



*Everything Is A Privilege...*

*I was impressed with what the Statue Meant*

*Max Riave's Journey*

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EVERYTHING IS A PRIVILEGE  
...I was impressed with what the Statue Meant  
by  
Bev Taylor

“The ship brought us to the Statue of Liberty. How I was impressed with what that statue meant.” Let me tell you about when I first saw the Statue of Liberty. “It is 1901 and I am six years old. My name is Max Riave. My brothers, Louis, and Sam and I are preparing to leave our home in Russia. We live in a very small village, Poltava in the province of Goberna. Our father and sister have already left for America. The way out was through the swamp, cold and dark. We each paid two dollars so we could go over the granite center. That day we got into the area near Belgium and traveled seemingly for miles and days. We had our worldly goods all in a big box that a very good friend had put on the train, so it followed us through. Sam was about three or four years old. I carried him, and my older brother carried some of the luggage, and we got through into Antwerp, Belgium. From Belgium – I don’t know what countries we went through, but finally we got onto ship. That ship brought us to the Statue of Liberty. I’ll never forget Ellis Island...How I am impressed with what the statue meant.

Max’s first years after coming to America were in Indianapolis. His mother, Anna, had a sister there. It was their first place they lived in the United States. It must have been very cold as Max mentions it in his interview with Peter Bandurraga of the Ventura County Historical Museum in 1980. No matter how cold, he still sold newspapers. His brother Louis was the first family member to come west because of health. The remainder of the family followed in 1907 settling in Stanton, California about six miles west of Anaheim. Max recalls, “The coyotes howled so loud and long that one day I decided to walk back to Indianapolis. I got as far as Anaheim before a policeman convinced me to back home.”

Louis’s health did improve living in Riverside as the doctors had suggested. He found work with Scott and Frampton in Artesia and used some of the gold that came with the family from Russia to buy 6 acres of land in Benedict. Max and his family were making southern California their home.

Max attended high school in Santa Ana, then Compton and in 1914 graduated from Los Angeles Polytechnic High School. At all of the schools he was on the track

team. While in high school he worked for H. Gemini Company in Los Angeles. Max was always working. He always found a job.

In 1917 he enlisted in the “President’s Own Supply Regiment, the 24<sup>th</sup> Engineers.” They were shipped to Brest Harbor in France. He remembers that of all places while on guard one night in France he met Robert Parr of Simi Valley. The two chatted for a bit about home. The delay to chat probably saved Parr’s life as he was headed to mend a telephone line when the whole area was blown up by enemy bombardment.



*Photo courtesy Museum of Ventura County*  
Max Riave in World War I uniform

When Max returned from the war in 1922, he married Ruth Goldring in Los Angeles. The bride was 20 and Max 27. The following year, 1923 Sam and Max bought their first store in Camarillo. It was at the end of Ventura Boulevard. Sam and Max were in business.



Wedding Day (1922) photo of Mr. and Mrs. Riave.



*From Ventura Daily Post September 27, 1924*



*Photo courtesy of Museum of Ventura County (undated)*  
Max Riave (right) with unknown man in front of Camarillo Mercantile





As WW II was ending in 1946, Sam had left the store and Max ran it by himself. Camarillo was growing. Max a forward-looking businessman wanted to be part of the growth. A new business area was developing in town; sometimes referred to as “Knob Hill”. It was at the intersection of Arneill Road and Ventura Boulevard. The new store carried men’s clothing, shirts and shoes, and uniforms. Doris Reed was the seamstress that did alternations for men’s suits in particular. Max fitted the suits by the eyeball method. Doris found this very frustrating when trying to make the alternations.

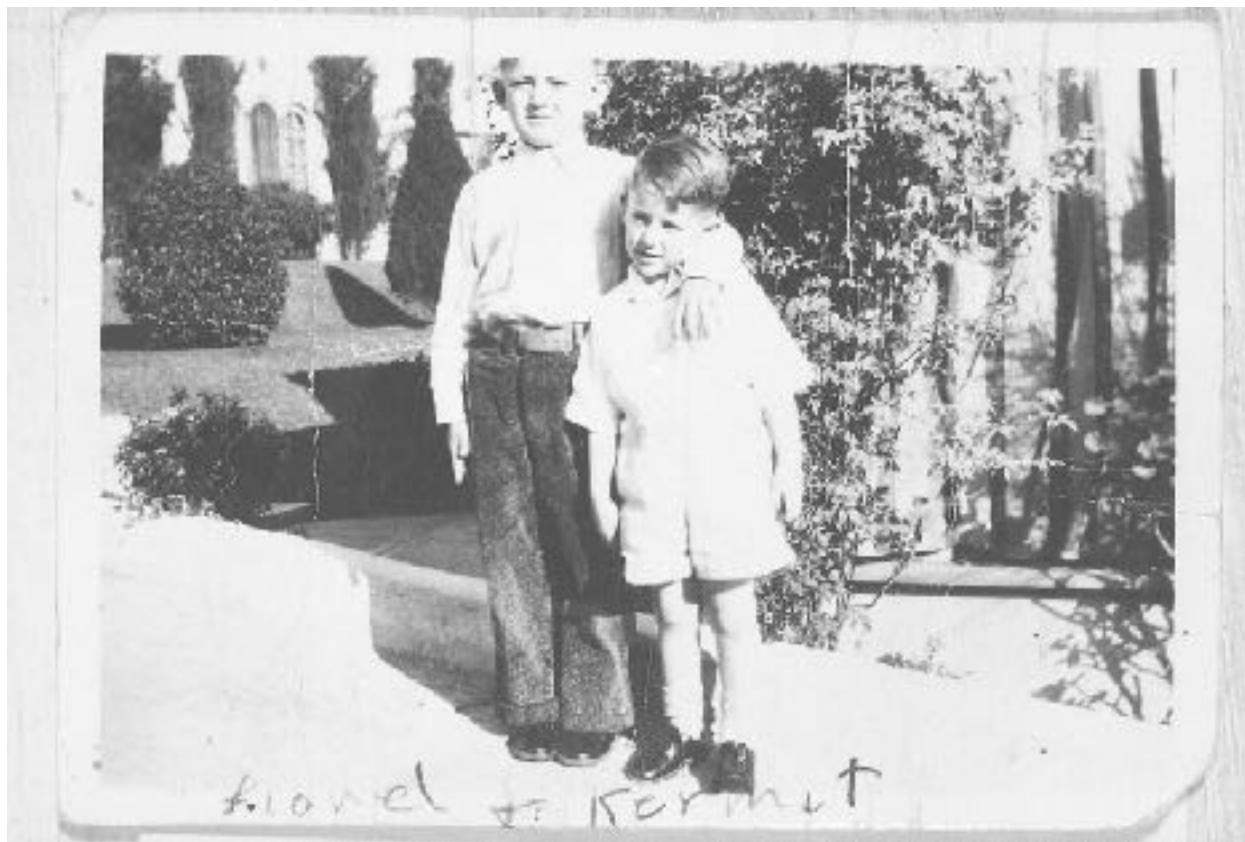


Riave Clothier 1949

To be part of the new commercial area Max built a new building and moved his store to Knob Hill on Ventura Boulevard (south side). It became Camarillo’s first clothing store and Fossati called it a haberdashery. Eldon Walden who owned the Camarillo Cleaners, now on Elm, remembers Max walking from his family’s home on Grandview to the haberdashery right past the cleaners. Eldon says, “...that Max always wore a white shirt and tie, as did Adolfo Camarillo. And sometimes, Max had on a suit jacket. The store Max built is still here. The Cantina occupies the space.

Ruth and Max and family first lived on Fulton Street, a block over from the Flynn family. The two families kids went to school together. Eloise Gerry Mansfield remembers the daughter Sarelle. Later, the Raives moved to Grandview. The

family included a son, Lionel, the oldest boy, a younger brother by two years, Kermit, and girls Sarelle Roselyn and Kandy. For some time, Max's mother, Anna, lived with them before she died. Mrs. Riave admits that she was a strict disciplinarian in the family. She recalled, "The children used to call me 'the sergeant'; now they thank me."



*Photo courtesy of Museum of Ventura County*  
Lionel and Kermit Riave (undated)

Kermit died in a motorbike accident at age 16. Lionel grew up to become a Circuit Court judge.

In 1941, the younger son, Kermit, was killed in a traffic accident in Oxnard. He was sixteen. Adele Flynn Stubbing Walsh remembers returning from a trip to Catalina to learn the tragic news when their boat docked.

From his first day here, Max was active in seeing Camarillo grow and prosper. He was proud of the work being done by many especially the Camarillo brothers and Mike Dizdar and Mr. A. Levy. He wanted to be a part of that. "I was so appreciative of all of the liberties here that I would do anything for the



community.” he remembers about the early time. “Thinking back of Camarillo, the Camarillo family was just wonderfully gracious to people, taking in all the refugees from Mexico. Knowing how it feels to have no place to go and nothing to do with or to, I lent them what I could. I lost very little money from my Mexican trade.”

Max was a spark plug, Mr. Chamber of Commerce, you could say. He was a charter member of the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce. Really, Max said it was more of a protective association. Remember, he said people carried sidearms then. Adolfo Camarillo was president and Max was secretary of the protection association. When the Chamber of Commerce developed later Adolfo Camarillo was president and Max Secretary.

Max helped organize the Camarillo post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of which he is a life member. He was a charter member of the first American Legion Post formed in the county. Add to that, he was one of the original members of the Pleasant Valley Lions Club. His favorite holiday was the Lions Club Flag Day. In 1973 he was given a gold-plated card which makes him a life member of the International Association of Lions Clubs. By 1960, he was an active member of the Masonic Lodge in Oxnard and the Elks Lodge.



*Photo courtesy of Museum of Ventura County*  
Max Riave in American Legion Uniform (undated)

For these and many other leadership positions he was honored in 1965 when chosen to be among the first Doñis and Doñas at the 1965 Fiesta Parade. For this

special occasion he wore a fiesta costume made and given to him by Adolfo Camarillo. He wore the costume again for the celebration of Lena Jones' 100 birthday reception; part of the 16th annual Doñs and Doñas celebration at Adolfo's ranch. Again in 1971, Max was honored for his more than 43 years as a merchant here. He would head the Fiesta Parade that year again. Joining him will be his wife Ruth who has shared his work in business as well as civic and service endeavors. At this time Max observed that in the early days of Camarillo there were few merchants "in town." Everyone had to pitch in to do what was needed to guide our town.

The Camarillo Daily News  
dated Monday, November 1, 1965  
Camarillo's 1st Fiesta

**Sidelights Noted**  
Some interesting sidelights at the fiesta included:  
—Max Rave, Camarillo merchant for over 43 years, was active in the late Don Adolfo Camarillo's fiesta costume, including the colorful hat.



**HONORARY DONS AND DONAS** — Camarillo's first Honorary Dons and Donas are pictured after receiving the honors at the fiesta Saturday. In the back row, from left, are Eugene Palmieri, Ike Nor-

man, Fred Stein, Max Rave and Cliff Glenn. In the front, from left, are Eva Hayes, Rosa Camarillo Petit, Marie Fulton, Julia Sotello and Lena Jones. (Daily News Photo)

Standing left to right: Eugene Palmieri - Ike Norman (the "mohawk" on his head is the end/tip of a tree limb) - Fred Stein - Max Rave (attired in the late Don Adolfo Camarillo's fiesta costume, including the colorful hat) - Cliff Glenn

Sitting left to right: Eva Hayes - Rosa Camarillo Petit - Marie Fulton - Julia Sotello - Lena Jones

Glenn and Barry Streets, before the freeway cut through Camarillo, were connected and there was Mexican Independence Day Parade there. The street was decorated with banner from one side to the other. The Camarillo White Horses rode in the parade and Riave Clothiers of Distinction was represented with a float. The dresses for the Camarillo White Horses that rode in that parade and many others were made by Adele Flynn Stubbing Walsh's, mother, Adele Flynn.



Mexican Independence Day Parade  
Max Riave's float

An honor dear to Max's heart was to be chosen as Man of the Year by the Brotherhood of his temple, Temple Beth Torah. He helped organize the Ventura Jewish Council which later grew and became Temple Beth Torah. The temple history tells us that Max was very, very active in the establishment and growth of the association to a temple. He served as temple president, 1949. His picture is hanging on the wall with the others who have served the temple family. Year after year he served on the council continuing his commitment to seeing our community thrive.



*Photo courtesy of Museum of Ventura County*

Max Riave wearing prayer shawl(tallit) for daily prayer (undated)

After retiring in at age 77 and 43 years as a merchant in Camarillo, Max sold the store. He remained busy and now could enjoy night community college classes. He liked creative writing and Ruth preferred music appreciation. Gardening classes were together. In 1976, after Ruth's death Max remarried. His bride was Dorothy (nee Tattlebaum) Duvall.

"I still try to dedicate my future towards the accomplishments which will make Camarillo a model city." The words of Max Riave when he retired.

Mr. Chamber of Commerce died in March, 1982. Max was 87 years old. He is buried at Ivy Lawn Cemetery. He was preceded by his mother Anna in 1939 and his father, Labe in 1906.



*Photo Courtesy of Museum of Ventura County*

Max Riave and daughter 1945 in front of Camarillo Mercantile

Do you have a comment, story or photo you'd like to share?

Please contact Karin Farrin.

Thank you!

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