An aerial photograph of the Fillmore Refinery. In the background, there are rolling hills with sparse vegetation. Several large cylindrical storage tanks are visible on a hillside, one of which has a star symbol on it. In the middle ground, there are industrial buildings and structures. In the foreground, a train with several tank cars is moving along tracks. The tank cars have "TEXAGO" written on them. Below the train, there are rows of young palm trees planted in a field. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue rectangle containing white text.

*GROWING UP AT THE  
FILLMORE REFINERY*

JOE SCANLIN JR.  
DON SCANLIN



*Don and Joe Scanlin Jr. grew up on the grounds of Fillmore Works, where their dad, Joe, was the refinery manager for 22 years. Both brothers and their families returned to the former refinery site in 2013, touring the property and reminiscing about life in Fillmore.*

*Their stories, captured in this memoir, are presented in recognition of Fillmore's Centennial celebration.*

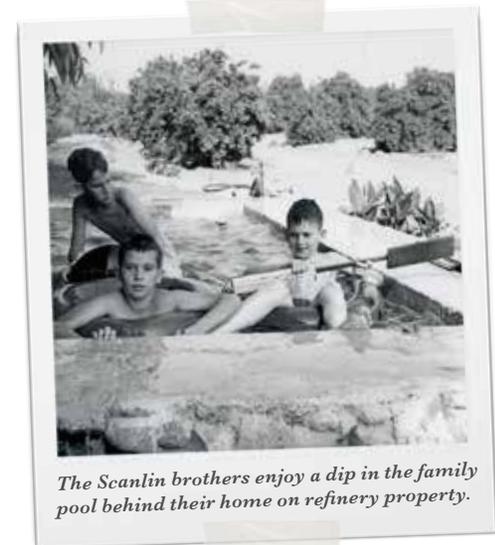
## JOE SCANLIN JR.

### A VISIT TO FILLMORE WORKS

**JOE SCANLIN JR.** gets downright misty when he talks about life at the Fillmore Works Refinery, but he does so with good reason: he grew up on the property and carries fond memories of it. Joe's dad, the senior Joe Scanlin, managed the refinery from 1928 until it closed in 1950. The job came with a home on the site, where Joe Jr. lived from the age of three until he left for college. Joe recalls the idyllic days of his youth – when Fillmore had 3500 residents and the refinery was a bustling center of commerce – in a memoir he shared with Chevron.

Joe's memories, both entertaining and informative, prompted current Fillmore Works Manager Leslie Klinchuch to invite Joe and family for a present-day tour of the former home site. In the fall of 2013, Joe, his wife Laurie, sons Mike and Tim, Tim's wife, Jenny, and grandchildren Aidan and Sean joined Klinchuch for a visit back in time.

Joe's memories of life in Fillmore mirror those recounted by his younger brother Don. The Scanlin family was committed



to hard work and high performance, but family and friends and the brotherhood of the refinery gave the boys a carefree life. Joe remembered playing simple games like kicking a single rock all the way home from school or walking along a railroad rail without falling off. The boys enjoyed climbing pepper trees along Pole Creek. The much-loved refinery horse was the center of games and activities and the boys produced their own home movies. Joe spoke of a Boy Scout hike up Mt. San Cayetano, where the pack's names were all placed in a glass jar and buried on the property. He's thought from time to time about trying to find the jar.

## THE WAR

**WORLD WAR II** was a frightening time. Joe remembers refinery workers arming themselves and patrolling the facility grounds after the Pearl Harbor invasion. Tensions eased after a few days, but life was not the same.

In late February following the December 7th bombing, residents were rocked again when the Ellwood Oil Field near Ventura was attacked by a Japanese submarine. Shells directed at oil storage tanks missed, but slightly damaged the Ellwood Pier and destroyed a derrick and pump house. A blackout was ordered and the incident caused shockwaves nationwide, leading to the federal government's decision a week later to intern Japanese Americans. The internment program affected Fillmore in a profound way that Joe recalled later in his visit.

Meanwhile, the refinery was pushed to new levels of production for aviation fuel needed for the war effort. Joe recalls a daily

phone call from March Field Air Force Base in Riverside County, with military leaders demanding more fuel. Joe Senior led a team that blew past former production records to keep the fuel coming. Work was in high gear all day, every day.

The War also brought soldiers on leave home to Fillmore, where many would stay at the Scanlin home, joining the family for Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, borrowing horses and enjoying a respite from war. Joe's mother's hospitality was famous.

## THE HOUSE AND GROUNDS

**JOE TALKS FONDLY** about the family home, a great old house with a giant square piano. The piano had been found, of all places, in an old drilling site in Sespe Canyon and restored by the Scanlins. The home also had a beautiful yard. And Joe remembers – vividly – the family home being moved from the refinery to a new site in town when refinery operations ended. Joe was on campus at Fillmore High when he saw the house go by as it was moved into town. Texaco had given the house to Joe Senior.



*The Scanlin Family home in Fillmore.*

## A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY HOME FROM WORK

**“WHILE IN COLLEGE,** I had a summer job with Texaco’s Pipeline Department, hoeing weeds and cleaning up pumping units,” Joe’s story begins. “Les Knighton was in charge of Fillmore pumping station (Old Fillmore Refinery) and he sent me out to clean things up each day in an almost-new red Texaco 1950 Ford pickup. J.T. Wood, a senior Texaco VP in charge of Southern California operations, was coming from New York for an inspection tour. This made Les very nervous. He told me to go clean up the Piru pumping station and not come back until after lunch, and not be sweeping when Mr. Wood showed up.”

“Well, I was sweeping when Mr. Wood arrived from Los Angeles in his chauffeur-driven limousine. He showed no interest in the pumping stations. He only asked me how college was going. While we were talking, one of the limo’s tires went flat. Seeing this, he said to me, ‘you change the tire and we will continue on to the Fillmore Refinery in your pickup.’ I wasn’t at the refinery to see this, since I was busy changing the tire, but the others who were there said Les was jumping around and had all the troops lined up for inspection. When he saw my red pickup coming through the gate, he ran out to chew me out, and about had a heart attack when Mr. Wood and his chauffeur got out. Surprise! I, on the other hand, changed the tire, turned on the air conditioning and had a nice ride home in the limo. Something I didn’t get to do every day,” he said.

Joe’s interest in all things automotive has carried through his life, and today he is an avid car collector and car show participant. A 1934 Ford Phaeton (a four door convertible) restored to its original condition and just like one driven by Henry Ford is the most prized piece in Joe’s car collection.

## MOMENTS IN TIME

**AS JOE AND FAMILY** made their way from lunch downtown to the Fillmore Railroad Museum, Joe pointed to an empty lot and noted it had been the Inadomi family grocery store. He recalled that the wonderful family who owned it had been interned during the war, and he didn’t know what had ever become of them. “So sad,” Joe said.

The museum’s executive director, Martha Gentry, greeted Joe and family when they stepped into the museum. Martha had scheduled time to show the family the Fillmore Works photo archive, but she asked for a few minutes’ delay so she could help a pair of visitors who had just arrived. Two women, Southern California residents, were passing through town and had come



*The Inadomi Department Store in Fillmore.*

by the museum. The older of the two had grown up in Fillmore and wanted to give her grandniece a sense of her hometown. Joe's jaw dropped when the women were introduced and he found himself shaking hands with, then embracing, Taduku Inadomi, daughter of John and Mitsuyo Inadomi, the very family he had just been discussing. Taduku and Joe had not seen each other in 70 years.

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*Taduku told of the family's internment, and of graduating from high school while in the camp.*  
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She shared a powerful story: when the Inadomi family was interned, the store was not lost. Members of the local Rotary

Club stepped up and volunteered to operate it at no cost to the family. When the war ended, the Inadomis returned to town and to their family owned business. The family eventually sold the store.

Reunions inside the Railroad Museum continued. Fillmore resident Catherine Frias, granddaughter of the family's gardener, Albert

Ramirez, came by to meet the Scanlins and share her own memories. She remembered her grandfather's tireless work ethic and his fierce pride in becoming an American citizen.

She spoke of the opportunity that the refinery had given him and that he in turn created for his own family. Catherine's sons Alexander and Nicolas (great-grandsons to Albert), were both State Champions in cross country in 2012. Alexander was valedictorian for the Fillmore High School class of 2013 and is now in college. His brother Nico graduated from Fillmore High in 2014 and is planning to attend UC Santa Barbara.

Talk of education led Joe to the topic of the Balden/Scanlin Scholarship, a scholarship Joe started for Fillmore High graduating seniors. Joe is personally involved in selecting its recipients each year. The scholarship was created to honor the memory of Ron Balden, Joe's best friend, Fillmore High classmate and star basketball player. Ron was named All County in 1958 and went on to be the captain of the UCSB Gauchos' team. He died from a brain tumor in 1978.

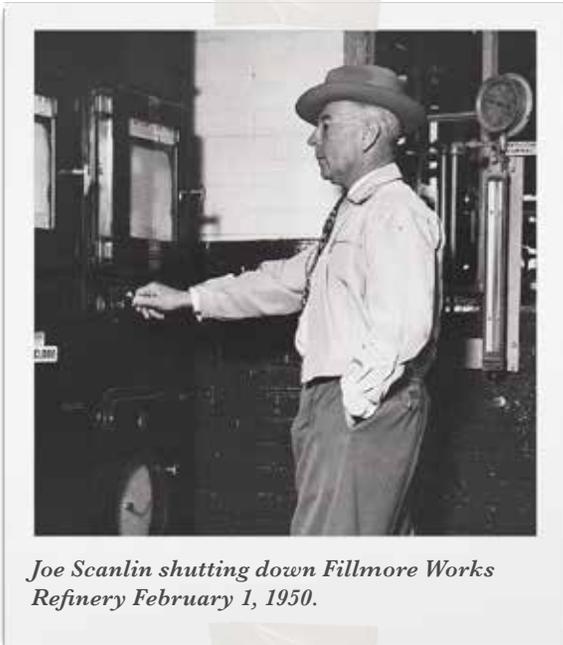
.....  
*Since its inception, the Balden/Scanlin Scholarship has provided more than \$200,000 to Fillmore High students.*  
.....



*John and Monda Inadomi.*

## FONDNESS FOR FILLMORE

**BOTH JOE AND HIS BROTHER DON** beam when speaking of their father. Joe Senior was the son of an Irish potato farmer who arrived in Rhode Island in 1846. By 1895 the family had a farm outside of Indianapolis, where Joe Senior was born. Joe was a voracious reader and a brilliant student. Joe laughs remembering his Dad's dislike of places with a lot of sun, especially the beach – "he was a fair skinned Irishman." Despite that, Joe Senior honored his wife's wishes and the couple built a retirement home on the beach Ventura. Joe passed away in 1988, preceded by his wife's passing in 1978. Joe's memories of Fillmore are captured in an audio recording at the Ventura County Museum. The beach house remains a favorite spot for family gatherings.



**AFTER GRADUATING FROM FILLMORE HIGH,** Joe Scanlin Junior attended Ventura Community College and went on to UCSB, where he met his future wife, Laurie. The couple, married 56 years, lives in Orange County. Joe continues his lifetime career in wealth management and Laurie is a successful realtor. Son Mike is an internet marketing expert, and Tim has an internet music company. Both boys live in Southern California. Tim and wife Jenny's two sons, Aidan (8) and Sean (5), round out the brood.

Family members eagerly joined Joe on his trek through the refinery grounds, onto the hill overlooking Fillmore, into downtown and on to the railroad museum, taking photos, asking questions and capturing memories. The outing coincided with Joe's birthday, celebrated over lunch and gag gifts at Central Station.

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*At the end of a full day of reminiscing, Joe, a great storyteller and solid historian, summed things up: "we were so fortunate to live here."*  
.....

## *DON SCANLIN REMEMBERS*

### *LIFE AT FILLMORE WORKS*

**ASK DON SCANLIN ABOUT** his childhood in Fillmore and he shares tales of a horse named Tom, a private swimming hole and an elegant family home situated on the premises of a bustling oil refinery. Don's dad, Joe Scanlin, was manager at the Texaco-owned Fillmore Works Refinery from 1928 to 1950. And for Don and older brother Joe Jr., those were idyllic years.



*Don and Joe Scanlin and kitten enjoy their family's front yard at Fillmore Works circa 1938.*

Don and three generations of his family recently toured the property where virtually no traces of former refinery operations remain. While buildings and equipment have been removed and crews are at work addressing the remains of oil operations, Don's vivid memories have not dimmed.

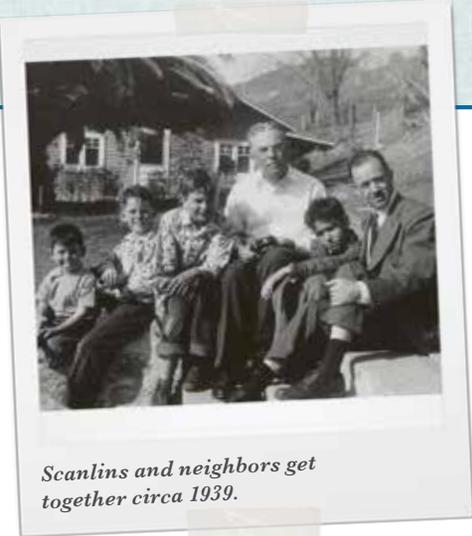


*Don Scanlin with daughter and son-in-law Lisa and Gary Mendel.*



*Scanlin family members look on while Don Scanlin tells Fillmore Works Project Manager Leslie Klinchuch (right) about site.*

## EARLY YEARS



*Scanlins and neighbors get together circa 1939.*

**DON WAS BORN** at a local hospital in 1934 and spent the first sixteen years of his life calling the refinery home. A portion of the property was designated for housing, where a mini company town of about 10 homes ringed a large lawn area known as “The Green.” An orange grove separated the housing compound from the refinery operations. The houses were impeccably maintained and beautifully landscaped, and the Scanlin home, as the residence of the refinery manager, was the crown jewel. At nearly 5,000 square feet it was a large, gracious home whose remodeling masked the fact that the building had originally served as the company cafeteria. After the refinery closed in 1950, the Scanlin family purchased the home and transported it through the main street of Fillmore to a location near 3rd Street and Central, where it still stands today.

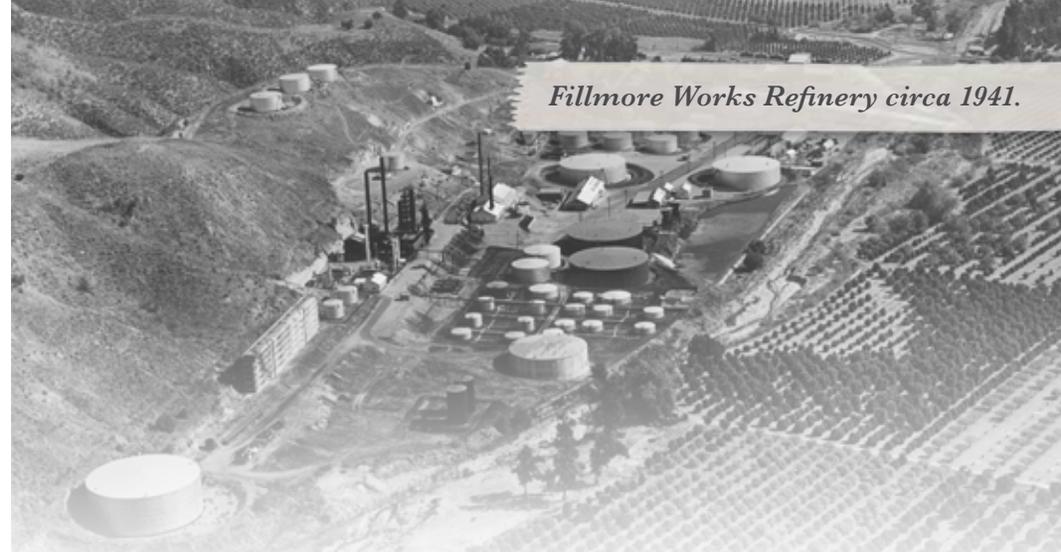
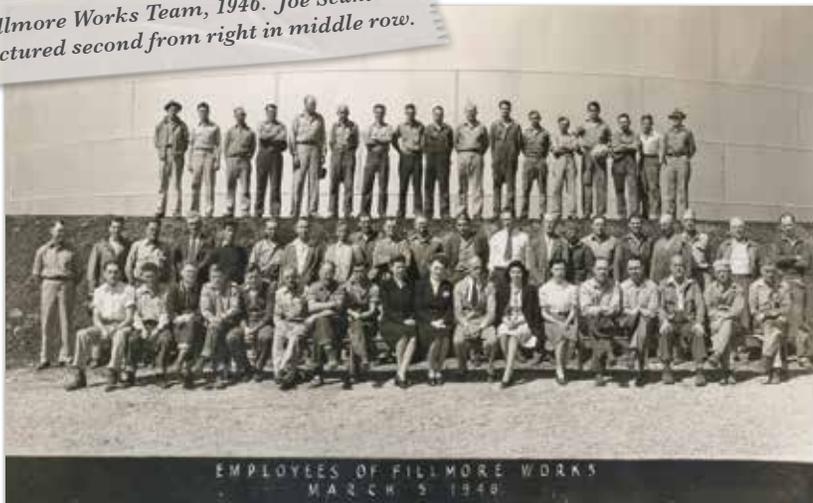
*Don describes his earliest memory as a young boy riding his bike around the Green with other neighbor kids, with Don dressed in chaps and toting toy guns.*

“I thought it was a magical place,” he said, “We had the big green lawn all to ourselves.” He and the others kids dammed up the drainage ditch near the railroad tracks and enjoyed

their own swimming hole. The young residents were the darlings of refinery workers, including Jim Crocker, a skilled woodworker who converted one of the home garages into a wood shop and produced everything from custom cabinetry for adults to a tree house and a mini train for the children.

Don remembers neighbor Sam White, who had two fabulous pomegranate trees as well as a pair of aggressive dogs. The neighborhood kids spent many hours thinking of ways to outsmart the dogs to pinch a few prized pomegranates. He recalls a town “covered with orange trees” and laughs about fruit fights in the orchard. He describes the refinery’s old steam whistle blowing every day at noon, and recalls his Dad letting him pull the whistle at midnight on New Year’s Eve. Refinery children walked to school on the railroad tracks over Pole Creek and Don boasts that he could walk the entire way balancing on one rail. He also shares a childhood story that claimed the then-school superintendent relied on a spanking machine to maintain order. Local lore held that the elaborate

*Fillmore Works Team, 1946. Joe Scanlin is pictured second from right in middle row.*



*Fillmore Works Refinery circa 1941.*

device included a silver tank, ladder and funnel that could catapult badly behaving Sespe School third and fourth graders off the school property.

He has many happy memories of his dad, Joe, who passed away in 1988 at the age of 92. The son of an Irish miner, Joe found himself in Navy boot camp preparing for World War I. He never attended college, but after the war he mastered organic chemistry and passed an engineering test. He went to work for Texaco and was put in charge of the refinery in 1928 when Texaco acquired the company that operated it at that time. In its heyday the refinery was a booming operation and, with a staff of 100, one of Fillmore’s largest employers.

Don said his dad took the job very seriously and functioned like the captain of a ship. Like any good leader, Don says, his dad was respected, “but not always popular.” Don said that cleanliness and safety of the operation were top priorities for his dad, who never lost sight of the inherent danger of the operation. Don remembers pipes being so hot under pressure they would glow orange. Joe was devastated by the 1946 fatal accident in which a line ruptured, killing two workers.

## TEENAGED DON

**AS A STUDENT** at Fillmore High, Don drove a '39 Ford with a rumble seat, a possession he says helped win the attention of fellow student and future wife, Ann Mosbarger. "I had a pretty fast car," he says, noting that refinery workers boosted him with a supply of aviation gas that gave the Ford a little extra oomph. Don and Ann married in 1956, two years after she was Fillmore Festival Queen. Today the couple, parents of grown daughters Lisa and Kelli, lives in Ojai.



*Tour moves to Fillmore Historical Museum to look at more photos and share stories with Museum Director Martha Gentry.*

*World War II was especially memorable for Don, who as a young boy saw firsthand the importance of the refinery to the war effort.*

He vividly remembers the constant patrols around the perimeter fence, day and night. The refinery produced all-important aviation gas, and Don remembers many occasions when military officials phoned his father or came to the facility to push for increased output. It was a tough time, Don said, noting the military was "on Dad's back, squeezing every drop."

## 1950: END OF AN ERA; HAPPY MEMORIES REMAIN

**REFINERY PRODUCTION ENDED IN 1950** and Joe transferred to Texaco's Los Angeles Refinery. When the time came for Joe to retire from Texaco, the self-made man embarked on a new career developing smog reduction programs for the State of California. Joe worked until he was 75, because, Don said, he never wanted to retire. Don proudly points out his Dad being named Engineer of the Year by the American Society of Civil Engineers the last year he worked – a recognition achieved without the benefit of a college degree.

Joe and Don's mother, Ida, retired to a beach house in Ventura. Ida passed in 1978 and Joe in 1988. Before his passing, Joe



*Scanlin Family at the Refinery site: Gary and Lisa Mendel (left) and their children Riley (floral short) and Cole (grey shirt); Kelli Scanlin D'Angelo (wearing sunglasses) and her children Gray (yellow shirt) and Anja (hooded sweatshirt), and Don and Ann Scanlin gathered for a family photo at the bluff overlooking Fillmore.*

participated in a living history interview for the Ventura County Museum. The recording is housed at the museum in Ventura.

As Don and Ann, their daughters, Kelli and Lisa, son-in-law Gary Mendel and grandchildren Anya and Gray D’Angelo and Cole and Riley Mendel made their way to the scenic overlook of the old refinery, Don talked about Tom, a beloved old horse that lived with the families on the property. Tom would tolerate six kids riding him at a time and he enjoyed his every-Saturday baths. He even had a part in a Western movie the kids made. When Tom died up on the hill, he was buried on site because “he was too big to move,” Don laughed.

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*Don Scanlin treasured his childhood in Fillmore and loved living at the Fillmore Works Refinery.*

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His voice gets a bit husky when he looks up the canyon and remembers losing track of time as a youngster walking up a hill to watch the sun set over his community. A successful executive and generous community volunteer, Don has spent most of his life living near his boyhood roots. And while the Fillmore Works Refinery is gone, its happy memories live on in a boy who called it home.

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:** We thank Don Scanlin and family for spending time at the Fillmore Works site and providing such a rich historical background. Don has graciously provided his family photos and home movie collection for use on this website.



BARNETT COX  
& ASSOCIATES

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