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MARGARET (MRS. C. IRVINE) DOWD

An Interview Conducted by
Ruth and Joe Wilson

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Mrs. C. Irvine Dowd (nee' Margaret Wosser)

Born January 10, 1906 at Duncan's Mills,
Sonoma County, California.

Resident of Mill Valley since 1909. Owner
of Dowd's Moving & Storage, Inc.

Interviewed October 1968 in her home at
631 Sequoia Valley Road, Mill Valley.

(Note: Mrs. Dowd has an extensive collec-
tion of early Marin County photographs, and
during the interview she frequently used
them to illustrate her recollections.)

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MARGARET (WOSSER) DOWD

As far as they know, my father's father, Grandfather Wosser, was born in Dublin. My Grandmother Wosser was born in Kilkenny. Both eventually came to California. They met in San Francisco.

My Grandfather Wosser was a very young boy when he first came to this country. This was before the Civil War. He worked in a munitions factory during the war with Mexico, when we acquired Texas.

My mother's father, my Grandfather Williams, who was the same age as Grandfather Wosser, was driving teams carrying munitions to Mexico.

After the war, my Grandfather Wosser went to sea and came to San Francisco where, as I say, he met my grandmother. They were married in Old St. Mary's Church, on California and Grant in 1858. They moved to Sausalito and built a house on Pine Street. It's over a hundred years old now. My aunt, my dad's younger sister, still lives in the house. She was the librarian in Sausalito for years. Her name is Mabel Wosser. She has never married.

There were 14 children. Aunt Mabel was the youngest. My dad, William Wosser, was next to the youngest. They have all lived long lives.

My dad was born October 13, 1880. He lives here with me now. He's still in good health, although very hard of hearing.

I was born at Duncan's Mills, near Jenner, near the mouth of the Russian River. My mother's sister married a man named Frank Orr. His father was one of the first presidents of the Caledonian Club in San Francisco. There were a lot of Scottish people in that part of the Russian River. There was Duncan, who had the mill. There were the Sheridans, who were cousins of my uncle's. Then there were the Orrs.

My parents were with my aunt at Duncan's Mills when I was born, January 10, 1906. Three months before the earthquake!

Here are some pictures of early Sausalito. This is my father when he was about 16. This man is Frank Thomas. He was Master Mechanic of the Mt. Tamalpais & Muir Woods Railroad for years. His brother, Bill Thomas, developed the first engine that had the cab in front.

When I was about three, my mother bought a house up Blithedale Canyon. The old mountain railroad track went right behind our house. Almost everyone who lived up the canyon, when they were in a hurry to get downtown, walked down the railroad track. It was the shortest way to the village. As you went down, there were stops at Marsh Station and Lee Station.

This is a picture of my husband.¹ Irv was born in Mill Valley, right where we have our business today -- 157 Throckmorton. Isn't that remarkable? In those days you were born at home. The doctor was Dr. Spottiswood, who was a wonderful old man in Mill Valley. Irv was born in November of 1896.

He was a very dear person, with a great sense of humor. He was very much liked by everyone, I think. He was a fine person.

His grandfather had come to California and had settled in Marin County, on the other side of Corte Madera Ridge. Do you know where all those apartments are, just this side of Marin Joe's? That was Dowd's property. They had a little ranch or farm there. That is where Irv's father was born.²

When his father was a young man, he started a livery stable in Mill Valley. They also had Fresno graders (the big scrapers) and other equipment. They had about 50 horses in the barn. They rented them out, some for work teams and some for pleasure horses. They had teams that would take out a surrey, for people who wanted to go on a picnic. A lot of people who owned their own horses would board them there.

¹Charles Irvine Dowd.

²Charles James Dowd.

The livery stable was right where the business is today. The family lived upstairs, as they did in those days. I don't know exactly what year the livery stable was started. We say today that the business was founded in 1896. That is the year that Irv was born. His father might have had a business in Mill Valley before that time. I don't know.

They had donkeys, too. I've heard a story told about Irv. The stable would rent donkeys for youngsters to ride. Some of the animals were not too well-behaved. The youngsters would ride them about as far as the old mill, and the donkey would have had about enough of it and would dump the youngster and come back to the barn.

Dowd's also had a stage which went from Stinson Beach to West Point on Mt. Tamalpais. Irv said when he was a young man people would often come to the stable and want to go to Muir Woods, so his father would supply a team, and Irvin would drive the people over to have a picnic in Muir Woods and go sight-seeing.

Irv went to Tamalpais High School. When he graduated, his first job was with Tyler Spices in San Francisco. From there he went to work for the Federal Reserve Bank. He had been there about a year, I believe, when World War I came, and he went to war.

When he came back from overseas, he went back to the bank. His job had been kept for him. In World War I they did the same as in World War II and kept the veterans' jobs for them.

Irv's father died when Irv was 16. When he came back from the war he was about 20. He and his mother had quite a discussion as to whether he wanted to stay on at the bank or take over the family business. He came back to the business, and he worked very, very hard. He had a lot of responsibility for one so young.

For years he did a lot of heavy physical work. He had a building material business, and I don't know how many carloads of gravel he unloaded by hand. They didn't even have a conveyor in those days to help unload. They hauled gravel with teams of horses in these old dump wagons. He would do the hardest work that had to be done around the place.

When they got their first truck, it was a flat-bed

with stakes on the side. It was much later that he got the first covered van. Before that, they moved furniture on the flat-bed, just like a little old wagon!

When they got their first trucks, they had a man working for them who just did mechanical work, repair work. There weren't many garages in those days. I remember that you would go into a place to get your car fixed, and they expected you to leave your car there. There weren't very many service stations.

Can you remember when they used hard tires, and you repaired them by stuffing the holes with some sort of rubber stuff? They weren't pneumatic tires -- more like solid rubber.

I can remember Mill Valley's first fire truck. They got rid of the nice old team that they'd had, and they bought a big old red DeMartini. Mr. Thony, who had driven the team of horses, learned to drive the fire truck. Mill Valley really thought it was advancing when they got that!

Even in those days you had to branch out to make money. Perhaps you never become too prosperous in a small town. So Dowds started an undertaking business, with a man named Eden. They bought a fine hearse, all glass and black ebony-looking finish. They also supplied carriages for the mourners.

Irv said that one time going up to Fernwood Cemetery near Tennessee Valley Road, the mourners included a lot of friends from Sausalito. Among them were some great big stout men -- Mr. Creed, Mr. Hannan. They were very heavy men. Going up the hill, the horses balked and wouldn't move. Irv was driving the carriage. He was quite young then. He told the men they would have to get out and walk. They were the pallbearers and were very indignant, but the horses wouldn't budge. In order that the funeral could continue, they had to get out and walk. They were panting and puffing, but finally they made it to the top of the hill and could get in the carriage again.

As I remember, the road through Tamalpais Valley was the same then as it is now. The road to Muir Wood is the same. The road around the mountain is the same, the road that continues around the Old Pipeline Trail.

I don't remember the year Panoramic Highway was built. Everybody thought it was a great mistake. They said houses

would be built all over the mountain, and it would be subdivided. It hasn't happened.

People around here are quite protective, as far as the country is concerned. We don't like to lose the mountain -- and I don't think we ever will. With all the bulldozing on the ridges and the places they've built houses, they haven't changed the mountain.

We've had many fires on it, you know. The 1929 fire came down Middle Ridge almost to Bayview Avenue, which is the street behind Lovell.

The day of that fire, my mother had gone to San Francisco to the Fox Theater, which had just opened.¹ When she got out of the theater, there was a newsboy crying the headlines, "Mill Valley in flames." Mother said to her friends, "Oh, that's ridiculous. They exaggerate these things so." Coming across the bay on the ferry, the closer she got to Marin County, the more smoke she could see. Cinders were blowing out onto the bay, the wind was so strong.

We lived at what is now 121 West Blithedale. They had stopped people from going up the canyon, but when Jimmy Jenkins, who lived up the road, saw my mother, he said, "You can go through." When she got to the house, she found that everything had been taken. The only thing she could find was my father's good hat, which was tucked away in a closet. That was all that was left.

She was very relieved, you can be sure, to find out that it was my husband who had gone up there and taken everything out of the house. The fire was burning right across from us, down to the little trail that runs above Corte Madera Avenue. The fire was way down there. Many people lost just about everything, but our house did not burn.

I remember they had a meeting at the town hall. A lot of indignant people were there, complaining and blaming the fire on the mountain train. People said that the trains had started the fire. The people from the railroad said, "No, our trains went up the mountain at 2:20" -- or whatever the time was -- "and there was no fire." The people said,

¹Demolished in the 1960s and replaced by the Fox Plaza Building.

"Yes, but half an hour later the fire was blazing."

They started their engine fires with wood. When the train would start up the mountain, hot coals from the fire-box would drop on the right-of-way. The right-of-way was grassy, and it would catch fire. If there was any wind, it would really spread in a hurry.

One thing I like to remember about Mill Valley is that when I was young, you could pick wild flowers. We would go to Blithedale Ridge and get such lovely wild iris in the spring. There were favorite places where we would find wild cyclamen, the little Johnny Jump-Ups. Then there would be shooting stars. Along the trail above Corte Madera Avenue there were fritillarias. There were places where we would find wild strawberries in the spring. But gradually the houses would be built right where the best Baby Blue Eyes grew.

When we were young we went to Summit School. Ever so many people who grew up in Mill Valley went to that school. It was on Summit just above Lovell, right across from the old Catholic Church which is still there, although the building is no longer used for a church.

Here is a picture of the old railroad depot, taken about 1902. Wasn't it attractive? This is looking up Miller Avenue. Some of these buildings are still there. This is the Finn house.

I used to think that when people came in to a community and started building houses, they cut down all the trees. Well, when you look at these old pictures, you can see that the people have planted the trees! Look at old pictures of Belvedere taken 70 or more years ago. It was just a bare, grassy knoll. In Mill Valley, too, the trees came with the people.

Look at this picture of the old mill. When they re-roofed it recently, some of the townspeople were worried that the pitch of the roof was too high to be authentic. But this old picture shows that it's really that high. I can remember when Bill Hamilton's mother organized a pageant, when I was a young girl, to raise funds to repair the roof.

Here's a picture of Summit School. In those days, we had a boy who would drum us into school. The teacher would blow a whistle, and everyone would line up. Then we would march into school in time to the boy's drum.

This was the only elementary school in Mill Valley at that time. The old stone wall and stairs of Summit School are still standing. Elvira Becker Cassell has apartments and small cottages for rent on the property now. We used to sit on the wall and eat our lunch.

I went to high school at Tamalpais High and graduated in 1922. It was in the same location that it is now. I believe the first graduating class was about 1911. I can remember that my cousin, who is about 10 years older than I am, graduated with the first class that had gone a full four years. They started in a tent. It's wonderful to think how that school was developed.

Originally, a lot of property in Mill Valley was sold to summer people for vacation homes. There were a number of old hotels here. Families would come from San Francisco to spend the summers, and the husbands would commute back and forth to work in town.

When the earthquake came, many people who were burned out from their homes in the city came over and lived in their summer homes or bought someone else's place. That is when Mill Valley really began to grow.

When my grandparents first moved to Sausalito, Belvedere was called Kashow's Island. The man who lived over there had a farm and ran sheep. You can see from this picture that the island was completely bare.

This is the old Lyford house, which was moved to the Audubon Sanctuary on Mrs. Verrall's property, the woman known as the Goat Lady. The house was originally located on Strawberry Point, where they have now built a lagoon.¹ In 1961 the old house was moved by barge to its new location on Tiburon Boulevard.

This map shows the North Pacific Shore Railroad that

¹The house was built by Dr. Lyford who married Hilarita Reed, John Reed's daughter.

went right in front of the Lyford place. It came from Sausalito, across a trestle from Waldo Point to Strawberry Point, then down the east side of Strawberry Point and across the road in back of where the Town and Country Shopping Center has been built, then up by Eagle Rock near North Knoll Road and South Knoll Road and around the property where the Tiburon Bank is located.¹

Where the highway cuts over the hill to go to Corte Madera interchange, the railroad crossed and wound around that hill. From Highway 101, going toward Corte Madera, you can see where the old right-of-way was. A row of tall poplar trees went along the railroad, and they're still standing.

The old Dowd barn, the first barn that they had, burned in about 1910. They bought hay by the carload for their 50 or more horses. They also had a coal business and brought coal in by the carload. Men working for them were given board and room, and they had a Japanese or Chinese cook. They believe one of the cooks dropped a cigarette near the hay. The whole barn caught on fire. They had just received a new shipment of hay and a carload of coal, and it made a tremendous fire. It smoldered for a week. They saved all the horses and most of their equipment. But they lost all their furniture except a nice old walnut desk belonging to my husband's father.

In late 1910 or early 1911 they built the building that stands now. It looks just like the old stable, except there are no living quarters above it.

They had horses until about 20 years ago. As long as they kept horses, they were allowed to do so. But once taken away, horses could not be brought back.

Many hikers who came to Mill Valley after World War I would come over by ferry and train. We used to hike, too. People didn't have cars, and they walked a lot. You'd see them starting out in the morning with loads of sandwiches in a box, headed for the beaches -- Stinson Beach or Big Lagoon -- or to Muir Woods or to hike up the mountain. Then you'd see them coming back to catch the train at night.

¹Now Sierra National Bank.

They'd be so tired. There would be some ahead, shouting, "Hurry up. Hurry up. The train's leaving." You could hear the gong, "Clang, clang, clang, clang," and the poor tired girls would try to walk faster.

Some of the outfits that people would hike in were really ridiculous. Things that we wear nowadays are so much more sensible. I remember girls hiking in high heels, with the spiral leggings that the soldiers used in World War I wound around their legs. They'd be wearing riding pants -- you know, the ones with the wings flaring out at the side. I suppose they borrowed the leggings from their boy friends. When they'd straggle in at the end of the day, sometimes the leggings would have come unwound and would be dragging behind. They were sad-looking. Of course there were lots of very good hikers, too. But some who came over from the city didn't know how to dress to be comfortable on a long hike.

Just the other day, though, I saw a couple hiking. They had gotten this far up the mountain. The man had on heavy brogans, but the woman was in thongs. I thought, "Oh, my word. How has she gotten this far?" Barefoot would almost be better.

I wish Irv could tell you some of these stories of old-time Mill Valley. I never got tired of hearing him tell these things, and his stories were always true stories.

When he was young, we had a nickelodeon, a moving picture that cost five cents. Once in a while a vaudeville entertainer would come to the nickelodeon. One summer they advertised that Holton the Cannonball King was coming. The posters showed a man with huge muscles, grasping the big cannonball which had just been fired at him by the cannon. All the little boys were excited. This was a big thing!

Finally the night came for the performance. Holton was announced by a lot of fanfare. The youngsters were at fever pitch -- until the cannon shot out a ball about the size of a softball. Holton went through all the motions of catching this little ball, which shot out of the cannon with a little "Putt."

Another time the nickelodeon had a performer who sawed a woman in half. The showhouse was built over the creek, and some of the youngsters went down underneath and found the fake trapdoor and the lift which would take somebody

up or down through the floor. They checked all the details of how the performance went on, and it left no mystery for them how the woman was cut in half.

In the days when the old electric trains came to Mill Valley, on Hallowe'en the youngsters would dress a dummy and put it on the track. The poor engineer would see this figure on the track and slam on the brakes. He'd stop so quickly the passengers would practically fall off their seats.

I remember when I was going to high school that after Hallowe'en we found one of Dowd's dump trucks up on the roof of the gymnasium. Those things weighed an awful lot, and some kids had worked hard to take it apart and put it back together again on top of the building. I imagine they had lots of help.

In those days the mountain had not become a game reserve, and you could hunt any place. On Thanksgiving Day, if you had a family gathering, all the young men in the family would go to Tennessee Valley and hunt quail in the morning -- get up a big appetite hiking over the hills -- and then get home in time for Thanksgiving dinner.

Of course we always went out in the country and bought our turkey for holiday dinners. Everyone did this. The turkey was kept in the chicken pen in the back yard until he was needed.

At one time the Dowds had a Japanese cook named George. Before Thanksgiving there was a turkey raffle at the pool hall, which was between Dowd's and the railroad depot. George said to Mrs. Dowd, "If you'll give me 20¢, I'll go see if I can get us a turkey." He bought two paddles.¹ They spun a wheel. Lo and behold, George won a turkey! In back of the stable was an outdoor toilet. It wasn't a Chic Sale kind of thing. It had regular plumbing, but it was in a separate little building. That was where they put the turkey.

Somebody opened the door, and out came the turkey. He flew up to the top of a redwood tree in back of the barn. This was a tragedy. George said to Mrs. Dowd, "If you'll

¹Chances.

cook dinner, I'll go get the turkey."

You may know the way a Japanese can climb with a sling. He ties a sling thing around the tree and around himself. This is what George did. Up the tree he went. He got almost to the turkey when the turkey flew to the next tree. George went up the next tree -- and the same thing happened. Irv said this went on for three or four hours. Finally George came back. He had climbed every tree between Dowd's and the old mill, I guess, but the turkey was finally worn out, and George brought him back!

Dowd's kept their help. The people who worked for them stayed for years. They were well-treated, and they liked to work for Mr. and Mrs. Dowd. There were usually about a dozen men working at the stables. In those days, of course, the livery stable furnished the only means of transportation.

Of the horses in the stable, I'd say they had pretty much an equal number of work horses and pleasure horses. They had some very nice horses, and they always took good care of them. I can remember my father saying (and this was years and years before Irv and I were married) that Dowds fed their men well and took good care of their animals. He said if you rented a horse from Dowd's, it wouldn't wear out before you got back from wherever you were going.

When the Armistice was signed for World War I, we were living on Blithedale. The old railroad shops were below us. My best friends, Marion and Jean Ward, lived near us. We went down to the shops and blew the train whistle until there was no more steam left in the engine.

Word of the armistice reached Mill Valley in the middle of the night. Thony was fire chief, and he took a whole crowd of youngsters on the fire engine. I was lucky enough to be aboard. We went around and stopped at the homes of families who had someone in the war. We serenaded them with "The Star Spangled Banner," "Over There," "The Marseillaise," and all the war songs we could think of.

After the sun came up, at 6 or 7 or so, they began serving coffee and refreshments in the little town square.

The baker brought over doughnuts. Somebody else brought coffee. Everybody in town was down there rejoicing because the war had ended.

As long as I can remember, there was some sort of town square where Lytton Square is today. I can just barely remember a great clump of old laurel trees in the Y between the present Bank of America and the Mill Valley Furniture store. There was a huge chain around the clump of trees. My dad said that at one time a blacksmith named McLeod came from Sausalito and did smithy work there in the grove. Later on there were other blacksmiths, too. The people from around would bring in their wagons and their horses for work to be done -- shoes on the horses, wheels on the wagons, and other work.

Roads weren't paved. They had many boardwalks instead of sidewalks. I never learned to roller skate because there was no place to skate in those days.

The old mountain train left the depot and went north, where Dr. Paul Rice now has his office¹ -- right between Rutherford's Pharmacy and Mrs. Winton's Pet Shop, It connected with the ferry train which came from Sausalito. The passengers would get off the ferry train and take the mountain train. The train went behind the Masonic Hall, then up where the post office now has its annex² and through the property where the Richfield station is. Where Alcatraz starts up the hill, that's where the track led off through the trees and finally into Blithedale.

The track crossed the creek a number of times. Our place was the first house on the right of the track, just after it left the shops. It's now called Miller Park. It crossed the bridge the first time right there. Our property went back to the bridge and to the right-of-way. On the other side, some people named Smith lived. Someone now has a swimming pool down in that little hollow. Then the track went on up the canyon -- not along present Blithedale Avenue but through the middle of the various homes now standing there -- until it came to King Street.

Near where Blithedale and Corte Madera join, the track crossed the creek again and went on up to Marsh Station and Lee Station. I actually have no idea how many bridges and trestles the train crossed.

¹70 Throckmorton Avenue.

²Corner of Corte Madera and Lovell.

People who lived up Blithedale Canyon had a little commute train called the dinkey. It ran up as far as Lee Street. There were times when the dinkey was a locomotive and one car. Later they bought a gasoline railcar which could be operated by one man. Otherwise they had to have an engineer, a fireman and a conductor.

Irv and I were married in 1948. It was my second marriage. I was married to a man named John Alexander McInnis, and we had two girls.¹ We were divorced when my oldest girl was about 5. She was 20 when Irv and I were married. We had a lot in common and were very happy.

I had known Irv since I was about six and he was 16. When I was a little girl, we used to camp up at Bootjack so my father could go hunting. Irvine and his cousin, Oscar Cappelman, used to come there and hunt. My mother would always have more exciting things to eat in our camp than they had, and they would come to our camp for meals. Then the men would play cards. My father and Irv were good friends for so many years.

I went to school with Irv's sisters. We all hunted over at Bolinas together.

I'm sure anything you hear about Irv will be nice. It was a wonderful time in my life.

When we were first married, we lived in the old family home on Bayview. Then we bought a place in Stinson Beach and thought we would live there. When we began to think of retiring, Irv decided he didn't want to live anywhere but in Mill Valley, so we bought this house. It was built originally by a man named Clyde Scott, an artist. Jack McCallum, the realtor, and his wife bought the property and added this room and a large bedroom downstairs. They had a lovely garden and a barbecue house. We both enjoyed gardening.

Irv always loved horses. When we bought the place, he rebuilt the hothouse into a great big horse stall, and I bought a Shetland pony for my granddaughters. The older girl became quite an accomplished rider. Later we got her a horse, a nice mare. Irv said, "You know, that mare looks

¹Margaret Carol, now Mrs. Talmadge Childers of Mill Valley, and Jacqueline, who was killed in an automobile accident when she was 18.

to me like she might be going to have a colt." We showed her to the vet, and he said, "Oh no, that's just a hay belly. You ride her and she'll lose it." We bought the horse in April, and in June she had a colt! That was a great day, to have this darling colt.

Later on we sold the mare and colt and got two other horses. Irv had lots of pleasure from them. Having grown up with horses, he loved to spend time grooming them. I got very spoiled. We used to ride a lot, but I hardly ever had to saddle my horse or brush him down after we got back. Irv would do it all.

Two years in a row, my granddaughter won first place in the junior division of the Southern Marin Horseman's Association. They had a ride around the mountain, sort of an endurance test. There was a veterinarian about every seven miles to check the horses. She won first place with a big quarter horse that we had. The second year she won with a grading of 100 per cent, and so did the horse. We were very proud of that.

I have paintings of the horses. The girl who painted them (Kharvina Burbeck) went to school when I did. This is Yankee; he is a fine horse. This is Mack, an Anglo-Arab. He is also a real good animal. Irv and I rode them in the Mountain Play one year. They did Flamenca, and we were the gypsy king and queen.

The paintings are fun to have. Some people have family portraits, but we have portraits of our horses!

The horses are with Irv's nephew in San Luis Obispo now. He is a graduate of Cal Poly in animal husbandry. He has four boys, and they had only two horses. So now they have a horse for each boy.

Irv and I used to ride horseback a lot around the mountain, along the old railroad right-of-way. We'd go out from here on the Pipeline Trail up to Mountain Home and take the right-of-way around to the old Nostrund property, now Lando's. Sometimes we would come down Summit and other times we would go all the way down Ralston White's canyon.

I was looking at the mountain tonight and thinking how beautiful it is. When you go away on a trip and come home -- say you've been to Sacramento, and you come up

over the hills and get the first glimpse of the mountain. It's such a welcome sight! When you come up Miller Avenue and look at the town with the mountain behind it -- I wonder sometimes if we really appreciate what we have.

During World War II there were many boys stationed at the Net Depot in Tiburon, which used to be the old coaling station. We didn't feel about them the way you would now about hitch-hikers. We always gave them a ride. One day I said to a young man, "How do you like our mountain?" We were coming from Tiburon toward Mill Valley, with that lovely view of the mountain. The boy looked at me and said, "Where is it?" I said indignantly, "Don't you know Mt. Tamalpais?" Well, it turned out he was from the Colorado Rockies. Mt. Tamalpais didn't impress him one bit.

I can't understand people who build on the mountain and put all their view windows looking toward the city. Over on the lagoon in Tiburon, so many of the houses look out on the lagoon and turn their backs on the mountain. To me, that is one of the loveliest views, looking across the water toward the mountain.

Mill Valley has always been a nice place to live. There's a friendly atmosphere here, a sort of small-town feeling. In the old days, when you'd go downtown everyone would speak. You knew almost everyone, of course, even the summer people. On the whole the summer people were well-liked. I don't think there was any resentment towards them. Many of them eventually moved over here.

Of course there were different kinds of summer people, but on the whole they were very pleasant -- people you were fond of, people who were friendly.

Here's a picture looking up Middle Ridge, along Summit Avenue. You'll see that there are no trees growing; it's just grassy hillside. It looks completely different today. People plant trees, don't they?

This is Mill Valley Junction, near where the high school has its new football field.

Here's the fire department, with the old team of horses.

The old firehouse was in the same location as the present one. The old bell now on the lawn is the one that was rung in those days to call the volunteer firemen. Look at this headline from the Mill Valley paper: "Firemen sometimes saved the lot but seldom the house." That was true!

This picture shows when they were starting the tennis club. Look how few houses were here then. And again -- no trees.

Here is the Keystone Block as it used to look. Sunset Grocery belonged to the Bagshaws. And here's a picture of Mr. Suey Kee. They had such a wonderful market.

The building on the corner of Miller and Throckmorton, where Mayer's Department Store now stands, was Lockwood's Drug Store. I rather think Lockwood was the first druggist in Mill Valley. The old building had turrets and bay windows. Here's a picture of it, taken in 1910.

Chauncey Montgomery and his wife had the curio shop over in Muir Woods. This is a picture of him dressed up in an old Spanish costume for some Mill Valley parade. He drove a team and buggy and was a real character.

In January of 1912, Mt. Tamalpais had lots of deep snow. I particularly remember it because my father wanted to take my mother riding up the mountain to see the snow. It was my birthday. She was having a party for me and couldn't go, so he took two of his sisters. They went on horseback. Here's a snapshot of them. Doesn't that look exciting with all that snow?

I don't know when I'll retire. To tell you the truth, I would be lonely if I didn't keep busy. I have my grandchildren, and my father, but when something like this¹ happens to you, I believe the best thing to do is to keep busy.

Of course there are a lot of other ways to keep busy, but Irv loved his business. He loved the people, and he liked the idea of Dowd's having been part of Mill Valley

¹The death of her husband.

for so many years. To me it's sort of a satisfaction to be able to continue something that he liked so much.

It's a nice thing when people will remember things that happened years ago, and I take pride in going on with that business.