale Theater and became what is known as a relief operator, that is I would go to different theaters one night a week to run movies so the regular operator (projectionist) could have the night off. As a result I ran movies in the Campbell, Los Gatos, Mt. View, Sunnyvale and Cinema theaters on different nights.

The Campbell Theater had developed a different schedule. They would close on Wednesday nights and other programs would be added to fill the vacancy.

One Wednesday night they announced that they were going to show a dirty movie. This was a movie filming of the San Diego Burlesque show and a far cry from the trash they now label "Dirty Movies".

The business agent for our union was Jack Sandgren, who phoned me to advise me that I was to run the dirty movie next Wednesday.

So next Wednesday after coming home from a long day at San Jose State College, I was eating supper when I noticed Jack walking toward our home on Foote Street.

"Why don't you go to Sunnyvale tonight and I'll run the dirty movie", he said.

So I drove off to Sunnyvale to run a movie there.

The next morning the headline in the San Jose Mercury News read:

CAMPBELL THEATER RAIDED; PROJECTIONIST ARRESTED

There was a big picture of Jack Sandgren on the front page.

This became the talk of the town.

Lucky for me that Jack had decided to send me to Sunnyvale or my teaching career would have been short lived.

TRAIN COMING

I lived in Campbell, California at 52 Foote Street near the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. The Southern Pacific track ran from San Jose to Campbell alongside Drew's Cannery. At the entrance of Drew's Cannery, the tracks crossed Campbell Avenue. On the other side of Drew's Cannery was Dr. Morgan's office. Further south the railroad tracks passed the Geo. E. Hyde dehydrator and on to Los Gatos. Every morning a large passenger train would come by on its way to Los Gatos then on to San Francisco. This train returned to San Jose in the evening passing through Campbell about 7:30 p.m. This rail line also served the cannery and dehydrator. A switch engine brought boxcars filled with empty cans to the rail siding next to Drew's Cannery and carried away box cars with canned fruit.

Enter Jack Vitale! Jack lived on Dillon Avenue and owned a 1938 Dodge sedan and he enjoyed driving us around town. One of Jack's stunts was to try to drive his car down the railroad tracks. He would start where the railroad crossed Campbell Avenue and carefully maneuver his car over the rails and drive down the track for a few hundred feet with the gang all cheering him along. Each time he tried this, he got a bit bolder and drove further down the track. Jack could drive past the Campbell Lumber Yard and turn off at the bend on Foote Street. One day he picked up a few friends and decided to see how far he could go without his tires falling off the rails. The next drive off from the Foote Street turn was Hamilton Avenue, one mile away and the tracks were lined with steep slopes on each side.

At any rate, Jack was off on his new adventure, with a carload of friends. He was able to maneuver his carload of pals onto the tracks at Campbell Avenue and drive on

until.....you guessed it.....a train came down the track right at Jack and his car. Lucky for Jack the train was a switch engine carrying some boxcars for Drew's Cannery and the train stopped. The engineer was laughing at Jack and began to back the train so that Jack and his now scared friends could reach Hamilton Avenue and safety.

That was the last time Jack got onto the tracks.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author was born on a sugar plantation, Ewa Mill, Oahu and grew up in Honolulu and lived there until almost a year after the Pearl Harbor bombing that he witnessed. He moved to California, graduated from San Jose State College, taught there for one year, served in the Army Chemical Corps, then received a Ph.D from the University of Notre Dame in Organic Chemistry.

His business experiences include Director of Research for the O'Brien Corporation, Staff Scientist at Whirlpool Corporation and Adjunct Professor at Indiana University South Bend. He also served as Technical Editor for the Federation of Societies for Coatings Technology's Journal of Coatings Technology for twenty years and Editor of the Monograph Series on Coatings Technology.

He received a number of local and National Awards for Outstanding Scientific Accomplishment and the Outstanding Business Alumnus Award from the Business School of Indiana University South Bend from which he received the MSBA degree. He has published over 50 papers, a book, book chapters and is the author of 13 United States Patents