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CAROL BUDDS

An interview conducted by
Gene Stocking on August 8, 2006

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ORAL HISTORY OF CAROL BUDDS

INTRODUCTION

Today is August 8, 2006, and I am in Mill Valley with Carol Connelly-Budds.

Carol's grandparents were early residents of Mill Valley.

Carol you have a rich family history of Mill Valley going back before the turn of the century. Can you tell us a little bit about who your maternal grandparents were and when they came to Mill Valley?

My grandparents came to Mill Valley in the late 1880's and my grandparents had both come from Sweden. My grandfather came first and my grandmother came shortly after and they were married in San Francisco. They lived on Bay Street in San Francisco and they had a sailboat and I have pictures in my living room of them arriving on Angel Island for a picnic when my oldest uncle was an infant and he was born in 1890. I know my grandfather walked into Mill Valley from the Alto Station before the trains ran into Mill Valley. I don't know for sure about my grandmother, if she did the walk or not. After the trains started into Mill Valley they frequently came and camped. I have pictures of them camping on Ethyl Avenue and Wildomar at the time of the auction, the summer after the auction.

Q. What year was that?

A. The auction was 1890.

Q. What were their names, Carol?

A. My grandfather was Alfred Axel Lunquist and my grandmother was Agnes Caroline Lundquist.

Q. When and how did they happen to move to Mill Valley?

A. They moved to Mill Valley because they were living in Alameda and had bought property at the corner of Cascade Drive and Marion Avenue and by that time they had four children. The two older ones were boys and the boys never wanted to go back to Alameda at the end of the summer. They decided they would add on to the house and live there permanently.

Q. What year was this?

A. I actually don't know what year but it was around 1903 or 1904. My mother went to first grade in Alameda and I believe that is as far as she went in Alameda.

Q. What did your grandfather do for a living?

A. He worked for the Sanborn Map Company. He was the superintendent in San Francisco.

Q. I believe they bought a large parcel of land?

A. Yes, they did. They bought property on Marion Avenue and Cascade just opposite Eugene and Cornwall Streets on Cascade. It went up to what is now Renz Road.

Q. They had four children, is that correct?

A. That's correct. Their eldest son was Karl and then Iver and then my aunt was named Afhild and my mother was the youngest one, Karin.

Q. I believe at one time your grandfather sub-divided some property on Cascade Drive. Is that correct?

A. Yes, that was opposite where Josephine comes into Cascade and there is a city lane that goes right through the center of the property that he sub-divided. I am not sure if you can still go up and down that lane but it went up to Marion Avenue.

Q. What was your mother's name?

A. My mother's name was Karin Lunquist Connelly.

Q. And your father's name?

A. My father was Frank Connelly but all his close friends called him Pat.

Q. When did your mother come to Mill Valley?

A. My mother came to Mill Valley as an infant. The family was living in Alameda and she was born in Alameda. I guess they already owned the property in Mill Valley buy the time she was born and they would come over on weekends throughout the year and they would come for the summer.

Q. When did your dad come to Mill Valley?

A. My dad came to California in 1915 but I'm not positive when he first came to Mill Valley, sometime between 1915 and 1919 because he and my mother were married on January 1, 1919. He had come for at least two summers before that time.

Q. Where did he live before they were married?

A. He lived in San Francisco during the year but in the summer time he, as many other young men did at that time, came to Mill Valley. First he rented a little house on Miller Avenue, not too far from Park Avenue. The next year he stayed... Elsie Quedens had a boarding house on Buena Vista and he and a number of other young men, one of whom later became my aunt's husband, lived in a boarding house.

Q. Is it the same Quedens that was related to Eve Arden?

A. That is correct. He knew Eve Arden when she was Eunice Quedens as a very small child. She would come to her aunt Elsie's house probably, even at that age, entertain the young men who were there.

Q. Where were your parents married?

A. They were married in a redwood grove at my grandparent's house on January 1, and I guess the weather was alright because they were married outside.

Q. What did your dad do for a living?

A. My dad worked for several different railroad companies. He had worked in Salt Lake City for the railroad before he came to San Francisco. The only railroad I remember him working for was the Northwestern Pacific. When I was a small child they had offices in the Southern Pacific building at 65 Market Street.

Q. Where and when were you born?

A. I was born at St. Francis hospital in San Francisco on July 19, 1926.

Q. You had a sister?

A. My sister is a little bit older than I am and her name is Patricia.

Q. Where was your childhood home?

A. We lived right next door to my grandparents on Cascade Drive.

Q. This house your mother lived in for many years, is that correct?

A. Yes, the house had been built as a summer house by my grandfather for some friends in the east Bay and the house was empty when my mother and dad were married so they moved into it and they enlarged it a little bit. After we were born they enlarged it some more. It was remodeled quite a bit in the 1950's and my mother lived there until she moved to the Redwoods in the mid 1980's.

Q. What do you remember about the 1929 fire?

A. I remember we went to Sausalito. My mother's oldest brother, Karl, lived in Sausalito at that time. He had a hardware store in Sausalito. He and his wife were gone for the weekend and I remember we stayed in their house at least one night. When we were returning to Mill Valley I recall we were stopped so it must have been there was still some evidence of the fire. I really cannot remember seeing the fire myself. My mother had put a copper lamp out in the front yard and I remember seeing that in the yard when we returned to the house.

Q. Did she make any other preparations for any of her household effects?

A. Actually she did. I don't remember it but she told the story afterwards of putting all of her good china in the bathtub which was on a second story, not the same story where the china was kept. It involved some carrying and she filled the bathtub with water and her idea was the china would be safe if the house burned.

Q. Do you remember seeing the smoke and the flames?

A. No, I don't remember that at all. I was three years old.

Q. How did you get to Sausalito?

A. We didn't have a car at the time but my uncle who still lived next door to my grandparent's had a small Chevrolet Coupe. Every so often he would let my mother and dad use the car. My mother was the driver. She had taken lessons in 1919 when my grandfather bought a car and he wanted her to be the driver for my grandmother when he was not available. Until my dad bought a car in 1929 he didn't do the driving. He didn't like to do the driving.

Q. Do you remember the mountain railroad at all?

A. I don't remember riding on it and I don't really remember very much about it. I do remember the tracks going across downtown, going across Throckmorton. I am not sure I remember them at the time the trains were still running on them. I do remember where the shops were in Corte Madera Avenue area. I remember many people whose property boarded on the tracks going up through Blithedale Canyon bought some of the property and added on to their property.

Q. What kind of a town was Mill Valley when you grew up here?

A. It was a small town and it was a suburb of San Francisco. We did know people whose parents worked in Mill Valley but most of our friends' parents worked in San Francisco and commuted on the trains and the ferry. It was a very nice town in which to have grown up. We would go downtown and everyone knew your name. You were certainly pretty safe.

Q. Where did your mother do her grocery shopping?

A. There was a market called the Pacific Market which was just a couple of doors down from the coffee house that is at the corner of Miller and Throckmorton. Although it was named Pacific Market everyone called it Oppenheimers' because the Oppenheimers were the people who owned it. My mother enjoyed driving the car downtown and doing the shopping herself although many people would phone. My grandmother usually phoned and gave a delivery order. The delivery person would bring it right into your kitchen.

Q. What hardware store did you go to?

A. We went to Tamalpias Hardware. It was also right in that section and it was owned by Mr. Tieman and Mr. Dux. We had an icebox until sometime in the early 1930's and either Mr. Tieman or Mr. Dux would make a delivery of the ice. They would have to climb 108 stairs from Cascade Drive up to our house. They would come right into the back porch and put the ice in the box. It was a 25lb. chunk of ice so they had to do that at least once a week. Twenty-five lbs. of ice was twenty-five cents.

Q. That was at 209 Cascade Drive?

A. That is correct.

Q. What drug store did your parents go to?

A. We went to Lockwood's Drug Store. It was on the corner of Miller and Throckmorton.

Q. Do you remember the big scale in there - all the children in town would go in and weigh themselves?

A. Yes, I do remember the scale. I also remember the people who worked there always knew your name. I remember there was a telephone not right in plain sight but near the front of the store and you (could) go in and use that telephone after school and call your mother and ask if it was ok if you went home with a friend.

Q. Do you remember Esposti's?

A. Oh yes, I remember they were right up the street from Lockwood's where La Ginestra is now and the prices were comfortable for the times. When we were in 7th and 8th grade one of our big thrills was once a week we could buy our lunch at Esposti's and you could have a hamburger and milkshake for twenty-five cents. If you bought them separately they were fifteen cents each. A whole group of us would go down from Old Mill School and buy lunch on Wednesdays. Every other day we went home for lunch.

Q. Do you remember them making ice cream in the window?

A. Yes, I do. I remember something called a big moon. The big moon was a round bar they made. It was vanilla ice cream covered with chocolate. It had a little wooden spoon stuck into it and if you were very lucky you got a big moon that had a wooden spoon that said "free". That meant you could come back and get another one.

Q. Do you remember the Depot?

A. Yes, I remember very well what it looked like with the trains coming almost up to the building, the railway express right next to it.

Q. Of course you must remember the Greyhound buses coming into Mill Valley when the trains went off.

A. Yes, I do. I remember right after I graduated from high school in 1943 I started working in San Francisco that summer and most of my friends did and by that time the buses were running and we all rode over on the bus together.

Q. What schools did you attend in Mill Valley?

A. I started in kindergarten at Summit and went there through the low 6th grade. We had grades divided in those days. There was low 6th and high 6th. Ordinarily after low 6th you went to Old Mill for the upper grades but when I was ready it was being remodeled to make it earthquake safe so I went down to Park school for high 6th and the beginning of low 7th and then Old Mill was ready and I went there until the beginning of high 8th and at that time they had just completed the part of Park school-the building at the corner of Blithedale and Elm and that's where I went for the high 8th.

Q. Who were some of the outstanding teachers you had?

A. I remember the most, as being outstanding, Eva Riccomini. She was the person we had for English in 6th, 7th and 8th grade. The schools were called "departmental" for the upper elementary grades. The students stayed in the same classroom but the teachers moved from room to room. I also remember Belle Abraham, who we thought was ancient because she had taught my eldest uncle at Summit School, my mother's other siblings, and my mother. In retrospect she was much younger than I am now.

Q. She was a very gentle person, wasn't she?

A. She was a very gentle person and I think she was a pretty good teacher.

Q. Where did you go to high school?

A. I started at Tamalpais High School in January of 1940 and I went there for the spring semester and then my sister and I went to boarding school at Ursaline High School in Santa Rosa.

Q. Where your college days spent?

A. I went to Dominican College in San Rafael.

Q. Did you get your teaching credential there?

A. That's correct.

Q. What were your memories of World War II?

A. I remember the day of Pearl Harbor. It was a weekend we were home from Ursaline for the weekend. My sister had a friend visiting from San Francisco so in the evening on Sunday, we drove across the Golden Gate Bridge and took her home. Everyone was a bit apprehensive going across the bridge and going to San Francisco and also my dad's office at that time was in Sausalito and one of his responsibilities was arranging for the protection of the tunnels and bridges all the way on the Northwestern Pacific Line up to Eureka as well as the inter-urban service that was still running. He was at his office after dark one of those first nights and there were terrible noise like bombing and flashing light and as it turned out it was a thunder and lightning storm. Everyone really had the feeling what happened at Pearl Harbor was going to happen here.

Q. Do you remember any of the Japanese community that lived on Bernard Street?

A. Yes, I remember them very well. I went to kindergarten with Betty Shibata, we called her Akiko when we were young and I guess I still call her Akiko when I see her. She is probably one of my oldest friends because we played together before we went to kindergarten. She and her sister had gone to Japan shortly before the war started, one year and a half before, probably.

Her aunt and uncle with whom they had lived still lived in Mill Valley. I remember her aunt coming to the house and saying her uncle had been sent away. Sometime after that she and the eldest niece were sent away. Throughout the war my mother corresponded with them and sent Christmas gifts and that sort of thing.

Q. That was Natsu and Yoko?

A. Yes.

Q. And their oldest niece was True?

A. That's correct.

Q. When and who did you marry Carol.

A. I married a man named Frank Budds in 1964. He lived in San Francisco and at the time we were married I moved into his apartment which was one and one-half blocks from Mission Dolores.

Q. Did you have any children?

A. Yes, we have one son, Andrew, who lives in Tiburon now.

Q. What does Andrew do for a living?

A. Andrew is in construction and he is quite a water sports enthusiast. He did work in a water sports store near the Presidio for quite a few years. He is a great surfer- wind, kite surfer. Recently he has become very knowledgeable about hiking on Mt. Tamalpias. He knows the trails better than I do now.

Q. Where did you teach school?

A. I started teaching in Mill Valley right after I graduated from Dominican and it was 1948 when they were just feeling the influx of children. We were on double session while Alto school was being completed I taught at Park school. I shared a room with Edna McGuire. She taught in the morning and I and my class started in the afternoon.

Q. What grade were you teaching?

A. I was teaching third grade. In those days we still had the low and high designation. I started out with low third and high third in the fall. In the spring I had high third and low fourth. That meant I kept my fourth graders for an extra hour after the third graders went home. The next year I taught second and third. All the time I taught in Mill Valley. I taught at Strawberry Point School after five years at Alto school.

Q. I believe in those days you had yard duty and bus duty, and no teacher's aide and you had a big class?

A. That's correct.

Q. How many in your average class?

A. I would say 34 or 35.

Q. And later on you taught for the Marin County Schools?

A. Yes, I stopped teaching when my son was born and at that time I was teaching in San Leandro. It was always easy for a teacher to obtain a job. In fact I stopped at the end of February, the year he was born, and they hadn't been able to replace me until the week I was leaving. It was impossible to get a teaching job in the 1970's so I went to a program that was offered through the Marin County Office of Education to upgrade my office skills and as a result of that I got a job working for them, which led to teaching the office skills program.

Q. Who was the Superintendent of School?

A. Virgil Hollis when I started and Byron Mauzy was the Superintendent at the time I retired.

Q. I guess you've seen a lot of changes in education over the years?

A. Yes, I have. I do some volunteer work now. I take children on tours of Luther Burbank Home and Gardens in Santa Rosa. I am so impressed with the way second and third graders can read. They are so much better readers than children were at the time I was teaching primary grades. They start their readiness at a pre-school level and they learn to read and write in kindergarten.

Q. How has Mill Valley changed over the years?

A. What I notice more than anything else is the traffic. It is not only in Marin County-it has gone North in the eleven years I have been in Santa Rosa. It is incredible how the traffic has increased up there. When you turn into Mill Valley you are in a line of traffic all the way into downtown and it does seem much more built up. It has not too much in Cascade Canyon. Once in a great while we will park near our former home and walk up in Cascade Canyon. The trail to the cascades is pretty much the same.

Q. Didn't you lead hikes for the Mill Valley Parks and Recreation?

A. Yes, I did. I retired in 1992 and I started walking around Mill Valley a lot and at that time I was living in a little house on Throckmorton. I got the idea of having other people learn about the numerous lanes that still exist in Mill Valley and so I presented it to the Recreation Dept. and we started out with four different walks. The walks lasted about 1 ½ to 2 hours and the idea was to take people up and down the different stair systems and lanes in a certain part of town. In addition to the walking I would tell them a bit of the history of the area.

Q. What areas did you travel?

A. The first one was in the park area. We started at Park School and walked down Elm then Locust and over to Willow to Miller Avenue and then we would cross Miller Avenue and go up a set of stairs to Ethyl Avenue. Then there was one in Blithedale Canyon and one on the Middle Ridge and one in Cascade Canyon. The first set of four was successful enough so ultimately there were five others. There was a second one in Cascade Canyon, a different side of the canyon. There was one where we started down near Boyle Park and it included a section of Hillside and over near the golf course and tennis club. There was a final one - the ninth one, was in Homestead. We started way up in Homestead near Stolte Grove and then we climbed up out of Homestead on the Pixie Trail and did a little section up toward the Pipeline Trail.

Q. Have you seen the new map that has been published?

A. No, and I would enjoy seeing that.

Q. Can we go back to Cascade Canyon and some of your neighbors?

A. Yes. Right next door to us 229 Cascade was a house where the Wood's lived, Ethyl and Ed Wood and their son Edwin who was about a year older than my sister. He was the only child in our immediate neighborhood when we were small children. Across the street there were some people named Bryant whose children were considerably older. They were at least in high school, if not older. Above them was where Melvin Klyce and his family lived and his father, Harvey, lived in an L shape to Melvin's property that went all the way to Throckmorton. There was a house across the street on Marion Avenue, which was made into apartments. It had been the Newbegin house but I don't remember the names of any of the neighbors at the time we were children. It was owned by someone name Stallow and later some people named Kelley remodeled it. Dr. Renz lived right next door to my grandparents and Renz Road is named after him. Another house off of Renz Road above the Wood's house was the Brook's house.

Q. What about the Staples property?

A. The Staple's lived the distance of two city blocks from Cascade Drive. It was far enough and the terrain was wooded and the houses were all a distance from the street. The children didn't play out on the street. My sister and I just loved to go to my mother's friends houses with friends who lived on Sunnyside, such as the Schaubel's, on Mountainview such as the Kahler's because we could play with all the neighborhood children. We didn't have that kind of atmosphere on Cascade.

Q. You are a member of the Mill Valley Historical Society, and have been for many years, also on the Board. What capacity did you serve on the Board?

A. The first year on the Board, Bud Ortman was president and he had a little assignment for each of us. My assignment was to do oral history. I must say I didn't do too many interviews but I did lots of transcription.

Q. You were editor of the Walk Into History Guidebook. Do you remember how many years you did that?

A. I can't tell you how many years. I started sometime in the 1980's and I believe it was around 4 or 5 years.

Q. Your wonderful memories of Mill Valley really enhanced these walks and you served as a guide for many, many years too.

A. Yes, I did. I really enjoyed it. The entire experience of writing the guidebooks and doing the walks was always very enjoyable.

Q. When did you leave Mill Valley?

A. I left in 1995 and moved to Santa Rosa.

Q. Was it hard to leave the valley after being here so many years?

A. In retrospect it is very hard but it wasn't so hard at the time. I am a person who does not like moving. I make a career out of moving so the months before the move I'm just so terrible getting everything ready and then as soon as I get there I have to unpack everything immediately. The first couple of weeks are so terrible that it wasn't that hard leaving Mill Valley because I had so much to do. I can't help but say if I had my "struthers" I'd live in Mill Valley.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

A. I actually can't think of anything.

Carol, it has been wonderful talking to you and we appreciate you driving here from Santa Rosa today and we thank you for this interview. We thank you for the Historical Society Board and for adding this oral history to our collection.

A. I thank you for doing it and it's fun you are the one who did it.