

Oral History Committee

Mill Valley Public Library

Mill Valley Historical Society

Mill Valley, California

CARL MOSHER

An Interview Conducted By

Donald Oman

© 1979 by the Mill Valley Public Library

Index
Carl Mosher

Albert's Dept. Store (later Mayer's)	9,12	Johnson Motors	23,24
Andresen, Bob	11	Keystone Building	11,27, 29
architecture, commercial, restrictions	16	Library Board member	19,20
Army Counterintelligence Corps	4	Marin Child Development Center	20
banks, MV, 1940s	9	Mayer, Joe	10
beautification project, downtown Mill Valley	16	Mayer's Dept. Store	12,24
Bennett's Variety Store	13	McCabe, George	19
birthplace	1	McCarthy, Senator Jos.	19
books, interest in	22	Meyer, Bob, plumber	23
Brier, Royce	21	MV Historical Society	20-22
Brown's furniture store	10,11, 22	MV Library, Lovell Ave., remodeled and repriced	18,19
Brown, Lester	10,27	Mill Valley Lumber Co.	12
bus depot	11	Mill Valley Market	28,29
Canepa, Frank	28,29	Mill Valley, post-World War II	8
Chamber of Commerce	17,25, 26	Miller Avenue merchants, 1950s	22-24
C of C annual "Clover Days" sale	24,25	Miller Avenue retail trade, 1940s	11
childhood	2	Mosher's Shoes at 32 Miller Avenue	6,11, 23,31
children	4,7,8	Mosher's Shoes, move to Keystone Building	11
college	2,3	Mosher's Shoes, sale of	31,32
Comstock, George	11	Mosher, Clara (Hamilton), first wife	3,4,7
Davood's, location	23n	Mosher, Clara, death of	7
Democratic party, political campaigns	19	Mosher, Jean (Hollings- worth), wife	7,33, 35
downtown merchants, changes since 1940s	13	Mosher, John, son	7,8, 33
downtown merchants, 1940s	9	Mosher, Mitchell, son	7
downtown merchants, political force	17	Mosher, Robert, son	4,8
Drexler, Fred	5	Murphy, Dove	29
Drexler, Jane	5,6	Murphy, Ruth	11,29, 30
"drug industry"	13	musical instrument bldg.	33
education	2	Nail, Bradford, Cheryl, and Joe	32
Fleming, Bill	11,27	The Office, bar	10
Goheen, George	27	Office of War Information	3
Gomez, Manny	28	Old Brown's Store	10
goods and services, Mill Valley, 1940s	12,13	Oman, Don, Interviewer	
grandchildren	8	oral history project, MV	20,21
Hallowe'en celebration, Lytton Square	26,27	Pacific Theatre, WW II	4
Hartman, Dr. Rod	11	parents	1
History Room	21	Pearl Harbor	3
Hoyle, George	26		

Mosher index
Page 2

Planning Commission	16
Pohli, Emil	10,25, 26
Powers, Doris	11
public officeholders	17,18
Quinn's bar	10
R&M Style Shop	11,29, 30
real estate prices	18
realtors, Mill Valley	18
redwood trees planted in Lytton Square	11
restaurants in Mill Valley, 1940s	9
retail merchandising today, prospects	34
retirement, 1975	32-34
Rotary Club	17,26
Rutherford, Hugh	26
<u>SF Chronicle</u> , writing book reviews for	21
savings & loans in Mill Valley, 1940s	9
Security First National Bank, 1937-1941	3
shoe stores in Mill Valley, 1940s	6
shoe store jobs	5
Stone, Bill	26,27
Storey, Bob	27,28
Strawbridge, Gordon	6,30,31
Strawbridge's	6
Tamalpais Hardware	23
teaching credential	3
Tiemen and Dukes	23
Tieman, MV mayor	23
tourism, Sausalito	13
traffic and parking problems, downtown MV	15
trains	11,12
village intimacy	14,15
Mr. Wood, Tam High principal	5
World War II	3,4
young, well-to-do Mill Valley residents	13,14

Carl Mosher

Born December, 1910 at Alden, Kansas.

Resident of Mill Valley since 1947.

Interviewed October 17, 1979 in the Board Room of
the Mill Valley Public Library.

The following manuscript is open for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to Mill Valley Public Library. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without written permission of Librarian, Mill Valley Public Library, 375 Throckmorton Avenue, Mill Valley, California 94941. Requests should include identification of specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of passages, and identification of user.

CARL MOSHER

Donald Oman

This is Don Oman and I'm in the Board Room of the Mill Valley Library with Carl Mosher for a history interview. It's October 17, 1979. To start out with, Carl, I'd like to get a little brief review of your own personal history, your education, what happened during the war years. Can you begin by telling us how old you are, where you came from, and how you got here?

Carl Mosher

Yes, I will, Don, thank you. I was born in December, 1910 in a little town in Kansas, Alden, Kansas, out in the wheat belt, and very shortly thereafter, my father, who had married a young lady from the state of Virginia who was very religiously oriented, decided to become a minister, so we didn't stay in the wheat belt long. My father really worked in a store there anyway, he wasn't farming at the time, although he did a lot of farming. But very shortly thereafter we went to Ottawa, Kansas, which is a town near Kansas City. The reason for that was that the Baptist University that was training most of the ministers was there, Ottawa University. He hadn't had a lot of schooling so he was forced to really do a cram course in high school before he could be admitted to the University, even though the standards then weren't as high as they are now. He eventually did that, working his way with the help of my mother, who developed a speciality of cleaning and starching the fancy lace curtains which were de rigueur in those days. Thus they worked his way through high school and three years of college.

Mr. Oman

When did he bring you out to the Pacific Coast? You went up to the Northwest, I think, didn't you?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, that's very true, we did. The first move we made was when he left Ottawa as a junior, because of his health, and we went to a little town in Colorado. That's going part way west. Hooper, Colorado. He also did a stint as a minister in Canyon City as well as in Florence, Colorado, both on the Arkansas River. Then we went back to Kansas for a little bit, and then, along about 1922 or three, we went to the Pacific Northwest, to the State of Oregon. Let's see now, his pastorates; well, he had one in Denver for a little while on the way, one in Idaho for a while, and then at our destination in the state of Oregon, it was Junction City and Gladstone, the latter being a suburb of Portland.

Mr. Oman

When did you come to California?

Mr. Mosher

Later, in 1928. But to back up for a moment, after the Oregon stint we went back to Kansas for a slight turn, when I was in high school, and were there about a year. Then came the trip to California, where I've lived ever since. This was 1928.

Mr. Oman

You came out in '28. That would be better than fifty years ago.

Mr. Mosher

Yes, yes that's right. And we went to San Jose, then to Ukiah, California, where I was a senior in high school. Actually I started my senior year in San Jose, and graduated in 1929 in Ukiah. I'd gone to thirteen schools in five states in those twelve years.

Mr. Oman

And you went to the University of Southern California?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I did, geographically speaking. I would have been normally in the class of 1933, but I worked for three years,

so I was in the class of 1936 at the University of Redlands, (not U.S.C.) which was another Baptist-sponsored school (like Ottawa University) in the town of Redlands, sixty-five miles east of Los Angeles.

Mr. Oman

Then, after you got out of college, you taught for a while? Did you?

Mr. Mosher

Before that I worked for the Security First National Bank for almost five years, 1937 till 1941, and during that time I was doing additional educational work toward a general secondary teaching credential.

Mr. Oman

And that brought you up pretty close to the war years. What happened during the war?

Mr. Mosher

It does indeed. I was teaching in Compton, California, the fall of 1941 and the spring of 1942, and we know what occurred on December 7, 1941. I continued teaching in the spring and. . . .

Mr. Oman

You and I know what happened. . . .

Mr. Mosher

That was Pearl Harbor Day, when the Japanese attacked, and the war started, yes. I was teaching at Willowbrook High School in Compton, a suburb of Los Angeles. They had an unusual system there, that actually put together the seventh and eighth grades and the ninth and tenth grades, which would be the equivalent of freshman and sophomore high school. Anyway, I had a contract to go back and teach, in June of 1942, when school ended, but I didn't expect ever to do it, and sure enough I didn't. I've never taught a minute since. Because of the unusual times I went to work for the Office of War Information in San Francisco, where my wife had gone. I had married in 1937. My wife was a student at the University of Redlands. Her maiden name was Clara

Hamilton. Her home was San Francisco, where she went in 1942. So I joined her there and went to work for OWI, where I worked eleven months; at which point I was drafted, even though I was thirty-two years of age.

Mr. Oman

Did you have any children then?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. Our son Robert was born in November 1942. But that didn't count. I was in a small draft board in Redlands, California and they ran out of people, so they started calling the older folks. And that caught me.

Mr. Oman

You served in the Pacific?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. I ended up after doing a variety of things in the Army in the counter-intelligence corps, as what they called a 'special agent'. Counter-intelligence is designed, to oversimplify it, to prevent the enemy doing to you the things you'd like to do to them. So I'd gone to Camp Ritchie, which was the military intelligence training center, not too far from Baltimore, Maryland.

Mr. Oman

How long were you in the Army?

Mr. Mosher

Oh, I think it was about two and a half years.

Mr. Oman

Then you came back to California?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. I was in the Pacific Theatre, and then at the end of the war, two and a half months after the end of the war, I was back in California and was discharged. At that point my whole life shifted.

Mr. Oman

Did you have any definite plan of what you wanted to do when you got out of the service? Or did you know what you wanted to do?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I had an idea I might go back to teaching.

Mr. Oman

But you never did.

Mr. Mosher

No, I never did. In the three years I was out, at the beginning of the depression, I had worked in two or three shoe stores. Very hard to get work then, and as a matter of fact I worked in two department stores, in the shoe departments, and the first year I was in college I worked in a shoe store in Redlands. So I did consider the shoe business as an alternative to teaching.

My roommate most of the time I was in college was Fred Drexler, a well-known person in Mill Valley. He came here when we graduated in 1936, and has lived in Mill Valley ever since, forty-three years. Occasionally, before the war because of our intimate friendship, we would come over here to visit the Drexlers. His wife was also a Redlands classmate. Our wives were sorority sisters, and we were fraternity brothers and roommates, so naturally we'd get together in Mill Valley.

Mr. Oman

And that's how you got acquainted with the county?

Mr. Mosher

So I was very much interested in Mill Valley. You asked the question of what I wanted to do. The answer is that I really wanted to teach. I interviewed Mr. Wood, the principal at Tam High, with the idea of becoming a history teacher at Tam but he was full up in that department. Since I was determined that if I went back to teaching it would be in the area of my interest, history, I had to do something else to remain in Mill Valley.

Somebody said one day, when we were talking about the problem "Well, I know you sold shoes for a while." (As a matter of fact, it was Jane Drexler.) "Why don't you start a shoe store in Mill Valley? We don't have one; we just have a little tiny shoe department in the local department store, and we've never had a shoe store." Which turned out not to be true, there had been one in the 1890's. But that's another story. While thinking on these matters I was increasingly mulling over the idea of a shoe store. So I came over here and, to my dismay, discovered there was going to be a slight game of musical chairs going on. In short, a couple of stores were moving. There was a store at 32 Miller Avenue, named Strawbridges, a stationery and camera store run by Gordon Strawbridge a well-known citizen here for many years. He was moving into a location being vacated in Lytton Square. The move took place in February, 1947. Earlier, during the last half of 1946, to get a refresher course, I worked for the Frank Werner Co. in San Francisco. So, since the slot at 32 Miller was being vacated I made arrangements to move in as Gordon moved out.

Mr. Oman

Subsequently you moved your store over onto Lytton Square next door to, or practically next door to, Strawbridges.

Mr. Mosher

Yes, you're right. There was one spot in between.

Mr. Oman

You were a downtown merchant then for twenty-five or thirty years.

Mr. Mosher

Well, in my ownership, for twenty-eight years, because I opened in March of 1947.

Mr. Oman

Before we get into the further discussion of your business, will you bring us up to date on your personal family situation.

Mr. Mosher

Yes, I referred to my first wife, Don, a little while ago. To back up a little bit, when I was a high school senior in Ukiah, I went to a church camp at Asilomar. I was there two weeks, with young people, all high school kids or just out of high school, and I met a young lady from San Francisco, named Clara Hamilton. We rather liked each other and much to my surprise, when I went to Redlands in 1932 who do I find on campus as a fellow freshman but this same young lady. We dated our freshman year and then, as so often happens in college, we broke up. She was once engaged to another person but that broke up in her senior year. So, and I suppose this often happens too, not long after we graduated there we were back together again. We had scouted the field and hadn't found anybody we liked better. In April 1937 we were married. She worked for several years as a secretary to the business manager of the University.

Mr. Oman

And you had a family?

Mr. Mosher

In 1942, November 1942 Bob was born, and in 1944, April, our son John, or Jack, was born. We had two children. We were married for eighteen years. Unfortunately, thirteen months before our eighteenth anniversary, she suddenly became ill, something which we couldn't imagine, because she'd hardly been sick in her life. She was past forty years of age then but looked much younger. It turned out to be cancer, and she only lived thirteen months. That was a terrific shock! Then, almost two years later, I had met a lady who was somewhat (nine years) younger than me, but oddly enough she had a son who was somewhat older than my two sons. We hit it off well. Jean Hollingsworth, her married name was Anderson, and I were married in November, 1956. We moved to 535 Summit Avenue, where we now live, and where we hope to stay indefinitely. Her son, Mitchell, I adopted shortly after we were married. He has become a member of the family, and one that we're very proud of. He's a podiatrist now, who practices up in Roseville and vicinity, and is very successful.

Mr. Oman

And the other two boys? What do they do?

Mr. Mosher

Well, Bob is actually teaching school now, although I don't know that he's going to continue that too long. He lives in Fetters Hot Springs, which is in Sonoma County. He's married to a nice young lady whose maiden name was Phyllis Anderson. They have no children. Jack is a general contractor, and lives in Fairfax. He has two children by his first marriage, he's divorced, and in his second marriage has two children by adoption. So there are four involved there. Mitch has three children, so we have seven grandchildren. As fine a family as one could wish for.

Mr. Oman

And they're all in the Northern California area so that you can get together on occasion.

Mr. Mosher

And that of course is a marvelous thing, which delights us.

Mr. Oman

Well let's see, what was Mill Valley like during these post-war decades? It changed a lot during the almost thirty years that you had your business in downtown Mill Valley. What do you recall? Were the trains still running? Had the bridge been built yet?

Mr. Mosher

You're speaking of the Golden Gate Bridge? No, that was finished in 1937. We often came over to Mill Valley by ferry while the bridge was being built, and I remember that well. Very briefly, my first detailed impressions of downtown Mill Valley have to do with the period immediately after the War, in 1946, when I was thinking about going into business here. Downtown Mill Valley reminds everybody of something in Europe, some people say Switzerland and some say the Midlands of England, it's kind of a combination of the two, and it's such an attractive, choice place.

Mr. Oman

What kind of businesses were there on the square in

this little community? You mentioned that there was a department store.

Mr. Mosher

Yes, on the corner where Moody Blues is now, was Albert's Department Store. They had a similar store also in San Rafael in those days, later to become Macy's. They were our only shoe competition. Over on Lytton Square, though, one of the interesting things, Don, was the fact that instead of merchandising, there was a barber shop, and the P. G. and E. office. In fact, if memory serves, P. G. and E. was where Strawbridges went in 1947.

Mr. Oman

Were there any banks? There must have been a bank in town then.

Mr. Mosher

Yes, two, right where the ones downtown are now. The Bank of America formerly the Bank of Italy, I guess, for years, and the other bank, now Wells Fargo, I think was American Trust.

Mr. Oman

Savings and Loans, there are two or three of those in downtown Mill Valley now. They didn't come in until some time later, did they?

Mr. Mosher

That's right. Even Northwestern, which I believe was the first here, didn't come until later.

Mr. Oman

How about restaurants and bars?

Mr. Mosher

Well, where Bell Savings is now, there was a restaurant, Stiveson's, for countless years. Over next door to the Mill Valley Market there was also a restaurant.

Mr. Oman

Well then Quinn's famous bar was on the corner too at one time?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, that's right. On second thought I believe it was where the Mill Valley Market liquor store is now.

Mr. Oman

And the real estate office.

Mr. Mosher

Yes. Emil Pohli had a real estate office there and insurance. And as you say, Jimmy Quinn's bar was in that area. He also owned for years the bar that's up on Throckmorton. I don't go to bars anymore and I forget the name of it.

Mr. Oman

Sweetwater.¹ What other kind of merchants were there in downtown Mill Valley in the early days? Service or merchandising businesses?

Mr. Mosher

I think one of the most conspicuous differences was the presence of Brown's, a large furniture operation. There's nothing comparable at all now. In fact Lester Brown did business all over Marin County, making it a very sizeable operation.

Mr. Oman

That was in recent years converted to what they now call "Old Brown's Store?"

Mr. Mosher

Yes. I don't know what he thought of the "Old Brown" business. I guess it was apropos. I might add that if he

¹True, although there was one owner in between: Joe Mayer, who called the place "The Office" during his ownership.

hadn't been there doing a big business, I don't think I would have opened the store at 32 Miller. In other words, Brown's was beyond my location and I had the feeling that that would draw quite a bit of traffic from Lytton Square. Well, it did to a certain extent, but his was not the same type of business, and it didn't draw enough to do much good. Miller Avenue in those days was very poor as far as the small retail trade went.

Mr. Oman

When you moved into the lower floor of the Keystone Building, what other kinds of operations were there? Upstairs as well as down.

Mr. Mosher

Over my store was Dr. Rod Hartman's office for many years. I think that went all the way back to during World War II and maybe before. And then we had George Comstock's engineering firm upstairs, as well as Bill Fleming, accountant, Bob Andresen came in later, I can't remember just when, as an attorney there. I think it was in the late forties, but I'm not sure about that. On the first floor I bought a lease so I could move into the children's shop, run by Doris Powers. She moved out as I moved in. Next door on the corner was the R & M Style Shop, ladies clothing.

Mr. Oman

What was Lytton Square like itself? Had the trees been planted in the middle of the square yet?

Mr. Mosher

No. Believe it or not, the enormous redwood trees that look like they have been there since the middle ages, were planted in the early fifties. Ruth Murphy, who ran the R & M Shop, and I, stood out in Lytton Square and watched them set the little trees down. You could pick them (the trees) up in one hand. Prior to that there was just parking in the middle of Lytton Square in those days.

Mr. Oman

Now, the bus depot, the trains were not running.

Mr. Mosher

Well, I wouldn't say that. The passenger trains weren't running.

Mr. Oman

The railroad station had been converted into a bus depot, I believe.

Mr. Mosher

That's right, but they still brought freight in. The freight was mostly for Mill Valley Lumber. They also brought in plumbing equipment, I think, for Varney's and people like that, on occasion. Heavy objects, and also some things for Brown's. It usually came in at night. I lived on Miller Avenue in those days and I can well remember that, because the shuffling around of freight cars would wake one up during the night and be somewhat irritating.

Mr. Oman

What was your impression of the kind of business that was done here in Mill Valley? Most of the people were commuters to San Francisco, working. Did they buy most of their things in the city? Were the goods and services offered in Mill Valley a complete variety of things, or did people have to go to San Rafael or San Francisco if they wanted to buy a suit of clothes, or if they wanted to buy an automobile?

Mr. Mosher

No, as a matter of fact, Don, I think it was more complete than it is now.

Mr. Oman

That's interesting.

Mr. Mosher

I think it was a carry-over from the ferry days when it was actually a bit of a problem to go to the city, and most of the ladies didn't like the idea of going over to shop as a regular thing. For example, the Albert Department Store, and later Mayer's Department Store, served great needs. Just to mention one thing that comes to mind, they had all kinds

of bathroom supplies, linen and blankets, underwear, and basic bread and butter materials, you know, that every family needs. Those things are hard to come by now, even though we have a terrific multiplication of other things going on.

Mr. Oman

Were there any boutiques or tourist-type shops?

Mr. Mosher

Not really. There were some smallish shops, but they were run in a different way. The boutique, to me, has an aura of expensive luxury, that these shops didn't have. They dealt generally with elementary merchandise. For example for years and years we had the variety store, Bennetts; we still do, although I guess it's in the process of closing out, and if that should fold, and nothing of like nature came in after it, that would leave us without a lot of the unglamorous everyday merchandise. If you don't have those things, and you're just dealing in expensive luxuries and gift-type things, you have drastically narrowed the shopping choices as far as the average family goes.

Mr. Oman

How do you account for this change of types of business in Mill Valley? Is it more money and more tourists, or how do you account for it?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, there certainly are a lot more tourists. Of course anything as attractive as Mill Valley, this close to a large metropolitan area, is going to get a big play. Somehow the pattern was set by Sausalito, which started as a tourist town many years before Mill Valley. The quantity of conventional people of means has grown too. They've always been here, but it's added to their number greatly. There is also a new element of young well-to-do people, which are exemplified by the drug industry, which we all know has been pretty big in Marin, particularly in Southern Marin.

Mr. Oman

And there have been a fair number of rock band and entertainers, types of young people who've moved over here also,

I think, with lots of money.

Mr. Mosher

Oh, yes, I can remember once about, I suppose, ten years ago, I had a call in the middle of the afternoon from a young man. He said he wanted to be downtown around five-thirty; when do you close? And I said "Around five-thirty." And he said, "Well, we'll try to be there by five-thirty. But if not, would you wait for us?" I demurred a little bit, but he said, no, it's worth your while. So I waited and a little after five-thirty an enormous limousine pulled up, full of people, I think there were seven in it, and they got out and rapped on the door. He said, "I'm the guy we were talking about." This was a whole rock band which was trying to be inconspicuous by coming at closing time. They lived up in the hills somewhere. I must have sold them four or five hundred dollars worth of merchandise in the next hour or two. They were typical of the high roller types that have infested the area during the last decade.

Mr. Oman

As a downtown merchant who served families; practically every family in Mill Valley must have been a customer of yours at one time or another. How about the small talk and gossiping?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I certainly did see a big cross-section of people over the years all right. The gossiping and small talk were minimal though. Most Mill Valley people were, then at least, not given to that sort of thing. As a generalization, however, I'd like to say that in my experience Mill Valley inhabitants are extraordinarily nice people. I haven't mentioned the fact that I opened a store in Daly City, in the Westlake Shopping Center in 1952. I went down there part time; as the years went by, my time in that store got less and less, for the reason that I was spoiled by being used to waiting on the type people we had here in Mill Valley. By and large they were, and still are, considerate, nice, paid their bills, and were just pleasant to be around.

Mr. Oman

A lot of them knew you and probably called you by name.

It was not an impersonal business.

Mr. Mosher

That's right. It had a village intimacy, that doesn't exist now--so much, anyway. When you went to the bank or the postoffice in those days, you generally knew everybody you saw, or practically everyone.

Mr. Oman

There's been a buildup of traffic and parking problems that had an effect on local business.

Mr. Mosher

Well, of course everyone who lived here more than twenty years ago, talks about that, because we have essentially horse-and-buggy streets in Mill Valley--even downtown, and we've had this enormous influx of traffic. And another thing that has happened here is the large numbers of young people who, for a variety of reasons, have found something attractive, and they have doubled up and tripled up and even quadrupled up in the houses. If you drive around the hills you find cars parked along the street bumper to bumper. Every one of those cars represents two or more people who are living communal style in traditional one-family residences. And this situation does, of course, create traffic jams downtown. So that, while you could walk across the street with fair safety without looking either way twenty-five years ago, you wouldn't do it now any more than you would cross Market street without looking.

Mr. Oman

And yet Mill Valley today has about three stop lights: one out by Tam High, by the Safeway store, one by the Middle School, one by Park School, and one at East Blithedale and Camino Alto. As far as I know, that's all. There are none in downtown Mill Valley.

Mr. Mosher

None whatsoever.

Mr. Oman

And there are no police directing traffic in downtown

Mill Valley, even today, are there? Except perhaps for a special event.

Mr. Mosher

Exactly. So it is a hard place to get around in, whereas it used to be quite different. Mill Valley, you know, due to the terrain, hasn't changed in appearance all that much. There isn't a lot you can do to the appearance of a mountain town, particularly if you live in a forest; the houses are mostly hidden. And then the terrain prohibits building in a lot of ways.

The biggest thing they ever did downtown while I'm thinking of it, Don, (to change appearance) was to plant trees in the sidewalks intermittently. And then there was the famous "Paint-up" campaign back in the fifties. The whole area, which is structurally surprisingly similar to earlier days now, looks vastly better because of the coordinated paint job. So far it's been kept up pretty well too, which is a blessing.

Mr. Oman

I guess the Planning Commission has control over the appearance of certain types of establishments. It seems to me that there have been rulings by them to keep certain types of commercial architecture out of the village, particularly the franchise-type buildings. Is this right?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, there's been a big effort to keep things the way it used to be in the old days. Some of the buildings have been remodeled and rebuilt, and the architectural advisory people have encouraged period designs of many of the new structures so that they're attractive and, I think, they'll have lasting esthetic appeal. There are two buildings going up on lower Miller Avenue now, and while people laugh at them in a certain way, they're interesting architecturally. There is lots of detail, and that's the sort of building, I think, that has lasting character; in contrast to the tiresome rectangle that's set down somewhere with a roof on it.

Mr. Oman

As a retail merchant in a town like Mill Valley I sup-

pose you had opportunities to belong to some of the local civic groups and organizations. Which ones, if any, did you belong to?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I belonged to the Chamber of Commerce for the whole twenty-eight years. I also belonged to the Rotary Club, which was the only social or semi-social club I frequented. I was limited in extra curricular activity because I was one of the smaller merchants who had to spend most of their time in their business to make them profitable. You don't get out and run around too much under those circumstances because your presence is necessary. So it was nice to be required, once a week, to go to some kind of a public meeting like that and meet fellow merchants.

Mr. Oman

The downtown merchants, on occasion at least, were a political force in Mill Valley domestic politics. Who ran, who does run, Mill Valley now?

Mr. Mosher

That's an interesting question, Don, and it bears on what I was just saying a minute ago. It was always hard to get merchants to participate, to go on the City Council and similar meetings, because they needed to "watch the store." This was exemplified by me certainly. I customarily worked six and a half days a week; the half being Sunday morning, because I had things I had to do which couldn't well be done during the week. Many other merchants, although perhaps not that diligent, were on the job all the time, and they had an understandable tendency to not have the energy to attend all those meetings. For that reason the merchants, at least in the old days, when you had a little different type stores and so on, just didn't get involved too much.

Mr. Oman

Then what kind of men and women did take the jobs, run for office? As leaders in the community, political leaders?

Mr. Mosher

Generally well-to-do precocious people who had offices in the city but who wanted to have a political activity

here; real estate people, lawyers and certain types that always have a desire to get into politics for various reasons.

Mr. Oman

Well, real estate has, for many years, been one of Mill Valley's leading industries hasn't it?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, that's right. Many of the desirable homes just simply don't turn over. They stay occupied for a lifetime, but other than that, there's terrific activity.

Mr. Oman

Incidentally, in the matter of real estate, I'd like to have you comment on your observations of what has happened to real estate prices in Southern Marin County in the last five years or so since the nation has been experiencing wild inflation.

Mr. Mosher

Well, everything we've said about the desirability of Southern Marin and Mill Valley is an explanation of the fact that real estate has gone up here, about as much as any place in the country.

Mr. Oman

Do you remember what you paid for your house? I was told that mine cost \$3500 to build in 1903; it's one of the older homes, and it might be worth \$250,000 or \$300,000 today.

Mr. Mosher

Oh, yes, I wouldn't doubt it in the least. It's a good location and so on. The amount I paid for mine on Summit Avenue doesn't mean very much because I've changed it about ten times over the twenty-five years that I've been there, but all homes have gone up somewhere between ten and twenty times.

Mr. Oman

Do you remember a few years ago the old library in Mill Valley was sold by the City, it seems to me for \$18,000,

and perhaps with a trade of some other property.

Mr. Mosher

Something like that.

Mr. Oman

And I believe that I saw somebody has re-modeled it into a home and the last price I saw on it was somewhere in the neighborhood of four hundred or four hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Mr. Mosher

That's correct. When I saw that sign, I was struck dumb. In fact I parked my car that day and I got out and I hiked up the steps, walked around looking in the windows at a luxury dwelling, in an old Carnegie Library! Incredible! As a matter of fact, almost thirty years before that I'd been on the Library Board. Looking through the window into the room where we used to sit, I saw these fabulous luxury fittings, mahogany walls, and huge rugs. A luxury house, one can hardly believe in that setting.

Mr. Oman

As a resident and merchant in Mill Valley all these years, you became involved in numerous extra activities. You mentioned having been on the Library Board. You have been interested in the Library, and you've undertaken activities, political and social activities--over and above your business. What types of things have you done?

Mr. Mosher

Well, we referred to that a minute ago, and I was saying that most of the merchants, small merchants, just couldn't get involved too heavily. I did, however, participate in political campaigns somewhat. I was a life-long Republican until the Joe McCarthy period, in the early fifties, at which point I bailed out of the Republican Party. And after that for about fifteen years I was active in Democratic politics. In fact I was once co-chairman of the Congressional political campaign for the area, and put in a lot more time than I wanted to. A tough exhausting job--if there ever was one. It was when George McCabe was running for congress. I, for example, took a chance and did things that other merchants

didn't do in the area of politics. For example, I always permitted political signs, and handed out pamphlets and brochures in the store, a policy that's considered death to merchants. For some reason I had the idea that in Mill Valley you could get away with that.

Mr. Oman

And you did.

Mr. Mosher

As a matter of fact I did, fortunately.

Mr. Oman

Tell us a little bit about your work with the children, the San Rafael building, and so on.

Mr. Mosher

Yes. That occurred many years later, just after retirement. I worked as a Board member of the Marin Child Development Center, which is a non-profit, United Fund organization, which has been in existence for approximately fifteen years. During the two years I was on the Board, we had the good fortune to be able to put up our own building in San Rafael. Since then the school has grown. It's considered, in its field, a very important institution. They train young children up to the age of approximately ten who have autistic and similar difficulties. There's one teacher usually for about every three young people enrolled. So it's a very specialized school.

Mr. Oman

And your connection with the Library in Mill Valley?

Mr. Mosher

Well, as I say, I was on the Library Board in the early fifties, and then I've always been interested in it, working with the Historical Society, and the thing we're doing now, working with Oral History, things like that.

Mr. Oman

You've been President of the Mill Valley Historical Society?

Mr. Mosher

No, no I've been Vice-president, but I've done a lot of work with it. I'm involved in the Oral History program, though, as chairman, for three years, and have worked with it actually seven years.

Mr. Oman

Were you active at the time that the History Room was put into the basement of the Library?

Mr. Mosher

Only verbally. That happened during the period when I was so busy with the school, (the Marin Child Development Center) that I didn't get involved here.

Mr. Oman

Have you had other extra-curricular activities over the years that you'd like to comment on?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I wrote book reviews as a guest reviewer for the Chronicle for three years, at one period.

Mr. Oman

Did you specialize on certain types of books that were in your field of interest?

Mr. Mosher

I tried to specialize in history books, but it turned out I did very few. The reason, I think, had to do with the fact that in lieu of money, the paper gave the guest reviewer the book being reviewed. There was a writer by the name of Royce Brier who was with the Chronicle then who also reviewed books. He wrote political columns, but since history was his interest I imagine he accumulated a much larger history library than I. I did a variety of things. It was, above all, stimulating and a great change of pace. It took a lot of time evenings but was sufficiently interesting that I did it for about three years, before dropping out.

Mr. Oman

This raises another point about you as an individual. I've been in your home, and I've seen your personal library and know something of your interest in reading. It seems to me that you have a far greater interest in bookish matters than most.

Mr. Mosher

I daresay that's true.

Mr. Oman

How much time do you spend reading? Usually?

Mr. Mosher

That's hard to say. I read sometimes two or three books a week, then again maybe one. Lots of history and biography, and some philosophy, and a few magazines, although not very many.

Mr. Oman

What magazines appeal to you?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I've read the New Yorker for years. And I get history magazines. I belong to the American Historical Society, the Western Historical Society, the Mill Valley Historical Society, and a number of others.

Mr. Oman

Before we leave the discussion of the life and times of a downtown merchant in Mill Valley, I'm wondering if you might have some recollections of some more of the stores downtown?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I might mention the ones on Miller Avenue, because, as stated before, that's where I started in business in 1947. I was there until early 1949 when I moved to Lytton Square where the store still is. Brown's, as I said earlier, was a very large furniture operation, and we also had a popular barber-shop, plus a couple of other items between there and

my store. Right next door was a very active plumbing shop, run by Bob Meyer, a young go-getter. Actually he rented the whole building that I was in, 32 Miller. He put a wall-board divider down the center of the building, and rented the other half. So the rent I was paying took care of all the rent; he was rent-free and had the other half, which was all right, I didn't blame him, it was fine. It was an interesting place to do business though, because they had lathes and pipe-cutting machines and all sorts of things going in the back of the shop, with only this wall-board in between. He also had some ex-soldiers in there, fresh from World War II whose language was interesting. When you had a store full of customers, and they'd start up the pipe machine, and then stop because something had gone wrong, you'd hear one of these ex-soldiers use extraordinary language. Now, of course, a first-grader wouldn't turn his or her head, but we were all a little more particular in those days. We had some interesting philosophical exchanges as a result!

Mr. Oman

I'll bet you did!

Mr. Mosher

Next door, on the other side, was a hardware store, Tamalpais Hardware, belonging to Tiemen and Dukes. Tiemen had at one time been Mayor, and both of them were very active. They were older people, prominent in the American Legion, being veterans of World War I. However, they were prominent business men who brought a certain amount of traffic down there. On the whole though it was not a good place to be, particularly if one's business depended on foot traffic. And next to them, when I went in. . . .

Mr. Oman

Pardon me, I can't resist commenting that the shoe business needs foot traffic. (Laughter)

Mr. Mosher

In more ways than one. And two doors down now, where Davood's¹ is, was a large garage. As I moved in, it was

¹ 22 Miller Avenue.

getting a new facade featuring an electric sign which said "Johnson Motors". They were introducing some off-brand cars. I think the Edsel was one, I forget. Oh, and they had the Henry J.--it was a Henry J. garage too, remember that?

Mr. Oman

Henry J. Kaiser?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. Alas, that only lasted a few years (poor Johnson). Then we had the bank, the bakery, drug store and department store on the corner of Miller and Throckmorton.

Mr. Oman

Do you feel that the Miller Avenue foot traffic has changed much?

Mr. Mosher

Oh, yes, I see all kinds of action down there now. What with Brown's being the boutique-type place with many shops, there is twenty times more foot traffic--there's no question about it.

Mr. Oman

You mentioned having been active in the Chamber of Commerce. What are some of the things the Chamber of Commerce did?

Mr. Mosher

They had a tendency to take a position on all business-related city affairs. Since they did, the merchants didn't usually feel duty bound to do much else. My chief involvement with the Chamber of Commerce was in the merchandising sales area. I was chairman of the town annual sale for five years. They don't have them any more, but in those days we felt it was necessary to have annual sales. And we used to generate a lot of activity.

Mr. Oman

Tell me a little bit about those. Would all merchants plan a sale under a blanket name of some sort?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. At one time we had something called "Clover Days". We used a four-leaf clover as a motif; everybody would have their ads printed around the picture of a clover, a symbol of good luck in our culture.

Mr. Oman

Did those stimulate business?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, they did generate quite a bit of traffic. They were an enormous amount of trouble to run because owner-operated small stores have a long tradition of having rather independent people running them. They weren't particularly cooperative, so most people who chaired these events a time or two would wash their hands of the whole thing, saying "If they don't want to cooperate, forget it".

Mr. Oman

Speaking back of the old times, it occurs to me that you probably were acquainted with a good number of what would be famous names, in Mill Valley historical terms. Let me start by naming one or two. We mentioned Emil Pohli for example, a little earlier. Do you want to start with him and tell me a little bit about what you know about him and some of his contemporaries?

Mr. Mosher

Emil Pohli, as we mentioned earlier, had a real estate and insurance business over, roughly, where the liquor store is now in the Mill Valley Market. He was an enormous man, I guess about six feet two, and around three hundred pounds; terribly hard size foot to fit, I was never able to sell him shoes. If I remember correctly, he wore size thirteen triple A, which was really extraordinary for a heavy-set man. A great booming heavy voice. He was a high-ranking naval officer in both World Wars, as I recall it, and that's where the somewhat intimidating quarter-deck voice came from, I suppose.

Mr. Oman

Was he a power in Mill Valley? In politics and civic affairs?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, he was a leader in the Rotary Club and fairly prominent in the Chamber of Commerce affairs. I don't recall that he was ever on the Council or anything like that, but he was a big voice around town, in more ways than one.

Mr. Oman

And some of his contemporaries?

Mr. Mosher

Oh, Hugh Rutherford--he happened to be a very good friend of Pohli's--ran the drug-store that still bears his name, now owned by George Hoyle. But Hugh Rutherford was in his prime when I came here in 1947, and I believe at that time was also president of the Rotary Club. I don't think he enjoyed terribly good health, but he was a very cooperative, friendly man, who was your old-type druggist. The town was full of people that were as likely to come in and ask Hugh Rutherford what to get, if they felt bad, as to call the doctor. A very helpful nice guy.

Mr. Oman

His drugstore was just across the street and down a few doors on Throckmorton from Emil Pohli's office?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. Another one who operated right in that area, long ago deceased, was Bill Stone who ran an appliance store where the branch post office is now.

Mr. Oman

Just across the street from the City Hall?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. I guess Stone was in his fifties or sixties when I came here in 1947. But he was very active in city affairs. I can remember once we had a Halloween Show, at night. A small town blow-out in Lytton Square. Somebody brought in a big flat-bed truck on which musicians gathered, and Bill Stone, wearing a pair of coveralls with his store name printed on them, was up there slapping his hands, acting as emcee. All the kids in their costumes filled Lytton

Square. It was a typical village-type thing that you never see any more. But Stone was an extrovert, and a nice guy to have around. He didn't last too long, however. He married a lady much younger than he and they had several young kids. The combination of responsibilities wore poor old Bill out. But a real character in his day. Well, we talked about Les Brown, too. One of the things that always impressed me about Les was the fact that, while he was easily the wealthiest person around, he had made a good share of his money out of financing all his own credit sales.

Mr. Oman

Was he able to finance other individuals, and ventures as well?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, he did, for a variety of things, including Mill Valley's practically only big developer, who built all the lower area, George Goheen. He helped finance him in the beginning. Les Brown had something of the air of a kind of a slick dealer, but as far as I know he gave good values, and his service department was always good.

Mr. Oman

He had a full line of furniture and rugs and lighting fixtures and. . . .

Mr. Mosher

Everything you could think of, another one of those complete places. You could go for anything for your home, including men who put down rugs and linoleum, and repaired everything under the sun. Very important place.

Mr. Oman

Nothing quite like it in Mill Valley today.

Mr. Mosher

No. No, there isn't. Another one of those things we miss. Now, it's a pleasure to speak of Bill Fleming. We talked about Bill having an office on the second floor of the Keystone Building. He sold out a number of years ago to Bob Storey, who is the present occupant of that area. Bill

was my accountant and one of the first persons I met when I came to Mill Valley. We used to trade World War II tales and engage in long political debates which, alas, weren't recorded for posterity. (Laughter.) A wonderful friend and a fine man who has a well-deserved reputation for integrity.

Manny Gomez, a town character. And a great monologist. He was born in Spain or Mexico, I don't know which. However, his first language was Spanish, obviously, and, it seemed, he could have lived a hundred years in another country and never lost his accent. All this, plus rapid speech, made him extraordinarily hard to understand. Manny ran his jewelry store in Lytton Square for many years, although I don't think he was there too much because he was primarily a developer, and a generally hard-headed business man. He attended City Council meetings without fail. It was there that he became famous for his malapropisms. He fractured the people in City Hall once by jumping up and saying, "Now after all this, let's get down to the brass facts". This was vintage Gomez; he had a thousand of them!

Mr. Oman

Isn't there a street named after him?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, Gomez Way, and a series of apartments, condominiums, he built at the top of the hill.

Mr. Oman

Down by the high school?

Mr. Mosher

Yes. He built a lot of things around, as well as engaging in land speculation. He's now deceased, and he died a wealthy man.

Oh, let's see. There was of course Frank Canepa, down here at the Mill Valley Market, one of Mill Valley's great business institutions. He started that in 1929 on Throckmorton, up where the laundry is now, an establishment always famous for fine vegetables, good meats and good service. Frank was born in Italy; came over here, I think, around the early 1920s. He would get up at three o'clock in the morning

and go to San Francisco to buy fresh vegetables. Even after he was in retirement, he would still get up and help maintain the store's reputation, by going to the city to select vegetables. A man of proven integrity and with what we now think of as an old-fashioned concept of service. A customer was always right to Frank, and don't laugh, that's pretty important. Anybody who's been in a lot of current stores, that don't have that philosophy, knows how uncomfortable it is. He didn't talk very much, but when he did he had something to say, and he was greatly respected in the community. Ruth Murphy: Ruth ran the R&M Shop for countless years. As a matter of fact, in 1946, when I was thinking about coming to Mill Valley, somebody said, "You should talk to Ruth Murphy"! I did, I went to her home, and I asked her about a shoe store here. She gave me her view of the whole thing, both present and future, and, on the whole, was most encouraging and helpful. So I was happy eventually to end up as her next-door neighbor, for many years, on Lytton Square. And down the street was her husband, Dove, who ran the men's shop successfully for many years.

Mr. Oman

How do you spell his first name?

Mr. Mosher

D-O-V-E, I believe, I'm not positive of that, but I think so. He was a Chamber member, and a fellow Rotarian. I saw him quite a bit. Oh, that reminds me, when I talked to Ruth Murphy, in 1946, in her home, her store, instead of being in the Keystone Building in¹ Lytton Square was up approximately where the Accurate TV is now. They were there on a temporary basis for a year or two. What had happened was that the Keystone Building, which was very old, had to move all of their tenants out, because it had been discovered that the floors were suffering from termites and dry rot. So they made the difficult decision to move everybody, take up all the floors, and put in cement. By early 1947 the job was completed, permitting the various establishments to move back into the Keystone Building. I mention that because I don't think anyone has ever referred to this episode before. It was a great inconvenience to all parties and a definite cause célèbre at the time. Later she remodeled her store, in the fifties, and did a beautiful job. A great

¹ Throckmorton Avenue.

shop-- ladies from all over depended greatly on the R&M for their classic clothes.

Not long after the remodeling just referred to, I was sitting toward the front of my place one Saturday, fitting a pair of shoes, when, all of a sudden, I felt what we thought was an earthquake. The whole building shook; a terrific crash followed, leaving us all terrified. The shoes in my display windows started tumbling down. I jumped up off the shoe-stool and ran outside. Turning my head to the right, where my neighbor the R&M Shop was, I could see what appeared to be smoke coming out of the front. I thought, "My God, something terrible has happened." Moving in that direction I quickly saw that the whole front end of the store was gone. When I looked into the store I saw the back end of a very large Dodge station wagon. It had driven from the parking place immediately in front of the store, over the curb, smashed the parking meter flat, and crashed through the windows taking the whole big vehicle into the store. It was large enough, really, to occupy almost the entire selling-space. Mrs. Murphy was trapped unharmed in an open space behind the counter in back of the car or she might have been killed. There was a lady completely covered with bricks and dust, unconscious, lying by the car on the sidewalk. That was the scene I found. Unforgettable! It turned out that the driver was in a rental car and wasn't used to either the big motor or the automatic drive feature. He had thought he had put it in reverse, to back out, whereas actually it was in low --so when the car didn't move "in reverse," he stepped on the gas harder and harder, producing the result just described. It turned out that the lady who was knocked down was rather seriously injured, though not, fortunately, fatally. Anyway that's a long story and we don't need to go into it any further, but it is an interesting Lytton Square vignette.

Mr. Oman

The biggest piece of excitement they'd had for many years.

Mr. Mosher

You know it!

Gordon Strawbridge should always be mentioned, the founder of Strawbridge's, the scion of the famous Strawbridge family in Philadelphia. Strawbridge and Clothier, one of the world's largest department stores, bears the family name.

Along about the end of World War II he started the shop in Mill Valley, the stationery and camera store that I spoke of earlier, on Miller Avenue. An interesting man, with a sense of humor, he was very helpful to me when I moved in as he moved out of 32 Miller Avenue. There was opportunity for all kinds of friction but no problems of consequence appeared; in fact, we eventually bought a house next door to the Strawbridges and became neighbors and good friends. I remember Gordon once sent a number of his friends a special Christmas present; it was a one year's subscription to the PG&E Progress. (Laughter) Anybody who knows Gordon Strawbridge would understand that. (Laughter)

Mr. Oman

He was Mayor of Mill Valley?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, he was, and he was the exception to the rule I was talking about. Actually, he wasn't as financially dependent on the store as most of us, as you can well imagine. Later, Gordon moved to Tiburon, where he also served as Mayor for a time.

Mr. Oman

Do you think of any other old-timers?

Mr. Mosher

Given time I could think of a lot of them, but those are probably all I can come up with at the moment.

Mr. Oman

Well, what's happened to you over these years is that you, in your turn, have come to be an old-timer in Mill Valley.

Mr. Mosher

I'm what we call a "new" old timer.

Mr. Oman

You sold your business and retired a few years ago. Tell me, what have you been doing since your retirement?

Mr. Mosher

First, Don, may I lead up to that by commenting briefly on the sale of the stores. I decided quite early that I would like to retire when I was sixty-five. I owned a store in Petaluma, Keigs' Shoe Store, thought to be the oldest shoe store in the State of California. (founded in 1870.) It was a good and profitable store, but the first move, once I was satisfied that none of our three boys wanted to be in the shoe business, was to dispose of that store. A purchaser surfaced, fortunately, in the person of a young man who was area salesman for the shoe division of the United States Rubber Company. His name was Bradford ("Brad") Nail. He was a great favorite of mine as a salesman for them. We got to talking one day, and I finally ended up selling him the store in Petaluma. This was several years before I sold him the store in Mill Valley, (1975). He eventually brought in his brother, Joe Nail. They also opened another store in San Anselmo, a year or so ago, which is also very successful. So I retired in 1975. It was a pleasure to sell to the Nails because they are fine young men who have the same business philosophy I had. Since the two stores in Marin County bear my name, I'm interested in having them conducted along the lines I tried to follow over the years.

Mr. Oman

They've expanded the operation.

Mr. Mosher

They've expanded it, yes, and they're doing extremely well, and anyone who knows them will be convinced that they'll continue to do well. They're hard workers and fine merchants. They also have the advantage, I might add, of the services of Brad's wife Cheryl, who is top drawer in both sales and merchandising.

But anyway, retiring in 1975, now a little over four years later, I don't regret anything I've done. It was, in a sense, a great wrench to leave the business I'd started. One's ego is involved in it; not to mention the fact that it's more remunerative than being retired. But the time had come! I was not in good health; I was worn out! I'd gone into business under-capitalized, --so much so that it was ten years before I could really take a deep breath. The small merchant's lot is hard at best, and while I came out quite well in the end, it all took its toll. I didn't want to stop activity, I wanted rather to do different things and

get a chance to rest and think a little bit about life in general. I've found it extremely helpful, good for both health and spirit.

Mr. Oman

Any hobbies?

Mr. Mosher

Well, one of the first things I did--I'd never done any building of any kind at all--was to work out a deal with Jack, our son who is a general contractor, to build me a shop. I watched everything he did and picked up a lot of ideas, and also acquired quite a few tools during that period. One of the reasons I wanted the shop was because I wanted to try my hand at putting together some musical instruments. Anyone familiar with current medieval stringed instrument building will know that there are companies which sell "kits" which contain the components, instructions, and most of the materials needed for the instrument in question. What's required is an enormous amount of patience and a willingness to go over all this material in great detail. So I spent, in three years, something around, I guess, eight or nine hundred hours putting together a Flemish harpsichord by the Hubbard Company, which is a copy of one made in 1584 by a famous Flemish maker, and two Zuckerman instruments, one (they're also copies of medieval instruments,) a virginal and the other a clavichord. So we have three different types. They're all rather interesting and this was a great experience.

Mr. Oman

Jean plays all of them?

Mr. Mosher

Yes, she does.

Mr. Oman

Are you a musician?

Mr. Mosher

No, not really. I play a little bit, but I don't really understand music. You don't have to fathom music to build

these instruments, but you do have to have some tools and space and patience to follow an awful lot of directions which at the time seem contradictory.

Mr. Oman

You feel your decision to retire was, on the whole, when you did it, a happy decision?

Mr. Mosher

Extremely beneficial. I wouldn't change it one iota.

Mr. Oman

Looking back over your business career in the light of business conditions as they exist today, would you recommend a young man to go into the retail merchandising business?

Mr. Mosher

Oh, yes, I certainly would. However, before I stuck my neck out, I'd want to definitely have the feeling that he was of a temperament which would make it work. Not everybody can operate on their own. Many people, it's nothing against them, simply operate better in a situation where they don't have ultimate authority. It's a peculiar type of strain that goes with constant decision making. You've been in business on your own for many years, and you know there's a marked difference. I've known a lot of people who were excellent employees who were never happy and never made private business go. They've "gone under" several times in some cases. If I felt that they had adequate financing, and they liked to operate on their own, I'd recommend it very highly. It's the way to go!

Mr. Oman

Looking ahead now, to the next ten or twenty years, what are you going to do with your life?

Mr. Mosher

Well, I guess, more of the same. That's an interesting question, because it's true that I have thought, just recently, that I have pretty well carried out my intention to try a lot of new experiences when I retired. In short, I decided I was going to slow down for a while. I'd like to try building some more things, and also get into gardening--something I've never done. In fact in the last year, I've gradually worked into that more. And, too, we've recently

gotten interested more in church activities than we have been in countless years, and some thinking in that area.

Mr. Oman

So you're really looking forward to your last years?

Mr. Mosher

Very much.

Mr. Oman

That's better than feeling any dread or any hesitation.

Mr. Mosher

It occurred to me not long ago when I was looking at a calendar and read a relevant article that "Hey, I might make two thousand." Ninety years old.

Mr. Oman

No reason why not.

Mr. Mosher

When I retired, all broken down, I guessed I'd be lucky to last five years. Now I can see that, if everything went well, I might conceivably make it to two thousand. So stick around!

Mr. Oman

Well, let's hope so. Thank you very much.

Mr. Mosher

Thank you, Don.

Don, you asked if there is anything else I wish to add after thinking for a little bit--and there is one thing I'd like to comment on more fully. May I emphasize how fortunate I've been to have a good wife! In fact, we are about to celebrate our twenty-third wedding anniversary. It's a pleasure to add that statistic. Thank you.

Transcribed by B. Dreyfus
Edited by Carl Mosher
Final typing by Mildred Antrobus