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Oral History Center  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

East Bay Regional Park District Oral History Project

Julie Haselden:  
East Bay Park District Parkland Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by  
Shanna Farrell  
in 2017

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Interview sponsored by the East Bay Regional Park District

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Julie Haselden, 2017  
Photo by Shanna Farrell

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**Julie Haselden** was a longtime East Bay Regional Park District employee. In this interview, she discusses her early life, early jobs, getting hired by the EBRPD in 1980 as a truck driver and forklift operator, working as the only woman in her department, enrolling in the carpenter's apprenticeship program, affirmative action in the district, becoming a journeyman in 1989, involvement in the union, memorable projects and sites, suffering significant injuries on the job, retiring in 2011, volunteering for the EBRPD and running the retirees association, and the meaning of her career with the district.

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## **The East Bay Regional Park District Oral History Project**

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is a special regional district that stretches across both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. First established in 1934 by Alameda County voters, the EBRPD slowly expanded to Contra Costa in 1964 and has continued to grow and preserve the East Bay's most scenic and historically significant parklands. The EBRPD's core mission is to acquire, develop, and maintain diverse and interconnected parklands in order to provide the public with usable natural spaces and to preserve the region's natural and cultural resources.

This oral history project—The East Bay Regional Park District Oral History Project—records and preserves the voices and experiences of formative, retired EBRPD field staff, individuals associated with land use of EBRPD parklands prior to district acquisition, and individuals who continue to use parklands for agriculture and ranching.

The Oral History Center (OHC) of The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley first engaged in conversations with the EBRPD in the fall of 2016 about the possibility of restarting an oral history project on the parklands. The OHC, previously the Regional Oral History Office, had conducted interviews with EBRPD board members, supervisors and individuals historically associated with the parklands throughout the 1970s and early 2000s. After the completion of a successful pilot project in late 2016, the EBRPD and OHC began a more robust partnership in early 2017 that has resulted in an expansive collection of interviews.

The interviews in this collection reflect the diverse yet interconnected ecology of individuals and places that have helped shape and define the East Bay Regional Park District and East Bay local history.

## Interview 1: November 28, 2017

01-00:00:11

Farrell: This is Shanna Farrell with Julie Haselden on Tuesday, November 28, 2017, and we are doing an interview for the East Bay Regional Parks District Oral History Project. Julie, can you start by telling me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early life?

01-00:00:26

Haselden: Born in 1950 in Napa. My father was a teacher. We moved from Napa to Oakland, and I went to schools in Oakland. Fruitvale District. I grew up there.

01-00:00:42

Farrell: What did your parents do for work?

01-00:00:44

Haselden: My father was a language teacher. My mom was a stay-at-home mom until maybe 1960, and then she went to work for the Oakland Campfire Girls.

01-00:00:59

Farrell: Did you have any siblings?

01-00:01:01

Haselden: Yes, older sister.

01-00:01:03

Farrell: What are the names of your family members, your parents and then your older sister?

01-00:01:07

Haselden: My father is William Doyle Haselden, my mom Verna Jean Haselden Schoenweiler—she remarried—and my sister Nancy is now Nancy Olsen, and she lives in Piedmont.

01-00:01:20

Farrell: Can you tell me about some of your early memories of growing up in Oakland, in the Fruitvale area?

01-00:01:27

Haselden: Yes. Total tomboy. Loved Diamond Creek, playing in the parks, hiking around, cutting through backyards, finding creeks.

01-00:01:38

Farrell: You spent a lot of time outside when you were growing up?

01-00:01:41

Haselden: Yes.

01-00:01:41

Farrell: What drew you to the outside? What was the pull?



01-00:01:45  
Haselden:

I don't know, I think it was just in me from the beginning. My sister was very kind of sedate and more adult as a child; I was a total child for a really long time, and I was just very active and curious and not afraid to get dirty, loved to play with the boys, all that.

01-00:02:07  
Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about your memories of the Fruitvale community in Oakland or some of the things you remember from growing up?

01-00:02:17  
Haselden:

The street that we lived on, Fruitvale, it's actually Upper Fruitvale, which is older homes, big trees, everybody knew everybody, skateboarding, knew every crack in the sidewalk. It was a real wholesome, great neighborhood to grow up in.

01-00:02:38  
Farrell:

Where did you go to school?

01-00:02:41  
Haselden:

Glenview Elementary in Oakland, and then I went to McChesney, which was a junior high—it was before middle schools were invented. My father taught at Piedmont High School, so there was a deal where if your parent was employed by the city, then you could transfer and go to Piedmont, which I did.

01-00:03:07  
Farrell:

What were some of your favorite subjects when you were in school?

01-00:03:10  
Haselden:

I was a terrible student. I had potential, they said, [laughs] but I was very distracted. PE, really PE. Fascinated in the classes that I did try to do well, and so that would be languages and science.

01-00:03:34  
Farrell:

Were there any hobbies or interests that you had outside of school?

01-00:03:39  
Haselden:

Just animals, playing, bikes, skateboards, exploring.

01-00:03:48  
Farrell:

Do you remember what any of your sort of early career aspirations were at that point?

01-00:03:53  
Haselden:

Didn't have any. I really was not goal-oriented at all. I just couldn't even imagine growing up. I knew kids that had the big plan, and I never did. Little did I know how it would turn out just fine.

01-00:04:11  
Farrell:

What was your thought or your plan after you graduated from high school?

01-00:04:19  
Haselden:

To go to Laney [College]. I was a little fearful of that because I really hadn't figured out how to be a good student yet. I was more interested in the social aspects of school. I was interested in early childhood education after I'd gone to school a little bit, and I did get a job working at a daycare center. I did that for three years, and it was something I could do and I did well. It was amazing. I was kind of going to go in that direction for a while.

01-00:04:54  
Farrell:

How old were you when you were working at the daycare center?

01-00:04:58  
Haselden:

Twenty? Yeah, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two.

01-00:05:04  
Farrell:

What were you studying at Laney?

01-00:05:06  
Haselden:

Everything. Eclectic. I liked anthropology, I liked psychology, sociology. Let's see, what else did I take? Some of the basics, English and—I didn't really know where I was going to go. I didn't really long to go to a four-year school. I was I guess just a late bloomer. I really was, in every way.

01-00:05:32  
Farrell:

You worked at the childcare center for between twenty and twenty-threeish?

01-00:05:39  
Haselden:

Ish, yeah.

01-00:05:39  
Farrell:

What did you do? Because you started with the East Bay Regional Parks District in 1980, right? So that's a few years. What'd you do leading up to that?

01-00:05:49  
Haselden:

Let's see. My first delivery job was working for I think it was Advanced Mail Delivery Service. They paid very little, drove my own car, and drove ethical pharmaceuticals around. Went to a warehouse, picked up orders, and drove all over the East Bay delivering to pharmacies. Because it really paid poorly, I got a job delivering truck parts. Because of that experience, I was a Teamster for three years. That was back when all the Teamsters were men, and all the letters to me were "Dear Brother." We had to swear that we wouldn't recognize the Community Party in our orientation. That was a really good experience for me, to load up my truck, drive to all these mechanics and fleet truck service places all through West Oakland and up and down the East Bay.

01-00:07:06  
Farrell:

Do you think that it helped that you grew up in Oakland so you knew the lay of the land and how to get around?

01-00:07:11

Haselden: Should have, but not really, because the areas that I was driving in was more industrial, and West Oakland was kind of famous for being seedy and scary. Seventh Street and West Oakland meant danger. I got really used to it and really enjoyed it.

01-00:07:30

Farrell: What drew you to working in that capacity, being a Teamster, and doing deliveries?

01-00:07:37

Haselden: Opportunities. There were opportunities that arose. I didn't actually seek them; people told me about job opportunities and I just said yes, and that was it. That's one of the things—well, anyway, we'll skip to that later. [laughter]

01-00:07:57

Farrell: Did you like the physical aspect of the job, that it kept you kind of engaged and active?

01-00:08:03

Haselden: Yes, yeah. It was hard, hard work. There weren't a lot of women. It was kind of a trick for the parts house to hire girls to come in, and they would get extra business from the mechanics. They had a lot of people they could have ordered from, but they'd like to have the girls bring their spark plugs and cylinder heads and brake drums.

01-00:08:28

Farrell: Interesting, okay. At that point, were you learning a lot about tools and equipment and that kind of thing?

01-00:08:35

Haselden: Yeah.

01-00:08:36

Farrell: Okay. Was there any challenges to being one of the few women in that industry?

01-00:08:45

Haselden: Yes, there was. [laughs] At the time, I was really shy. I was super shy, even though I was going for these jobs, and so when I would walk into a mechanic shop and all this attention would come, and it would make me really nervous, it was kind of like facing your fears, and so pretty soon I just got used to it, and it was like, pfft, yeah, no big. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the social aspect and making friends and doing a service, providing a service for these guys. It was good; I liked it.

01-00:09:24

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how you came to the East Bay Regional Parks District?

01-00:09:31

Haselden:

Yes. That delivery job, I had a really—God, I guess he was bipolar; he was a crazy boss. It was just time for me to part ways. I had a '48 Dodge pickup at the time, and I really didn't have a plan, I had a little money saved, and this man asked me, in a coffee shop, he asked me if that was my pickup truck and would I be interested in doing some hauling. I said, "Well, yeah, I guess I will." I started hauling concrete rubble to the dump, and then from that guy, I started hauling up roofing debris. Guys would strip roofs, and they needed somebody to come clean it up. I got involved with some of the customers who thought I did a good job, and they asked if I could do handyman work. I said that I could, even though I'd figure out how to do it. [laughter] = I started repairing screen doors and painting and patching walls. So just had this really weird, off the grid business of me and my truck, and we would just go and do weird odd jobs and lots of trips to the dump.

01-00:11:00

Farrell:

Was that with the parks district, or that was kind of on your own?

01-00:11:03

Haselden:

No, that was just me. Yeah.

01-00:11:04

Farrell:

Were your parents supportive of this at the time, or was there any pushback?

01-00:11:10

Haselden:

My mom had died. I don't know how she would have felt about it. She knew that I was always a little different. My father was kind of impressed that his daughter was a Teamstress. I need to take a break.

01-00:11:30

Farrell:

Sure, absolutely.

[Pause in Recording]

01-00:11:32

Farrell:

All right, we are back. So it was called Dirty Dog Hauling?

01-00:11:37

Haselden:

Dirty Dog Dumps.

01-00:11:38

Farrell:

Dirty Dog Dumps, okay.

01-00:11:40

Haselden:

I knew all the guys at the dumps: "Hey, there's Julie! Come on in."

01-00:11:43

Farrell:

Which landfills were you going to?

- 01-00:11:46  
Haselden: Down in Berkeley. There was one at the foot of University, and I think there was another in Albany. All completely different now.
- 01-00:11:56  
Farrell: Yeah, are they still there?
- 01-00:11:57  
Haselden: No.
- 01-00:11:57  
Farrell: They're gone, okay.
- 01-00:11:58  
Haselden: They've restored it as best they could.
- 01-00:12:00  
Farrell: At that point too, you're hauling debris and you're hauling rubble. Are you ever worried about health effects from that?
- 01-00:12:07  
Haselden: Not at the time, not at the time. Gloves.
- 01-00:12:12  
Farrell: Gloves, okay. No mask or anything?
- 01-00:12:13  
Haselden: No.
- 01-00:12:16  
Farrell: From there, you were hired in 1980 as a truck driver and a forklift operator with the parks district. Can you tell me about how that came to pass?
- 01-00:12:25  
Haselden: I was working on my sister's house—she'd hired me to scrape the exterior wood—and she heard about a job opportunity up at the park district. At the time, I had a boyfriend who was a metal sculptor. He did huge, beautiful metal sculptures. We had a forklift. We lived in a Quonset hut in West Oakland, and there was a forklift so that he could move his art and the steel around. I did a little bit, but then when I applied, of course I was a professional. [laughs] When I applied for that job, I think it was 225 people applied for this job. The park district at the time was interested in implementing affirmative action and trying to get women into nontraditional jobs. The guys that were working there, a lot of them were like, "Well, women can't do that, duh-duh-duh, yeah." I think I might have been hired by a guy who wanted to prove that women couldn't do the work. "You want me to hire a woman? I'll hire a woman. Watch this!" He gave me jobs to do I didn't know, like unloading pallets of concrete by hand, which he never would have done. Years later he said, "I don't know why you did that. I would have said no."

01-00:14:03

Farrell: Did you feel like you had an option to say no?

01-00:14:06

Haselden: No. Didn't even occur to me.

01-00:14:08

Farrell: Can you tell me about how you heard about the job, that the district was hiring?

01-00:14:13

Haselden: I think my sister might have seen something in the paper, word of mouth, don't know. But it was just absolutely fabulous for me.

01-00:14:21

Farrell: What was the application process like?

01-00:14:25

Haselden: The main office was at 11500 Skyline in Oakland; that was our main office. I went up there, got a form, took it home. At the time I think they would have preferred a typewriter to fill these out. I didn't use one; you know, it was just a manual fill it out. All of my experience with that low-paying pharmaceutical delivery, then the Teamster job, and then my own work, so I had a lot of experience with trucks and handling material. That was pretty much the job. They called me in for an interview. I was scared to death, and I think they saw my fear as enthusiasm, which worked out fine. I was absolutely delighted when I got the job. It was tough.

01-00:15:26

Farrell: Did you have to go in and interview?

01-00:15:29

Haselden: Yeah.

01-00:15:29

Farrell: Do you remember what the interview process was like?

01-00:15:32

Haselden: The interview was at the Tilden Corporation Yard, in the lunchroom. There was a big table, and there were a bunch of people—some managers, my boss. The scariest looking guy, I didn't know, was going to be my boss. It was like [noise]. So they all asked different questions. Not really about safety. Mostly about my work history. Asked a couple questions like—my boss, who was going to be my boss, one of the questions was, "Do you know why we wear uniforms?" I think I said, "So that you can be identified to help the public" or something. Anyway, he wasn't happy with that answer, and asked another couple questions. Anyway, I guess I did well enough.

01-00:16:30

Farrell: At that point, were you the only woman in that position?

01-00:16:34  
Haselden:

Absolutely. The warehouse, there was the supervisor, and at the time they had an acting person filling in for the guy who had had the job before, so there was just one other warehouseman, forklift operator. We would receive deliveries from trucks using the forklift, load it up. We had a counter, so people would walk in, so we would fill orders for our walk-ins—these from all of the parks. Then while I was doing that, load my truck, and then take off and deliver all day. Also go to warehouses to pick up other things that had been ordered. It was just heaven. I loved it. People were really nice to me. They were kind of amused. My first day, I guess I was loading a truck, and all these guys from the main office came to see this chick. These guys were watching me, leaning up on the warehouse wall, and they're smoking cigarettes [makes murmuring noises] and holding the clipboard and kind of pretending like they were actually doing some work, but they were actually just watching the new kid. One of the guys, who later became my manager, said, "So you think you can do a man's job, huh?" I said, "You mean, smoke a cigarette and hold a clipboard and watch somebody else work? I can do better than that." [laughter] Anyway, I said something along those lines. Everybody laughed, and so that kind of broke the ice. Yeah, it was good.

01-00:18:22  
Farrell:

Did you feel like you were hazed at all, a period where you had to prove yourself, that you feel like there was hazing?

01-00:18:31  
Haselden:

Not bad.

01-00:18:31  
Farrell:

—loading concrete by hand when other people—

01-00:18:33  
Haselden:

Yeah. Not bad, because I was willing. They saw that I would do anything. I was never going to play the girl card. People were eager, and anybody would be eager to help a new person if they saw that they were really trying hard. So yeah, they were good. There was, you know, a lot of teasing, sexist stuff, but I was kind of used to it and I didn't even hardly notice, where other women would have been really offended.

01-00:19:03  
Farrell:

Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit about the warehouse that you worked in? That was in Tilden, is that right?

01-00:19:13  
Haselden:

Yeah. There were three areas. There was a building that had a loading dock, a concrete ramp, so that we could drive in; a counter for walk-in stuff; and inside had plumbing parts—everything you could imagine that the park would need: tools, plumbing, hardware, toilet paper, everything you can imagine. I think it was a World War II Nike base, so it was this huge, thick concrete-walled building that was kind of set into the hill. Really a fascinating building.

Huge, giant. I think it had been the map room during World War II. I'm pretty sure. Anyway. So out there, we'd have plywood, lumber, fertilizer, concrete. Then we had an outside yard that had long pipe, railroad ties, more lumber, sacks of grass seed, garbage cans—lots of stuff.

01-00:20:34

Farrell:

What was the role of that warehouse in the larger parks system?

01-00:20:38

Haselden:

We would provide all of the typical, normal things that every park needed so that they wouldn't go out and shop for different things. That there would be a uniformity, and hopefully by buying in bulk we would get good prices. That it'd keep the guys in the parks doing their job instead of going out and trying to find materials that they needed.

01-00:21:08

Farrell:

Were there other warehouses in the district that you would [work out of]?

01-00:21:13

Haselden:

No.

01-00:21:13

Farrell:

It was just that one? Okay. You had mentioned you were given jobs that you didn't necessarily know how to do. How did you learn how to do those things?

01-00:21:28

Haselden:

Well, just time and trial and error. I became really good at the forklift. It was an old forklift that you had to double clutch, and it was really hard to operate, but just doing it so much, I got really good at it. My boss sent me to a 'train the trainer class' so that I would be trained to train forklift operation. The park district had never had a policy or a program like that. It was the "Can you drive a forklift? Okay, get on" instead of being certified and knowing what the laws are and stuff. So I went to this class, and the first class that I gave was at Fire Station One. I was probably into the job maybe a year, something, and still had some pretty good stage fright bouts.

So these guys, they were all ordered to attend my class. These guys were older, been operating a forklift when I was still, you know, [makes noises], and they were just very resistant to the program. They just said, "I don't need to be trained, I know how, duh-duh-duh-duh-duh." Anyway, I gave it my all. They wound up enjoying it and learning things. I told them that I intended everyone to be successful. You know, they were afraid they were going to have to take a test. Some of these guys, older guys, they didn't have reading skills. They were laborers. Anyway, I helped them so that they knew what the rules were, what the laws were, some tricks that I had learned. Everybody wound up enjoying it. I did that for twenty-five years.



01-00:23:28

Farrell:

Wow. Initially, how did you break the ice and get these guys who had had all this experience and some resistance to a woman training them, how did you get them to listen?

01-00:23:40

Haselden:

There was a moment, and I was holding the papers, because I'd done lots of work and tried to get the program together. I was trembling, for one, and I was about ready to like start crying—I mean, I was that bad—and I'm looking out at all these guys that are going, Grr, and I said, "Okay, well, first of all, I have to tell you, I am really nervous, and I really need to calm down." They all went, Aww. [laughs] So they felt sorry for me because it was genuine. Since then, I've learned, it's kind of a trick: once you cop to being nervous or fearful.

[Interruption]

01-00:24:38

Haselden:

Once you admit that you're fearful, somehow it just calms you down. It's out there now; you're not trying to pretend to be brave, and then all of the sudden you become brave. That's what happened. I don't know. I'm a nice guy, so they liked me. It was good.

01-00:24:56

Farrell:

What were some of the standards or the safety protocols that were there?

01-00:25:02

Haselden:

Oh. Well, when I first arrived—I don't know if you know much about forklifts, but one of the basic things is no riders. No riders, right? My first day on the job, or maybe in the first week, I had to pick up some material that was—the forklift was overloaded. When you pick up something that's too heavy, the rear end of the forklift pops up. I learned later, the first thing you do is drop your forks and lighten the load, change your approach, do something so that you—because your steering wheels are in the back; if you're up in the air you can't steer, and it's dangerous. The first week, these guys see me picking up a load that's too heavy, and they go, "Wait, Jul, wait," and they come running over, and these two big guys hang off the back of the forklift, go, "Okay, go." I lift it up, and oh my gosh, they counterbalanced it. They're going, "Go ahead!" I've got these two guys on the back of my forklift, [laughs] sticking their butts out so they can counterweight. That was one of the things we can't do anymore. [laughter] You know, it worked. But there were some little things about keeping your load up against your mast. I called it "hug your load." "Low and slow." Just some different things about the dynamics of a forklift.

01-00:26:37

Farrell:

Do you think that there was something about like the humor that you added in and sort of your approach that made these guys start to listen? Ultimately you were successful for twenty-five years in teaching.

01-00:26:50  
Haselden:

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. My approach was not to challenge. I think that was important. To let them know that, you know, we all have to be here, it's part of the deal, and we're going to have as much fun as we can, but I'm obligated to go through the regulations.

01-00:27:12  
Farrell:

Did you have any mentors at that point?

01-00:27:16  
Haselden:

Yeah, yeah. A couple of the guys. A couple of the guys that were hanging off the back of the forklift, which, once we got the protocol down, then it was fine. But there were people who would come and help me, and loading things. They'd have a minute, and I'd help them when I had a minute.

01-00:27:39  
Farrell:

What were their names?

01-00:27:42  
Haselden:

Lee Nvinnally, John Santistevan—I'm trying to think of who else. A lot of the mechanics were really helpful and nice. Back then, a lot of those older guys, they actually had prayer meetings some mornings, which is kind of not my thing, but there was a certain group of people, because there was a roads and trails group, the Tilden crew, and then trades crew, and the mechanics and the fire department. Some of these guys, like maybe twenty guys would hold hands in the morning and close their eyes and pray, which was like, wow. That was really interesting. These were not people that were necessarily generous of spirit and generous of heart, honest, you know.

01-00:28:47  
Farrell:

The things you would associate with people being Christian or Godly or whatever. Yeah.

01-00:28:53  
Haselden:

Yeah, uh-huh.

01-00:28:55  
Farrell:

Interesting. You were also, at this point, doing deliveries to other places in the district. Were there any people who worked at different sites that you got to know that became sort of advocates or allies for you?

01-00:29:06  
Haselden:

Yes, all of them, everyone.

01-00:29:07  
Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about maybe a couple people specifically?

01-00:29:12  
Haselden:

Maryann Canaparo, she was a secretary at Del Valle, and she worked for Lou Gigliatti, and he was a supervisor. Often, when I would come and they would know that I had a big load of maybe several pallets of concrete, several pallets

of the fertilizer—the cement was ninety pounds, concrete was sixty, the fertilizer was eighty, and when you have a whole pallet and these need to go in—so anyway, some people, supervisors, would just say, “Oh, hi, Julie, come on. Yeah, we want them over there,” and they would split. Which was fine, but at Del Valle, Lou Gigliatti, Maryann Canaparo, they would come out and do the bucket brigade, help unloading. Also at Lake Chabot—and his name escapes me right now, but it’s the supervisor out there—they were really good. They would stop what they were doing—and these were clean guys—they would come out and help me unload, and that was pretty cool. Very cool.

01-00:30:21

Farrell:

Yeah. Were there any sites that became your favorite?

01-00:30:28

Haselden:

You know, I just kind of thing I loved it all. I really did. It’s probably dependent on who was there that day, because not everybody would be there. Sometimes I would just unload myself because they would be out in the field. That was fine; I was ready for that.

01-00:30:45

Farrell:

You were in that position for five years, and then at that point you decided to apply for the carpenter’s apprenticeship program. Can you tell me a little bit about what drew you to the apprenticeship program?

01-00:31:02

Haselden:

Again, I didn’t really have goals beyond my job. I enjoyed my job. Kevin Goe, one of the carpenters at Tilden, who was a friend of mine by this time, and he said, “Hey Jul, how are you on ladders? Can you climb ladders?” I said, “Yeah.” “You’re not afraid of heights?” “No.” He said, “You need to apply for this job.” “What job?” It was the carpenter apprenticeship. I thought, Yeah. There were lots of people that applied. They had two positions to fill. Again, it wasn’t the primary focus, but they wanted to implement some more affirmative action. But the two guys that they chose, Fred Porter and Dennis Waespi both happened to be white guys. It was over that day, we found out that they were named, but somehow—I don’t know how, it was heaven—there was a meeting after that, and somebody went to bat saying, “We need to get a woman in the trades.” They figured that I was the best candidate for that, so they included another position, which was huge in funding and planning. I was delighted, and I had aptitude and energy but I had no building skills. I mean, I had delivered a lot of tools, I had handled a lot of tools, I had watched a lot of work, but I just didn’t really have a lot of experience. Which is kind of a good thing, I think, because I was just open. I was open. The first few weeks and months were very bloody fingers, [laughs] blisters, hard work. I went to apprenticeship school. It’s in Pleasanton. The program included seven thousand hours on the job, sixteen one-week classes, so it was four classes a year for four years, and each one of those classes was one week on. That was another—people weren’t as nice there. They were more competitive, young—

and I was thirty at this point—no, I was thirty-five. These guys are all young and crazy. Anyway. It wasn't always easy.

01-00:33:45

Farrell:

What did that look like, that competition, or, I don't know if you want to go so far as say discrimination or sexism, but I mean, what was that like?

01-00:33:54

Haselden:

It was uncomfortable. At work, I knew people, I just felt comfortable, I felt accepted. There were always a couple jerks, but I would avoid them, and no problem there. Even the teachers at the apprenticeship school would make wisecracks and just be pretty much unpleasant and kind of let me be in the class. It was just a very competitive, very guy thing. We would have a classroom, and so there would be theory, and we would learn about building materials and building codes and different things, and then we would go out into a shop and build whatever it was that we'd been working on. These guys go out there—and it was always kind of crummy material because it was a school and they reuse it, and so they'd all race out there and get their stuff and get the biggest guy on their team, and then I'd be like last kid picked kind of guy. It worked out okay, but it was really hard ego thing.

01-00:35:06

Farrell:

Was it ever enough to deter you from wanting to continue with the program?

01-00:35:10

Haselden:

No. No. One good example is that it was more like the tortoise and the hare, where I would build something once, and they would be building it so fast, and then the teacher would come around and go, "Take it apart. No, it's na-na-na." We'd all wind up finishing about the same time. In welding—welding is a really cool skill, and it's a beautiful thing too—but the guys would be, a lot of them, anger and throwing things and banging around because it can be frustrating unless you're gentle.

01-00:35:53

Farrell:

Yeah, what were some of the skills that you were learning? So you were learning to build things. Were you also learning welding?

01-00:36:00

Haselden:

Yeah. The sixteen classes, I think the first one was safety, then floors and foundations, concrete—we did two classes of concrete—exterior finish, interior finish, framing, roofing, interior finish—did I say that?—surveying, and layout, and welding. I think that's—it was everything. Oh, stairs. Stairs was a thing by itself. Anyway, so it covered every aspect of construction.

01-00:36:41

Farrell:

What was your favorite class?

- 01-00:36:44  
Haselden: I really liked welding. I learned later, on the job, to really enjoy framing, but again, the competition and the scrutiny—it was very tense at school. But I learned to love it all.
- 01-00:37:03  
Farrell: What was it about welding that you liked?
- 01-00:37:05  
Haselden: It's beautiful. It is. It really is beautiful. You put your hood on, and you see this metal flowing. It really is a beautiful thing. When you're finished and it sticks two pieces of metal together, oh my gosh, it's very cool.
- 01-00:37:22  
Farrell: It takes a lot of nuance, too, I think. There's so much detail in there.
- 01-00:37:24  
Haselden: It does. Yes, yes. It's not intuitive. To stick your weld, you have to get close, and there's arcing, and you get this puddle of metal. It's pretty beautiful.
- 01-00:37:38  
Farrell: This may be not applicable, but I mean, we are in the East Bay, and Richmond Navy Yard with a lot of Rosie the Riveters who were welders were there. Is that anything you ever kind of drew inspiration from or you thought about while you were doing that?
- 01-00:37:55  
Haselden: Well, not while I was doing it, but then when I retired, I now volunteer in the Rosie the Riveter festival. I volunteer and I work with kids, and we dress up. I'm fascinated by all of that.
- 01-00:38:11  
Farrell: Yeah. Oh, cool. At this point, when you're in the program, so you're working as a carpenter as well for the parks district, is that right?
- 01-00:38:22  
Haselden: Yes. All during, they had us work with different journeyman. My buddy Kevin Goe, who is still my buddy. They wanted us to work with all of the different journeymen. There was a guy, Bud Scott, he was the key and lock guy, and so each one of us, each one of the apprentices, worked with him and learned a lot about mortising locks and repairing locks.
- 01-00:38:55  
Farrell: Just to clarify, you had moved on from the warehouse, so you're now in a different capacity?
- 01-00:38:59  
Haselden: Yeah. Even though I'm still in the same corporation yard.

01-00:39:03

Farrell: Okay, so you're still seeing all the people that you were seeing those first five years?

01-00:39:08

Haselden: Yes, and now I'm getting materials from central stores. We would purchase plywood and lumber, and then we would have to go to lumberyards for other stuff. Yeah, it was a great transition.

01-00:39:25

Farrell: Yeah, and that also probably like, especially with a little bit of the nervousness around the new position, at least there's the comfort in the work environment.

01-00:39:33

Haselden: Yeah. The three apprentices, they tried to juggle us around so we worked with the other apprentice or we worked alone with other journeymen, and then we had Tilden Corporation Yard, there's another corporation yard at South—we call it South County; it's above Lake Chabot. We did six months at Tilden, six months at Lake Chabot, South County, and six months, six months.

01-00:39:59

Farrell: Oh, so you would go back and forth?

01-00:40:00

Haselden: Mm-hmm, during the apprenticeship.

01-00:40:03

Farrell: Was that a hard transition to do, or were you ready to kind of move on to a new location?

01-00:40:07

Haselden: No. It was just part of the deal. You know, I always liked Tilden better just because it's so beautiful to drive up there and be there. But the other one, there's different people, different styles, different shop. Very different shop.

01-00:40:24

Farrell: What were some of the differences between the two shops?

01-00:40:27

Haselden: Tilden shop is huge, huge, and the Lake Chabot, the South County shop, it's just smaller, and so when we were working—we used to build a lot of cabinets before Home Depot—it was like there was this new thing: Home Depot sells cabinets readymade? What? They must be junk. No, they're not. So it turned out to be way cheaper to buy—unless it needed to be a custom cabinet. But so working in small place, rainy day, everybody's in the shop, at Tilden we could spread out and we could actually build buildings in the shop, you know, outhouses and stuff. I preferred Tilden. I just preferred Tilden.

01-00:41:19

Farrell: At this point, are you still the only woman working in this capacity?

01-00:41:26  
Haselden:

At that time? Yes. Oh, well, and then, somewhere into my apprenticeship, came Sharon Corkin, and she was a journeyman. From New Zealand. She was very interesting. She wasn't soft and cuddly. She was kind of tough, especially on the guys, and especially as an apprentice, it was like I was finally on the right end of the stick when it came to sexism, because she would be a lot more patient with me than with the other apprentices, which I just found amusing.

01-00:42:13  
Farrell:

Did the two of you form sort of an allegiance, or not really?

01-00:42:19  
Haselden:

No, no. She was one of the journeymen. You know, she didn't pamper me by any means, but she was a real good carpenter. She was different because she was trained in New Zealand, and so she had different tools, she had different methods, and her personality, she just had a different style, and so it was pretty much just back off and let her do her thing. She became supervisor at South County for many years.

01-00:42:50  
Farrell:

So affirmative action, that program is becoming something that the parks district is paying attention to. Aside from them trying to get women in the trades, were there people of color in the trades as well? Was that an effort that they were trying to make?

01-00:43:07  
Haselden:

I believe so. I'm trying to think. Through the years we've had a lot of people of color. Mostly laborers for some reason. Now it's a little more different. Yeah, I'm trying to think. I can't even—which is a good thing—I can't think who was a person of color. I have to picture them. Oh yeah, it was a black guy. Oh yeah. Everyone got along. There was really no racial conflict that I ever felt, noticed, nothing. Sexism, yes, but.

01-00:43:46  
Farrell:

What were your thoughts in general around the district's affirmative action program?

01-00:43:52  
Haselden:

I supported it, and I kind of felt, like I think most people, that you wouldn't want to hire someone just because of their gender or skin color; it had to be either aptitude or ability, and I think those two are really the way to go for employment. There was one more thing I wanted to tell you about, a person. Maggie Ely. She was a ranger at Tilden, and then she worked at the botanical garden. The mechanic shop at Tilden at the time, great bunch of guys, liked them all, but they had a lot of pornography on the walls. I mean, like, pornography. I didn't really even hardly notice it. I'd go, Oh, yeah, whatever. It did not bother me; I did not notice it. My years being a Teamster, I was surrounded by it; it was just like wallpaper. Didn't even notice it. I mean, it

really didn't ruffle my feathers at all. It definitely ruffled Maggie's feathers. That's where I felt if someone else is going to be offended, then I will absolutely support them. It was like she was going, "No, that is absolutely not acceptable." "Really? Yeah, I guess you're right. It's offensive, isn't it?" You wouldn't want anyone to come in here and feel uncomfortable. So the guys were very resistant. Part of it was Maggie's method. She was very sharp. I mean, I don't know. She had a lot of power behind her feelings. So these guys were going, "No, no, what are you talking about? We just love beautiful bodies. It's nothing ugly; they're beautiful bodies." This all happened like in a week. And then some other woman—I can't remember who—got a picture out of a male gay porn pinup and went down when no one was looking, put it up on the wall, because it was a beautiful body. They ripped that thing down, tore it in little tiny pieces, said how disgusting that was. That was kind of, they kind of went, Hmm, wait a minute. Oh, well. Anyway, so Maggie was the one that made that happen and got it to be a G-rated place. At first they were going, Well, if you don't like it, don't come in here. Well, I have to come in here; I have to get my truck serviced. They resisted, and Maggie prevailed.

01-00:46:33

Farrell:

She was the one who was really spearheading the effort to get that taken down?

01-00:46:38

Haselden:

Absolutely.

01-00:46:38

Farrell:

Did she have support behind her?

01-00:46:42

Haselden:

Probably.

01-00:46:42

Farrell:

I guess more like administrative or supervisor support.

01-00:46:44

Haselden:

No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

01-00:46:48

Farrell:

Was there an HR department at this point, or is that too early?

01-00:46:51

Haselden:

I think it was called personnel.

01-00:46:56

Farrell:

Personnel. That makes sense, yeah.

01-00:46:58

Haselden:

When they changed, human resources, it was like, What? Wow. There's a concept.



01-00:47:04

Farrell: Yeah, it's like EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] Personnel Compliance or something.

01-00:47:07

Haselden: I don't know, she may have spoken to someone there, and I don't know if she would have been heard or supported. I would hope so. But I think at the time it's like, Leave the guys alone; they're just trying to work down there.

01-00:47:25

Farrell: Was there ever any time where you felt like you needed to lodge a complaint at all, or go to the personnel office?

01-00:47:31

Haselden: You know, there are times when I should have. Looking back, I really should have. But I was more concerned about somebody losing their job. I don't know. I'm really sorry—actually, I'm just glad I don't have to do it. I'm glad I'm out of that realm. Again, I would be very supportive, I would do anything for someone else, but then I just—it was part of what I had to deal with, and learn how to literally run away sometimes and scoot out of the way, avoid being alone with certain people. Nobody talked about this. It turned out, years later, He did that to you too? He did that to you too? There were a lot of women, and here was this guy that, oh, he just seemed like the nicest guy, grandfather type, and he was not, he was lecherous. But again, it didn't occur to me to even—I didn't think I had that power, and I didn't really want that power. I didn't want it to happen. I wanted it to not happen.

01-00:48:48

Farrell: Yeah, yeah. I guess, to follow up on that, so years later you're realizing that other women have had similar experiences. How did you start to have those conversations and make those realizations as a group?

01-00:49:02

Haselden: I don't know. I think sitting around talking, and somebody mentioned some guy that's retired or gone or died or whatever, and it's like, Oh, yeah. He was the whatever, and it's like, What, you too? I thought I was the only one. Oh my gosh. Yeah. I had to always carry boxes in front of me or they would grab me and stuff like that. It's like you have to time it, otherwise if he's alone, or says, "Come on, I want to show you something." We didn't really think we had—it was our job to stay out of their way. Isn't that nuts?

01-00:49:45

Farrell: Yes. During the time that you spent working in the parks district, did you see that get better?

01-00:49:52

Haselden: Yes, yes.

01-00:49:54

Farrell: Do you remember kind of when that started to get better?

01-00:50:01

Haselden:

I can't really say. I know that, first, they had some sexual harassment training, which, again, kind of like my first forklift class, they were going, I don't need this, I know how to [muttering noises]. I think that planted the seed. I don't really know about complaints, because they kept it pretty hush-hush. It's mostly word of mouth. I think it just got better. Just that whole deal about having unacceptable artwork on the walls, and just thinking about is this a place where anybody could come at any time? There were some people who kind of took advantage of that, and I mean that because there was a plumber that we had that he would exhibit outrage at silly little things, like, this is seriously, a Barbie bra. Somebody found in the park a little tiny Barbie bra, and they put it on a bulletin board in our office. It was like whatever, no big deal. This guy, he took the bra down, went up to the main office, and said, "Look what I have to live with. This is not a workplace that I feel comfortable." This guy is the same guy—I don't know, he just wanted to be a little tattle-tale. I don't know what HR thought. But this was also the guy who was busted for masturbating on the job with porn. The same guy. He would see a magazine and he'd go, "Look at this trash!" and then he would save it for later. Anyway, he's gone too. He was like misusing the whole thing.

01-00:52:00

Farrell:

Like opportunistic, or like a way of masking his bad behavior?

01-00:52:06

Haselden:

Yeah.

01-00:52:07

Farrell:

Aside from a lot of the sexism and the harassment that was part of the culture, were there any other challenges that you were facing? Even like professionally or training-wise, when you were in the apprenticeship program or in the carpentry capacity?

01-00:52:26

Haselden:

There were a couple guys that were very difficult, very difficult, and there was some weird, stupid social stuff. You know, shunning, this one period of time with this one particular guy that was hired, temporary. I mean, he was hired permanently, but he had a—what do you call it when they—you're not permanent until you go through—probation.

01-00:52:57

Farrell:

Oh, probationary period, yeah.

01-00:53:00

Haselden:

He started out being very polite, kind of like Eddie Haskell, being very nice in front of people, and then as soon as they'd turn their back, he'd talk trash about them, including the bosses and everyone. He was just almost permanent and then he came up with some bizarre behavior that couldn't be ignored, and so he was not made permanent. Thank goodness. But that was a very uncomfortable six months.

01-00:53:36

Farrell: Those challenging parts of the job, how did you get through that?

01-00:53:44

Haselden: You know, I had some support from my supervisor at the time, but it was more emotional support. It wasn't anything he could really address, but he was supportive in that he tried to give me jobs that I wasn't going to be alone with this particular guy. It was depressing for a while. It was really depressing. That's not my style at all. There was a time when I was thinking, I might just forget this, train forklift from now on, rather than live with the silly, childish, evil behavior. But fortunately, every time there was some evil behavior, it went away. I outlived it, and it worked out fine.

01-00:54:44

Farrell: Also during that period of time, too, what were some of your biggest successes?

01-00:54:53

Haselden: I guess designing different things, just being a real team player that was respected. Yeah. Guys, they really have, often, really strong egos, so when you're working on a project with a crew, you're developing your plan as you work. And some guys, they just plain wanted their way, and the other guy would want it his way, and I'd go for, Well, you know, make a plan. Let's just go for it. That's just a workplace thing, I think, that they have that. It didn't bother me. I did not need it to be mine. I did not need to be top dog. I loved being a part of the team.

01-00:55:50

Farrell: So then in 1989, you're hired as a journeyman in Tilden, and then you spent nineteen years in that capacity. What was it like to be hired into that role, especially after completing the apprenticeship program?

01-00:56:06

Haselden: It was fabulous. The nineteen years included the four years of apprenticeship.

01-00:56:09

Farrell: Oh, it did?

01-00:56:10

Haselden: Yeah. I was technically working as a carpenter, but an apprentice. It was wonderful. It was great. I also knew, having no experience before those four years, that I was going to be green. I didn't think I knew everything. I had lots to learn. I had no problem with being a low man or new guy or whatever. It felt really good. I felt good. It was well compensated, as far as the pay.

01-00:56:49

Farrell: You felt like you had room to grow?

01-00:56:52

Haselden: Yeah, yeah.

01-00:56:54

Farrell:

It's important. When you were going through the apprenticeship program, was there a sense that you were sort of guaranteed a job as a journeyman when you were finished?

01-00:57:06

Haselden:

Yeah. If we had completed our apprenticeship, we had earned that job.

01-00:57:11

Farrell:

Okay. So did you need to interview for that at all or it was just kind of you were done and you got it?

01-00:57:16

Haselden:

No. Yeah, seven thousand hours later. Most carpenter apprentices do about four thousand hours in four years, so we had way more hours. The plan was really good in that we had experience in everything, and a lot of carpenter apprentices, they'll just do windows, they'll just do concrete, they'll just do roofs, and we had the whole spectrum, which was cool. That was intentional; it was good planning for them.

01-00:57:47

Farrell:

Why was there an additional three thousand hours? Just because you were getting everything?

01-00:57:53

Haselden:

Marty Stevco decided to throw that in. At one point he got in my face—this guy's a weird guy—he got in my face and he said, "Don't you think you're ever going to go out and get a job outside. You're staying with the park district, because this is [makes muttering noises]. Just because you went through this apprenticeship doesn't mean you have [makes muttering noises]. Marty, he was just that kind of guy.

01-00:58:14

Farrell:

Was it kind of a natural thing for you to say, Yeah, I went through this program; of course I'm going to stay with the parks district?

01-00:58:22

Haselden:

It was my intention. It was my intention. The other two carpenters—Dennis Waespi, who is now a board member, Fred Porter—I don't think he was really a good candidate. He had substance abuse problems, which we dealt with every day on the job. He was kind of a cheater and a liar and liked to go out on workman's comp. He went away after not very long after becoming a journeyman. Dennis moved up, so I was the only apprentice left that turned out as a journeyman. But anyway. Just kind of curious.

01-00:59:13

Farrell:

At that point, when you're now working as a journeyman, are you working with Sharon?

- 01-00:59:20  
Haselden: Yeah. Different jobs. Yeah, we worked on different things.
- 01-00:59:22  
Farrell: Now that you're equals, did that change your relationship at all, or not really?
- 01-00:59:29  
Haselden: No. She was always going to be top dog, and there was no problem with that.
- 01-00:59:36  
Farrell: At that point too, now that you're in this capacity, do you see an affirmative action programs have kind of been—they're making an effort. Have you seen more women start to enter the trades?
- 01-00:59:44  
Haselden: I think so, yes, and I think it has to do with ability again, ability and aptitude, that they're not focusing on gender, age, or color. Yeah, a lot of women have become supervisors and managers, and they're doing great jobs. When women were first starting to come into the trades, the fire department, it all came down to people knew, who did you want to work with? You wanted somebody that was a good worker and knew how to get along on a crew. Gender and color and size and shape does not matter when you're on a fire.
- 01-01:00:30  
Farrell: It's interesting that you bring the fire department up, because in 1988 is when the consent decree happens in the San Francisco fire department, so there's women and there's people of color that are being—the fire department is making sure that they get hired. Are you paying attention to this at all? Are you aware of that?
- 01-01:00:48  
Haselden: I wasn't aware of that. But I think the park district was really a forerunner for including and appreciating women in the fire department, and they were given opportunities to go up in the hierarchy.
- 01-01:01:13  
Farrell: Okay, so you worked in two corps yards, is that right?
- 01-01:01:18  
Haselden: Corp yards.
- 01-01:01:18  
Farrell: Corp yards, okay. Each of them had a plumber, 4 carpenters, a laborer, a painter, an electrician. One was in Tilden and the other one was in South County. Can you tell me a little bit about what the team atmosphere was like, working with people across the trades kind of with the goal to maintain the parks district?
- 01-01:01:43  
Haselden: Well, there are some characters, as we've mentioned. I think in general, everybody really appreciated everybody. Painters have it the hardest because

they come in after electricians, plumbers, and carpenters, and they have to make pretty whatever we've done. There's some of that—not even really bickering. There was one electrician that was very hard to work with. When he was in a good mood, life was good, and when he was not in a good mood, he would make anyone's life miserable. Aside from him, and that particular guy, otherwise I think everybody respected and appreciated each other. The crews that stayed. That's forgetting that guy that didn't make it through probation. But no, I think everybody really appreciated and respected each other.

01-01:02:47

Farrell: Were you ever at any point part of a union?

01-01:02:49

Haselden: Yes.

01-01:02:50

Farrell: What union were you in?

01-01:02:52

Haselden: It's the Local 2428 in the Regional Parks Union.

01-01:02:56

Farrell: Okay, so it was a parks district union.

01-01:03:00

Haselden: I think someone else could probably give you more information. I believe it's AFSCME [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations]. I think it is. But we had our own union, and then at some point, like maybe around 2000 or something, we made our own decisions, we voted on different things within our union, and then the mother, the father, whatever, the big umbrella union, wanted to have more say in the union activity. It turned out to be fine, and we still are pretty independent, but there was a resistance at first. Because we were good; we didn't want the big guy in there.

01-01:03:48

Farrell: Did you feel like being a part of the union, that you had power, you had some agency over what was happening?

01-01:03:55

Haselden: I felt really well represented, yes.

01-01:03:58

Farrell: Did you ever have to lean on the union to get anything?

01-01:04:01

Haselden: Not me.

01-01:04:03

Farrell: The parks district was supportive of you being a member of the union?

01-01:04:08  
Haselden:

Yes. Every couple years, or whatever the term of the contract needs to be renegotiated—which I never wanted to be involved with, only because these were people that we're all on the same team, but all the sudden management is on one side and the union is on the other, and it just seemed so simple to me, that whatever's good for them—healthcare, whatever, benefits, retiree—shouldn't that? But no, no, no, no, no, no. So anyway, I just had to support the union, hope they didn't want to ever go on strike, and get it over, because it was really hard. A lot of people, a lot of emotions—anger. I like everybody. I also was very appreciative of all the efforts, because a lot of the union people put a lot of effort into it.

01-01:05:17  
Farrell:

During your time working as a journeyman, what were some of the types of projects that you were working on?

01-01:05:26  
Haselden:

We built lots of things. Every time I go to a park, it's like, Hey, I built that; Hey, I built that; Oh, I did that asphalt. Some of the fun jobs we did were bridges. We replaced bridges in the botanical gardens in Tilden. We didn't have plans, we just get out a piece of — draw out a plan, make a material list, and go build it; take out the old one and put in the new one. Did some really fun bridges—they were new—in Castle Rock, which is now Diablo Foothills—and it was a lot of fun. It was hard to do, and I was working with some great guys who had some great cowboy kind of experience, and we're tying on these poles and supports to pickup trucks across the creek and dragging them over into the abutments that we'd made. It was all good. And then animals—there's always bobcats, and we get to see all kinds of cool wildlife. We did a black powder press structure at Point Pinole that was kind of fun.

01-01:06:39  
Farrell:

What is that? Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

01-01:06:40  
Haselden:

Yeah. Black powder press is how they used to make black powder and dynamite, and Point Pinole is an old dynamite factory. We got this black powder press. I think it's forty tons—is that right? Anyway, it's huge. It's maybe from wall to wall in here. We built these, kind of a concrete cradle for this massive hunk of steel that was steam-driven, so the steam would pull these plates back, and then they would squish the black powder into sheets, which would then be taken. Anyway, so it was a whole production of that. We got one of these old black powder presses from Hercules, transport it out there, and built a structure over it so that it could be informational panels and people could see what used to be up there.

01-01:07:44  
Farrell:

Oh, cool.

01-01:07:45  
Haselden:

Yeah, very cool. Great job sites.

01-01:07:48  
Farrell:

Yeah. Any other ones of note?

01-01:07:51  
Haselden:

We worked on a house in Mission Peak. It's probably 120 years old now, and it was up on a cliff. You can see it when you're down in the Bay and you look up at the face; there's a little house up there about there. It's a Victorian. We had to redo the roof, which was really steep and wet in the mornings, scary. You'd get a sheet of plywood and a wind comes up—it was all very scary, but it was fun. [laughs] Scary-fun. And going to the job sites every day. We did a really cool camp installation out at Camp Ohlone, out in the Ohlone Wilderness, and it took like forty-five minutes just to go on this road, and then we built all these different structures and tent platforms, camping platforms, and the cookhouse. It was a real fun, extensive project.

01-01:08:53  
Farrell:

Were you ever working on different projects at the same time?

01-01:08:58  
Haselden:

Oh yeah. When you went to work, you would think, okay, we're going to finish this. You'd get there and you'd go, No, you're going to [makes noise]. You had to be ready to be flexible, to go wherever they needed you right now, whether it was an emergency or a budget issue.

01-01:09:16  
Farrell:

Who was giving you assignments?

01-01:09:19  
Haselden:

A supervisor.

01-01:09:21  
Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about your supervisor?

01-01:09:23  
Haselden:

I had two supervisors. Ray Middleton, who had been an electrician. He had not a lot of skills as a supervisor. He retired, and then I was the acting supervisor for like six weeks. I was just coming back from one of my injuries, so it was perfect. Bruce Lagasse became my last supervisor. I like and respect him. He's a great carpenter, works hard, is a fun guy who's all business. I mean, he'd be the kind of guy who would not break a rule. He just wouldn't do it. Good guy.

01-01:10:11  
Farrell:

During this period of time, or your time spent working as a journeyman, what are some of your biggest successes or the things you're most proud of?



01-01:10:21

Haselden:

Oh my. Those jobs that I just mentioned, those are good, but there are lots of other jobs that were all fun. Then moving into my next job, which was the pavement, I think that was more me. These jobs were collaborative. Some of them I designed, but it was always a group effort. Once in a while I would do some things on my own, but usually it was a crew. Which was very satisfying, really good. Some of the guys, their skills and talents were just amazing. Then I got this other job, my final job.

01-01:11:16

Farrell:

Yeah, so there's kind of a little bit of a lead-up to that, right? You had mentioned a second ago, when you were active supervisor, you were coming back from one of your injuries, and I know that you've had a couple of spine surgeries. Can you tell me a little bit about that and then maybe how that has sort of impacted your time working for the parks district?

01-01:11:36

Haselden:

Yeah. Well, the first time, I was on Brooks Island, and we were covering some cisterns, freshwater cisterns, because the parks district was going to open it to the public, and these seemed hazardous. We built decks over them. The material was helicoptered out. We got in a boat with our tools, and we'd go out on a boat to the job site. It was awesome. They had a little four-wheel-drive Mule, because the boat would land here, we would leave a generator, so a Honda generator about like that. It's a two-man deal. We put those on trucks all the time, carry them. All the time. We used these all the time. This one day, I was lifting it up to put it into the Mule, with another guy, and good body mechanics and everything, and lifted it up, and *bang*, I just had this experience. What had happened is I kind of blew my spine out on the front of my spine.

01-01:12:53

Farrell:

Oof.

01-01:12:54

Haselden:

Yeah. Well, it didn't hurt so bad yet. Then I had workers' comp. My leg shrank two inches in two weeks; it just went [makes noises]. It was a real neurological blowout. At the time, we had a workers' comp outfit different than they have now, and there was this woman who generally didn't—they pretty much didn't appreciate people putting in claims because it made work, and some of them were fudging. But anyway, this woman, she helped me get the right surgery. I had two surgeries, one for pain, and then it took three more months to get one so that I could walk again. Bless her heart. They were saying, Eh, you're never going to walk again, you're not going to work, and I went, Oh, I think I am. Did some real strenuous physical therapy and went back to work as a carpenter. That was in 1989, and then in 2003, well, probably for a couple years, it started being bad again, so I had a fusion in 2003. Went back to work as a carpenter. Shortly after that, this opportunity came up for another job.

01-01:14:31

Farrell:

Yeah, and at that point you had mentioned that both your surgeon and your family—this was off-camera—you had mentioned that your surgeon and your family had wanted you to not continue as a carpenter. The opportunity with the asphalt and the pavement came up. Can you tell me a little bit about that program and how that came to fruition?

01-01:14:53

Haselden:

The park district had not had a pavement maintenance program, and the MTC, which is Metropolitan Transportation Commission, they're in charge of entities, like cities and counties, and they're in pavement. Pavement maintenance, the costs, collecting data, how to improve drainage—all the aspects that are included in pavement maintenance. We had seventeen million square feet of asphalt at the time, so they recommended that we have a pavement maintenance program, which meant that first we needed to calculate and identify all of the asphalt in the park district. Had never been done. That included concrete, but it was primarily asphalt. They hired me to implement the program. I really wasn't qualified as far as education. My education was kind of spotty. But when I gathered all of my education together, the classes I had taken, my apprenticeship credits, all the Laney and the Merritt [College] classes that I'd taken, it all added up to that I qualified.

01-01:16:24

Farrell:

It added up to essentially a bachelor of science, right?

01-01:16:26

Haselden:

Yeah. Kind of amazing. I just lost my train of thought for a minute. The manager of this program, Stephen Gehret, he was in charge of the roads and trails, the mechanics. Roads and trails included asphalt. He implemented this program. He put it out there that this needed to be funded. He justified the need of the funding and that this was an asset that it was our responsibility to maintain and pay more attention to. Stephen, he suggested that I apply for it, and I think there were other people outside of the park district that this looked like a really good job for them, and fortunately they picked me. It was just awesome. I had this great supervisor, Stephen. His boss, Ann Scheer. They were both very supportive. They trusted me. Once I figured out how to do this. It took like a year just to kind of—even to get all sixty-five parks to respond with locating and giving me an idea of the measurements for their asphalt, and then I had to run some contracts for people to come in and survey and assess the quality of every square foot.

01-01:18:15

Farrell:

You were doing a lot of the oversight of the implementation of the program?

01-01:18:19

Haselden:

Yes.

01-01:18:20

Farrell:

Because you had had a spinal fusion a year before this, and I know with that, mobility becomes limited?

01-01:18:27

Haselden:

I'm good, though. I was very fortunate. I'm very mobile. But it was interesting, because during my rehabilitation I was disabled. I had this thing for seven months. I was involved with another project that was assessing the park district for ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] compliance. Being disabled, I could really appreciate all of the nuances. That experience also came into my qualifications for this project. In the pavement maintenance program, we needed to make sure that we were going to be upgrading all of our ADA accessibilities. There was lots of funding for this. I was doing the assessment and qualifying, quantifying, but then I was also running projects. I didn't have any experience with asphalt, but I went to some classes, went to some seminars, and I started designing. I would do the drawings, I would do the scope of work, write up the contract, write up the bid proposal, get the contractors to come on site, select the contractor, develop the contract documents, run the project, be on the job, and then pay.

01-01:20:05

Farrell:

You were really seeing the whole thing through.

01-01:20:07

Haselden:

It was amazing. Yeah, and I did, I don't know, between fifteen and twenty big projects a year, which I later found out was impossible, Can't do that. [laughs] It's too much. But I didn't know that, so I was like doing three jobs at once, and I was getting up early and staying late, and I loved it. I really, really enjoyed it. That's where I think I felt that I had really accomplished things. Now the program is very different. I was using some real basic computer software to do my drawings, or I was hand-drawing the scope and location and where I needed what, and drainage, and the painting, striping. I love all that stuff. It was so fun. Yeah. I loved it.

01-01:21:04

Farrell:

What was it like assembling a team of people to execute those projects?

01-01:21:09

Haselden:

The only team would be contractors, so I would have to come up with documents, and then I hired contractors to do the assessment and all that, and then that would comply with the MTC requirements, because it was just too much. They would have their own team. We selected the most qualified and for the best price, but actually the most qualified was the thing. But the other jobs, the paving, that was me; I did it all. I loved it.

01-01:21:45

Farrell:

You were reporting to a supervisor, but you didn't have anybody in the parks district per se working for you?

01-01:21:52  
Haselden:

No.

01-01:21:52  
Farrell:

Wow, that's incredible.

01-01:21:55  
Haselden:

It was so cool. I had bosses that I really liked and respected, and they liked and trusted me with these big-money items, but they knew that I could justify every single penny. Every single project that would have to be approved by the board, they approved every one of my projects. It was great. I would do presentations to the board and make asphalt seem fun. They would go in, "Oh, great, asphalt," and then they'd go, "Oh, it's Julie. Awesome, come on, bring me pictures."

01-01:22:35  
Farrell:

Oh, I'm going to pause you, actually. Your microphone fell off.

[Pause in Recording]

01-01:22:42  
Farrell:

Okay, we're back. Can you tell me a little bit about how the pavement program has changed the parks district?

01-01:22:57  
Haselden:

Let me think about this. We have a roads and trails crew, and they typically deal with smaller paving issues—repairs, emergency repairs and stuff. That was kind of how it was dealt with, pavement maintenance. We have a design department. They would also design the larger projects. But they were hindered in a lot of ways because, I don't know, they would spend so much time designing a project, they would run out of money and they would have to come to me to say, "Can we use some of your money for the asphalt?" I think it's gotten a little bit more organized. When I left, it was better. We were paying attention to good pavement. There's a PCI, pavement condition index, and so the public and a lot of people think that if you have all these roads and parking lots and walks, that you want to take the crummiest ones and fix them. Well, the crummiest ones aren't going to get any crummier than crummy, but the ones that are pretty good need to be maintained. I don't remember what the numbers were, but you save a lot of money by preserving good pavement. Your next priority, aside from safety, would be to repair the really crummy ones. But preservation is the best way to go. I think that focus has come in instead of the loudest barking dog, you feed all the dogs.

01-01:24:48  
Farrell:

Do you think that the pavement has—the upgrading, the maintaining, the quality—has made the park more accessible?

01-01:24:56  
Haselden:

Yes, yes. That's a big project throughout the park district. Everyone is focused on that.

01-01:25:03

Farrell: Accessibility?

01-01:25:04

Haselden: Yes.

01-01:25:06

Farrell: You retired in 2011, after thirty-one years with the parks district. Can you tell me what it was like to retire?

01-01:25:16

Haselden: It was another just like everything else that was not my goal. I wasn't looking forward to retirement. I loved my job, I loved the people I worked with. I got married, and my new husband was kind of eager for me to retire. Then my boss, Stephen Gehret, he was kind of getting ready to retire, so it seemed like, Oh, okay. The numbers all worked out, the retirement planning I had done. It was great. It was great. I loved it. I knew that the social aspect was going to be the hardest one, because all of my jobs, I was with people all the time, all the time, all the time, different people, which I really enjoyed. As soon as I retired, I got involved with volunteering, and I volunteer in schools, I work with kids, I became a docent with the park district. I do a reading program with kids. Hiking, biking. I lead an exercise class at the pool. I mean, I love it. I love it. I'm very busy.

01-01:26:31

Farrell: Yeah. So now you're a volunteer and you work as a docent with the parks district. What was your inspiration to step up in this way?

01-01:26:44

Haselden: Somebody said, Hey, I think you would really like this. Really? Oh, okay. That's how I did kindergarten. My neighbor said, "I heard you retired. Would you like to volunteer in my kindergarten?" and I went, "Yeah, I guess so." Again, it's opportunities, and just realizing that they are opportunities.

01-01:27:05

Farrell: In that capacity, as a docent, what have been some of your most memorable moments?

01-01:27:12

Haselden: Letting brand-new baby pigs nibble my toes, holding a chicken, holding snakes, doing programs and just being excited about animals and learning, and having kids and telling them stories and getting them to laugh, and grinding corn and feeding chickens. I love it all. Talking about poop. Yeesss! What's that smell? It's a farm! Going on hikes. Again, I support the naturalist staff, which is perfect. Happy to do it.

01-01:27:51

Farrell: You also are part of the retirees association. Can you tell me a little bit about the background of that association?

01-01:27:59  
Haselden:

I'm going to guess it's probably more than twenty years old. I joined it when I first retired, and it was kind of a social thing. The communications person was a husband of a former employee; he wasn't even doing that involved. Then the treasurer, she just had her ninetieth birthday, so she said, "I'm done with this. Somebody else do it." I said I would do it. Then the communication guy said, "You know, I am done. I don't want to do this." I said, "Well, I'll do that too." Then they decided they needed a vice president to step in when the president was not available for meetings, so I'm doing that too.

01-01:28:54  
Farrell:

Doing all three roles at once?

01-01:28:54  
Haselden:

I know, isn't that funny? But I enjoy it, it doesn't take that much time, and I like to get different programs up so that people can have some different experiences.

01-01:29:08  
Farrell:

Yeah, what types of programs does the association do?

01-01:29:12  
Haselden:

We have an annual Christmas party at the Trudeau Center, which used to be our old main office. Was it October? No, November. We had a meeting. I hired this woman who has raptors, and she brought a peregrine falcon, a Swainson's hawk, and a Eurasian eagle owl to a meeting. About fifty people came to that. Earlier in the summer we did a boat ride at Lake Chabot. I'm hoping to do more stuff like that, opportunities.

01-01:29:52  
Farrell:

Yeah, what kind of programs do you want to build out?

01-01:29:55  
Haselden:

Just experiences for people that are retired and don't really get out that much. Botanical garden visit. Not really walking, because a lot of people aren't into that. We did a Rosie the Riveter meeting there and had Betty Soskin speak, and we had a little picnic in the cold. It was fun. So just different stuff like that.

01-01:30:22  
Farrell:

How big is the membership?

01-01:30:24  
Haselden:

We have about, I'm going to say, 225. I should know. Yeah, about 225.

01-01:30:33  
Farrell:

What do you see the potential for the retirees association in the future?

01-01:30:38  
Haselden:

Mostly it's social. I also try to be the connector—news, people who pass away. Just social news like that. That's its biggest aspect, is that it's a social thing for people.

01-01:31:06  
Farrell:

What's it meant to you to keep your connection alive with the parks district?

01-01:31:10  
Haselden:

Love it. Love it. I also go hike in the parks. I still have maps in my car, and I'll give them to people at Safeway: What, you have children? You need to go hiking. I love being an ambassador.

01-01:31:29  
Farrell:

You spent thirty-one years working for the district, and now I guess, you know, what is it, six more still being connected. What has that meant to you to work with the parks department over all this time?

01-01:31:45  
Haselden:

Feel like the luckiest, I won the lottery. Even if I hadn't been employed, I still just love the parks, I love what they do, I love their message, I love their mission and the foresight that they had in 1934 to vote this in, to save this land, which would now all be built upon. I just really, really love it.

01-01:32:17  
Farrell:

What's it meant to you to be a woman who was kind of forging the path for a lot of other people—whether or not you recognize it that way, but that's what it seems like.

01-01:32:25  
Haselden:

Yeah, I think it's great. I'm delighted. I also do a kind of an inspirational thing. There's an outfit in Berkeley called Rising Sun, and this friend of mine does a pre-apprenticeship program for women, mostly women, lower income and few opportunities. A lot of times there's lots of issues that are keeping them out of the job market. So I go and I talk to these women. The first time I went in I was like, Okay, I got to tell you, I'm a little nervous, and they went, Aww. [laughter] Okay, I feel better. I just pretty much talk to them, give them a very abbreviated version of what I did and talking about opportunities and just seeing opportunities. Even if you don't have goals, be open to goals; they might present themselves. So they really appreciate that. And I kind of give them a rah-rah. I usually take some tools in and tell them a couple tricks, and they're going, Yeah.

01-01:33:39  
Farrell:

Like empowerment.

01-01:33:41  
Haselden:

Yeah.

01-01:33:42

Farrell:

What are your hopes for the parks district future? How do you hope that it grows?

01-01:33:46

Haselden:

I think they're just doing a perfect job, perfect. More conservation, they're doing that, and habitat and accessibility. That's what they do, and I'm just so grateful.

01-01:34:01

Farrell:

Is there anything else that you want to add?

01-01:34:04

Haselden:

I'm good. We covered a lot.

01-01:34:06

Farrell:

Well, thank you so much.

01-01:34:07

Haselden:

You're very welcome.

[End of Interview]