

Mill Valley Oral History Program
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ROBERT ANDRESEN

**An Oral History Interview
Conducted by Carol Staiger on June 3, 2003**

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TITLE: Oral History of Robert Andresen
INTERVIEWER: Carol Staiger
DESCRIPTION: Transcript, 23 pages
INTERVIEW DATE: June 3, 2003

Robert Henry Andresen was born on November 20th, 1915, at St. Luke's Hospital in San Francisco. Bob attended Balboa High where he lettered in football, track and tennis, and got a football scholarship to the University of San Francisco. He later transferred to San Mateo Junior College, graduating in 1936. After working as a bellboy on cruise ships he was admitted to Hastings Law School. His first job was at the Massachusetts Bonding and Insurance Company. He then worked for Prudential Insurance's real estate department. After working in Army Intelligence during World War II, Bob went back to Prudential Insurance and eventually became head of the legal department, before starting in private practice in 1953.

In his oral history, Bob recounts meeting his wife, Betsy Anne Brown, after a mutual friend tried to set them up on a blind date for a New Year's Eve party. He shares his memories of building their house together on Magee Avenue. Bob also delves into his experiences serving with the Mill Valley Planning Commission, actively participating in various civic affairs including the School District, Family Service Agency, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, and Little League, and serving as Director of the Marin County Bar Association and council member for the Mill Valley City Council.

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Oral History of Robert Andresen
June 3, 2003

Carol Staiger: Today is Tuesday, June 3, 2003. I am at the home of Betsy and Bob Andresen at Villa Marin, the retirement complex high in the hills overlooking Northgate Shopping Center in San Rafael. Bob, your formal name is Robert H. Andresen. What does the H stand for?

Bob Andresen: Henry.

Carol Staiger: Oh, Henry. Okay. Well, you've had a real rich background in Mill Valley. Before we get into those details, let's talk a few minutes about your background. Tell us about your birth and where you were born, and so forth.

Bob Andresen: Born November 20th, 1915 in San Francisco.

Carol Staiger: At home or a hospital?

Bob Andresen: At St. Luke's Hospital. [I] first lived in south of Market which is sort of a distinction.

Carol Staiger: Yes.

Bob Andresen: And from there we moved down to Sanchez Street near 18th in a series of tenements, which our doctor called Finnegan's Row, an interesting mixture of Jewish, Polish and Irish population and we were there until the third grade. There I attended Everett Grammar School. The principal was Pop Sturges, reported to be a veteran of the Civil War. Following that we moved to Ingleside, my father having moved up in the business world and into a new home on Plymouth Avenue in the Ingleside District. There I attended Farragut Grammar School. Farragut Grammar School was a monolith located in the Ingleside district. It is now gone.

Carol Staiger: What do you mean by monolith? One big building?

Bob Andresen: A big chunk of building.

Carol Staiger: I see, and it's gone.

Bob Andresen: Massive concrete.

Carol Staiger: What street was that on?

Bob Andresen: That was on Holloway.

Carol Staiger: And what would be there now?

Bob Andresen: Housing.

Carol Staiger: Oh, my gosh.

Bob Andresen: Went back a couple of years ago and it was all gone. So anyway, we cruised along there and my dad was credit manager with Sherman & Clay, a fairly responsible position and then the Depression hit and he was one of the first to go, being rather high salaried at that time. Lo and behold, before we knew it, he was on WPA. In the meantime I'm in high school working in service stations.

Carol Staiger: That's what Warren did, too. Warren was a service station man. You both became lawyers starting at the bottom.

Bob Andresen: Thank heavens for service stations. It put me through high school and law school. Fifty cents an hour.

Carol Staiger: That's pretty good. I got thirty-three cents an hour.

Bob Andresen: So where were we?

Carol Staiger: Well, you were working in services stations. What sort of work did you do? Pump gas?

Bob Andresen: I pumped gas, lubed cars. In those days we lubricated a car for \$1.50, with jillions of fittings to take care of. Changed the oil, painted the tires, striped them with silver paint, cleaned the inside and washed the windows, all for \$1.50. That lasted all through law school and it put me through, really grateful. So because my dad had the misfortune of being on WPA and then ultimately he got promoted into the Treasury Department of the United States. He was quite content until he — he was never an office manager. He liked to do things with his hands. I recall they had lotteries in those days, the Pressmen's Lottery and things of that kind, and he won \$3,000 once.

Carol Staiger: Which is a lot of money.

Bob Andresen: And he quit his job and he went to work for the Market Street Railway in the shop. Good salary.

Carol Staiger: Well, where were your parents from originally?

Bob Andresen: Well, my dad was —

Carol Staiger: And his name was?

Bob Andresen: Harry, Harry P.

Carol Staiger: Harry P. Andresen.

Bob Andresen: And my mother's name was Sarah Francis Kilroy, maiden name. They were both from San Francisco. They were both born in San Francisco. They were first generation. Her parents came from Ireland. My father's parents came from Denmark.

Carol Staiger: That's why you have the good old Danish name.

Bob Andresen: Right. My grandfather first came here, got into the — Do you recall the barges they had out in San Francisco Bay in the old days to unload ships? They were called scows, sailing scows, and under sail and they'd go out to the ships, load it up and then take off for the brickyard or wherever they had to go, and out to some hay field.

Carol Staiger: Like the Alma; that's a hay scow.

Bob Andresen: Yeah, precisely.

Carol Staiger: She went up to Petaluma. I guess it carried anything.

Bob Andresen: He carried everything. He was carrying bricks from McNear's over to Pinole.

Carol Staiger: And they went by sail rather than by motor.

Bob Andresen: By sail, sure. And I don't know when, but eventually he wound up in the wine business. He was managing a winery first in Livermore and then in Oakville in the Napa Valley. He did this during Prohibition. Legally, they were bonded wines.

Carol Staiger: You're talking about your grandfather.

Bob Andresen: My grandfather, right. And so he was a wine maker until about the time Prohibition ended and then he was into the retirement period and out of it.

Carol Staiger: OK, let's tell about college. Where did you go to college?

Bob Andresen: Well, once again because of the money situation, I finished high school in three and a half years in order to go to work, and after working for six months I got a scholarship at the University of San Francisco playing football. Incidentally, I lettered in football and track and tennis at Balboa High School. The scholarship didn't last long because I weighed 150 pounds then and I was playing guard and they were awfully big in those days. From there I went to San Mateo Junior College and enjoyed it; excellent instructors and a good rapport between students and professors. I graduated there in 1936 in the odd semester. That is, I finished in December, with junior college honors. Applied to Hastings. That's what you could do in those days if your grades were good enough. What you did, you submitted your transcripts and they made an evaluation based upon University of California standards and if they thought you were scholar enough, they let you in. So I was fortunate to get into Hastings with two years of college behind me. However, I had six months to go before I entered law school so I went out to sea. I sailed on the Monterey, and as bell boy.

Carol Staiger: As a what?

Bob Andresen: Bell boy.

Carol Staiger: Bell boy.

Bob Andresen: Yes.

Carol Staiger: Well, that's pretty low down?

Bob Andresen: Well, you might think so. It's quite rewarding.

Carol Staiger: I mean a bellboy, in other words — it's okay; explain it.

Bob Andresen: A bellboy is the guy when you want a drink, you call up and he goes up and gets a drink for you and that sort of thing. And whatever had to be done, we did it.

Carol Staiger: Oh, this was on a passenger boat.

Bob Andresen: Sure, yes.

Carol Staiger: Oh, I was thinking of a working boat.

Bob Andresen: Oh, no. No, I sailed on *The Malolo* the year before for two weeks and went out to Honolulu and back.

Carol Staiger: Which one?

Bob Andresen: *The Malolo*.

Carol Staiger: How do you spell that?

Bob Andresen: M-A-L-O-L-O.

Carol Staiger: Okay.

Bob Andresen: And worked on that as a bugler. Incidentally that was my entre to the ship. I could play a bugle and they wanted a bugler so —

Carol Staiger: Oh, isn't that funny!

Bob Andresen: So I took my trumpet along and bugled for them. Unfortunately while I was playing bugle all the bell boys were making money because that's when people were getting on or off the ships and money was floating. So eventually I got out of the bugle business and got into the bellboy business and fortunately at the end of six months I got off the ship with \$300 and

was able to start law school. The ships went down from here to Honolulu and then to Pago Pago and to Fiji; Auckland, New Zealand; Sydney, Australia; Melbourne.

Carol Staiger: Now, what year would this have been?

Bob Andresen: This would have been 1936.

Carol Staiger: I see. Times were pretty tight.

Bob Andresen: So I entered law school in August of '36.

Carol Staiger: Now, you went to Hastings. So did my husband. He went to it when it was at Van Ness and McAllister. Now it's at McAllister and Hyde. Was it still there at Van Ness and McAllister or where was it?

Bob Andresen: Well, when I started there it was in the State Building.

Carol Staiger: Which was where?

Bob Andresen: On McAllister Street. You know the State Building.

Carol Staiger: But I mean on Van Ness.

Bob Andresen: No, no, on McAllister Street. You know where the [recording skipped] part is, right facing the square?

Carol Staiger: So then it moved over. It was also in the State Building when —

Bob Andresen: Yeah, there is another State Building —

Carol Staiger: Which has now become the Brown Building.

Bob Andresen: Yeah, but the —

Carol Staiger: You know, I mean it's a white building but it's long after Pat Brown.

Bob Andresen: Oh, really.

Carol Staiger: It's the one that —

Bob Andresen: The one on the corner.

Carol Staiger: The one on the corner. That's where the building down there.

Bob Andresen: This is a building that faces upon the Plaza.

Carol Staiger: Yeah, okay. Well, then it's moved three times at least.

Bob Andresen: Oh, well, indeed. We met in the basement of that building. The problem, the classes were comfortable.

Carol Staiger: Were there any women at all?

Bob Andresen: Yes, we had two women in the class.

Carol Staiger: Because there were very few when Warren went, and now it's more women than men in law school, would you believe?

Bob Andresen: I understand that's true. So then from the State Building we moved over to Van Ness Avenue in a larger building over there, nondescript, and then ultimately of course came the beautiful campus on McAllister Street.

Carol Staiger: Yeah, well, that's been more recent.

Bob Andresen: Yeah.

Carol Staiger: Okay, and you enjoyed your law school and did fine, so —

Bob Andresen: Law school was — the first year was a shock. An entirely different system of education and I recall taking my first examination and getting a D. And I went into the Dean with it, who was the teacher of the course, and I said, "You must have made some mistake. I don't get Ds." "Mr. Andresen, it was no mistake." So I straightened up and flew right and managed to get out of there in three years.

Carol Staiger: After you got out of law school, what did you do next?

Bob Andresen: After law school, one of the first things I did was to get a job. Jobs were difficult to get then.

Carol Staiger: This would have been what? '39?

Bob Andresen: In '39, yeah. First I had to pass the Bar. I took the Witkin¹ course, as most lawyers did in those days. Witkin did a beautiful job and he trained people. God knows how many volumes of law —

Carol Staiger: Well, that's just fine. That's what makes it more interesting.

Bob Andresen: So let's see, where were we? We were out of law school and I went to — in desperation, I managed to get a job with the Massachusetts Bonding and Insurance Company adjusting claims, \$10 a month.

¹ **Bernard E. Witkin** (May 22, 1904 - December 23, 1995) is the founder of the California law treatise Witkin's.

Carol Staiger: That was when? Based in San Francisco?

Bob Andresen: In San Francisco and two weeks after getting that job, Betsy and I were married.

Carol Staiger: Oh, my gosh. Well, we'll talk about meeting her in just a few minutes.

Bob Andresen: That's a story in itself.

Carol Staiger: And then how long were you at Massachusetts Bonding?

Bob Andresen: One year. And then I went to work for the Prudential Insurance Company as assistant resident attorney in the Real Estate Investment Department principally in mortgage loans and lease purchase deals and things of that kind.

Carol Staiger: You were living where? In San Francisco?

Bob Andresen: San Francisco. Our first home was out on the Great Highway, a big apartment out there. \$30 a month.

Carol Staiger: You have to add two zeroes to that now.

Bob Andresen: Oh, indeed, yeah, yeah.

Carol Staiger: Two zeroes.

Bob Andresen: We'd open the window at night and the curtains would flow straight in. From there, we stayed there a year and then Prudential gave me a — That was the first year I was with Massachusetts Bonding and after I got out of there and with Prudential, I went up to \$150 a month. We moved into a much nicer apartment over on 31st Avenue and Fulton right across from Golden Gate Park near Spreckles Lake. I better go back and capture Betsy.

Carol Staiger: Okay, fine. Sure. That's just fine.

Bob Andresen: I had a good friend, practically a sister, living across the street from me, Bea Zisser.

Carol Staiger: How do you spell Zisser?

Bob Andresen: Z-I-S-S-E-R. And a very talented piano player and my age. No romantic attachments, just good friends. And so, I had two friends at San Mateo Junior College who were kind of wild men, big spenders. They called me up and said, "We're all set for New Year's Eve; we've got the St. Francis. \$14 a couple." I almost died so I had to get a date and I ran across the street to see Bea, and she said, "I know just the girl for you, Betty Brown." So we called Betty, and Betty's mother wouldn't let her go. A blind date; she didn't approve of that at all! I took a

classmate of Betsy's, Connie James, a delightful girl, also very talented musically. She had a great time and —

Carol Staiger: Got your \$14 worth.

Bob Andresen: Oh, indeed and then some. But I didn't give up on Betsy nor did Bea. Bea invited me up to — I was then going to law school which was fairly close to San Francisco State, which was then located at Dubois and Market Street, so I could walk up there from law school and so Bea said, "Come on up and meet Betty Brown." Which I did. We met on the campus and she introduced us and then made herself scarce and the two of us were standing there and Betsy said, "Well, let me show you the campus." And we first went into Anderson Hall and we were up in the top floor walking along. A girl came flying out of one of the classrooms, lab rooms, and she said, "Are you Fred Snex?"

Carol Staiger: And you said no.

Bob Andresen: What she said was "Are you afraid of snakes?" And I said, "No, I'm not Fred Snex" and so she said, "Well, come with me." And here's a snake wandering around in there and she wanted me to pick it up and put it back which I did. I had to. Painful as it was. And that was Betsy, and the next date was a tennis date. I had my doubts about Betsy at that time. She showed up on the tennis court with a topcoat and mittens. Of course it was January, January the 7th, and then there was a movie and we won a dollar at the Parkside Theater. And so that brings Betsy into the picture.

Carol Staiger: Okay, you were in law school and Betsy was at San Francisco State.

Bob Andresen: San Francisco State and we both graduated in 1939, I over at Cal Campus.

Carol Staiger: So you went over there for your graduation.

Bob Andresen: Oh, yes. It was part of the University system.

Carol Staiger: I know but I don't think Warren's was there.

Bob Andresen: Yeah, well.

Carol Staiger: 'Cause one was a decade later.

Bob Andresen: Yeah. But we joined the mob scene at [recording skipped.] So we graduated and then working and finally Prudential and then came the war. I went down and talked to a Major Conrad in the Army and told him I was interested in going into Army intelligence and he checked my background. I told him I was an attorney and I had investigative experience with companies, and he said, "Andresen, you're just the man we're looking for. Get into basic training and we'll have you out of there in six weeks and into the field, and it's dangerous work. You're going to be down in Brazil one night and you'll be over on the front lines the next. We don't know and but it is dangerous." Still, with all hope I departed and became not entirely trustful of

Major Conrad. I went over to the company commander at the P.O. and managed to get my basic training over there.

As to what my qualifications were, it was a headquarters company and he said, “What’s your qualifications for being in a headquarters company and can you type?” And I said, “No, I can’t type.” And he said, “What are your qualifications?” And I said “Well, I have a certain amount of administrative experience” and he said we’d take care of that. So I got into basic training and took it over and over again and Major Conrad let me down. Never did call me, so I went over and applied for OCS and they said, “Well, what would you like? What school do you want?” And I said, “Well, I don’t care. I just want to get out of this basic training thing.” At this point I’m drilling squads and — we qualified and so I went back to the barracks and that night I got a telephone call from another major. This guy in charge of the Investigation Division of the Provo Marshall, looking for investigative personnel and that’s where I ended up in the Investigation Division.

Carol Staiger: And what rank were you?

Bob Andresen: I was a sergeant.

Carol Staiger: You never did get —

Bob Andresen: No, I never did go to OCS. I was a buck private when I moved down there and then they moved me up to a buck sergeant and still in uniform, and there I sat and read credit reports and stuff and finally they moved me out up to Seattle.

Carol Staiger: When you say “down”, where were you? Where was down?

Bob Andresen: In the Presidio.

Carol Staiger: In the Presidio. Okay.

Bob Andresen: Yeah, we were investigating civilian personnel for jobs. So, the next step I was assigned in civilian clothes out of Washington, and we were fortunate enough to find a wonderful apartment right on the beach in Seattle and eventually we had a sailboat anchored just off the shore and when the time was right, we were sailing away. Great way to fight a war, but it was interesting work. It wasn’t particularly dangerous though. Eventually, this became a part of the intelligence, then became Army Intelligence. They coordinated the two offices which they should have done a long time ago. And it’s not a particularly exciting thing. I chased down Japanese balloon once out on the Peninsula, Olympic Peninsula, about the Japanese balloons flying around. Paper balloons that the Japs flew over.

Carol Staiger: What was the reason for them? Just so they would know how things went?

Bob Andresen: Just to destroy things and kill people.

Carol Staiger: They had bombs on them.

Bob Andresen: Yeah. Payload on them. And in fact, two little kids were killed down in Longview, Washington. Yeah, they were set up so that they'd fly and then they'd descend and then an aneroid barometer would kick in and drop sandbags and go up for another day and then night would fall and they'd come down again and finally at the appropriate time they'd come down and drop the payload as far as Montana. That, and worked with the FBI. I was writing the weekly intelligence reports for the Pacific Northwest. I dictated to a little girl by the name of Louise Shireman.

Carol Staiger: How do you spell Shireman?

Bob Andresen: S-H-I-R-E-M-A-N. The war was over and we left and a couple of years later I'm walking across the lobby here in Villa Marin and a little voice says, "Mr. Andresen!" and it was Louise. And she came here and has since died. Just a charming woman. Let's see, where were we? That's the war.

Carol Staiger: How long were you in the service altogether?

Bob Andresen: About three-and-a-half years. Seattle the whole time except for, as the war ended, they sent me down to Texas to go to school and learn how to do surveillance, which I'd been doing already.

Carol Staiger: Betsy go with you?

Bob Andresen: No, no, this was just a trip.

Carol Staiger: Just a short trip.

Bob Andresen: This was strictly a business trip and there were people in my particular outfit from all over, all over the United States. I was brought in and taught how to pick locks and take pictures and how to be spies and sleuths and I'd been doing it for three years. But there were people down there who needed the work so we went down. The last day when everybody was excited about going home, they had target practice. I'd never fired a gun before. It was pretty exciting.

Carol Staiger: Had you shot guns much?

Bob Andresen: Pardon?

Carol Staiger: Had you ever done much gun shooting?

Bob Andresen: Yes, regularly when I was in the basic training there.

Carol Staiger: Now you got out. Where did you get out? Up there? Out of the Army up there?

Bob Andresen: No, I got out of the Army. I was a special agent of Army Intelligence and with an outstanding rank of sergeant. Our counter numbers in the Naval Intelligence were all commanders so the best-kept secret in Seattle was our rank 'cause we were all in civilian clothes. They didn't know. Otherwise we would have been dead 'cause Navy is quite rank-conscious. So home we came and we had hoped to go to South America. In fact, we studied Spanish many nights up in Seattle, and got back and Prudential made a pretty good offer to get me back and so we didn't go to South America.

Carol Staiger: Why would you go down there? For a visit or to work?

Bob Andresen: Pardon?

Carol Staiger: To go to South America just for a visit or to work there?

Bob Andresen: No, just to go down there.

Carol Staiger: Oh, I see [recording skipped] I didn't know whether you were going to have a job there. Okay, so you're back at Prudential.

Bob Andresen: Back in "Pru" and ultimately I became resident attorney there.

Carol Staiger: What does that mean? Head attorney?

Bob Andresen: That's the top dog in the legal department of the Real Estate Investment Department. And it was a small department, three attorneys. This is, let's see, around 1951 or '52 so they wanted to assign me up to Seattle, Washington. I was called down to the chief counsel's office in Los Angeles and they gave me the delightful news and so at that point I said goodbye to Prudential. Actually, I went into the building business at that time. Simpson and Odsted Builders did buildings on the Peninsula, a thousand houses a year and my job was to coordinate Andy Odsted's thoughts on a flowchart and make them go. I did that for about a year or so and it wasn't going anyplace. I made appearances at City Council and Planning Commissions and supervision and keeping the ball rolling. And then I went into private practice in 1953.

Carol Staiger: And that was in –

Bob Andresen: October of 1953, Mill Valley, California.

Carol Staiger: How did you choose Mill Valley? Up to now you haven't mentioned it.

Bob Andresen: Oh, that's easy. I didn't mention living in Mill Valley, did I?

Carol Staiger: No, not yet.

Bob Andresen: All right.

Carol Staiger: You lived in the service up in Seattle and then you came back.

Bob Andresen: When we came back after the War, we decided we didn't want to live in San Francisco. In the meantime our house had been sold in San Francisco. We had bought a house before the War out on 44th Avenue and had a nice garden in the sand. When the War came along, we rented it out and then ultimately we sold it. We came to Marin County as soon as we got back. We'd think about being around San Anselmo, Ross, Mill Valley. Somehow we kept coming back to Mill Valley, probably because the price was right, and we finally found a lot for \$1,200 on Magee Avenue. A steep drop from Magee Avenue down to Corte Madera, but it was buildable, and bought it.

Carol Staiger: So you actually built the house there yourself.

Bob Andresen: Yeah. We hired people.

Carol Staiger: Well, I know that.

Bob Andresen: Betsy had to round up all this. It was right after the war and materials were scarce and Betsy had to go out and round up all the materials and we had to round up the money. Up went the house. We fired the first crew, and then ultimately our second crew finally got the house constructed. It was an unusual house. It had a garage at street level and the main living area was down 10 feet below that, below the street, with a little patio in front of it. It had about 1,000 square feet on the main floor but there was a whole basement and a few years later I put up a chute and I ran concrete down and poured a foundation and put in two rooms and a bath with [recording skipped].

Carol Staiger: Is the house still there?

Bob Andresen: Yeah.

Carol Staiger: Does it look much the same?

Bob Andresen: No, it's been improved. It was sold a couple times; it turned over and finally people by the name of Coregas bought it.

Carol Staiger: How do you spell Coregas?

Bob Andresen: I don't know. We had Klyce do a remodeling of it and principally, the downstairs area, extending it out, stubbing it down. Worth over a million dollars. All right, let's get back to Mill Valley now.

Carol Staiger: Okay, that's Magee and I had you down as — So you lived there according to these records from '46 to '52.

Bob Andresen: That's correct, yeah.

Carol Staiger: And then '52 I know what happened. You have Eric so you needed —

Bob Andresen: It was '51 actually. Eric was born. No, '52 is right.

Carol Staiger: '52, 'cause that's when Stuart was born.

Bob Andresen: Let's get into the City.

Carol Staiger: All right, whatever.

Bob Andresen: And as I said, our house was located on Magee Avenue with a patio down below the road, 10 feet below the road with steep embankments. And I was at a Planning Commission meeting. I was on the Planning Commission with Bill Fleming, Bill Hamilton, Gene Crawford, Drexler, Gosser. Remember Gosser, the butcher?

Carol Staiger: Bob [recording skipped] wasn't on it yet.

Bob Andresen: Oh, no.

Carol Staiger: 'Cause he was on it at one point.

Bob Andresen: Yeah, he came later on. I was on it for about four years from about '48 until '52. One night the meeting was interrupted when a policeman came in and said, "You'd better come with me; somebody crashed into your house." So we're driving up and this is a good story about Mill Valley and [recording skipped]. We're driving up and he said, "Now this is a fine young man and we had no trouble with him at all and he just had trouble making a turn and he didn't make it and he landed down on your patio. He's been a good kid."

Carol Staiger: Was it the police car that did it or just a kid?

Bob Andresen: No, a youngster, but the police car came down and drove me up. And we got up there and down on the patio, there's the car.

Carol Staiger: Upright.

Bob Andresen: Yeah. A fine young man and I got to know his family.

Carol Staiger: Are you anxious to tell his name?

Bob Andresen: I'll skip the name.

Carol Staiger: All right.

Bob Andresen: Yeah, but he was a good kid. And so we got it all fixed up, put the patio back in shape, put steps up and the insurance company paid for it and everybody was happy. And let's see, after the Planning Commission, concurrently there was an activity going on. The Family Service Agency, I was on the Board and President of that. In those days, we used to meet down

in Marin City and the Family Service Agency consisted of Marie Larsen, who was the case worker and the director, and the secretary. It was more of a Family Service agency; it was more of a grant-in-aid situation. We helped people that needed help whether it was advice, or whatever. Mostly it was money. I was on that for quite a period. I've forgotten how many years now, on Community Chest drives and the Commuters Club. I was on the Board of that.

Carol Staiger: I have you down as the Vice President of that. Where did you commute? How come you're on that when you lived in Mill Valley and walking to work?

Bob Andresen: Well, you see, back when we first came to Mill Valley, I was working for Prudential so we were riding Greyhound and we were fighting Greyhound over rates and stuff. Granville Beedle, do you remember him?

Carol Staiger: Yeah.

Bob Andresen: He was then President and I was Vice President. And incidentally, that club was started by Al Giesecke. Do you remember Al? [We were] up in his house early on and there were just a few of us that sat around and talked about Greyhound and what we could do about it and that's where it started. So that's so much for the Commuters Club.

Carol Staiger: You have all these other organizations, so many of them. So you just talk whichever one you want to talk about.

Bob Andresen: Okay, what?

Carol Staiger: I have Rotary here.

Bob Andresen: Rotary. joined Rotary I think in around 1953, about the time I opened my office in Mill Valley and was doing business in Mill Valley and therefore because eligible to belong to Rotary.

Carol Staiger: What are some of the big projects you remember that your Rotary did? Just name a few of them that you were closely involved with.

Bob Andresen: In those days it was really nothing. You were just helping people and I have no particular recollection of any particularly. Not in the scale they are now where they build housing projects and things of that.

Carol Staiger: But I was thinking they built a bridge in Boyle Park in memory of Bob Graver.

Bob Andresen: That was the Lion's Club I think.

Carol Staiger: Oh, pardon me. Okay, I get the two mixed up. Okay, they're similar.

Bob Andresen: But I was on the Board and President of Rotary.

Carol Staiger: How long did you stay with them?

Bob Andresen: I stayed with Rotary until about 1981, when I retired. And they made me an honorary member. Honorary Life Member or something like that. And the Tennis Club.

Carol Staiger: When did you join that?

Bob Andresen: We joined that first in 1948 and then we thought we were going to live down the Peninsula when I was working for Sterling Building Company down there. Dropped our membership in that in 1952 and reestablished shortly thereafter when I opened my law office. We stayed with the new tennis club and I became President and I was President the year the new clubhouse was built. So we're honorary members of that.

Carol Staiger: I can see. Tamalpais Park Neighborhood, of course you're still living up on Magee so you have to get down to Walnut and Catalpa before you can talk about that, right? But anyhow, you can do whatever you want to do.

Bob Andresen: All right. We sold our house on Magee for two reasons. One, we were afraid the earth was going to go over the edge of the balcony and land down some 30 feet below. And two, it looked pretty much like we were going to move down the Peninsula. Ultimately, we changed our mind about the Peninsula and rented a house on Walnut, which was owned by the Watsons. Forgot the first name.

Carol Staiger: Yeah, I have it here.

Bob Andresen: We remodeled that and made a bedroom into a family room and connected it with the kitchen. Worked upstairs and it's sort of a house that required a lot of work.

Carol Staiger: Does it look today much like it did then?

Bob Andresen: Pretty much the same, yes.

Carol Staiger: Thought I'd go by and take pictures of these places.

Bob Andresen: Yeah, it's there. There's a little entrance out in front. There's a little covered entrance that's been added. We didn't put that on. We did put the fireplace in, though. It had a false fireplace. And it had a beautiful garden and azaleas and rhododendrons and trees and apricot and apple trees and pear trees. So that property ran from Walnut over to Catalpa. If you walked directly across the street on Catalpa, you would come to 69 Catalpa. That's the house that we ultimately bought. It went on the market. The McWaters, the owner of it, was talking to me one day and said he was thinking about selling the property. In fact he had it on the market and nobody was interested in it. I think nobody was interested in it because he was asking too much money for it. I took a flier and offered him some ridiculous price on it and he took it. We moved in and that was a delightful house to live in.

Carol Staiger: Very charming. Spanish style.

Bob Andresen: Well, Spanish, English.

Carol Staiger: Influence of Spanish, yeah.

Bob Andresen: A little of everything.

Carol Staiger: Okay, now let's get back to some of these other things. Well, you haven't really talked about your work downtown, you opening your office. Let's talk about that.

Bob Andresen: When I decided to go into private practice, I first talked to several attorneys I knew in San Francisco. They all told me the same things: go where you're known. At that time I'd made a lot of friends and so I struck right out and moved in with Paul Thorne. Paul Thorne was a very old man, [had] an office in the Keystone Building in Lytton Square and did very little practice of the law, if the truth be known. His diary which he religiously kept would say, "It's a nice day in today and there's not too much traffic in the square." But the little work he did have I was helping him with. And actually I think he maintained that office so he could smoke.

Carol Staiger: Oh, he couldn't smoke at home, huh?

Bob Andresen: He couldn't smoke at home and he was a cigarette smoker. But after he moved out of the Keystone Building, he got another office so he could continue his peccadillo with the cigarettes. So what we did, when we joined Paul Thorne, he had a library in the back of the building, a nice big room with a big table in it and I brought up an old chair that I had, a big office chair with a big harp back on it, spindles and all these books all around me and I looked real professional. And one of the early projects I had was the Mill Valley Medical Center located down on Camino Alto near Safeway. So my initial meeting with the doctors, and it was doctor owned, came to my office in this library office of mine and in the back of the Keystone Building and they sat around this big table to talk about what we were going to do by way of getting a medical center. I leaned back in the chair and the chair exploded! The spindly back of the chair just burst, [I was] embarrassed.

Carol Staiger: Did you need a doctor for your experience?

Bob Andresen: They nevertheless stayed with me in spite of that and I got the thing built. Interesting on that –

[end of side A]

Carol Staiger: You were talking about the Keystone Building.

Bob Andresen: Oh, yes. It's quite a homey little place. The girls were all called the Keystone Cuties and [recording skipped]. They included my secretary, Esther Bericks [sp?]. Esther worked for Colley, Crowley and Supple when I was a clerk there. When I was studying for the Bar I clerked at \$25 a month for that and Esther worked for one of the partners, one of the junior partners. And so when we came over to Mill Valley, there was Esther and so when I opened my

office, I invited Esther to come along and at first she just came into the office and would take dictation and go back and work at home on it. And ultimately it became a full-time job for her. And the Keystone Cuties, they used to congregate in my office. Maureen Roche worked for Bill Busby and —

Carol Staiger: I heard them talk about some of the parties.

Bob Andresen: Oh, yes. And but after they were there, they were there for lunch. They'd all brownbag and sometimes I did. Frequently I did. And Betty Callahan's secretary, Marcy — I've forgotten Marcy's last name. [recording skipped] name I've forgotten. Tough to grow old, kid. But anyway, whenever we had an occasion, we had a party whether somebody was going on a trip or coming back from a trip or having a birthday. Anything at all, we had a party.

Carol Staiger: That's what Maureen told me.

Bob Andresen: And it was great. I remember we had one party. It started at noon and I left at one o'clock because I had a deposition in San Francisco. I must have gone back to the office about four o'clock and it was empty. I went over and looked at one typewriter, Larry Mayer's secretary, and she started a letter. It was perfectly in order and all of a sudden she just gave up on it and all strange things came out on the letter and she just walked out and left it. Yeah, those were the Keystone Cuties.

Carol Staiger: Well, about your business, did you have — When you opened up, did you have a lot of business? Or did that build up slowly?

Bob Andresen: It developed slowly but steadily, and it was never a wealthy practice. I mean it was fun; I enjoyed it. And we played tennis once a week on Wednesday afternoon [recording skipped.] But it was thoroughly enjoyable. I knew my clients and most of them, I knew well and it was a pleasure.

Carol Staiger: Okay, let's see. We talked about the tennis. Okay, now we have two big things, the School Board and the City Council. Which came first?

Bob Andresen: The School Board came first and let's see, that was —

Carol Staiger: You have down here —

Bob Andresen: Let's see, it was '66. No, '56 to '60 and [recording skipped]. And I was appointed for one year and then I ran for the succeeding period or something. Ultimately, I became the President of the Board, Chairman. I ruled it with an iron hand.

Carol Staiger: Who was on the City Council with you? Who were some of the names?

Bob Andresen: Oh, let's see. The School Board came first, but I'll give you the City Council.

Carol Staiger: That's right. Okay, the School Board. Which one are you giving me now?

Bob Andresen: Well, the School Board came first.

Carol Staiger: All right, who was on the School Board when you were there?

Bob Andresen: Oh, boy.

Carol Staiger: You can remember any of the people who you worked with.

Bob Andresen: I remember them but I don't remember their names.

Carol Staiger: Well, that's all right. Don't bother. And what was the big thing the school — Had the new elementary school been, I mean, the middle school been built yet?

Bob Andresen: No, no, that wasn't even in the offing. In those days the big debate was "basics" versus "the total child."

Carol Staiger: The total child.

Bob Andresen: The equivalent to that. And I can recall that we decided to adopt our policies, our goals of education. I can recall that I said, "Well, I think our first goal should be the education of the child." And there was a debate on it! But it was fun, I enjoyed it.

Carol Staiger: Was that when your headquarters were over the Mayer's store?

Bob Andresen: That's it. [recording skipped] over the Mayer's Men Store.

Carol Staiger: Yeah, I remember that.

Bob Andresen: And in my rigid governance of the Board, I adopted an agenda at the start of the meeting and allocated so much time to each subject and set up a closing time because we were running there until midnight. It was ridiculous. I remember one night this poor lady came, stood up and wanted to talk about something and it had nothing to do with anything that was on the agenda and I sat her down. [recording skipped] —the County Superintendent and raised total Cain about it, but nothing happened because [recording skipped] I guess was Superintendent. I guess that's about it as far as the School Board is concerned.

Carol Staiger: I have here that you were President of Edna Maguire PTA. Was that before or after?

Bob Andresen: That was after. That was after. That's when I was President of that when they let Bob McConnell go from — which was a big mistake. Bob was a fine Superintendent and [recording skipped] on the School Board. There'll be no names, but [recording skipped] was Superintendent and there was a lady that caused his demise and then Bob McConnell was also evicted by a lady. I saw Bob not too long ago; he's in good shape.

Carol Staiger: Well, you can do the City Council if you want.

Bob Andresen: Oh, yeah, the City Council. That was fun.

Carol Staiger: And who were the people? Can you remember the names that were on it with you then?

Bob Andresen: Oh, yeah. Well, of course there was George Wickham; he was Mayor, [recording skipped] Vice Mayor, Steve Mayer. I'm trying to dig up some of these names.

Carol Staiger: That's all right. I just thought maybe — Don't bother. It's no big deal.

Bob Andresen: And at one time [recording skipped] at the City Council.

Carol Staiger: What were some of the problems that you were handling?

Bob Andresen: Nudity.

Carol Staiger: You mean just on the beach, walking around the street or art hanging in the building?

Bob Andresen: It all started up at the old reservoir, remember?

Carol Staiger: Oh, yes, yes.

Bob Andresen: We had nudity problems up there.

Carol Staiger: Is that inside the city limits?

Bob Andresen: Oh, indeed. Yeah. Yeah. And-

Carol Staiger: Where was that reservoir? I guess I'm thinking of a different reservoir.

Bob Andresen: It's extended out Throckmorton, just kept going.

Carol Staiger: Okay. Yeah.

Bob Andresen: Or Blithedale or —

Carol Staiger: Where Cascade comes in. Okay, I know where it is. Okay, nudity; that was one thing.

Bob Andresen: We passed an ordinance that outlawed nudity in public places. Had some problems doing it. There was a split on the Council.

Carol Staiger: Any other problems that you remember?

Bob Andresen: No, but one fun thing that I want to tell you about. Elizabeth Terwilliger, old friend — a beautiful marsh located next to Goodman’s Lumber Company in fact it’s still there, beautiful. A developer wanted to put a building that was going to encroach into this marsh and he was coming before the City Council on appeal from the Planning Commission —

Carol Staiger: Nobody wanted you to say yes.

Bob Andresen: Yes. So Elizabeth Terwilliger got down there early and she brought her stuffed birds with her. All the ducks.

Carol Staiger: They weren’t stuffed; they were frozen.

Bob Andresen: Well, these were stuffed. She has stuffed ones, too.

Carol Staiger: Well, I always thought she had frozen ones and then after an hour she said, “I have to get these back to my freezer.”

Bob Andresen: Yeah. No, she had a freezer full of not only birds but animals, but she has stuffed birds, too.

Carol Staiger: Okay, all right.

Bob Andresen: And she planted one of these birds on each one of the posts on that rail in front of the City Council? And all facing where the speaker was going to be, you see? And here were all these fat old birds staring at the microphone.

Carol Staiger: That’s pretty smart of her.

Bob Andresen: And this poor attorney got up there to plead the case. It was murder; he was clobbered. Oh, I’ll show you something. Excuse me. It’s a little thick book called ***Birds of North America***. And it was given to me by Elizabeth Terwilliger, inscribed: “Thank you for the many hours, days, years spent to make Mill Valley a more beautiful place.”

Carol Staiger: Just — I still remember her back in the White House with Ronald Reagan and she was having him demonstrate a vulture with the arms out and he looked so sheepishly.

Bob Andresen: He did it. He did it.

Carol Staiger: He did it and she’s the one who went around and picked up all the debris around the White House and they couldn’t figure out who was picking up trash. Absolutely Elizabeth.

Bob Andresen: I have Elizabeth up here. I did a biography on her. Yeah, and again we did the V for victory, but she couldn’t make it. Her poor shoulders just couldn’t handle it.

Carol Staiger: Okay. Now, let's see. Your School Board. How about your children, Eric and Meg? Tell about them.

Bob Andresen: Well, let's see. They went to Park School and Tam High. Both went to Chico State. Chico State was a good school; I suppose it still is. Good for them. Let's see, Eric is now in the computer business, a firm called Nacio, which he helped found.

Carol Staiger: How do you spell Nacio?

Bob Andresen: N-A-C-I-O. Meg is living in Minnesota, a city near Minneapolis called Plymouth. Married David Stein, converted to Judaism.

Carol Staiger: Has twins.

Bob Andresen: And Eric has twin girls who are now grown up. They were born in 1980. Meg had a son born about the same time, Emerson. Emerson Gadbury; that's the name of her first husband. Finished at UCLA, music major and really loves music. But he's now finished school and there's no work for him, nothing you can depend on. He can play gigs here and there but — so he went to work for an insurance company for one year and he's just skyrocketed.

Carol Staiger: Enjoying it, doing good.

Bob Andresen: Oh, yeah.

Carol Staiger: And where does he live now?

Bob Andresen: He lives right the same place he was living, right next to the UCLA campus. And so he's with them a year and now he's leaving them and he's going to study law. He's going to UCLA and he's been accepted.

Carol Staiger: And you see the twins?

Bob Andresen: Incidentally, he's going — he's leaving for Europe. The twins are spread out. One is down in San Diego and she's involved in some sort of automobile activity. Emily is going to school at Santa Barbara City College.

Carol Staiger: The first daughter's name — I mean the other twin besides —

Bob Andresen: Julie. Julie's the one in San Diego.

Carol Staiger: Okay. Let's see now, then there's hobbies. Golf and home remodeling. Well, you mentioned home remodeling. You don't have to do any of that here, but you have golf.

Bob Andresen: Golf and tennis.

Carol Staiger: Well, sure, tennis. You played a lot of golf, too?

Bob Andresen: Only after I retired. Yeah. A great experience playing golf: you can play this or not, I don't care. When I worked for Prudential, we sometimes entertained the builders that we worked with at the Olympic Club and we played golf. I was out there one day with Dick Payton who was the other attorney in the office, a golfer, and I was a hacker. A guy who was 50 and in the Columbus Day celebration, Mike Desiano [sp?] was the other player and the other was our builder. And I had a few bucks in my pocket. I never carried too much money then, still don't, and we started playing and we were playing so much a hole. I got to the 18th hole and I figured that I just had enough to payoff and my partner said double or nothing. And we made it. Poor attorneys playing with rich builders!

Carol Staiger: Well, you had tennis and you played tennis. After you moved to Villa Marin, do you still play handball or something?

Bob Andresen: No, we played what's called paddle tennis. It's played on a smaller tennis court, has a net, tennis balls, but you play with paddles. But it's a smaller court and you don't have to run as much.

Carol Staiger: Just give a few words about your living here; how it's changed your life from when you lived in a home and did all your cooking and gardening.

Bob Andresen: This was the right thing for us to do. We came here 10 years ago, '93; enjoyed every minute of it. I've served on the Board and the Finance Committee for five or six years and I'm on the Admissions Committee which controls who comes in, who doesn't. And we've been fortunate in getting a great group of people here. Quite a gradation in wealth — some very wealthy and some not so wealthy.

Carol Staiger: Bob has an album here. Oh, Sutton Manor, yeah, that's where I live now.

Bob Andresen: Back in the old days in Mill Valley when I was on the Planning Commission, a developer came in and wanted to develop Sutton Manor and there was a quite a debate as to how much fill he was going to put in there. I hear from Bill Fleming, who was on the Commission at that time, and he quotes me not too accurately but I questioned the man as to whether the fill was going to be sufficient because that had been marsh. The cows were up to their bellies in mud and he assured me that it would, and I said, "Well, what about really high water? You're going to get high tides and you're going to get south winds blowing and it's going to push that bay right up there. What about that?" "Oh," he said, "that's all right, these houses are elevated a little bit and they've got a foundation, a slab or a foundation, and so you've got a clearance there above the ground where the water won't get to them." [recording skipped] drive up to their house and how do they get to the house?

Carol Staiger: Oh, you mean if it's flooded?

Bob Andresen: Yeah. And he was perfectly content with the fact that the water — When the water was all around the place and flooding it, it wasn't getting into the house.

Carol Staiger: One time we had water pretty close to coming in.

Bob Andresen: Well, we had him up the ante and he increased it. And there are two letters in here commending me for what I did on that, one from Shirley McDowell and the other from Bill Fleming.