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FREDERICK LEROY MARTIN

An Interview by

Jean Mosher

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Frederick Leroy Martin

Born December 25, 1912 in Brooklyn, New York

Resident of Mill Valley for 63 years.

Interviewed on September 8, 1979 in his home
at 11 Hill Street, Mill Valley.

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FREDERICK LEROY MARTIN

JEAN MOSHER:

Today is September 8, 1979 and this is Jean Mosher, interviewing Fred Martin for the Oral History Committee.

Fred was born in Brooklyn, New York, in December of 1912, on Christmas Day.

Jean Mosher: What was it that brought your family all the way from New York to California, sixty-three years ago?

Fred Martin: Dad was in the printing business. There was an opening here at Carlyle's in San Francisco. He was good at colors and was offered a job, so he came out.

JM: I seem to have heard of that. Is that still in business?

FM: Yes. It was just Carlyle's at first. Then it went Carlyle, Rutledge and someone else, and now I think it's Carlyle Graphics-Division of Litton Industries.

JM: So what can you remember of your first awareness of Mill Valley?

FM: I guess when they moved up to Walnut Avenue. We lived on Walnut for awhile there and my brother Bert was born there. Then we moved back down to Almonte. I don't think we came all the way up into Mill Valley during the time we lived in Almonte. I think there was a little grocery store that used to belong to Murphy's and Rogers, or maybe Mr. Rogers at the time. It was located where Jackson's Barber Shop is on Locust Ave.

JM: So that was sort of a little separate community down there.

FM: And across the street, where Eggers is now, there was a big vegetable garden.

JM: Whose was that?

FM: I think it was Ferrari. It was owned by Italians. And you could go out and pick out the vegetables you wanted.

JM: And you could just buy them right there?

FM: Yeah, you could go out and pick a few carrots yourself.

We lived at Sycamore when we first got married and there used to be Boates's garage on the corner there, then it burned partly and then they tore it down.

Right opposite Hickman's service station on Miller Ave. and Evergreen, was all marsh. They filled that in of course.

JM: There was a big flood in 1955. Did you have much trouble with floods in that area?

FM: Oh, yes. I remember it flooded so badly when I had the service station, we were going out all the time trying to get someone started. You step out of the car and maybe sink about two feet or better. It was just like a lake.

JM: When you remember about things going up around it, was Tamalpais Valley kind of marshy at that point then too?

FM: In Tamalpais Valley - it was low, because as you first went in there, there was one big ranch that belonged to Sequerias. That was always flooded up in the winter-time. That was all marsh. When you get up higher, that was quite good grazing land that he had. Quite a few cows. On the corner there, it was called Dolan's Corners for a long time, there used to be a used lumber yard. Then right after that, there was a big bar built on part of it, called the Pastime, and it was a rough place for a long time. It was right where the ARCO service station is at 251 Shoreline Highway. That's where the lumber yard was and right next to it going toward Sausalito was the Pastime.

JM: Who was Dolan?

FM: They are from Oakland.

JM: They owned all that property around there?

FM: There, down to the next corner, as you make that big bend going to Tam Valley. After you go about a quarter of a mile, on that bend, there are two houses in there. That's where the Dolan family lived, in two of those houses.

JM: They still call it Dolan's Corners.

FM: Well, more so where the two houses are. They call that Dolan's Corner. There used to be so many wrecks, people would pile into the house.

JM: Really!!

FM: A few years back, they put a big metal guard along the road because on the weekends, people would be going too fast coming home and they'd drive right off the road and right onto the front porch or part of the house or something. I guess he got sick and tired of it, so he built the big fence himself and then the County built one - put the guard up there for him.

JM: There's talk of straightening the road and putting a road across the marsh there to avoid that whole loop.

FM: Probably so, it's the same with Martin Brothers Supply at 234 Shoreline Highway. They're talking of running a road to the east. That will take care of the traffic going to Mill Valley. The present road would take traffic going out towards Stinson Beach.

JM: Did your family own the property where you had your Martin Brothers Supply?

FM: No. My brother Bert started that - I guess around back in 1953, 1954; something like that. He used to be with Dolans when Mr. DeMartini had Dolans Lumber Yard there. He worked with them for quite some years - hauling lumber here and there. Mr. Mibach bought the piece of property that T&M Feed had. Then Bert got it from him. Then Bert and Tony Brabo bought all the property in back. There's thirteen or fourteen acres; then Tony Brabo wanted to get out and buy property someplace so my brother Bert bought it. By that time, Jack, the Youngest brother, came out of the Army - and got together with Bert. So they're the ones who started it.

JM: You said your family moved to Locust for awhile. That's when you probably started school. Where did you first go to school?

FM: Park, and I remember about the other school. My teacher was Mrs. Plummer, up at the old Summit School on Summit Ave. I went down to the Old Mill School to finish up. I think that was when the Old Mill School was built because the classrooms were getting so crowded that the Old Mill School took the sixth, seventh and eighth grades - I think that's how it was.

JM: Who were your classmates that you can remember?

FM: Oh, Douglas Painter. Another boy, I can't remember his first name - we called him Monkey Barr. His last name was Barr. He lived over in Alto. Painter was an old family. They lived here many years. I don't remember where he moved to. But Summit, that was quite a school to go to. It was about three stories high and had the big bell that rang when you had to come to school. If you go up Summit Ave., and Cornelia'll swing this way, and as you go around, you can barely see the old stone wall - that was all around the front of the school. It was a blue stone wall. It was all flattened out and they had the building there. In the back, they had a big canopy like a big wooden car port where in winter time you could play under it. It was quite large. It had playground rings, low rings for shorter people on one side and higher rings on the other side, so you could exercise and fool around; and it was big enough where you could even play baseball. Not hardball, but softball. It wasn't too much room, because it was built way up on the hill up there.

JM: About how many were in your class?

FM: Oh, I'd say maybe twenty - around seventeen - twenty, something like that. The only teacher I remember at Summit was Miss Plummer. Down at Old Mill School I can remember, I had Mrs. Beck. I don't think I had Mrs. Buttner at that time, but I had Miss Abrahamson and Mrs. Black. For some reason we went down to Homestead School for six months. It was closer for me. I lived in Tam Valley. I had Mrs. Jackson for a teacher there.

JM: Do you remember your teachers mostly kindly?

FM: Yes. Well, I guess Miss Plummer - she was a little rough, up at the Summit School. She was noted for that. But she taught you. There was no fooling around there; she'd just come right out and whack you one with a ruler...on your hand, of course. But the other teachers - nothing like that.

JM: What about games and things? Do you think that kids were rougher then, or did worse things at Halloween than now?

FM: I don't think so. They weren't destructive then. Well, they'd do some goofy things, like Jack Wisler was telling me during the time when Tail-light Andy was the town constable or cop. He was the Police Chief, I guess. He didn't have a car, so he had to walk around town. But Jack Wisler would get some old tires and about the time he'd see Tail-light Andy walking across Bernard and Throckmorton, he'd just let a bunch of tires come down that Bernard hill, longside of the Old Mill Bar. He'd let them run down the block and, of course, they'd run right through town, you know, to scare Tail-light Andy. No, we used to have a lot of fun, but it was just cute things.

JM: You started baseball early?

FM: Yeah. In grammar school.

JM: Did they have organized teams then?

FM: Yeah. We played - not too far away. I think it was just mainly between Mill Valley and San Rafael. That's when Mrs. Oconomy was our coach.

JM: She was?

FM: There weren't any men teachers - just the Principal.

JM: So they taught sports too?

FM: Yeah. Then at lunch time, we'd play touch football. Basketball, no, because they didn't have any baskets at the time.

JM: Now there were more men teachers when you went to high school?

FM: Most all your Math was taught by men. The women taught - like English, Geography, History. The men had, of course, the gym classes / for the girls. The Commercial Art teachers were Relzie Aiken and Scotty Hall. The Wood-shop, Machine Shop, Auto Shop classes were taught by men. I had Miss Buttner for English. She just passed away not too long ago. She lived down here on Marin Heights for a long, long time. She taught English and History, I believe. And then we had Mrs. Sidney Thompson for English and History. Mrs. Relzie Aitken taught Weaving and the other arts. She was real good in them, just like her husband was with Commercial Art.

JM: It was a rather famous high school, wasn't it?

FM: Oh, yes. And then sportswise, too, because that was when Mr. Wendering was there and they always had championship baseball teams. Football was fair. I think more fellows went out for football than they do now, because I was reading the other night where they just barely had enough boys to go out to have a team. And there was good track. Mr. Graves, who taught track then, is still living. He's on a tour in the Caribbean right now. Mr. Potts and Mr. Palmer, they were like the Gold Dust Twins. They were short and they were cute and they both taught, and Mr. Abners.

There were women teachers in the gym classes for boys.

JM: Well, you were a member of some touring baseball team - the American Legion League? Tell about that.

FM: Well, 1928 was when they started and we just played mostly locally. The second year, they got the nice team together and we played over in Oakland, Emeryville, around the County - then Sacramento. We won the first game. The second time we played a San Diego ball club and we lost in the last inning, but then we found out that one of the ball players had been playing professional, so they had to forfeit the game. So from there we went to Long Beach and won there. We went to Salt Lake and Colorado Springs.

I played in the outfield, then I played left field. Stutz was our pitcher and Dick Wright. They've both passed on. He was great. He pitched us a good ball game against that Milwaukee team and I forget how many fanned, but we won.

JM: Then you were the champions.

FM: Well, we were league champions in the West. They gave us little medals and if we'd have won that game the next day from the New Orleans team, we'd have gone back to see the New York Giants in the World Series with Babe Ruth playing.

JM: Who were some of your team mates?

FM: When I first went to high school in 1928, that's when the first American Legion Team started - there was Tommy Maura, MacGowan and myself - we always chummed around together. Tommy was a Japanese boy; Police Chief Jim MacGowan's stepson; then there were the other boys who came in - Bill Franchini was third baseman and pitcher.

JM: How did that work. You were going to high school, but the American Legion sponsored you in some sort of way?

FM: Yes. They got the uniforms.

JM: And was it a kind of an honor to be chosen?

FM: Oh yeah, it was great. They did as much as they could. Of course, it was bad times. I forget how many thousands of dollars the American Legion paid for the trips and things of that sort, but they were so proud of us. And, of course, Jim Langdon, who coached us - he's still living in San Rafael.

JM: It was an annual affair - - each year?

FM: Then it was. A few years afterward, it petered out.

JM: What about some of your Tamalpais High School reunions?

They've just had one and that was a year or two ago, in May, when they had classes from '30 to '36. We had it at Peacock Gap. One of the girls - maybe you might know her - Johnson, she was on Sunnyside. She worked as secretary for the Maguire School. Before the reunion, she said "We're going to have a surprise for you when you

FM: (continued)

come to the reunion." And it was. The girls at the desk, where you had to sign up and pay your money, were dressed in middies and skirts, just like all the girls did at high school. At school on a Friday, they were allowed to wear anything they wanted, and, of course, the girls'd come dressed all cute. But it was great when they were just wearing the middies. And now, the kids really seem to try to outdo the other one wearing fancy clothes.

JM: Did you have to work summers?

FM: Well, I always caddied Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays at the Mill Valley Golf Course.

There was a big fire in 1929. That just took two or three days, but we fought that. We happened to be over at Muir Beach - the whole family - Mother and all of us had hiked over. In the afternoon, we'd see these billows of smoke showing above the ridge and we kept watching. It was getting worse and worse and Mother was getting nervous. She thought it might be in Tam Valley, but after we hiked home, of course, we could see it was over here. So, my brother and I hiked into Mill Valley and I guess we fought the fire until 3:30 in the morning and hiked home. They we didn't have any cars, you know, so we hiked all the way in and all the way back; and then, back the next day, and the following day.

JM: Did you know that that was the day that Mr. Canepa arrived in Mill Valley to start his store? And they told him to get off and help fight the fire.

FM: Is that right?

JM: Everybody's got memories of that day.

Did you go to lots of parties and have dates in high school?

FM: No. 'Cause we lived so far away. Oh, once in awhile some girl or some fellows would have a party, spin the bottle, or something like that. There was, I'd say, not too many parties. Too busy with sports, I guess. We'd go out once in awhile, mainly on Friday night, after the game. That's about it.

JM: Did you go up the mountain on the mountain railway?

FM: We went up there and had dinner at the restaurant on top a couple of times. What was it called - Tamarin?

JM: You hiked to Muir Beach?

FM: Yeah, quite often. You could say, "Well, we're going to go to the beach."

JM: And hiking was the way to go? You didn't have a car?

FM: No, not 'til a little later. Then, of course, nobody else knew how to drive but Dad. Mom would say, "Would you like to go to the beach Wednesday?" And we'd maybe stay over a night or two nights, and it would be always nice weather, not like now; you can't figure from day to day.

JM: You mean it was different?

FM: The weather's changed so much.

JM: Is that right? Was it warmer in those days - less foggy?

FM: Less foggy, yeah. It got awfully warm. Of course, you'd get a little breeze once in awhile.

JM: Would you camp over there?

FM: Yeah. Just camp. We didn't even have a tent. You'd just throw a blanket over you.

JM: Were you living in Tam Valley then? So how long did it take you to hike over?

FM: Oh, I guess it would be an hour. Oh, I'd better say more than that, because you had to walk right through Tam Valley, up the hill through the gum trees, the eucalyptus trees. Then you walked right down through the valley on the other side. You could hike right through to Muir Beach. Well, of course, then there was a lot of hikers. On a weekend, yes, you'd see them get off the train. There might be fifty of them. They'd be all in line, just one right after another. They'd go right up the trail. You'd see them come back and you'd always see someone with a big bouquet of poison oak in their arms. It was so pretty, at that time, you know, it changed colors. And they'd have it wrapped around and you'd tell them, "Oh, you're going to be sorry". And then they'd throw it away - they didn't know.

JM: Well, then what did you do after high school? You couldn't get a job for awhile, very good, so then what?

FM: One day, when caddying, I got a call from a friend of my father's, Michaelson, who lives in Marin Heights. He worked for the Nelson Steamship Line. He asked me if I wanted to go out to sea. I said "Sure, I'd do anything". So he told me to get ready. The ship was going to leave at five. Then it was about three. So I rushed home, threw a couple of jeans and things together and off I went. It was a freighter. Oh, it was lousy. It was chartered by another outfit, with a load of pig iron. Going up north we had to take some cars and just miscellaneous things. We went into Portland on our way back and took on a load of wheat. They just poured it in there. Just shot it in so full of wheat. The first time they ever did that. Then we went down through the Panama Canal, up to Houston, Galveston, New Orleans, Mobile.

JM: So you were about 18 years old at that time?

FM: Yeah, 18, between 18 and 19, I guess.

JM: So, did you continue that?

FM: No, 'cause when we got down to New Orleans, then I got a letter from Mother saying that Daddy wasn't well. He lost his job and so when we got back I quit. I wasn't home too long, and then, they were building the Golden Gate bridge, they were changing the spur in the railroad in Sausalito. They were going to straighten it out and take it from the big bend. I got word that there was work, men being hired, so I got down there the next day - early. So I rushed

down there and got on, and Oh, that's the hardest work I've ever done. I was what they call a "gandy-dancer". We're just shovelling, or packing rails. And they give you a square-point shovel to shovel big inch -and-a-half rocks in between the ties and half the time it'll just bounce along. The foreman, he was right over you all the time, "get in there and do this". Then, if you're packing a rail, they give you tongs to carry it with and instead of matching you up with a person about the same height, you'd always wind up with either a tall man or a short guy, so you either had your tongs on your chest or down on your knees, packing these long rails.

JM: It doesn't sound very efficient.

FM: I guess I made a good showing. When I came back the next day, oh, I was so tired when I got home the first night, my Mother asked me, because I came around five, and she said "Do you want to eat now, or do you want to wait 'til the rest came home?" I said, "Oh, I'll wait" and fell asleep right away. I was gone.

I ached so badly next day, but I want back to work. Only about 8 of us showed up out of 20 some. After that, the foreman asked me if I wanted to go out towards Lagunitas to pull up the railroad tracks and I said "Sure, might as well keep busy." So I went up there. Then they were paying 33-1/2 cents an hour.

Then Hamilton Field started to break and so a neighbor fellow named Shoemaker and I went and signed up and we got on. It was almost all labor work. That's about all there was to be gotten at the time. This would be the 30's then. When they were pouring the floors and the walls of the hangers. We stayed there practically a whole year. We helped smooth the walls out, you know, where it's honey-combed. You take a burlap sack and fine cement and water and you rub it. This smooths it off so you don't see any of that honey-comb, all those walls, all those buildings - - there were 7 hangars at the time.

After that is when I first got into a service station. A friend of mine in Tam Valley got me a job with General Petroleum in San Francisco. I worked at stations at Fell and Baker by the hospital, at Filbert and Van Ness, and at 22nd and Van Ness South out in the Mission District. So, I worked there as a partner for two years. Then I found out that Ben Filotti was going to get out of the service station right on the corner in Mill Valley, so that's when I got that. I worked that for 9 years, then went with Alex Bardea for 11. Then I went down to my brother's for about 18 years.

JM: So it was just the one station in Mill Valley that you were in, one location?

FM: No, Alex/^{was} across the street. The other one was right on the corner where the barber shop is, if you were going up Throckmorton, right by the theater. There used to be a nice little service station right on the corner there, before they built that barber shop and leather shop and all that. There was just a bank there and a couple of houses. They were set back a little bit. They removed one or two, moved them. Yeah, it was a cute little station. That was Mobil gas. The station had a nice little lawn on one side, a very neat one. The station was painted white, green and red.

JM: And that was before the new Catholic Church was built across the street from the station. Was the school there then?

FM: There was an old Catholic Church, but I don't think they had a school.

JM: Now that you have retired, what do you do?

FM: I try to play golf a couple of days a week, either in the early evening or during the day. Dr. Cudworth, a retired dentist, lives up the street from me and we go to Las Gallinas and play at night, shoot more holes up there.

JM: Do you garden?

FM: Oh, yes, I do all the garden work anyway. I like that. People figure they don't know how long they're going to live, you know, you read in the paper of somebody dying at 64 or 65, so I thought, what the heck, I might as well do a little travelling, and get my golf in while I can. That's about it. I have to go down next month and work practically a month, and then when they go on vacations, I go down there, so I go down to work every once in awhile.

JM: And you go to the Russian River to your place up there.

FM: Yeah, we have the place at Oddfellows Park, we've had that since 1945, I guess.

During World War II I had to go down and work at the shipyard in Sausalito. Then, when I'd come back home, I'd help Harriet take care of the baby. Then, I'd pick up the books and do that, so I was up until two in the morning. Then, I'd get up at 9 so I could be to work at the station by 10, to work until 3:30 in order to get down there by 4 and go to the swing-shift.

The boys at the gas station would get a little careless with the gasoline ration stamps. Maybe a friend would come in and he'd slip him a ticket. The first thing you knew, I was down low on my stamps. But then, I was pumping more gas than all the stations around here, so I was able to replenish my gasoline stamps, because I was allowed one half of one percent of what I was pumping. I got enough stamps to cover my shortage, which was a lot, it was 1100 gallons. So it built me back up again, but then as soon as I went back, then I was short again within a short time. So I said, "It's not working".

So then, they brought in Clifford Archer. By that time, the war was over and work ended at the shipyard, so I worked nights to help them build the gas station business back up again. When Archer came back in, he had a good personality with people. He was very good. When I got finished down at the yard, I went into partnership with him. Archer always wanted to get back with Standard Oil; so I went over and got started with Alex Bardea and I was there with him 11 years.

Archer later had that new service station in Larkspur, across from the theatre. He ran that until he retired, and his son took it over.

JM: So you had your finger on the pulse of Mill Valley for a long, long time?

FM: Yeah, it was so great, you could walk downtown, take you an hour or so to get back because you'd meet so many people, just shoot the breeze, talking on the street, going into a store and talking to the owner.

JM: So you've seen it's changed a lot by now, hasn't it?

FM: Oh, it's still a beautiful place.

JM: Certainly a lot more traffic!!

FM: When the war started, I was coming up town on Sunday morning - December 7, 1941 - was when they announced the bombing of Pearl Harbor. About an hour or so after that, this boy flew up around the mountain in an old biplane - and he came zooming right down - right over the center of town, and it just scared everybody. I guess the poor guy caught the devil. He just went up there to say "hello" to his folks who lived up West Blithedale. He flew up the canyon and roared it. Everybody thought it must be a Jap Plane coming to drop a bomb or just fire away or something like that.

When I was going to school here and we lived in Tam Valley, there was a family by the name of Jacks. They must have had 7 or 8 kids at the old chicken ranch way up in the valley, and if one of the boys missed the bus, he'd ride the big old plug horse they used for plowing the field. He'd ride it over the hill and he'd tie it up to one of these trees in the grove here.

JM: So you had a bus to bring you in to school?

FM: Yes.

JM: Could you come on the train?

FM: Well, you could but it was closer to hike over the hill in back of the high school, right over the hump right down here. It was quicker. We used to hike that way when we'd go to a show at night. We were allowed to hike over and go to the show and then hike back again.

I remember the old bakery shop- Hauser's - on Miller, a few doors down from the corner of Throckmorton. Then it changed to the Eastland Baker and later became Meyer's. They're the ones that had it last. We remember when it was Hauser's. They were an old German family. Another German family that came in was Gerhardt's. The father and the two boys baked and the mother took care of the cash register and receipts. They had a couple of girls working at the counter because it was where they had milk-shakes and things of that sort.

JM: So it was kind of like a little social club?

FM: Oh, it was. Another place was Esposti's on Throckmorton where La Ginestra restaurant is now. Oh, that was great - - you used to get ten cent milk-shakes - a big bucket like that. It was so thick.

Yeah, it sure has changed. When you start to think, we had an old, old bus that used to pick us up down at Almonte when we were going to grammar-school, and he'd bring us up to Park School. All that is in there along Miller, below Locust, used to be marsh. In the winter-time, it was just like a lake. And down where that yarn shop is on the east side, that was all open too. That was marsh that they filled in a little bit at a time. There was just that roadway, going up there, that's all, and the train tracks. You have to start thinking and then all of a sudden you can visualize what it looked like. And, of course, the high school wasn't developed like it is now. You could play baseball up close because the road used to cut across where the girls' gym is now. Now, it's changed. The football field's this way, and baseball is over here. And that used to be all marsh out beyond that too. I remember when they pumped that in.

JM: What did it look like in Marin City during the War??

FM: It wasn't that big, of course - it looked dumpy. It was just little shacks, but they kept them up pretty well. That's when most all the blacks came in to work in the shipyard.

JM: Was that filled land too? Was that swampy?

FM: No. I don't think it was that bad. It might have been a little bit. I think they might have had to put a little bit of fill in off the hills. When I was growing up, that used to be where the Betten-courts had a ranch back there. I think there's still an old school-house sitting on the corner unless they tore it down.

I remember Emil Pohli, when he was living, he'd been all around the world, in the Navy. He had a real estate office across the street from us and he'd just come back from a trip. He said, "Boy, I've been all over the world, and I don't care where you say, you just can't beat Mill Valley."

JM: Yeah, there's something special about it.

FM: Just everything about it is pretty.

JM: Did they have community celebrations in the earlier days of Mill Valley? Like Fourth of July celebrations, or anything like that?

FM: I don't think so. They had carnivals come into town quite often. You know, they'd park where the tennis court is now.

JM: You mean by Boyle Park?

FM: Yeah.

JM: Do you have any recollections of the class that built or designed the Community Church?

FM: My brother was one of the architects on it.

JM: Was he really?

FM: That was Scotty Hall's group down at the high school. I've forgotten what part of the building that Wilbur did, but he was in art.

JM: It was a very interesting project for the school group. Was it a copy? Did they base it on a Maybeck design? Do you remember?

FM: I couldn't say. They had the school draw the plans. Well, Scotty was tremendous. He's still living too; he's up in Canada.

I remember when the furniture store near Varney's Hardware used to be the old Purity store. Mr. Daly took care of the meat department; Mr. Eubank took care of the groceries and another fellow took care of the vegetables. I'd come in and I'd rip off the slip. I had the slip all made up and I'd give part to the groceries and to the meat department and the vegetable man. When I'd finished, I'd load up the back of the car and it would very seldom run to \$9.

FM: The back seat of the car would be loaded - then I'd run over to the Eastland Bakery and get a big pineapple wreath, or apricot or something for \$.35. Those were the days! If I looked hungry after coming back from golfing all afternoon, Mr. Daly would even throw in a hot dog or a piece of raw meat or something like that, 'cause I used to eat raw hamburger. If you asked for bones for the dog, he'd give you all you'd want. Now, you use them for soup bones. All for nothing.

Where the Purity store was located, used to be all Varney's. That used to be the plumbing department in there. Nick Armager used to be their plumber there. He was the old fire chief. There used to be like a ramp that would go up to a second floor or balcony. That would be all the plumbing part of it. I remember that.

The location of Bell Savings used to be a hardware store.

JM: Suey Kee's was one of the fascinating stores too.

FM: He was quite a guy. Suey Kee's and then Varney's. Varney took quite a bit of room there, and then the hardware store next door. Varney had coal and firewood in back. They used to have a railroad switch down there. Box cars used to come there along the fence. They used to have a little track or even shovel the stuff off. Then Dowd's crushed rock and concrete mix would come on the train. They'd have to shovel all that stuff into the trucks and take it up into his yard in the back.

We didn't get up to central Mill Valley too much because we never had a car until we got out of Tam Valley. We didn't need it. There was a little old jitney bus that looked like an old covered wagon. It could go about 15 miles an hour. It used to pick them up and make a little loop around the valley and then out again. It belonged to Bert's wife's father - old man Cooper. There was always someone who wanted to go to the city. Charge you so much. He'd take them to the train. Down to Almonte. There used to be a station there. There was one at Waldo too. Right at Waldo Point, where Marinship was right on the point where you travel if you come out of Marin City and go under (the overpass) it would be sticking right out there, where all those arks at Gate 5 are. If you missed a train, you had an awful time because another train wouldn't come by for three quarters of an hour or something like that. It was nice going over there on the ferry boat, so relaxing, and if you'd come home late at night, you could sit up by the engine room, by the metal, and just lay against it and go to sleep.

When we lived in Tam Valley, I don't know if there were ten automobiles up there. There were a few horse and buggies. We stayed there. Of course, now, you have to get going someplace every weekend. Then, if they wanted to go someplace, they'd just get out and hike.

JM: Do you think that that made for more contented people?

FM: Oh, much so.

JM: O.K. And thank you for your time. It's been a pleasure!

FM: Oh, it's been fun talking it over. I get a big kick out of it.