

**Mill Valley Oral History Program**  
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Historical Society and the Mill Valley  
Public Library*

**MARTIN GRIFFIN**

**An Oral History Interview  
Conducted by Debra Schwartz in 2015**

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TITLE: Oral History of Martin Griffin  
INTERVIEWER: Debra Schwartz  
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In this oral history, physician, naturalist, champion of open spaces and bane of developers Martin Griffin recounts with warmth and humor his long and extraordinarily active life. Born in Ogden, Utah, in 1920 to nature-loving parents, Martin moved with his family to Portland, Oregon, when the Great Depression hit, and then down to Los Angeles and finally up to Oakland, where he attended elementary school through high school. Martin recalls some early experiences that shaped his love for the environment, including his involvement with the Boy Scouts, where he met the graduate student entomologist Brighton C. “Bugs” Cain, who profoundly inspired him. It was also as a boy that Martin came over to Mill Valley for the first time, making his way by ferry and train, to go hiking on Mt. Tamalpais. He conjures the beautiful vision he had from the ridge that day of white birds down on Bolinas Lagoon, a vision which made such a powerful impression on him and would, years later, feed the flames of his conservationist passion. Martin recounts being involved in ROTC while an undergraduate at U.C. Berkeley, later attending medical school at Stanford, where he got married, and moving over to Marin to begin his medical practice. He recalls how after the war, developers began to swarm Marin County, and how this instigated his activism to preserve open spaces. Martin describes his work with the Marin Audubon Society and allied groups to save Richardson Bay, Bolinas Lagoon, Tomales Bay, and stop the project to build a coastal freeway that ran from San Francisco over Mt. Tam to Sonoma — the whole history of which is recorded in his book *Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast*. Martin also recounts his work in public health and his leadership role in eliminating hepatitis B from state hospitals, for which he received a Governor’s Award. He finishes the narrative of this committed and inspiring life with a brief performance on the accordion.

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**Oral History of Martin Griffin**  
**October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Editor's note:** This transcript differs in ways from the audio recording. It was reviewed by Martin Griffin, who made corrections, clarifications, and additions.

**0:00:00 Debra Schwartz:** Today is October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015. My name is Debra Schwartz. I am sitting here with Martin Griffin, longtime Marin resident, naturalist and environmentalist, and conservationist.

**0:00:18 Martin Griffin:** Physician.

**0:00:20 Debra Schwartz:** And physician, yes. So I am sitting here with you, Marty, on behalf of the Mill Valley Historical Society, and the Mill Valley Library. Thank you so much for taking the time to contribute to our Oral History Program and to share with us your very, very interesting and important story. Thank you.

**0:00:44 Martin Griffin:** You're welcome.

**0:00:45 Debra Schwartz:** So let's begin, get a little information about your family and your life. Can you tell me where you were born?

**0:00:57 Martin Griffin:** I was born in Ogden, Utah in 1920. July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920. I was a war baby, World War I.

**0:01:08 Debra Schwartz:** Not too many people say, [chuckles] when they say, "war baby," do they say World War I. That makes you how old today?

**0:01:16 Martin Griffin:** I'm 95 and three months.

**0:01:19 Debra Schwartz:** 95 and three months. Good job, you. That's no small thing. A long life, and filled with good works. And so you were born in Utah, and tell me a little bit about your family, your parents.

**0:01:33 Martin Griffin:** Well, they were sort of pioneers actually, especially my mother. She was born in a sod cabin on the plains of Nebraska in the 1880s, late 1880s. Her mother and father had come from Pennsylvania and were going west to try and find a piece of land. And they got caught in a storm right outside of Kearney, Nebraska. My grandfather had to build a sod hut in a hurry, because you couldn't rent any place, there was nothing available, and there was sort of a land rush on. So he built this cozy sod house, called a, "soddie." There were a lot of them. And she was born there. So, she was always a very determined woman, and she wouldn't let me get away with anything.

**0:02:58 Debra Schwartz:** What was your mother's name?

**0:03:00 Martin Griffin:** Frances.

**0:03:00 Debra Schwartz:** Frances.

**0:03:01 Martin Griffin:** Frances Eugenia Stoddard Griffin.

**0:03:04 Debra Schwartz:** What was the middle name again?

**0:03:05 Martin Griffin:** Stoddard.

**0:03:06 Debra Schwartz:** Stoddard? Frances —

**0:03:06 Martin Griffin:** It was her last name. So she was really the driving force my whole life. She lived to be 104.

**0:03:16 Debra Schwartz:** Wow.

**0:03:17 Martin Griffin:** And had all her marbles. A remarkable woman, really. And my dad was too, but he adored my mother. She ran the family. Her parents had six or seven children, and she sort of took care of them in a way when she got older. But dad and —

**0:03:53 Debra Schwartz:** And your father's name?

**0:03:56 Martin Griffin:** My dad's name was Loyal Martin Griffin.

**0:04:00 Debra Schwartz:** Loyal Martin Griffin, what a name.

**0:04:00 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, and he was the second or third. I think there were four Loyal Martin Griffins all together. But they settled in Ogden, Utah. And my mother, who was very good-looking, attracted this wealthy man and they had a wonderful life together in Ogden. The family owned a cabin up the Ogden River, overhanging the river. Really wild country, it was the Wasatch Mountains. So my mother insisted on my being born at home, even though it was 12 miles from Ogden, the doc —

**0:05:00 Debra Schwartz:** She insisted on what?

**0:05:03 Martin Griffin:** My being born at home, even though it was 12 miles from Ogden. And so the doctor came up there and delivered me, and my brother two years later.

**0:05:16 Debra Schwartz:** There's two of you, two boys in your family?

**0:05:19 Martin Griffin:** Yeah.

**0:05:20 Debra Schwartz:** So, I'm a little confused. Your mother attracted a wealthy man, and that is your father?

**0:05:27 Martin Griffin:** Yeah.

**0:05:27 Debra Schwartz:** Okay.

**0:05:28 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. Well, not wealthy, but he was a businessman. He had a business, and was well-educated in business, which you needed to be to compete with the Mormons. [laughs]

**0:05:43 Debra Schwartz:** They're an industrious group.

**0:05:45 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. Anyway, he was a great outdoorsman, and loved to fly fish. He made his own poles out of split bamboo and tied his own flies. And we lived right on a beautiful river. My mother said, "I want this whole family to sleep outside on the porch, so we'll be closer to nature." Those were her very own words, I understand. Well, then the big Depression came along, it started actually in 1926, or something like that, culminated in 1929. And my dad's business failed because there was no insurance for depositors. And he and his dad deposited money for their business at the Bigelow National Bank in Ogden. Mr. Bigelow was speculating on the New York Stock Exchange, and he lost everything. And my mother was so humiliated, and my grandmother especially, that they decided to move to Los Angeles. At that time, the trains crossed were going north and south, east and west. And their business consisted of selling supplies to railroad camps, and logging camps, and mining camps.

**0:08:00 Debra Schwartz:** Whose business?

**0:08:01 Martin Griffin:** My dad and his father had their business together. And so that was an interesting business. And they decided to move because of the Depression.

**0:08:26 Debra Schwartz:** So they went to LA?

**0:08:28 Martin Griffin:** My grandparents went to LA and my parents went to Portland, Oregon. Because that was where there was really good fishing.

**0:08:43 Debra Schwartz:** Because they're nature people, obviously.

**0:08:44 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. My dad just loved to fish, and he was awful good at it. Just fly fishing. So he took us kids, my brother and I, we were only 5 and 7 or something, I think, when we arrived there. We fished all the rivers, all up and down to the State of Washington and Oregon. It was before there'd been dams. And the country was just absolutely gorgeous, and everything was pristine.

**0:09:31 Debra Schwartz:** So, you are now living in Portland, and you're in this beautiful environment. Would you say that your parents' love of nature influenced you greatly or —

**0:09:42 Martin Griffin:** Well, they loved being outdoors, and they loved to sing. And my mother just loved campfires, and we'd all sit around and sing for hours.

**0:09:57 Debra Schwartz:** Any special songs?

**0:10:00 Martin Griffin:** Oh, there are lots of special songs. I play the accordion, just because — I wrote down, I think, 120 songs that I remembered from my childhood.

**0:10:19 Debra Schwartz:** Do you think you'll play one for us when we're done with this interview?

**0:10:22 Martin Griffin:** Sure. [chuckles]

**0:10:23 Debra Schwartz:** Great. I'd be very interested to hear the kinds of songs that you sang as a child with your family.

**0:10:28 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, okay.

**0:10:30 Debra Schwartz:** That sounds like happy times.

**0:10:32 Martin Griffin:** Really, really happy times. My mother loved to do camp cooking, and she had Civil War blankets that she had sewn into sleeping bags, so that when we lived in — in every place we lived, we'd go camping and sleep in these heavy-duty Civil War blankets.

**0:11:00 Debra Schwartz:** Did you take a car on all your camping trips?

**0:11:05 Martin Griffin:** We did. My dad found a job in Portland, and I went to a — my mother sent me to a Catholic grammar school right across the street from where we lived, and I didn't like it at all. They were very — I'm sorry — they were very rigid, and the nuns were mean. They'd slap you with a ruler if you misbehaved. Finally, I said, "I just don't like this, mom." [chuckles] "I don't want to go here anymore." Anyway, when we saw the Wild West, there were still Indians where we camped over at Mount Hood, and we'd buy gooseberries from them, and my mother would bake gooseberry pies.

**0:12:21:** We saw the best wild rivers, ever, before they got dams. And I remember once, we were camped up at some mountain in Washington, and I crawled carefully to the edge of a cliff, and looked down into a pool that just had a couple of dozen steelhead, about that long, and they were trying to get up over about a 15-foot waterfall. And they'd slither up it, and then occasionally they'd fall back and then try again, slither up and get to the top. That sight has stayed with me my whole life.

**0:13:17 Martin Griffin:** So I think the thing that inspired me to try and save these rivers in California, was that experience on that river. And then my Dad didn't like his job report, and he decided to visit my grandparents in LA. We drove all that way, and it was just — the Depression was just absolutely terrible.

**0:13:53 Debra Schwartz:** The what was terrible?

**0:13:56 Martin Griffin:** The Depression.

**0:13:57 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, the Depression at that time.

**0:14:00 Martin Griffin:** Economic depression. There were hundreds of men walking along the roads down from Alaska, and from Washington, from Oregon to California, and every night, there would be men camped under bridges. We saw the Depression at its worst. And then we got to LA, and here was this gorgeous country, with snowcapped mountains behind the city, and just a wonderful Mediterranean city. Well, my dad's sister's husband was an engineer, and we all lived in a sort of a court, like they have in LA.

**0:15:08 Debra Schwartz:** A court, did you say?

**0:15:09 Martin Griffin:** Court, little apartments. My uncle was an engineer for the Army Corp of Engineers, and he designed the Los Angeles River, one of the engineers that designed it. And so they had the big pieces of paper with drawings on them, of how they were gonna concrete the whole Los Angeles River. So he helped concrete the river. And I didn't know the implication of that at the time, but I knew it wasn't good. But it was a wonderful family I was born into.

**0:16:07:** And I just loved *Amos 'n' Andy* shows, and other — *I Love Lucy*, and all that stuff. Then my parents moved to Oakland when I was about 9, I guess, and my brother was 7. That was the most wonderful city I'd ever seen. And the high schools, the schools were just outstanding. You could take the trolley out to UC. And I went to the Piedmont Grammar School, to Westlake Junior High, down by Lake Merritt, and went to Oakland Technical High School, which is on Broadway, about halfway between downtown Oakland and Berkeley. What a school! I've never, ever seen a high school as good as that one. It was half industrial, and half academic. And if you were college bound you had to take a couple of courses to become an expert electrician, or sheet metal worker, or a carpenter. So, that was really good training.

**0:18:07:** And then the academic part of the school was just absolutely astounding. Oakland was a very wealthy city before the war, because the transcontinental railroads ended there. And the blacks all had good jobs, and there was harmony in the city. The family didn't have very much money, so I took a job as a caddy after school.

**0:18:47 Debra Schwartz:** A caddy?

**0:18:48 Martin Griffin:** Caddy.

**0:18:49 Debra Schwartz:** At a golf course?



**0:18:50 Martin Griffin:** At a golf course.

**0:18:51 Debra Schwartz:** Where was the golf course?

**0:18:53 Martin Griffin:** It was in the Montclair district of Oakland. I was very inquisitive; I'd ask these guys, I'd carry their — in those days, golf bags were only about that big, nothing like that.

**0:19:12 Debra Schwartz:** They were much smaller, then?

**0:19:14 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, and I could carry two or three of them. I'd always ask them, "How is it you can take Wednesday off and play golf? What would you recommend that I do when I go to college, or when I get a job, a permanent job? What do you recommend? What'd you do?" And he said, "Well, I was a doctor" or "a real-estate investor." Anyway, they advised me on what jobs would be nice to have. And high school was just good to me. My mother was President of the PTA, and she made damned sure that I studied and didn't chase girls, and wanted me to be the president of this, and president of that. And my dad was a very personable man; and my brother was about the handsomest kid you'd ever saw in your life.

**0:20:44 Debra Schwartz:** What is your brother's name?

**0:20:46 Martin Griffin:** Bob.

**0:20:47 Debra Schwartz:** Bob was super handsome?

**0:20:49 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, he's 93 now and lives down in Carmel.

**0:20:56 Debra Schwartz:** Gosh! You really inherited the good longevity gene.

**0:21:00 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, her genes were fantastic.

**0:21:13:** Oh, in high school, I was editor of the newspaper, the *Oakland Technical Scribe*.

**0:21:24 Debra Schwartz:** *Oakland Technical Scribe*?

**0:21:26 Martin Griffin:** And it turned out to be one of the best high school newspapers in the United States. We set our own type, if you could imagine that.

**0:21:35 Debra Schwartz:** You set your own type?

**0:21:36 Martin Griffin:** Set our own type on Friday afternoons. We'd have to go down to McClymonds High School. People from the staff of the *Scribe*, we set our own type, and they printed it there.

**0:21:55 Debra Schwartz:** And what school was it?

**0:21:57 Martin Griffin:** It was McClymonds.

**0:22:00 Debra Schwartz:** McClymonds?

**0:22:00 Martin Griffin:** Which was in West Oakland.

**0:22:02 Debra Schwartz:** Okay.

**0:22:03 Martin Griffin:** But I really learned a lot about journalism there. And we had a wonderful journalism teacher.

**0:22:14 Debra Schwartz:** Do you remember your teacher's name?

**0:22:16 Martin Griffin:** Miss Jessie Smith. And she was no-nonsense, she said: "You gotta remember, you're in a powerful position, the power of the press, you've got it right in your hands, right here, right now. Now, learn how to use it." And then I took Latin, and that three years of Latin was the best thing I ever did in my life. We had a wonderful teacher who thought she was a reincarnated Roman.

**0:23:03 Debra Schwartz:** She thought she was a reincarnated Roman?

**0:23:05 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, she always wore a toga to school, and a laurel wreath around her head.

**0:23:10 Debra Schwartz:** Really? [laughs]

**0:23:12 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, and she was smart. She really taught us how — everything we needed to know about Latin. And I took German, and German was a terrible language to learn, but I had to do it for medical school. They said, "If you go to Cal, you'll have to take scientific German, because German is the language of science, not English." And during World War I, the Germans just went wild on chemistry and turned out all kinds of deadly toxins and stuff. Anyway, I took scientific German when I got to Cal —

**0:24:08 Debra Schwartz:** So now you're thinking you're gonna pay heed to the advice of the golfers, that a caddy listens to, and so now you've decided you're going to be a doctor?

**0:24:22 Martin Griffin:** That was what decided it, but I did wanna know why they were able to take off Wednesday afternoons! [laughs]

**0:24:33 Martin Griffin:** I was an inquisitive little kid. I wasn't very big. I was very athletic, and I was on the track team. I did the Western roll on the high jump, but I came down and broke my wrist. And the school nurse phoned my mother and said, "Martin has

broken his wrist.” And she said, “Well, put a sling on it. I’ll be right down and take him to the doctor.” So she did. It cost us a lot of money, and about six months later, I did exactly the same thing, and the nurse called her and she said, “Put him on the street car and send him home.” [laughs]

**0:25:28 Debra Schwartz:** Not as much sympathy as the first —

**0:25:30 Martin Griffin:** No. And then I had my tonsils out the same way; they were bad. They took tonsils out in those days, she sent me down on the street car to have my tonsils removed. [laughs]

**0:25:44 Debra Schwartz:** How old were you?

**0:25:45 Martin Griffin:** I was about 10 or 11 or 12.

**0:25:48 Debra Schwartz:** Oh wow. So where did you end up going to college?

**0:26:03 Martin Griffin:** I went to Cal.

**0:26:04 Debra Schwartz:** You went to UC Berkeley.

**0:26:06 Martin Griffin:** UC Berkeley.

**0:26:07 Debra Schwartz:** Go Bears!

**0:26:08 Martin Griffin:** Which was, at that time, the best university in the world, even better than Stanford, and I took scientific German and took public speaking, and took physics from the guys who were developing the atom bomb, and realized what they were up to, and they were all nervous as — they were under terrible pressure, because they knew the Germans were working on an atom bomb, too. The Germans were so far ahead, technologically, and the war had already started. I was in the ROTC for seven years altogether, and they were serious, they really taught us how to fight a war, and Oakland produced more officers than any other place in the United States.

**0:27:20 Debra Schwartz:** Oakland did?

**0:27:20 Martin Griffin:** Oakland, because they had these wonderful high schools and Cal, right there. And Cal being a land grant college was required to have ROTC.

**0:27:34 Debra Schwartz:** Say that again please.

**0:27:36 Martin Griffin:** Cal being a land grant college —

**0:27:41 Debra Schwartz:** It’s required.

**0:27:43 Martin Griffin:** You see land for the university was appropriated, and then

given to the trustees of the University of California, and to the United States of America. And schools that had that done, were required to defend the country. So ROTC at Cal was a big deal. We had fancy uniforms, and there was a naval, army, and air force ROTC — and the Reserve Officers Training Corps for the army. There was the guys who ran the Ordnance, which supplied all the ammunition and all of the —

**0:28:38 Debra Schwartz:** What is that word, *ordnance*?

**0:28:39 Martin Griffin:** Ordnance. O-R-D-N-A-N-C-E.

**0:28:44 Debra Schwartz:** Ordnance.

**0:28:45 Martin Griffin:** Ordnance. That's one of the most important parts of an army, is to have the guns and ammunition there on time, and the food, and the pants, and the underpants, and all the clothes for everybody, shoes. Anyway, we drilled every day, and we spent two weeks every summer at Fort Ord, and everybody knew there was a war coming.

**0:29:21 Debra Schwartz:** And this all while you're doing your studies as well?

**0:29:24 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. So we learned how to fire machine guns, and use mortars, and a small cannon. And you had to be an expert marksman, so we spent hours drilling down in Fort Ord. They had dozens of ranges down there, and you had to be an expert marksman.

**0:30:02 Debra Schwartz:** So they would take you from the school — or this is the ROTC where they would take you to Fort Ord?

**0:30:06 Martin Griffin:** This is ROTC, yeah. So, some of my best friends were in the army. That picture right there is, the three of us on the right, were best friends all through high school and Cal. That's me on the right, and the guy in the middle was a major in the ordnance. He was the smartest guy in the class, because he could do calculus and everything.

**0:30:41 Debra Schwartz:** We'll take a picture of that to add to your interview, if you like.

**0:30:45 Martin Griffin:** And then the next one, he was the most famous guy of all, that's Ralph Fisher, who was the president of the Student's Association at U.C. Berkeley. He rose to be commander of ROTC at Cal. We were the war class from Cal in 1942.<sup>1</sup>

**0:31:28 Debra Schwartz:** Wait you were — you graduated what year?

**0:31:31 Martin Griffin:** I graduated in class of 1942.

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph was assigned as attaché to the Chinese army fighting the Japanese in China.—Martin Griffin

**0:31:36 Debra Schwartz:** So you started in '38?

**0:31:37 Martin Griffin:** Started in '38. And on December 7, 1941, while I was studying, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.<sup>2</sup>

**0:32:02 Debra Schwartz:** So you were in class when they declared —

**0:32:04 Martin Griffin:** I was studying in the library, and they pulled all the shades, and within 24 hours, they'd put up barrage balloons around the campus and around the physics department. They were all worried about the Japanese bombing.

**0:32:27 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, of course, because they couldn't — yes.

**0:32:29 Martin Griffin:** Losing this incredible laboratory.

**0:32:32 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, with all that atomic research. So what are the balloons that you're talking about?

**0:32:36 Martin Griffin:** Pardon?

**0:32:37 Debra Schwartz:** What are the balloons that they put up?

**0:32:38 Martin Griffin:** They're called barrage balloons. They're about 20 feet long, and they're on a steel cable. And they can put them at different heights and they floated on hydrogen. So, they had those already; they knew the war was coming.

**0:33:00 Debra Schwartz:** They knew, so they were prepared to defend.

**0:33:01 Martin Griffin:** They were prepared. The Golden Gate Bridge wasn't built for tourists, it was built for war. And guess who owns the Golden Gate Bridge?

**0:33:13 Debra Schwartz:** Who?

**0:33:14 Martin Griffin:** The army, the military, U.S. military owns the Golden Gate Bridge, and both sides of the land that it's built on.

**0:33:28 Debra Schwartz:** The US military owns the bridge and both sides that it's —

**0:33:31 Martin Griffin:** Both sides of it. The whole bridge as well.

**0:33:33 Debra Schwartz:** So that was a strategy, a defense strategy, the initiation of the bridge?

**0:33:37 Martin Griffin:** In 1937, '36, they knew war was coming because Hitler was invading Poland, killing Jews, it was terrible and —

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<sup>2</sup> The next day, the U.S. declared war on Japan and Germany.—Martin Griffin

**0:34:01:** Oh, yeah, Ralph Fisher, that guy, he was a tall guy, handsome. And the three of us played the guitar, and sang all through Cal.

**0:34:17 Debra Schwartz:** You had a band?

**0:34:19 Martin Griffin:** A little band. [laughs]

**0:34:26 Debra Schwartz:** That so. Did you play on campus?

**0:34:28 Martin Griffin:** Yeah.

**0:34:28 Debra Schwartz:** You did?

**0:34:29 Martin Griffin:** We were in the graduation magazines, the three of us playing.

**0:34:34 Debra Schwartz:** You were a trio?

**0:34:36 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, a trio.

**0:34:37 Debra Schwartz:** Like what's one song that you —

**0:34:40 Martin Griffin:** Oh, "Ragtime Cowboy Joe."

**0:34:42 Debra Schwartz:** What's a couple stanzas of that? "Ragtime Cowboy Joe"?

**0:34:50 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, "Ragtime Cowboy Joe," you've never heard that?

**0:34:54 Debra Schwartz:** Can you sing a couple stanzas of it?

**0:34:56 Martin Griffin:** I'll sing it for you. But this guy, Ross Reagan, was about the smartest guy I've ever known, and a lot of fun. A good hiker. That's what I'm talking about because he was. We hiked all over the Sierras together. And we were all in the Boy Scouts together, we were all three Eagle Scouts.

**0:35:31 Debra Schwartz:** But you knew them before Cal?

**0:35:34 Martin Griffin:** During Cal.<sup>3</sup> We happened to live close together in Oakland, and we met in high school.

**0:35:49 Debra Schwartz:** So all boys went to Cal? You went from high school to —

**0:35:52 Martin Griffin:** All three boys went to Cal. Nobody went to Stanford. [laughs] But my mother found out that my great grand uncle on my father's side was professor of German at Stanford, the first professor of German. And he was still living there, he was

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<sup>3</sup> But also in high school and the Boy Scouts.—Martin Griffin.

90s then, and he was living at the first house built for faculty at Stanford. So she took me down there, she said, “You ought to get to know this man, he’s important.” [laughs]

**0:36:36 Debra Schwartz:** Your mother really was — she had her antenna out.

**0:36:41 Martin Griffin:** She did, she really did, so we went down there, we met James O. Griffin, the professor of German, and he was pretty elderly then, but he conversed with us. And I loved Stanford, the campus — gosh, I wanted to go to medical school there. Our naturalist — am I giving you too much?

**0:37:18 Debra Schwartz:** No, go on.

**0:37:22 Martin Griffin:** Our naturalist in the Boy Scouts was a graduate entomologist from Stanford, a real good entomologist. He a very smart guy, and I learned a lot from him. We had this wonderful camp up in the foothills of Oakland, Camp Dimond. And that was probably the most influential things of my life, was going up there. And I was the hike master one summer at the Sierra camp called Dimond O.

**0:38:00 Debra Schwartz:** You were what? Say that again?

**0:38:00 Martin Griffin:** Hike master, at Dimond O

**0:38:01 Debra Schwartz:** You were a hike master for the —

**0:38:04 Martin Griffin:** Oakland Boy Scouts. They had a wonderful summer camp up near Hetch Hetchy in Yosemite National Park, called Dimond O. Oh, what a camp! All three of us were up there.

**0:38:23 Debra Schwartz:** John Muir lived east of Newark, not too far from Oakland, and he died in 1914. So his effect must have been felt in the east of the Bay.

**0:38:39 Martin Griffin:** John Muir was sort of my hero all through high school. And the last year that we were in high school they finished the John Muir Trail, the length of the Sierras. So another friend of mine, Wilbur Twinning and I, decided to hike the whole length of the trail in the summer, and so we did. I have a whole book full of pictures of our hike, it was really dramatic. Why we didn’t get killed, I’ll never know, it was —

**0:39:28 Debra Schwartz:** So let’s go forward a little bit now to — you went to medical school at Stanford then, did you realize your dream?

**0:39:38 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. Well, the war started, and I was an officer in the infantry, and in order to get to medical school I had to get accepted into the Army Specialized Training Program, ASTP.

**0:40:26 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, yes.

**0:40:38 Martin Griffin:** So I got accepted at Stanford and got into the ASTP, and the first year was down at Stanford, and it was so different from Cal, which was a rough and tumble school.

**0:41:20 Debra Schwartz:** You've entered the country club. [laughs]

**0:41:22 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, the country club is right.<sup>4</sup> While I was there, they banned all sororities from the campus. And that was the end of the sorority life at Stanford.

**0:41:38 Debra Schwartz:** Well, it's not really your story, but I can't imagine why.

**0:41:44 Martin Griffin:** Because the competition to get in a sorority, Kappa Gamma, or Delta, Tri-Delt, you know — I mean, mothers would kill to get their daughters into a sorority. And the competition was so terrible, and the discrimination. Stanford was very wise, they just said, "Well —"

**0:42:17 Debra Schwartz:** Just ended the conversation? [laughs]

**0:42:17 Martin Griffin:** They ended the conversation. "No more sororities, that's it. You can go to school here if you want to." And actually, it turned out to be a good thing.

**0:42:32 Debra Schwartz:** What did you specialize in in your education?

**0:42:35 Martin Griffin:** Well, because of the war, our class was speeded up. We were the war class in medical school. The war was on the whole time I was in medical school. They speeded up the course from four years to three years. So we had a week's vacation between each semester.

**0:43:01 Debra Schwartz:** Wow, that sounds intense.

**0:43:02 Martin Griffin:** It was very intense. And I got married to a fellow student in my second year, which was difficult for both of us, because it was hard work.<sup>5</sup>

**0:43:19 Debra Schwartz:** You mean going to school and being married?

**0:43:21 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, and being married, yeah.

**0:43:33:** Actually we made a pretty good team, and we got just an incredible education.

**0:43:43 Debra Schwartz:** So she was a student too. What was your first wife's name?

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<sup>4</sup> But I was there to get the best medical education possible.—Martin Griffin

<sup>5</sup> There were only three women in our class of 60 men. Her name was Mary Lindley Murray, fondly known as Mimi. Her grandfather was the first professor of Greek and Latin at Stanford. I wrote a story about our experience called "Wartime Romance."—Martin Griffin



**0:43:47 Martin Griffin:** She lived here in Marin until just a few months ago, she died.<sup>6</sup> We got divorced about 30 years ago, and she remarried.<sup>7</sup>

**0:44:29:** You're ready to move forward?

**0:44:30 Debra Schwartz:** Well let's finish a little bit with the school, and your specialty, and your practice, because that sort of situates you for the next step.

**0:44:36 Martin Griffin:** I really had an incredible wartime experience, because Stanford in those days was in San Francisco. The first year was down in the campus, and the next three years were in San Francisco, the old San Francisco Hospital. It was an incredible training; and no nonsense. You showed up the first day of school, and you were never late. If you were late, they'd kick you out.

**0:45:15 Debra Schwartz:** Who wants to be kicked out while there's a war going on?

**0:45:19 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, yeah, right. [chuckles] We both had a wonderful education. But during those days, during the war, they had coupons. You got gas coupons, you got meat coupons, and other things. So when we got married, we had to take my competitors for her hand, along on our honeymoon, so we could use their meat and gas tickets.

**0:45:58 Debra Schwartz:** Wait, what? [laughs] Say that again, you had to do what?

**0:46:05 Martin Griffin:** [laughs] Well, we wanted to go to Yosemite for our honeymoon; we had a week.

**0:46:10 Debra Schwartz:** And she's a medical student, too?

**0:46:11 Martin Griffin:** Medical student.<sup>8</sup>

**0:46:12 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, okay. Go on.

**0:46:13 Martin Griffin:** So she had a lot of admirers, too.

**0:46:16 Debra Schwartz:** There were other medical student males that admired her?

**0:46:19 Martin Griffin:** Oh yeah, there were only three girls in the class. [laughs]

**0:46:24 Debra Schwartz:** This is such a good story.

**0:46:25 Martin Griffin:** It was the first year that Stanford ever took women in medical

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<sup>6</sup> Mimi passed away in 2015 at the age of 92.—Martin Griffin.

<sup>7</sup> She got married to a man from Ross named Clinton Jones, taking his last name.—Martin Griffin. In the recording there is some confusion about the name that has been edited out of this transcript.—Ed.

<sup>8</sup> She was the smartest student in the class.—Martin Griffin.

school.

**0:46:30 Debra Schwartz:** Oh my gosh. So this is 1942, '43?

**0:46:35 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, we graduated from medical school in '45,'46.

**0:46:51 Debra Schwartz:** So she had many admirers, yet she agreed to marry you?

**0:46:55 Martin Griffin:** That's right.

**0:46:56 Debra Schwartz:** And you wanted meat to go to Yosemite?

**0:47:00 Martin Griffin:** Well we needed gasoline, and protein and [laughs] we often took my mother and father along, much to her annoyance, because my dad was such a great fisherman. So we took them both along. My mother and my wife never got along very well.

**0:47:29 Debra Schwartz:** But the part about you taking her suitors along, too. So you said, "Come on our honeymoon with us, even though you don't get to marry her, and we'll use your food stamp dailies and we'll have a great old time?"

**0:47:48 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. Oh, they were very agreeable, they thought it was a great idea. [laughs]

**0:47:51 Debra Schwartz:** This is a more progressive school than I thought. [laughs] Oh my gosh, that's funny.

**0:48:03 Martin Griffin:** Anyway, we graduated from medical school. But the important thing is that I was stationed at the Presidio during this whole time.

**0:48:13 Debra Schwartz:** You were stationed in the Presidio?

**0:48:15 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, and I had to report there once a week in uniform, private's uniform. But I also made a lot of friends there, and I got to see all the coastal defense sites — all the way from Bodega Bay down to Half Moon Bay.

**0:48:35 Debra Schwartz:** It was quite strong, I imagine, at that point. Freshly built.

**0:48:38 Martin Griffin:** You can't imagine how well defended the coast was. They had big guns every 10 miles, and spotters. They had the Net Depot over at the Golden Gate Bridge —

**0:48:51 Debra Schwartz:** The Net Depot?

**0:48:53 Martin Griffin:** Yeah.

**0:48:53 Debra Schwartz:** What's that?

**0:48:55 Martin Griffin:** Well, it was a tremendous undertaking to put steel nets down into the turbulent waters of the Golden Gate, and have them be big enough to stop a submarine.

**0:49:11 Debra Schwartz:** Stop a Japanese submarine.

**0:49:13 Martin Griffin:** The gate was so well-defended with the — anyway, I got a chance to travel the whole length of this area a couple of times, because some of my friends were stationed in these Coast Guard places. I saw, oh, the incredible beauty of the northern California coast, especially Point Reyes. And when I was in the Boy Scouts, we hiked over here a couple of times, took the ferry into San Francisco from Oakland, and then got on another ferry to Sausalito, got on an electric train, went to Mill Valley, got off and then hiked up the — what's the name of the trail?

**0:50:19 Debra Schwartz:** Was is Tamalpais Trail? The Railroad Grade, or the Tamalpais Trail?

**0:50:25 Debra Schwartz:** No, the —

**0:50:25 Debra Schwartz:** Or going to the top of East Peak?

**0:50:27 Debra Schwartz:** No, the one that everybody runs up.

**0:50:29 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, Dipsea.

**0:50:29 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, we hiked up the steps up to Panoramic Highway, then down Steep Ravine. Anyway, that's the first time I ever saw Bolinas Lagoon, with all the white birds on it, and it was so beautiful. And I said, "Someday we're going to come back to there and practice medicine, someday."

**0:50:54 Debra Schwartz:** So, you're up on the mountain. You're looking at the birds over at Bolinas Lagoon and you say, "This is where I'm gonna have my life"?

**0:51:02 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, "That's where I'm gonna live." And I did. Well, then the war ended, and the developers went crazy in Marin County. They'd been prevented from doing any developing anywhere during the war, and they were all ready to go. They had big plans for Marin County. And with the bridge there, they thought that the bridge was for tourists. It was for the war, to get to Hamilton Field and to get to all the other airfields. And all that aerial combat training was out at Drake's Bay, and these guys learned how to dive bomb there, and how to strafe from an airplane.

**0:52:09 Debra Schwartz:** How to "stray" from an airplane?

**0:52:11 Martin Griffin:** Strafe.

**0:52:12 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, strafe. I don't know that word, strafe.

**0:52:15 Martin Griffin:** Machine guns. And one of my best friends, still lives down in Hollister, he's 95, too. He was in the Air Force in the Solomon Islands, and was a very good pilot, gunner. He'd been a tumbler at Cal, and was very athletic. But he got shot, the Zeros were a lot better planes than our planes were, and he got shot down, and landed in the water right next to a PT<sup>9</sup> boat. The kind that Kennedy had been on. And they picked him up, and he lay out on the bottom there all wet, and the same plane that shot him down came over a couple of times, and strafed the PT that he was on. And he got up, grabbed the machine gun of the guy that had just been killed, and shot this plane down. [chuckles]

**0:53:38 Debra Schwartz:** Oh my gosh.

**0:53:39 Martin Griffin:** He got the Congressional Medal of Honor for that. [chuckles] Foster Jessup.

**0:53:45 Debra Schwartz:** Gee whiz. So, you are now looking at — the developers are looking at the —

**0:53:54 Martin Griffin:** Well, as the war ended, I was shocked at the amount of bulldozing going on over here, especially in the Tiburon Peninsula. They were just going crazy out there.

**0:54:05 Debra Schwartz:** Where are you living at this point, when you graduated?

**0:54:09 Martin Griffin:** My wife Mimi and I were in our last year at Stanford. We both interned at Stanford Hospital, and other hospitals in the Bay Area, but — what was I talking about?

**0:54:33 Debra Schwartz:** You were talking about where your first house was. In this area.

**0:54:39 Martin Griffin:** Oh, in our last year we bought a house in Mill Valley.

**0:54:44 Debra Schwartz:** Where in Mill Valley?

**0:54:45 Martin Griffin:** On Heuters Lane.

**0:54:46 Debra Schwartz:** Where is that?

**0:54:48 Martin Griffin:** You go up from the 2 AM Club and curve around — I'm trying to think of the name.

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<sup>9</sup> A Patrol Torpedo boat.—Ed.

**0:54:58 Debra Schwartz:** As you're going up, and then you take that first right?

**0:55:02 Martin Griffin:** The first main right that takes you to the top of the mountain.

**0:55:04 Debra Schwartz:** Molino?

**0:55:05 Martin Griffin:** Molino. Then about a mile up there, there's a road that goes off to the right, and down on the north facing side, it didn't get much sun. And there were seven garages that somebody had built in a row. They weren't very well built, but they were garages, and we rented them to the neighbors. [laughs]

**0:55:35 Debra Schwartz:** You lived in the garage?<sup>10</sup>

**0:55:36 Martin Griffin:** There were two acres below them and we bought that for \$2,500 and — the whole works. And we made enough on the garages to pay the mortgage.

**0:55:53 Debra Schwartz:** Wait, so the garage was above the house, and then you rented out the garage?

**0:55:58 Martin Griffin:** We rented out these garages.

**0:56:00 Debra Schwartz:** All the garages?

**0:56:01 Martin Griffin:** And there was a little shack right below our cabin where a woman lived that had been burned out of her house in the 1930s during the big fire up there.

**0:56:21 Debra Schwartz:** 1929?

**0:56:22 Martin Griffin:** '29, okay. She had squatted on this property and built herself a little cottage out of pieces of sheet tin, corrugated tin, or metal, and had a nice little life set up for herself and everything. She made her own trail down to the bakery at the bottom of the hill.

**0:56:50 Debra Schwartz:** On Miller? Or in downtown on Throckmorton?

**0:56:53 Martin Griffin:** Downtown Mill Valley. And she'd come back with a bag of cookies and donuts and stuff. Anyway, we got to know her pretty well, and when we signed a lease, signed the agreement to buy it, the City of Mill Valley said, "You have to take care of her the rest of her life."

**0:57:19 Debra Schwartz:** You mean the City of Mill Valley said that, "She is now your ward."? [chuckles]

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<sup>10</sup> In reviewing the transcript, Martin clarified that they lived in a cabin below the garages.—Ed.

**0:57:23 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, she says, “She’ll be your responsibility. She’s lived here that long and we respect her, and we want her taken care of the rest of her life. And if you want to buy this place, she goes with it.”

**0:57:40 Debra Schwartz:** Wow, I’ve never heard a story like that. She must have had a lot of friends in Mill Valley.

**0:57:46 Martin Griffin:** Well, she was sort of a fixture.

**0:57:50 Debra Schwartz:** Do you remember her name?

**0:57:51 Martin Griffin:** I don’t. I don’t.

**0:57:54 Debra Schwartz:** If it comes to mind, we can add it.

**0:58:00 Martin Griffin:** I did get to know Mrs. Terwilliger very well, that’s another story.

**0:58:06 Debra Schwartz:** So, you’re living in Mill Valley now, and you’re seeing that the developers are very interested.

**0:58:12 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. And the war ended — we kept that house a couple of years, but I didn’t want it anymore. My mother bought it from us, and she said, “Never sell California real estate.” [laughs] Which is true.

**0:58:43 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, smart woman.

**0:58:45 Martin Griffin:** Anyway, Mimi and I bought a house in Sausalito and rented the clinic at the Marin Shipyards. It was a beautiful clinic, had everything on it, everything — obstetrics, gynecology, ear, nose, and throat, the works. And we rented it for \$15 a month from the army, and it was pretty good. I had some really interesting medical experiences in Sausalito, I practiced there for about two years.

**0:59:44 Debra Schwartz:** What’s your specialty?

**0:59:46 Martin Griffin:** Well, my specialty was really internal medicine, but the doctors who’d been here were all worn out after four years of war, and so they needed a general practitioner. I took on babies to deliver, I operated on appendicitis, a few things in general practice. But that’s what they needed. And Mrs. Terwilliger moved over at about the same time, and we got to know her later on. But then I wanted to get into the central part of the county to find a nice office in San Anselmo. So we went up there, and we bought a house in Greenbrae, and had four children, four daughters. Two were born in Stanford Hospital in San Francisco, and two were born in Marin General Hospital.

**1:01:22 Debra Schwartz:** And what are your daughters’ names?

**1:01:25 Martin Griffin:** Linda Henke is the oldest. Anne Lynn lives down in Aptos. And there's Carol Griffin, who lives in Lucas Valley, and Joan Griffin lives in Novato. And she just drove me up fishing in the Klamath River.

**1:02:34 Debra Schwartz:** She did? Nice.

**1:02:36 Martin Griffin:** We spent a week up there fishing.

**1:02:38 Debra Schwartz:** How nice to be with your father, fishing. Is she your youngest?

**1:02:40 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, I'm still fly fishing.

**1:02:43 Debra Schwartz:** You're still fly fishing?

**1:02:44 Martin Griffin:** I am.

**1:02:49 Debra Schwartz:** Is that all of them, you've got four there?

**1:02:52 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, four lovely daughters, and five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

**1:03:02 Debra Schwartz:** So now, I am going to stop this for a minute, so you get a chance to refresh with a little water and then we'll continue, how's that?

**1:03:08 Martin Griffin:** Okay.

**1:03:10 Debra Schwartz:** Okay, we had a little break there for a moment, and in that time during that short pause, Marty, you were mentioning that you'd like to continue a little bit more about your medical career, and something that happened during the war that put you on the course of your specialty, your field of study. And then we'll get back to what was going on as far as the development of Marin County. So let's talk about the impetus for you becoming a specialist in the study of the liver, and the treatment of liver disease.

**1:03:50 Martin Griffin:** I had this friend who died during the war. He and five other highly trained airmen were departing for Normandy, and he was in the Air Force ROTC when I was at Cal. And unfortunately, the whole group got injected for hepatitis A, and it was contaminated with the hepatitis B virus, and they all became extremely ill and died. That tragedy was terribly upsetting to everybody that knew them, and it wasn't publicized, at all, because during the war, they only advertised their successes, not their failures.

**1:05:10 Martin Griffin:** Anyway, yeah I practiced here for 17 years in Marin County and San Anselmo. I was Chief of Staff of the Ross General Hospital, and also served as Chief of Medical Staff of Marin General. And I took special courses over at UC, in

physical diagnosis and also liver diseases. I was so exhausted after 17 years of practice, and working so hard to try to save West Marin from being urbanized, I took a year off and we moved the whole family to Italy. But I spent the first three months at the University of London Medical School, taking some special courses in epidemiology — the study of epidemics. And it came in very handy because later, when I was about 50 years old, I went back to school at Cal and got a master's in Public Health. The combination of having an MD and a MPH, Master of Public Health, is a good one, and it opens up a lot of doors.

**1:07:30:** In 1978 I got appointed as the Chief of the Hepatitis B Task Force to try to eliminate hepatitis B from the state hospital system. We have one of the biggest state hospital systems in the world here in California, and I got this wonderful job of Chairman of the Task Force. And it was while I was working at Sonoma State Hospital, that was my headquarters, that I took care of children from Marin that were disabled, mentally disabled.

**1:08:45:** And so I worked there for about 15 years altogether at the hospital, but for eight years, I was the Chairman of the Task Force to eliminate hepatitis B from the state hospital system. They had about 30,000 patients, clients, who were immunizing in five or six centers, psychiatric and developmental, and I traveled all over the state setting up testing areas.<sup>11</sup>

**1:09:24 Debra Schwartz:** To test for hep B?

**1:09:26 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, I was able to get a grant from Abbott Laboratories. They'd just developed a test for hepatitis B. With one blood sample, we were able to tell if a patient was a carrier of hepatitis B, if they were immune to hepatitis B, and had antibodies. So that came in very handy. And I traveled all over the state, and that gave me a chance to see what a terrible condition our environment was in. How all of the rivers had been dammed, except the Smith River and the Russian River. And I finally retired from that job, and started devoting full time to trying to save West Marin<sup>12</sup> from being developed.

**1:11:21:** That big battle, do you want me to start it on the —

**1:11:25 Debra Schwartz:** Jump on in, that's a big battle.

**1:11:28 Martin Griffin:** Okay, the battle to save Marin County really started right here in Richardson Bay in about 1955. The Utah Construction Company had bought a big area of Richardson Bay, and they were gonna tear down Ring Mountain and fill Richardson Bay with peninsulas, where they could have 2,000 marina homes. It would have been a huge marina.

**1:12:13 Debra Schwartz:** Just shave down Ring Mountain?

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<sup>11</sup> We were successful for hepatitis B, and I consequently received the Governor's Award.—Martin Griffin

<sup>12</sup> As well as the Russian River.—Martin Griffin



**1:12:15 Martin Griffin:** Ring Mountain.

**1:12:16 Debra Schwartz:** Oh.

**1:12:17 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. [chuckles] And they had been able to do it, because they'd been very active during World War II and war time events. They had filled an area off of Alameda for a big housing development. So Mrs. Livermore, Caroline Livermore, and Mrs. Terwilliger, who were sort of the heart and soul of the environmental movement we were in and who were both friends of mine, asked me to be the third Chairman of Marin Audubon Society. And at that time, we were trying to establish the 10 acres that Mrs. Verrall, Rosie Verrall, had donated to the Conservation League. And so we used that 10 acres as sort of the headquarters for the big battle to save Richardson Bay from being filled.

**1:13:41 Debra Schwartz:** And where was this property? The 10 acres?

**1:13:46 Martin Griffin:** It's where the home is, her home.

**1:13:49 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, over along on the way to Blackie's Pasture in Tiburon, as you're going along Tiburon Boulevard to the right, where you see the beautiful Victorian home, which was a Reed family home, as I recall.

**1:14:01 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, that had been moved over to its present location. Some very courageous people undertook to move it, and it worked out. We won the battle for Richardson Bay, and that was a tremendous undertaking. But while I was still president, I got a letter from the State Department of Transportation that they were gonna hold hearings for a freeway from the Golden Gate Bridge over the ridges of Mt. Tamalpais and —

**1:14:56 Debra Schwartz:** Going from — on the way to — so this is during Marincello's railway development, or before?

**1:15:00 Martin Griffin:** Well this wasn't the Marincello battle; that came later.<sup>13</sup>

**1:15:18 Debra Schwartz:** And we're talking mid-'50s here?

**1:15:20 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, let's see, we bought Audubon Canyon Ranch in 1961, and the freeway was probably defeated a few years later, the first freeway.<sup>14</sup>

**1:15:43 Debra Schwartz:** And it would have gone across the bridge?

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<sup>13</sup> The saving of Richardson Bay, Bolinas Lagoon, Tomales Bay, and Point Reyes is a complicated story that I've told with photos and maps in my book *Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast*, published in 1990.— Martin Griffin.

<sup>14</sup> The battle to save Richardson Bay ran from 1955 to 1960; the coastal freeway battle ran from 1961 to 1972 when the Golden Gate National Recreation Area was purchased.

**1:15:46 Martin Griffin:** Yes, it would have started from the Golden Gate Bridge, up over the ridges of Mt. Tamalpais. So they weren't even going to bridge them, the valleys. They were gonna just fill them with dirt, and slope the freeways down. It was really gonna be a terrible, terrible attack on Mt. Tamalpais.

**1:16:14 Debra Schwartz:** So they were just gonna shave and fill, just to create a smooth freeway-type —

**1:16:20 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. Cut and fill. [chuckles] So, anyway, I thought of Mrs. Livermore, and how she had helped with this battle for Richardson Bay. She said, “Flash the cash!” and —

**1:16:47 Debra Schwartz:** We're gonna pause for a moment.

**1:16:48 Debra Schwartz:** We had a little break there. We were at “Flash the cash!”

**1:16:53 Martin Griffin:** Oh yeah, well I learned a lot of lessons from Mrs. Livermore and Mrs. Terwilliger on how to buy land, actually. And I used that strategy to try to save Bolinas Lagoon, which was scheduled to get — the county had already rezoned the area, and it allowed 50,000 people in the Bolinas Basin. And the freeway — I've got the maps right here and it shows the freeway coming along the coast of Bolinas Lagoon, and a four-lane divided freeway along the ridge, Bolinas Ridge. And by going right up that ridge, it could take you right into Sonoma County eventually. So, this was going to be a coastal freeway. And I realized that there was a huge colony of egrets and herons that lived in what's called Picher Canyon that could stop this freeway.

**1:18:26 Debra Schwartz:** Pitcher? P-I-T-C-H-E-R?

**1:18:27 Martin Griffin:** P-I-C-H-E-R.

**1:18:30 Debra Schwartz:** P-I-C-H-E-R.

**1:18:31 Martin Griffin:** About 140 nests, and it was really the largest on the coast. But people had no regard for it, whatsoever. They didn't think it was important. But to me, it was the key to stopping this freeway, because the trees that the birds nested in were right near the proposed freeway route, so any attempt to build a 100-foot-wide freeway, and all the stuff that goes along with it, would have ruined the heronry. So I was able to negotiate the sale to the Audubon Society in 1961 from a big land speculator named Will Tevis.<sup>15</sup> And so we bought it, it was 507 acres altogether, and it took a tremendous fund drive to raise the \$337,000 that it cost, which was a lot of money in those days.

**1:20:07 Debra Schwartz:** So wait, now explain to me again, the land was owned by who at that time?

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<sup>15</sup> I wrote a check for \$1,000 to option the ranch called Canyon Ranch.—Martin Griffin.

**1:20:13 Martin Griffin:** It was owned by a land speculator named Will Tevis, who was a very wealthy man from a family that owned a big ranch down in Southern California. And his habit was to buy land in the area of a proposed National Park and then capitalize on it as the land appreciated in value, and subdivide it as necessary.

**1:20:52 Debra Schwartz:** So basically he saw where the National Parks thought was beautiful, and he was going to jump in, and because of its beauty, develop it?

**1:21:02 Martin Griffin:** Right, exactly. It's interesting that the National Park Service had already picked out Point Reyes Peninsula as a potential national park before World War II. And in fact, as the Bay Bridge got built before the war —

**1:21:26 Debra Schwartz:** You mean the Golden Gate Bridge?

**1:21:28 Martin Griffin:** I mean the Golden Gate Bridge — endangered all of Marin and Sonoma County to tremendous growth, because the hills are just gentle, and it's spectacularly beautiful country, and it's coastal, and it's tide lands, and the water source is the Russian River, which looked inexhaustible at the time.

**1:22:03 Debra Schwartz:** So you were able to purchase the land from this speculator, the Audubon Society did.

**1:22:11 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, Marin Audubon bought it. And then within a few months, we realized we had a tremendous burden on our hands raising all of this money. And we took in the — we joined forces with the Golden Gate —

**1:22:29 Debra Schwartz:** GGN?

**1:22:32 Martin Griffin:** Audubon Society.

**1:22:33 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, you joined with the Golden Gate —

**1:22:36 Martin Griffin:** Which operated in San Francisco and the East Bay. They had quite a few members, and I happened to know a doctor who was president — anyway, we all got together, our Marin Audubon Society and the Golden Gate, and agreed to conduct a big fund-drive, state-wide. We raised the money in about four years, and in the meantime, the state sort of gave up on its ideas of building a freeway over the ridges and up the coast. And I think it was because we scared them off. By that time, we had a constituency of 6,000 people. In order to do anything big in California, you've got to have a constituency. And so a constituency of 6,000 angry bird-watchers, [chuckles] was able to stop the construction of a freeway which had already been surveyed. But then we had to win the battle for Bolinas Lagoon and Kent Island. And the developers had big plans for Kent Island. They were gonna build a 1,200 boat boat-slip there. They had the Army Corps all poised to build a jetty out into the ocean, and they were going to build a high-rise apartment house on the island, a hotel. They were gonna have a bridge from Stinson Beach over to Kent Island, and —

**1:24:55 Debra Schwartz:** How large is Kent Island? It doesn't seem large enough to

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**1:25:00 Martin Griffin:** Well, it's 110 acres, and it was owned by Mrs. Anne Kent. Mrs. Anne Kent, yeah, and Alice Kent — Mrs. Roger Kent — owned 10 acres. She and her husband lived on the mainland, right behind Smiley's Saloon. And they gave that to us the first year, and we leased the whole southern end of the Bolinas Lagoon from the Bolinas Harbor District, which had been created by vote of the people, so it was a legal organization, to develop a marina. So they had the help of the state, and they had a big lobbying group of marina people to help them. Bolinas was going to be crowded with 50,000 people. And we have the maps that show all the subdivision size and everything.

**1:26:24:** So, it took a vote of the people to dismantle the Bolinas Harbor District, and that was another bitter struggle. So altogether, it took us about five years to win the battle for Bolinas Lagoon. Stan Picher and I alternated being presidents, because we didn't wanna get involved in education, and all of those good things. We wanted to buy land and try and save West Marin. And the way to do that was to stop the water, to stop the freeways, stop the sewage disposal, and stop the development. As soon as we had Bolinas Lagoon safe, I moved right on up to Tomales Bay, and started buying land there.

**1:27:42 Debra Schwartz:** This you did on behalf of the Audubon or —

**1:27:45 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, on behalf of Audubon Canyon Ranch now. In the meantime, we were enlarging Audubon Canyon Ranch into four national branches of the Audubon Society. We weren't National Audubon, but our branches were national.

**1:28:08 Debra Schwartz:** So, how is your constituency growing at this point, as you're enlarging?

**1:28:12 Martin Griffin:** Well, we had quite a few members. And my patients, I had offices at first in Sausalito and then in Kentfield. And I wrote all of my patients and I told them, "We're going to try and save the lagoons of Marin County, we have to save Richardson Bay, and we're gonna to try to save Bolinas Lagoon if we can, and we're going to do our best to save Tomales Bay."<sup>16</sup> Of Corte Madera Bay, Neil Schultz was the big developer there.

**1:29:19 Debra Schwartz:** So you've enlisted your patients in the fight?

**1:29:24 Martin Griffin:** I did, I got them. And there was a big joke that, "It costs \$10 to see Dr. Griffin for an office visit, and \$700 to buy an acre of Audubon Canyon Ranch." [laughs]

**1:29:43 Debra Schwartz:** That is a specialized field of medicine. How did you keep your spirits up in this fight? It must have felt daunting at times.

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<sup>16</sup> It was too late to save Corte Madera Bay and San Rafael Bay. They were already filled.—Martin Griffin.

**1:29:56 Martin Griffin:** Well, I had a lot of enemies, and enemies always keep your spirits up. You gotta keep ahead of them, [chuckles] you've gotta outsmart them. There was a lot of developers who hated me, and we completely changed the character of Bolinas.

**1:30:26 Debra Schwartz:** In what way, would you say? Describe it.

**1:30:27 Martin Griffin:** Well, it was all for development, and for growth, and to make it into another Southern California paradise. But in 1965, I realized that the biggest battle was yet ahead, and that was for Tomales Bay. Tomales Bay is a lot bigger than Bolinas Lagoon, and it had already sort of been subdivided along the east shore, across from the Point Reyes National Seashore, which incidentally, I support strongly and have from the very start. And actually, my main purpose was to help complete the Point Reyes National Seashore, because there were so many people against it. The supervisors had never really given their support; at least half of them were against it. And well, they wanted to cut back down some 53,000 acres to 25,000 acres.

**1:31:54:** But to me, it's one of the wonderful, magical places on the earth, in the world. And so the battle to save Tomales Bay helped save Point Reyes National Seashore. It turned into, what to me, has become the largest battle against urban sprawl in the United States. It's the largest battle, and the largest successful battle against urban sprawl in the United States. Certainly in California, and probably any place else you can think of in the United States. It was such an intense battle, it took 11 years to win the battle for Tomales Bay. And during that time, we almost lost the Point Reyes National Seashore to a group of investors called themselves Land Investors Research, and they —

**1:33:17 Debra Schwartz:** They called themselves what?

**1:33:18 Martin Griffin:** Land Investors Research. They were a group of wealthy young handsome guys, who carried briefcases wherever they went. They had signed up nearly every farmer on the east shore of Tomales Bay up to Sonoma County, and they had syndicated them. There was something like 9,000 acres and the whole list — every one of them is listed in my book, and how many acres they owned, and how many acres they syndicated. They were promised to make a lot of money when the lots got sold.

**1:34:14:** A lot of them had been subdivided already into lots, and the only thing they didn't have was the freeway yet. They didn't have sufficient water for the probably 150,000 people that were on the map. We have the subdivision maps here; I've got them here if you want to see them.<sup>17</sup> It shows the freeways, it shows the grammar schools, it shows the hospitals, junior colleges, cemeteries, everything for complete urban development on the east shore. And these guys had connections with the Department of the Interior, and they had somehow transferred the ownership, or some type of ownership of the most critical parcel in the Point Reyes National Seashore, Pierce Point.

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<sup>17</sup> The subdivision maps were referred to as the West Marin Master Plan and was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1964 and 1969.—Martin Griffin.

**1:35:37:** They managed to get it reassigned, somehow to themselves, and it was a big scandal, it was in the papers. That sort of faded away as they faded away, but this showed me the relationship between the county supervisors, and the developers, and the Department of the Interior — there's collusion. Anyway, we had a big election about that time, and it was 1968, we had Pete Arrigoni running for supervisor against a fellow named Kettenhofen, who was the leader of all the big developers.

**1:36:49 Debra Schwartz:** Kettenhofen?

**1:36:50 Martin Griffin:** Kettenhofen. He was a nice guy, and his kids and wife took courses out at Audubon Canyon Ranch. [laughs] But he owned 1,200 acres up near Olema that he planned on developing, Kettenhofen. Well, water is the important asset in California, and they didn't have enough water for this, for the tremendous development. They actually planned on a total of two million people in Marin and Sonoma, and I've seen this in the EIR [Environmental Impact Report] that was done on Warm Springs Dam. So water was their big concern. I ran for the Water District Board of Directors, representing Mill Valley, and I met some wonderful people, including Pam Miller. Her daughter is Katie Rice, elected county supervisor. But Pam helped me a lot.

**1:38:23:** But first, I should say that I helped start another organization called the Environmental Forum of Marin, because Stan Picher and I seemed to be the only ones that would go to these nasty meetings with the sanitary districts, with water districts, with developers, with the planning commissions, and we needed more help. In the last 40 years, we've trained over 1,000 men and women to be advocates for the environment, and to support the Point Reyes National Seashore.

**1:39:23 Debra Schwartz:** And your training consisted of what?

**1:39:26 Martin Griffin:** Well, we started it at Audubon Canyon Ranch. The first three years was at Audubon Canyon Ranch. They learned about biology, and about what lives on that far side of Mount Tamalpais; there's a lot of life over there. And they learned about the Bolinas Lagoon and its problems. And just the strong environmental forum we were in. But the biggest battle I ever got into was for the Water District Board of Directors. A friend of mine who was an attorney said, "You should run for this board, because you'll be controlling the water supply for the whole county." Except for Novato, which sits in the Northern Marin Water District. And it was Tom Thorner, he and Barbara Boxer dreamed up the logo of — what was it? It was, "The Plot to Save Marin." Their plot to save Marin was to control the water supply. And so Barbara went on to something else, but she was — I think she was a supervisor too, for a while. Anyway, I ran, and it was a bitter battle, and people taped every word I said.

**1:41:28 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, you mean, in the running? Or once you actually —

**1:41:31 Martin Griffin:** In the running.

**1:41:32 Debra Schwartz:** Just the running to get into the board?

**1:41:34 Martin Griffin:** Just the running, yeah. They wanted everything, every word I said was captured, on a dictaphone or whatever. It was pretty hairy, frightening. I had some threats.

**1:41:57 Debra Schwartz:** Threats?

**1:42:00 Martin Griffin:** They threatened — because my campaign was centered on saving West Marin, as well as [that] it belonged to the whole Bay Area, and that development out here would harm the National Seashore.<sup>18</sup>

**1:42:24 Debra Schwartz:** The development would harm the seashore, that was your platform?

**1:42:30 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. The seashore was authorized in 1962 by President Kennedy, but he'd underfunded it, and they didn't have enough money. They only bought half the land, and within 10 years, they'd only bought half of the Point Reyes National Seashore. And some guys had already started development at Drakes Bay, and they had plans for 900 houses there, and they'd already started. Anyway, I got elected to the Water Board, in a landslide. We were out of water actually, for Marin, and at the first board meeting, I wanted our manager Bill Seeger to write down on a blackboard, exactly how many hookups he'd given, beyond what we had water. And he'd given 2,000 hookups.

**1:43:51 Debra Schwartz:** Beyond capacity?

**1:43:52 Martin Griffin:** Beyond our capacity. And so we were justified in calling a moratorium, and we called a moratorium, and all hell broke loose. I got hung in effigy.

**1:44:08 Debra Schwartz:** Really, where? They hung you in effigy — they set something up in front of your house, or something?

**1:44:15 Martin Griffin:** Well, they threatened our house. We had a special meeting down at the Civic Center, which we should never have done. They let all the workmen off, and they all got drunk at the Civic Center, drank a lot of beer. And my wife and I were escorted home by policemen. We went down our driveway in Kent Woodlands, and the area was scattered with matchboxes, filled with matches.

**1:44:51 Debra Schwartz:** So you were the most hated man in Marin County, those developers saw you as the enemy.

**1:45:00 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, they did. But in the supervisorial election, in 1968, we'd elected Pete Arrigoni, who people thought was a developer, but he was a very nature-loving guy.

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<sup>18</sup> I saw it, moreover, as the key to protecting the north coast of California.—Martin Griffin.

**1:45:39 Debra Schwartz:** He was a nature-loving guy?

**1:45:41 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, he turned out to be really a wonderful supervisor, and he helped the Planning Department, which had been strengthened by the supervisor Peter Behr of Mill Valley. They had the most wonderful architects. And this one architect believed in design with nature, and that was the title of a book by Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature*. Everybody read that book, and it became our motto for all the designing in West Marin. But Arrigoni found out that Los Angeles had big designs on Northern California Water, and they already had the Sacramento River, and they wanted the Eel River, and the Klamath. We got beat on the Klamath before I got on the board. But the Eel River is a tremendous — it's the second- or third-largest river. And he appointed me to the — this was after I was on the Water Board, he appointed me to represent Marin on the Eel River Water Council.

**1:47:32 Debra Schwartz:** On the Eel River Water Council?

**1:47:33 Martin Griffin:** Which could supply all of the water they needed for the whole coast, all the way down to Los Angeles.<sup>19</sup> One of the biggest watersheds in California. And I'll tell you this, my story on that is — it'd take a book! [chuckles] But it was really exciting, and they would tell me where their meetings were, they'd give me the wrong place, and —

**1:48:05 Debra Schwartz:** They tried to undermine you?

**1:48:06 Martin Griffin:** They tried to undermine me. But I was a good friend of Ike Livermore, who was the Secretary of Resources for —

**1:48:19 Debra Schwartz:** Is this the same Livermore as Mrs. Livermore, the same family?

**1:48:22 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, yeah, Caroline's son. He was State Secretary of Resources for Governor Reagan, and Reagan planned on building three of the largest dams in the world on the Eel River. The largest was in Round Valley, and I've got a picture in my book that shows the location of those three dams. And the transmission tunnels would take the water to Southern California, and leave some for Northern California. And Ike told Reagan that if he built these dams, that he would not go to Washington with him if he got elected President. And that didn't bother Reagan, but what really bothered him was his brother, Putnam Livermore, was the Secretary of the Republican National Party. [chuckles]

**1:49:50 Debra Schwartz:** He needed to have the Livermore family in his corner.

**1:49:53 Martin Griffin:** He needed that. So anyway, Reagan killed it on the basis that we can't — he had Ike try and find some kind of a treaty with the Indians back in the 1850s or 1860s, and he found one.

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<sup>19</sup> Los Angeles proposed three huge dams on the Eel River.—Martin Griffin.



**1:50:18 Debra Schwartz:** That would basically disallow anybody to —

**1:50:20 Martin Griffin:** And that was the basis for turning down the Southern California —well, all hell broke loose when that got turned down. There's a big book about it called *The River Stops Here*, by a very qualified guy. Anyway, we'd stopped the dams. I went back to school during that time.

**1:50:54 Debra Schwartz:** To get your master's?

**1:50:55 Martin Griffin:** To get my master's in public health, and I got some of my professors to come out here and see the Cypress Grove, and write a book called *Tomales Bay*, or something like that. Anyway, it's a wonderful book written by five of my professors. [laughs]

**1:51:21 Debra Schwartz:** So you enlisted the help of the academic community across the SF Bay as well as your patients?

**1:51:28 Martin Griffin:** And they loved it out here. [chuckles] Some of them still live up in Ross.

**1:51:38 Debra Schwartz:** So, in essence, you have somehow managed to practice medicine while you're fighting these epic battles, one after another, enlisting the help of thousands of people, and protecting, what I guess now you would say, is the crowning glory of Marin County, all this beautiful open space which distinguishes this county as something really unique and special.

**1:52:11 Martin Griffin:** Yeah.

**1:52:11 Debra Schwartz:** I think I hear your story, and I think about every other beautiful area that was once beautiful that's now developed. Every highly developed, or over-developed area had the same kind of battle going on at some point, or maybe they just surrendered in advance, but I wonder what things would have looked like if others had stood up like you?

**1:52:35 Martin Griffin:** I have to give a lot of credit to other people for helping me, like Huey Johnson. He figured out how to beat the Bolinas Harbor District.

**1:52:45 Debra Schwartz:** And you know, that story is so well described in the movie that you're featured in.

**1:52:51 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**1:52:52 Debra Schwartz:** *Rebels with a Cause*.

**1:52:53 Martin Griffin:** Yeah.

**1:52:54 Debra Schwartz:** Where there's Huey Johnson, there's Doug Ferguson, there's you, there's others. All the people, well, not all certainly, but many of the people that had been instrumental in preserving the land of Marin County.

**1:53:09 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. We weren't necessarily coordinated, too, that's the interesting thing. Here's all these powerful people working to save West Marin, and we'd hardly knew each other. [chuckles]

**1:53:25 Debra Schwartz:** You were co-battling.

**1:53:28 Martin Griffin:** Co-battling.

**1:53:29 Debra Schwartz:** You were doing the same thing at the same time, but not really interacting.

**1:53:33 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, yeah. I phoned up Doug Ferguson of the Trust for Public Lands to get his legal advice on whether it was worth buying Kent Island, because we'd paid \$85,000 for Kent Island, and I had to be the fundraising chairman, nobody else would do it. But I asked him whether it was worthwhile buying it, seeing that it was protected under the State's Public Trust Doctrine.

**1:54:23 Debra Schwartz:** Well, he's working on Slide Ranch, and the other places.<sup>20</sup>

**1:54:28 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**1:54:31 Debra Schwartz:** And you're working in Bolinas Lagoon, and Huey's doing Marincello, and helping you with the Lagoon. This is an interesting time, in that there were so many people working together, and not together, to save the land.

**1:54:45 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, yeah. Well, the biggest battle they left out of that movie was the battle to save the Bolinas Lagoon, Tomales Bay, and it sort of got captured by Phyllis Faber, and she put a big farming twist on it, and downplayed the wilderness and coastal protection.

**1:55:20 Debra Schwartz:** You mean the fact that they were going to develop the houses? They talked about the farms, but not so much all of the housing, right?

**1:55:29 Martin Griffin:** No. But I'm not sure just — what you just said. But they wanted some housing, they wanted the farms to be much more prominent, and not the National Seashore and — well, I don't know what she wanted. We fought her tooth and nail in the — it was oyster battles, and I think she had gotten in with the Koch Brothers, I really do. I think she was after big time farming and less regulation, because I don't know why else she would bring lawsuits against the California Coastal Commission and against the National Park Service. What the hell was she trying to do?

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<sup>20</sup> Under the auspices of the Trust for Public Lands.—Martin Griffin.

**1:56:41 Debra Schwartz:** When you think back to the experiences you've had, you've got birds that showed you where you wanted to live when you first came over here and you looked over at Bolinas Lagoon. Could you have imagined that you would have been actually involved in preserving that very lagoon that enticed you to move here at that time? Did you have any sense that this is the direction it would go?

**1:57:08 Martin Griffin:** I had this wonderful Stanford entomologist, who was an Oakland Boy Scout naturalist, and he gave me a lot of ideas, and —

**1:57:34 Debra Schwartz:** About saving the birds, and —

**1:57:35 Martin Griffin:** Oh the birds. Well he was a wonderful —

**1:57:44 Debra Schwartz:** And his advice was?

**1:57:47 Martin Griffin:** Actually, I really did it for him, “Bugs” Cain.

**1:57:53 Debra Schwartz:** “Bugs” Cain was his name?

**1:57:55 Martin Griffin:** Mmhmm.<sup>21</sup>

**1:57:55 Debra Schwartz:** He was an entomologist with the name “Bugs” Cain? But what's his first name, really? [laughs]

**1:58:01 Martin Griffin:** My girlfriend at the time was Bugs Clark. [laughs] And the two of them got together, because they were both professional whistlers. I worked up at Yosemite in the summer, and they would whistle in unison, like, “I'm calling you!” [laughs]

**1:58:30 Debra Schwartz:** So when you hear that sound, you could say, “Oh, those are just two Bugs whistling.”

**1:58:34 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. [laughs]

**1:58:37 Debra Schwartz:** So you did this, you preserved this for your teacher? This is what inspired you, your teacher?

**1:58:45 Martin Griffin:** He inspired me more than anything. There were some other things besides water, though the big deal, really, was A60 zoning, which one of these planners had devised. It meant that you could only build one house in every 60 acres. And that killed the land investors' research, it was just an idea that worked. That's what kind of convinced me when we saw the planning commission, and then Pete Arrigoni took it up and pushed the A60 Zoning, and then Gary Giacomini picked it up and pushed

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<sup>21</sup> Brighton C. “Bugs” Cain inspired me to save what I could of the California of my childhood. He was a wonderful whistler, teacher, friend, and mentor, and there is a book about him.—Martin Griffin.

it, the A60 zoning. He got all of his friends and his relatives mad at him.

**2:00:09:** But that was an incredible achievement to get that for that easy to build on the eastern slope of a small space. That's why I say it's the biggest land-use battle in the history of the United States. And it was electricity, too. Electricity, because they had realized they had a potential here, for another Los Angeles. They needed power, and they needed water, and the power was going to come from the "Hole in the Head," the Bodega Head —

**2:01:03 Debra Schwartz:** Oh right, they were going to put a nuclear plant there, right on the San Andreas fault line.

**2:01:08 Martin Griffin:** Right on the San Andreas fault.

**2:01:09 Debra Schwartz:** Right. So, as we start to think about winding up this interview, I do have some, just overall questions about — I mean, I'm listening to your story, and I'm sure that even just a two-hour interview is the tip of the iceberg in the story, in your involvement and what it takes, and the people that have been paramount in helping you to preserve this area. But I have to say that with this interview, it's very interesting to me to see what drives you, the people that have inspired you in with a lasting inspiration. And beautiful and sad things, for instance, your Eagle Scout leader, the camp, your experiences with your family in nature, your experiences with your friends in nature, your —

**2:02:13 Martin Griffin:** And Mrs. Terwilliger. [chuckles]

**2:02:15 Debra Schwartz:** And Mrs. Terwilliger.

**2:02:17 Martin Griffin:** Yeah. I followed her around for a long time, she always fascinated me. Well, I knew her husband, he was an orthopedic surgeon; and Mrs. Terwilliger was a nurse at Stanford Hospital.

**2:02:32 Debra Schwartz:** She was a nurse at Stanford?

**2:02:36 Martin Griffin:** As I recall.

**2:02:37 Debra Schwartz:** So you've got Mrs. Terwilliger, you have Mrs. Livermore. Which is the same Livermore, that Mount Livermore is named after on Angel Island, I presume?

**2:02:46 Martin Griffin:** And Ike Livermore, who probably did more to save Marin County than anybody.

**2:02:54 Debra Schwartz:** Her son?

**2:02:56 Martin Griffin:** Her son, by stopping that dam.

**2:03:02 Debra Schwartz:** On the Eel River.

**2:03:03 Martin Griffin:** The Eel River.

**2:03:07 Debra Schwartz:** And you've got Huey Johnson, and that whole group. You've got your family; you've got your own very well-planted sense of joy, in nature, starting with your childhood. And an apparent abundance of energy, as far as I can tell, which seems to be still quite present at 95 years old.

**2:03:35 Martin Griffin:** [laughs] Yeah, when am I going to stop?

**2:03:39 Debra Schwartz:** When are you going to stop, will you ever stop? Have you written a book then?

**2:03:44 Martin Griffin:** Well just that — have you seen my book?

**2:03:46 Debra Schwartz:** No.

**2:03:50 Martin Griffin:** Oh, it's called *Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast*. That book inspired the movie —

**2:03:55 Debra Schwartz:** Oh right. I haven't seen the movie for a little while, forgive me — *Rebels with a Cause*.

**2:04:00 Martin Griffin:** *Rebels with a Cause*, was based on — Nancy Dobbs asked me if she could have permission because — my book, if she could find a photographer, and —

**2:04:14 Debra Schwartz:** So it was your book that was the inspiration for *Rebels with a Cause*?

**2:04:18 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, yeah. In fact it's the basis for *Rebels with a Cause*, except for what Phyllis undermined.

**2:04:30 Debra Schwartz:** So, if you were to look back and think of everything that you've been involved with, and all of the ways that you've garnered interest and support, what would you say to somebody that's going to be listening to this oral interview, who is interested in this oral interview, because they have the same interests and concerns, and love for nature that you have? What do you say to somebody young coming up these days? How to manage, how to maneuver, in preserving land and caring for land?

**2:05:03 Martin Griffin:** Well, now times have changed. It's hard to buy land anymore. Even when we bought the Canyon Ranch, \$700 an acre then, that added up to a lot of money. And then when we bought the other three canyons, they came to \$770,000 all together, and I didn't think it was possible to raise that amount of money.

**2:05:30 Debra Schwartz:** But you did.

**2:05:31 Martin Griffin:** But we did. And the thing that's interesting is that, we acted as nurturers for other organizations. We owned all of this land, these thousands of acres, they're all in a row there, nothing on it to speak of, except for birds, and the nice old house and a canyon there at the far south end, which we leased to the Point Reyes Bird Observatory for a dollar a year, for 30 years. And to me, that was nurturing them. That would have cost them a lot of money to get started, that they didn't have to put out.

**2:06:35 Debra Schwartz:** That's a very interesting concept, nurturing, and how you nurture.

**2:06:41 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, I got up and gave a talk about it at their last fundraiser, [chuckles] the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, because —

**2:06:50 Debra Schwartz:** Nurture and nourish land preservation. How do you continue to support growth through nurturing — I mean, growth of the natural world?

**2:07:04 Martin Griffin:** That's a good thought. Well, I always knew that insects were important, and what really angers me is the Mosquito Abatement District, and what they're doing. You never see a bug around here; there aren't any more bugs living here. Maybe a bee comes by now and then. When you don't have insects, you don't have birds, so we only a few birds that live here in this part of Marin. And we used to have quite a few birds over — right behind the library; there's a little freshwater pond there. But somebody put mosquito fish in there, which means that they also sprayed it with a chemical. And we lost a granddaughter — we ran a winery vineyard, it went right up in Healdsburg. And everybody up there used chemicals. I'm so angry with myself, that I used chemicals, and —

**2:08:40 Debra Schwartz:** You lost your granddaughter because of those chemicals?

**2:08:44 Martin Griffin:** I don't know what it was. Everybody, four or five times a year, they were out spraying all night long, shooting sprays 100 feet each direction. And the skies were cloudy with sprays, and fog in the Russian River Valley.

**2:09:08 Debra Schwartz:** I know, I just drove through the San Joaquin Valley, I saw it.

**2:09:13 Martin Griffin:** And I just, never told this to my daughter, but I just feel so sad that I didn't see that. I was so busy trying to —

**2:09:23 Debra Schwartz:** And so, your granddaughter died of cancer?

**2:09:30 Martin Griffin:** At age 15, leukemia. There were a cluster of them, which is always indicative. And I've been trying to figure out a way to stop these guys that run the

Mosquito Abatement District. They've developed tremendous power up and down the state.<sup>22</sup>

**2:10:01 Debra Schwartz:** So, your battles are not over, Marty.

**2:10:04 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, I know.

**2:10:06 Debra Schwartz:** You've got a lot to do.

**2:10:08 Martin Griffin:** This is really important, and —

**2:10:14 Debra Schwartz:** Well, I just want to say, on behalf of the Historical Society, and the library, and all of those people here that live here in Marin County, including myself, that love nature, thank you so much for everything you've done. Thank you for fighting those battles, and even being inspired by those battles. Some people would get knocked down at the first punch, but it seemed to stimulate you. "The enemy is good" is that what you said?

**2:10:44 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, I had good enemies. [chuckles]

**2:10:46 Debra Schwartz:** You did have good enemies, they strengthen you for the battle, I suppose, help you sharpen your sword of resistance. And also, I realize in this interview that while you're in the battle, you can look like the enemy, depending on who's looking at you. And later, when the dust is settled, that's not at all what happened.

**2:11:07 Martin Griffin:** No, no. Did you come to my birthday party we had just —

**2:11:12 Debra Schwartz:** No.

**2:11:14 Martin Griffin:** You probably didn't know about it, but Audubon Canyon Ranch, they put on a 95th birthday party for me at the Mill Valley Community Center, and God, they did a beautiful job — and 250 people, it was sold out! And they charged a lot of money for it. [chuckles] And a lot of people gave tributes of money to Audubon Canyon Ranch.<sup>23</sup> One thing I've noticed is this ripple effect. We had to buy Audubon Canyon Ranch, because nobody knew us. I didn't really capitalize on that work I did to save Richardson Bay at all, I sort of just did that. But after we got this 750, or 1,000 acres of the Audubon Canyon Ranch on the Bolinas Ridge, and leased one whole canyon to the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, we started the Environmental Forum of Marin.

**2:13:03 Debra Schwartz:** The what?

**2:13:05 Martin Griffin:** The Environmental Forum of Marin.

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<sup>22</sup> Home gardeners also use a lot of pesticides and herbicides.—Martin Griffin.

<sup>23</sup> Audubon Canyon Ranch has four wilderness preserves in three counties and we have nature education programs.—Martin Griffin.

**2:13:06 Debra Schwartz:** Forum, right, you mentioned that.

**2:13:10 Martin Griffin:** And that was really my idea from the Boy Scouts.

**2:13:16 Debra Schwartz:** So, this is the ripple effect you're talking about, one thing leads to another?

**2:13:21 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, and that has rippled, and become an independent organization, and —

**2:13:26 Debra Schwartz:** So, the wave action continues.

**2:13:28 Martin Griffin:** Yeah, I'm still on the board, still on it.

**2:13:31 Debra Schwartz:** Well, Marty, I think it's time to conclude the interview. But again, I say thank you for everything you've done, for the inspiration, for the "rippling" [Martin laughs], for the stories, for the fights, for the perseverance, for the ways in which you continue to inspire others, just all with that wonderful, profound love of nature that you carry with you. Even during our interview, you're pointing out the birds, and looking around you, and I appreciate that. So, thank you so much. Now, when we talked on the phone, you did say you'd end with a little song on the accordion. Are we gonna get that?

**2:14:15 Martin Griffin:** Oh, well, if you really want that? [chuckle]

**2:14:16 Debra Schwartz:** Remember, you were gonna play a song that you sang with your parents by the fire?

**2:14:20 Martin Griffin:** I'm an amateur, I'll tell you.

**2:14:23 Debra Schwartz:** That's okay, I'm gonna just pause this for a moment.

[Accordion playing "Edelweiss"]

**2:15:19 Debra Schwartz:** Bravo! Bravo!

[laughter]