And they wouldn't let him in.

Well, he says he couldn't get in. When he got back he changed his topic, he got his degree on the beginning of railroads into California, San Diego...

I've always said it, he was a great lecturer, popular lecturer, for ladies clubs, oh yes, he was excellent... He met me when I came down here and slept in his room and he got me my first place when I came here. Oh, yes. he was a great boy... he was a good friend of mine although I got into more battles with him, than anybody else. Well, to get back into here, I picked out the French in California simply because he said there wasn't anything and because my old friends Atton and Meachum had written a little article on the French in California and (Charles E.) Chapman, one of my own teachers said that the French either never left any record or didn't give a damn about them and no one knew anything about them. And so I decided I'd look and see what, I wasn't sanguine about what I'm gonna get or anything of the kind. Now most of from now your gonna find in the "Adventures" account of that article. But I'll review some of that for you.

Now, I didn't know what an archives was, if you think I knew French, you're crazier than hell. I did know some Spanish, oh yes. And I went. I stopped on my way cause I knew a Mrs. Surry and she gave me my first indication where to look on my topic because Louisiana was French just before it was Spanish in my period. I went to France not only for the California part but for my own thesis too. I knew that, but I knew nothing else about it. And I got to France, I'll never forget it. I was on the Aquitania and the Aquitania which is a British ship had stopped in Cherbourg, which is not a deep sea port and then had to get on a French tender to get in, remember, this is in 1924 when all the Frenchmen that skipped out the war and made money in the United States are now visiting their families. And they were all getting off with the rest of the Americans and getting on the tender and the first thing I heard was, 'well, I'll be god-damned, they can't even speak English here.' Which struck me right in the face, right off the bat. And the first time I knew it (AN laughs) I agreed with them. I agreed with
them in that in many respects. But I didn't really realize what that meant because when I got in there and I started ordering in a restaurant someone like me, there was a good reason there and I immediately then went over to the Kosher restaurants, to meet some of my Jews which I had rebelled against on my Yeddish. All my life my father and mother talked to us in Yeddish and we answered in English and I rebelled. I studied Hebrew but not Yeddish. Then I don't mind telling that story, I tell it quite often, and that when you get words and that's when I began to do it so that every once and a while a Yeddish work would come out in a lecture later on. And now I'm a great advocate of learning Yeddish literature although I don't know it myself, I read it. But I had to really dig in my French. It was 18th century French, ignorant French, it's hard French because I got Indians writing in what you call (phonetics), I have Spaniards writing poor French, and Frenchmen writing poor Spanish.

AL: And Indians writing neither.
AN: And Indians writing phonetically, so that I became the greatest authority on 18th century ignorant French. And had a harder time reading the newspaper. And I still do. Although I never trusted myself, Dr. Brown and the rest of them (AN refers to the SDSU French language department), Leslie Brown just died you know, gave me four hours a week for twenty-five years going over everything I did, I never published anything without at least having him check over my French. I had ignorant French, trying to get the sound. But I didn't know anything, I didn't get permission, I went into there and got it. I went over there and got a few things, not much. But I was told by Mrs. Surry to see a Calendar of the Mississippi Valley's materials over there which has not been published yet, it's been published since. And that would give me an indication as to where to go for what I wanted. And that was the greatest thing I ever had because at that time Professor William Spence Robertson, one of the great leaders in Latin American history was over in France and so was Alvord one of the leading Western professors over there. He was an experienced man in archival work, he published lots and lots at the time and he would never tell me to do this. He would say, 'Nasatir, did you do this?' I say, 'no, why do I have that?' Oh yes, 'you have to have permission in order to get into the Foreign Office.' I said,
'well, that's what I want.' So he would tell me that, so next week he would say, 'well Nasatir, did you see this or do that?' He was my greatest source. I've known him ever since. He's dead now. Certainly I got into the Foreign Office, and that's where I did my first French in California. I didn't find too much, I tried to argue with them that it must be in the French archives, they said no that's all there is, and it's only open to 1848. So, I did what I could and went on to Spain. And, in Spain, there's lots of thing that happened in the mean time.

AL: An this was in 19?
AN: 1924. I mixed up my stories between that year and the next year in my 'Scholarship' on purpose, and I could separate some of the stories.
AL: I'm thinking maybe we could wait until the next session.
AN: Oh I think you better, cause I want you to look over what I did there, and I'll do it next time.

END Session 1, October 28, 1981
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**END**
Dr. Nasatir's father, Morris Nasatir leave Lithuania and comes to Chicago
Morris Nasatir arrives in US in 1888 as peddler
Morris Nasatir spends some time working in South Africa in Orange Free State
Eventually comes to Los Angeles and Settles in Santa Ana
Morris Nasatir sends for Abraham's mother, Sarah Ester Hurwitz
Morris marries Sarah in Los Angeles, but they live in Santa Ana where Morris operates a Gents clothing store on Fourth Street
Nasatirs have four children: Julius (pharmacist), Frances (social worker), Abraham (educator), and George (businessman)
First important event in APN's life: accident to left arm which is amputated to the knuckles, August 1913
Dr. Nasatir describes himself as mischievous child
Nasatir's move to Los Angeles and he attends Custer Junior High and goes to new LA High School
Dr. Nasatir recalls Vernel Kersy, vice principal and future State Superintendent
APN moves through high school quickly by skipping grades
APN recalls Mr. Ewing, Spanish teacher who is "victimized" by APN's tricks
Side 2
Finishes high school by 1919 and decides to be a Math and Spanish teacher
APN's bother and sister are at USC and he becomes anxious to attend college
Father takes APN to Berkeley which had opened in August, they register him late in September of 1919. APN lives with family friends in Oakland and attends Berkeley.
Only difficult class is analytical geometry
As freshman APN takes Herbert Eugene Bolton's "Americas" course.

William C. Binkley recognizes Morris Nasatir where he is TA and goes on to become authority on Texas revolution

Teaching Assistant Kuykendall influences Nasatir in taking more history

Nasatir takes history course from Carl Leebrick but had missed taking Henry Moore Stevens on account of his death

End of freshman year, APN is still working toward a high school teaching credential

Practice teaching with Miss Mary Ross

Discusses hazing at Berkeley which means being thrown into the Strawberry Creek

APN works on Master's degree 1922 to 1923 during these years becomes a teaching fellow under Bolton

Discuss famous medievalist Dr. Paetow

Discussion of Ph.D. exam and his committee including Edward M. Sait and Dr. Russell

OCTOBER 28, 1981 Session 1 Tape 2 Side 1

Question of travels to European archives arises with discussion of long friend Dr. Lewis Lesley, also SDSU History professor

MA Thesis "Chouteaus and the Indian Trade of the West"

Leaves for France on board the Aquitania

Has difficulty securing items and adjusting to 18th century ignorant French used in frontier

Had clues where to search from Mrs. N.M. Miller Surrey

Receives help from Dr. William Spence Robertson while in France

Goes on to Spain

END Session 1 at Tape 2, Side 1 #140 (Wollensack counter)
NOVEMBER 4, 1981  Session 2  Tape 2  Side 1  begin #140 (Wollensack counter)

APN discusses difficulties in French Foreign Archives, only allowed material to be examined. Wants California related counselor correspondence but only received diplomatic records

While in France, gets information on his own work—Mississippi Valley, Surrey guide

By November APN goes to Spain, begins work in Madrid

Discovers material he wants in Madrid is moved to Archivo Historico in the Biblioteca National, so while permits are processed, to goes on to Seville

APN discusses experiences with Andalucian dialect, give some experiences in Seville such as conditions and limited access, few published guides. Also bribes potreros with cigarettes who begin a fire in archives

One of the Native fellow, Taliafarro, extinguishes fire and becomes local hero. Taliafarro also shows others the ways of the local folk

Side 2

First European trip APN left California August 1924 and returns in June 1925

Continues discussing Seville where he had trouble with director of Archivo Nacional, Gomez de Campillo. Shows proof of documentations using the Shepard guide with no luck

Gears paper work signed at Belles Artes but more trouble with Campillo who brings him one legado

Goes to Simancas, not much in archives there, leaves Spain, back to France and US

Returns to Ca and gets readership with Bolton and has to learn German for Ph.D.

Begins writing thesis under Bolton's guidance and adopted thesis "Trade and Diplomacy in the Spanish Illinois" breaks at 1792 although intended to go to 1804

Bolton brings together committee for Ph.D. including Charles Chapman and Prof. Gutridge in English History, passes Ph.D. in May 1926.

Parents attend graduation and Morris Nasatir proposes Abraham attend seminary in New York, however, Abraham has other plans

Bolton advises APN take job at University of Iowa and turns down chairmanship in Aida, Oklahoma

Iowa he aids Professor Root and gets first publication ready on Jacques D'Eglise in 1927

Leaves Iowa and returns to Ca and gets a contact to take Dr. Du Four's place in San Diego (SDSU)
NOVEMBER 4, 1981 Session 2 Tape 3 Side 1

Begins experiences in San Diego, travels to use Los Angeles Public Library and Berkeley to research when he can.

Relates some stories about Iowa.

Also discusses Berkeley, and keeping Sabbath and staying at Rabbi Hirsch to keep Sabbath and meets his future wife, Ida Hirsch.

Discusses paying back his father for money he owed and brings up salary at SD almost leaves since he had hoped to earn $3000.

Brings Ida down from San Francisco to meet everyone at San Diego Teacher's College dance at end of 1929, then marries her the weekend before school starts September 8, 1929.

Receives National Social Science Research Fellowship of New York 1930/31 to go back to archives and calls it his belated honeymoon.

Depression prohibits Ida staying too long, she returns home. Remains in Paris, and goes on to Spain.

Makes friends in Paris with Doysie who is helping Library of Congress and gets much help from him get much material for his first book French Activities in California.

Discusses how he gets "thrown out" of Foreign Office Archives in Paris.

Goes on to Spain and keeps in touch with Doysie but keeps trying for counselor reports, does not get info until trip in 1950.

Before getting to Spain had been warned again about Campillo, gets to Madrid and deals with Gomez de Campillo again.

Gets peek at residencias while in Madrid for Spanish Governors of Louisiana.

Ends by questions on Library of Congress interest in material, and we decide to close session here.

END Session 2 at Tape 3, Side 1.
Finish discussion on Library of Congress which has microfilm on series APN needs.
Leaves Madrid goes to Seville and works for nine months.
Hires two French born copyists in Seville to copy French material who work for him for about the next three years.
Spanish copyists not as efficient, hires Rivas and later his widow—they are paid by the page.
In Seville, major documentation of Papeles de Cuba, papers of the Captaincy General of Cuba overseeing Lousiana.
Last great microfilm series from Spanish Archives is Loyola University of New Orleans.
This trip was basic to his research, returns to SD in August of 1931.
Back to San Diego where APN discusses being moved to Old Library Tower and discusses what campus looked like prior to leaving to Europe in 1930.
History department made up of Dr. Lenord, Dr. Lesley and Nasatir.
APN is still assistant professor and gets an upper division course and gives courses on the Americas, Westward movement, England and Latin America.
Teaches History of England without much background and gives it up to Dr. Webb after teaching it for 18 years.
Discusses development of History Department, and gets Martin Ridge putting APN into becoming a Latin Americanist which he had little training but his colonial work in Louisiana helps.
Latin American classes connects him into organizing Pan American League and is Vice council of Paraguay-1936 and Active council in 1939-40.
SDSU raised to a State Teaching College granting an A.B. degree.
Was considered an academic freak in early years due to his research.
APN tells of early days building up the library collection by collecting broken sets and actively asking book dealers for rejects etc.
School is filled during depression both he and Lesley have filled classes and continue to build upper division courses and feels he had top students then.
Develop course in historiography.
Methods course offered by Dr. Lenord which was a seminar course and eventually graduate course. They helped students get ready for graduate school before had grad program at SDSU.

Sends students on to schools where APN friends to continue guiding them where APN had started their A.B. thesis.

During the 1930's campus had problems with 'peace movement and pacifism' and briefly discusses up to WWII.

"The war" effects history department by lack of personnel leaving Drs. Lenord and Nasatir to teach all classes -- Lenord has heart attack.

After "the war" tremendous increase in student population.

Hardest adjustment in 1930's was Dr. Hardy's retirement whose philosophy was very different than the incoming Dr. Hepner who was strongly opposed to old methods, and waters down curriculum.

Hepner brought in his own staff and profs were skeptical at this time, Nasatir is raised to full professor.

During the 1930's unions are organized in colleges and Ca employees.

Growth of department hires Osborn, John Merrill, Kathryn Reagan, Kramer Rohfleisch then separate political science and history.

Later additions are Webb, Ridge, Bergie who was from SDSU and replaces Ridge Raider and Coox and whoever still teaches French Revolution.

Dr. Hepner changes chairmanships for his needs and his system and becomes friend of Nasatir in later years, Hepner 1935 to 1952 when replaced by Malcolm Love.

APN in 1940's begins more publishing on California and continues on his own work on the Anglo-Spanish frontier in Mississippi Valley.

Also does work on John Evans.

Does first national paper coinciding with Pearl Harbor for AHA in December 1941 in Chicago, which was published the next year.

Side 2

Attends conferences all during this time, spends time during summer at Berkeley.

Brief general discussion on college status from teachers college.

Still in 1940's develop University attributes with leaves, sabattical etc. the work of Roy Cameron.
APN interjects story of having faculty parking shed to have space in 1931

Talks about the next move out of tower office and gets shelved office in Social Science building where he still has office today

After the war Fulbright program begins and APN receives scholarship in 1949 but leaves in 1950/51 since his father had died he gets delayed leave

Ida and Abe leave for and at this time he specifically works to get counselor correspondence for UC-Berkeley in addition to original work on Miss. Valley

In Paris he works in Archive National and Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by this time access is improved and knows what he's doing

French are now opposed to Americans microfilming complete sets and feared less tourist business

Information Nasatir needs, is in Archive Nacional which needs permission statements from Foreign Office

Howard Rice paved the way Nasatir thought to get information he needs but was not so foreign office denies Nasatir access but he gets lucky and a relative of Rice gets APN in on Saturday and gets microfilm copied and off to Library of Congress

Regarding his California work, is now allowed counselor info because this series is finally bound up to 1870 and is freed to use but still deny micro-filming

Solves problem by helping Chief with his project on Nootka Sound and gets better access

Invents gimmick to copy whole series and needs publishing rights for California material -- APN tells of these problems

APN tells of contacts in Paris through international conference meeting there where he discover Paris police department had records of California gold rush era.

We decide it's a good place to end this session

END Session 4 at Tape 4, Side 2
Prior to beginning session, Dr. Nasatir and I decide the main portion of his experience in researching at Paris police department, reader should refer to "Alexandre Dumas fils and the Lottery of the Golden Ingots" California Historical Society Vol 33, No. 2, June 1954 pp. 126 - 129. This introduction reviews APN's experiences there.

APN hires photographer to microfilm at the police department and sends negatives to UC Berkeley.

While in Europe he had vowed not to return to Spain as long as Franco had been in power.

Experience in France also included the publication of his Lewis and Clark work. He had to proof his galley sheets without aid of his references. He goes to the Bibliotec Genevieve for some references. This book gives him the status and reputation.

This year in Paris was his most successful for both French in California work as well as his Louisiana work.

Took side trips with Ida such as Neece, Switzerland and other places.

Had toured side places in France with the assistance of a former student who married a French woman, his name was Devlin.

Gets back to United States and when his Lewis and Clark book comes out, he give Pres. Love a copy who had just come to the College.

College grows to University size with attributes and M.A. degree is granted by this time.

Briefly talks about libraries at SDSU and problems with theft etc.

I ask Dr. Nasatir about his text on Latin America and how it came about as it was co-authored by Dr. Helen Miller Bailey.

APN had been opposed to writing text but this project evolves but toyed with the idea while still with Bolton.

A publisher who knew Bailey wanted a scholar in the Latin American field to work on text so APN agreed.

Begins to give background information on Bailey.
Discusses Dr. Bailey and her background at East LA College and the Mexican community work she did in Los Angeles and in Oaxaca, Mexico, supports Julian Nava Project takes them about five years and is published in 1960

Most productive time is in the 1960's with books and articles

Returns to 1950's in discussion at this time he has some of his excellent students

Illustrates students by giving examples of some

APN students include Gary Monell of Mesa College who is still working with APN

Another student, James Mills, legislator and did work eventually on published with APN on Commerce and Contraband Trade in New Orleans

Best Master's thesis was by Frances Coughlin who worked on Diaries of Commanders on Mississippi River and APN expands into a book on Imperial Osage finished in 1941 not yet published

This reminds APN of some student in 1940 when he takes a trip around the United State with John Butler and Merrill Douglas in order to touch four corners

Trip lasts eleven weeks and APN had done some research and stops many places

Mentions trip he had taken in 1936 with his father to Chicago and other places he had traveled in the US

Mentions a trip to New Orleans but never gets to library due to hurricane

APN begins discussion on some of his published books

In 1940, director of Oklahoma Press, Mr. Pollock who asked for work on Osages, leaves the press to go into commercial publishing

Sovaie Lottinville becomes director for the next 20+ years and as a result of many discussed problems Imperial Osages not published

In 1960's Yale Publisher wants to see Osage work and Spanish War Vessels which Frances Coughlin had worked on, this Yale editor leaves and Osage work never published and Spanish War Vessels out in 1968

Gilbert Din, from Lewis College in Colorado interested in Osage and contract has been signed and will be out as Din and Nasatir

Nasatir wants other book finished as continuation of Spanish war vessels tries to get Paul Vanderwood to take research and write it but does not work out and finds Professor Gold to do the work but never finishes - Lottinville now has manuscript
Those two works which he had never finished. His life's work will be to finish foreigners in Alta California.

In order to talk about publications APN goes back to 1941 to talk about projects and begins to talk about friend and bookdealer, Saul Lewis and begins enlarged history of Manuel Lisa—brief version done by Judge Walter B. Douglas.

A Ph.D. under Billington by the name of Oglesby was doing dissertation of Manuel Lisa.

Next Saul Lewis gets APN to do Luttig expedition in Missouri.

In middle 1960's, APN book with Jim Mills comes out too.

Does introduction to James' Three Years among the Mexicans and Indians for paperback series, they do not allow editing, just introduction.

In this period or earlier, Nasatir begins to work with Noell Loomis, a creative writer got together and began working on Pedro Vial, Road to Santa Fe. Nasatir's research and Loomis' writing.

Loomis helped APN begin on Derbec.

Begins to work on French Activities by getting articles together as teasers for these works.

Discusses work on Derbec where he needs to go back to Yale University for newspapers and meets Archie Hanna, editor and got APN to do James', also curator of Beinicke Library.

Goes back to New York at Library (he meant New York Historical Society, give me this correction later) and searches for trials of Derbec.

Comes back and does introduction for Derbec done by Tallisman Press.

These books come in 1960's mostly.

We end session.

END Session 4 Tape 6 Side 1.
We weren't too sure where to begin so we continue with some of Dr. Nasatir's students.

Around 1948, Ben Dixon comes to SDSU on GI bill and was in school with his sons. Dixon begins Phi Alpha Theta on campus.

APN discusses Phi Alpha Theta activities and his involvement including elected Vice President 1967 and President 1969. Is in office into Centennial year in Fayetteville, Arks. Installed many groups, Galbraith at UCSD etc.

Ben Dixon went on to Occidental College and is remembered for his work in the Congress of History and San Diego Historical Society.

This reminds APN of his involvement in Latin America and mentions his involvement in the organization of Pacific Coast Association of Latin American Studies brings conference to campus in 1966 or 67.

Mentions the many other committees he was on including Pan American League, Jewish Institutions, World Affairs Council, and others.

Begins to discuss his travels to Latin America, in 1959 he becomes a Fulbright Teacher at University of Chile for 1960.

Considers great experience going to Chile where he taught "History of the Americas".

Takes time to do work at the archives of Chile in the Biblioteca Nacional.

Took time to visit most of the other countries in Latin America with some extra time including Central America.

Relates problem with customs in Buenos Aires, but no other problems.

Discusses students and what it was like teaching in Chile.

Explains how students tried to pub on play of Oscar Wilde (he thinks of name later "The Importance of Being Earnest").

Archival retrieval in Chile was difficult and problems between Foreign Office and Archives etc. Gets help from the University photography department for microfilm.
Got Chilean correspondence on California and has never published everything

Jewish community in Santiago in fact many of the nationalities were separated
and were immigrants from both World Wars

Mentions the honors he has received over the years and many in 1960's such
as Western History Society, San Diego Historical Society and many others

Discuss briefly Dr. Henry Wagner as book collector, seller and amateur
historian. APN had met Wagner during his years in Berkeley regarding
James Ohio Pattie

Remember the development of revival of California Historical Society
who had done much on gold rush

I ask about the mood of campus after he returns from Chile, APN discusses
a little about effects on campus stresses importance of respect and formality
which started loosening after the war

Comments on student rebellion which he has seen many but only part which has
not left was use of drugs which he fears for the generations to come

I ask about his research on Old Town which he had done in 1960's with Dr.
Lionel Ridout. Goes to Berkeley for information but is not very clear

Feels that Richard Pourade sparked up interest in Old San Diego. APN gives
guidance to Pourade for San Diego History series

Discuss historic site markers through the Native Sons of Golden West, Mayor
Hoffer gets APN involved

In reference to Old Town, he gets information in Berkeley through notes of
Benjamin Hayes and Vincinte Romero and others

Talk about Pourade again supported by Copley Press and felt he put basic
history into Pourade's work

Local history sparks up with Lewis Lesley getting his MA's writing on local
history. Lesley did a small book on Camels brought to Ca

END Session 5 Tape 7, Side 1
Begin by discussing late 1960's, AHi takes his last leaves-of-absents with Mrs. Nasatir and travel in Europe in 1967/68

Get to England and fills in records where California material has empty spots does not stay long and goes on to Spain

Spends half time in Madrid and Seville

In Madrid, Archives is reorganized into a good building with good condition

Main work is on residencias of governors of Louisiana and major purpose is to finish his work on northeastern frontier of New Spain and wanted last volume of colonial period of Spain in Mississippi.

Returns to San Diego in 1968 and receives an invitation to give Fleming lectures at Louisiana State University. Also goes to Conference on Spain in the Mississippi Valley organized by John F. McDermott at Univ. of Ill.

These papers are contained in McDermott ed. Spain in the Mississippi Valley

In the 1970 question of AHN age was raised and retirement laws change from 67 years to 70, and has to retire

Lectures at the University of San Diego until he gets 50 years of teaching

Discusses Fleming lectures and how these chapters are a culmination of his research and books on Mississippi Valley, he adds chapter and Univ. of NM publishes his Retreat of the Borderlands in 1976

Retiring: Hardest part was not having students to direct-- but works harder than when he was teaching

Sets goals for retiring-- to get New Spain work on borderlands up to 1803 and to devote projects on California

Current projects are Calendar on French to bring up to 1870 with the story part of it in volume 2

Major project is Calendar on British Archives to 1860 in California, much of this information available series at Bancroft Library in Berkeley and Library of Congress

Gary Monell of Mesa College is co-authoring work. Include Admirals in 1840 of Admin. Seymour and Hornby. Calendar of California Material in British Archives is on-going for five years.
Continues discussion on current project of British Calander, APN and Monell are looking for publisher but book will be purely for scholars

Articles will correspond with this subject, which will be out and published soon in Westerners Brand Book, Horace Dodd, ed.

Writing introduction to book being put out of Taos by George Byrd Grennell

Fort Benton's Builders

I ask about local history and how APN got involved in talking about local history, he began by a talk in mid 1950's to the Jewish community invited by Justin Turner which led to publication on this topic. However, his involvement with local history was the result of SDSU offering MA and students needed primary materials.

Other publications on Opportunities in Local History Research used for many years at the University of San San Diego by Sr. Catherine McShane

Does agree that interest in history has grown tremendously, views amature different than professional

Discuss need and use of languages especially for History

Gives idea on teaching freshmen history and specialization, time needed in seminars for personalized attention

APN mentions his years as graduate student advisor

I ask his opinion of students present day obsession in practical business majors APN feels that these trends always have existed

Side 2

Continue discussion on topic of history majors and he feels student trends always go back to basics however, history departments are looking for ways to prepare students for non-teaching jobs

I ask about his Spanish Borderlands teaching if he was still teaching—he would not change anything and has always been careful of ethnic awareness

Once in the 1930's he was accused of being communist because he lectured on Lazero Cardenas and SDSU President Hepner got involved and sides with APN.

Mentions another incident in public speaking regarding Latin American news presented by Copley paper

END Session 6 Tape 8, Side 2 #140 (Wollensack counter)

End autobiographical summary of Dr. Abraham P. Nasatir, December 2, 1981