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DORIS BLOOM

**An Oral History Interview
Conducted by Dorothy Friedlander in 2001**

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INTERVIEWER: Dorothy Friedlander
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In this oral history, Mill Valley native and lifelong resident Doris Bloom presents a view of a beloved and evolving Mill Valley over the course of many decades. Doris recalls the Mill Valley of her childhood, including the Locust neighborhood stores to which her mother took her as well as the devastating fire of 1929 that her father participated in fighting. Doris recalls the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge and how she walked across it on the day it was opened. Doris attended local schools, and after graduating from Tam High went on to study at U.C. Berkeley, a relatively rare trajectory for a woman of that period. In college she met her future husband Jack, and they married just before he shipped off to World War II. After Jack returned from the war, they decided to stay in Mill Valley, where they raised their three children. Doris describes the old downtown commercial district and how things began to change after car ownership became widespread and the 101 freeway was built. After her children graduated from high school, Doris went back to work for several years before retiring to travel around the world with Jack. Doris's oral history provides a sense of what daily life was like in Mill Valley in various periods of its history as well as how greater historical events affected the town.

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Oral History of Doris Bloom
December 28th, 2001

Editor's note: The original recording of the oral history unfortunately could not be found. For the sake of readability, the transcript has been lightly edited.

Dorothy Friedlander: This is Dorothy Friedlander recording an interview with Doris Bloom on Friday December 28th, 2001. The interview is being done at Doris's house at 20 Bolsa Avenue in Mill Valley.

Doris Bloom: Mother was working in San Francisco, as was my dad, of course. They met, and my aunt and uncle lived here in Mill Valley, so they would come over here to visit, and that's when they fell in love with Mill Valley and decided to stay here. Mill Valley was then just a small little place over from San Francisco. It was just a matter of a few months that they lived over in San Francisco and then they moved over to Mill Valley.

Dorothy Friedlander: And where did they first live in Mill Valley?

Doris Bloom: Down on Walnut Avenue. They bought the little house down on Walnut Avenue.

Dorothy Friedlander: And do you remember the address?

Doris Bloom: 70 — it was 127 — 70 Walnut Avenue is what it is now.

Dorothy Friedlander: And you were born in that house?

Doris Bloom: No. I was born on Sycamore Avenue. At that time Mill Valley had nursing homes. My older sister was born in Mill Valley. I was born in Mill Valley and my younger sister was born in what was going to be a nursing home on Miller Avenue. The place where Barbara was born was up on Bernard Street. There's a little nursing home there uptown Mill Valley.

Dorothy Friedlander: And by nursing home you mean like a maternity hospital, as opposed to what we think of a nursing home today?

Doris Bloom: Right.

Dorothy Friedlander: And how long did you stay at that house? You said that the house burned.

Doris Bloom: Well, the house burned when I was two years old and they built that house that's presently down there. We lived there until 1936, and then my folks bought a house up on Magee Avenue which is still up there between Summit and Tamalpais.

Dorothy Friedlander: And why did the house burn?

Doris Bloom: One of those unfortunate things that — in those days they had what they would call coal oil stoves, and we had been up at my aunt's. It was Christmas Eve. Mother brought Barbara and I down, and she was going to put us to bed early. And the stove tipped over and of course it was lit and it started a fire. She took us back to my aunt's and we stayed there until it was safe.

I can remember vaguely the house. I can still in my mind see those flames, and I think that's why I've always been afraid of fire, because I even remember the mountain fire. I think that's what terrified me on that one, because in the back of my mind, even as a two-year-old, you still have this deep sense of something wrong.

Dorothy Friedlander: And what year did your house burn down?

Doris Bloom: Probably 1924 or '25.

Dorothy Friedlander: And then your folks rebuilt.

Doris Bloom: They rebuilt on the same lot.

Dorothy Friedlander: And that house is still standing?

Doris Bloom: Yes.

Dorothy Friedlander: And what — ?

Doris Bloom: 79.¹

Dorothy Friedlander: And your dad worked in San Francisco?

Doris Bloom: Yes.

Dorothy Friedlander: Doing what?

Doris Bloom: Well, he was secretary/treasurer of this small export-import business, Edward L. Eyre and Company, in San Francisco.

Dorothy Friedlander: And what do you remember about your childhood home, I mean, how was it set up?

Doris Bloom: Actually, I don't really remember the first house. I was too young for that. But the second one that was easy. We had a front yard, a back yard, and a little shed out in the back that we used for a playhouse. And there was a garage out in back. We had a little fish pond out in back, and then there was a long front yard; it seemed like it was

¹ The precise reference here is uncertain.—Editor.

long. When you're small, everything seems bigger than it is today. There was a front porch, and then you walked into the living room to the left, and to the right was the dining room and the kitchen behind that, and then there was a bedroom down the hallway. The hallway went right from the front door down to the bedrooms and then to the back porch.

Dorothy Friedlander: And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

Doris Bloom: Two sisters.

Dorothy Friedlander: Two sisters. And where did the kids play and what did you do?

Doris Bloom: Well, we used to play — as I say, we had this, what we called a shed or playhouse out in back, and so we used that naturally for a playhouse, and we usually had fun and games back there. One time I remember we played "store." We'd have our neighborhood and we'd have our parents save cans but they had to open them upside down so that we'd have a can — you know, a store — and the cereal boxes, and we'd play store. And then, of course, you'd play out on the street. You'd play hopscotch on the sidewalk or on the street. Gone are the days of that.

Dorothy Friedlander: Do you remember how your mother went shopping?

Doris Bloom: At that time down at the Locust area there were stores. My mother had a friend who lived across the street and had no children, and so Mother and Betty used to take us shopping. When we were old enough, we would walk down. They'd take the three of us and we'd walk down to the store, which was only just a matter of a few blocks, basically, down to the Locust area, and shop down there.

Dorothy Friedlander: So your mom didn't have things delivered.

Doris Bloom: No. Well, they did have deliveries. I guess at that time there was the fish man that sold fish and he would come by at my grandmother's in San Francisco. I can remember the fellow would come by and we would be out trying to — you know, rags, bottles, sacks.

Dorothy Friedlander: And when you went into San Francisco, was that something that you did a great deal or was it an event?

Doris Bloom: It was more of an event because my grandmother and great uncle, who lived over there, they would come over practically, not every Sunday but practically every Sunday, and I can remember that they used to bring a big box of donuts. Naturally, kids are always hungry. And then we would go over, and we'd take turns. We would spend a week with my grandmother — I mean, one at a time — and Grandma and Uncle John would take us out to the park. We were always really impressed by this great big house. It was a three-story house and it had a clock on every landing and looked out over

the Bay. There was no Golden Gate Bridge in those days. There were just those fun memories of when you were a youngster of going to someplace that's a three-story house.

Dorothy Friedlander: Now, do you remember the fire of 1929?

Doris Bloom: The only thing I really remember about is standing out in front of the house asking my mother, "Where's the fire now?" because we were down on the flat and you could see the mountains burning. And because of our house having burned, that was basically there again, in the back of my mind, a voice that says "Where's the fire now?" I just remember standing outside. My father — even though he was a city boy, they had all the volunteers in the world helping. I remember that he had a red sweater, and got a spark that burned a hole in it. And then Mother was very concerned because they were feeding the firemen peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and my dad said "beans," and my mother put a pot of beans on the stove. They had a little bit more that they could cook and give to the firemen so they had a little bit, you know, something to stick to their ribs.

Dorothy Friedlander: So in other words they met down on the flats and then they would go up the mountain in teams?

Doris Bloom: Well, I don't know how the men got up there, or actually how they were fighting the fire, because the fire got down within a block of town, basically. I know where we moved up on the beach, there was a tree house across the street from us, and those houses — I mean, we weren't living there at the time. I know that when we moved up there at that time it was vacant property. That house that burned down that my folks bought, they were very fortunate. That house didn't burn, obviously. The house next door had burned. And they built a new house. Across the street were the Browns from the furniture store, they bought the property and built a house across the street on Magee. And then I remember after the fire my mother took a cup — she had a friend that had their house burned, and we found a little teacup that Mother remembered having, that this friend of hers — because when that fire burned, it really just scorched everything.

Dorothy Friedlander: Was there a loss of life in this fire? Or was it just property?

Doris Bloom: I don't think so. I don't know. I really don't know.

Dorothy Friedlander: Okay. How did the town look about this time, about 1929, what were the differences?

Doris Bloom: Well, of course, the train went into the downtown. Where Miller Avenue is now, that center part used to be the railroad tracks. And it went right into where the Book Depot is now, which there had been an old depot there. But when my dad was commuting around, they had these little stations that were like little sheds, not really a building per se but just a shelter, because they had a Park Station, Locust Station, and then down at Tam, there was a station down there. Of course the trains in those days came from up at Fairfax. The trains met down by Tamalpais High School by the gym. You would transfer. Mill Valley was really serviced by the train.

Dorothy Friedlander: What school did you first enter? What elementary school?

Doris Bloom: Park School. It was only a couple blocks away.

Dorothy Friedlander: Did you wear a uniform?

Doris Bloom: No, there were no uniforms. Only in high school.

Dorothy Friedlander: Only in high school.

Doris Bloom: In high school we had uniforms.

Dorothy Friedlander: Did your family have an automobile?

Doris Bloom: Yes.

Dorothy Friedlander: Was that a big deal to have an automobile?

Doris Bloom: It was to a point because there weren't that many automobiles to have. Because I have this friend — do you know Alice Saxon? Well, her folks were neighbors of my folks. And they did not have a car and I remember that Mother loaned her dad the car to be able to get, at that time, into San Francisco. He had to take the ferry, of course, because I think it was late and he borrowed the car because, you know, people didn't have cars.

Dorothy Friedlander: Did you, when you were little, did you ride horses? Did you hike?

Doris Bloom: Not as a little kid. Later when I was a teenager we'd hike up the mountain. We'd hike over into the Muir Woods, hiking with groups that would come over from East Bay and San Francisco, you know, the city people that would come over here. That was a big deal to come here and hike. And then when we lived up on Magee, of course, we hiked up the mountain from there and down Tamalpais and back to Magee, like "Do you want to walk around the block?"

Dorothy Friedlander: And how old were you when your family moved to Magee?

Doris Bloom: 13. I was a freshman in high school.

Dorothy Friedlander: You were a freshman in high school. So the elementary schools you went to before then were Park and — ?

Doris Bloom: Park and Summit School — where there are houses now — and then Old Mill. That's what you usually did. But the kids that lived at that part of town usually just

went to school at Summit and Old Mill, and those that lived down in that Park area went to Park School. And then from the Old Mill end up at Tam.

Dorothy Friedlander: And what were the elementary classes like? How many students were in the class?

Doris Bloom: Well, that's what always amazes me today when they complain about the size of classes because we had —he first grade would be low-first and high-first, but they were all in one room. And when we were at, I think it was up at Summit School, we had as many as fifty kids in class. I mean, it was just your class. Now there's no such thing as low and high, just the one.

Dorothy Friedlander: Low and high based on age or based on ability?

Doris Bloom: At that time kids would enter school two times a year. It depended upon your birthday. And so when I went in, my birthday, being the end of November, I was in the low-second.

Dorothy Friedlander: Then you went to Tam High School. You mentioned something about Job's Daughters?

Doris Bloom: Uh huh.

Dorothy Friedlander: What was that?

Doris Bloom: The Masonic affiliation, you know, a Masons group for women. We had one in San Rafael. My mother was quite active in that. And so then she helped get one started here in Mill Valley. You had to be thirteen years old and be a relative of a Mason, basically. It's a Masonic order type of thing.

Dorothy Friedlander: And what did you do besides hike? Did you have socials? I mean, was Job's Daughters an outdoor activity type thing or were there a lot of different kinds of activities involved with the organization?

Doris Bloom: Well, they used to have their meetings, and then it was up to the group. When we did have some good weather some of the people that we had met over in San Francisco would come over and we'd go on hikes and so on. But otherwise, as far as kids were concerned, doing things like — oh, during the summertime. I remember one summer we went up to Russian River for a week. And another time my aunt — she was a schoolteacher in a very small little school in Grantham, outside of Willits — we went up there. We'd go up there, and one summer we spent the whole summer up there with her, and that was really out in the boonies, but it was kind of a fun place. I remember we went up and picked huckleberries and did things that you don't do around here, which was kind of fun.

Dorothy Friedlander: Tell me about when you first entered Tam High School. What was Tam like?

Doris Bloom: Well, I'm sure it's changed now but when you went in, you had been tested as far as your level. The classes were like, "Okay, are you going on to college or are you going into the business world or are you just going to work?" And at that time, I was going to junior college. I knew in my mind that I wanted to go to Cal so therefore I knew I had to take English and history, language, and math because they were the basic things you had to have. And I know there was algebra class. And Latin. First year I had Latin, and then you had the basic things that you had to have. You had to have gym. And then there was some other — I don't know how it is now.

Dorothy Friedlander: Was it unusual for a girl to be college bound?

Doris Bloom: In those days, well, they were either going to be going straight to San Francisco and going to work — because a lot of them would go in and start in the banks and make, what, 60 or 80 dollars a month, a big deal, and then some went just up to College of Marin. But in our class Bobbie, my friend, and I both went over to Cal. There were some classes that you had to have — again, it depended on the grades where you went. Some went up to Oregon because in Oregon you could get in with a C average. To get into Cal you had to have a B average. So it just depends upon how hard you work as to where you went.

Dorothy Friedlander: And your family completely supported your decision to go to college.

Doris Bloom: They encouraged it.

Dorothy Friedlander: Good, because I think probably that was somewhat unusual.

Doris Bloom: Well, partly because of my mother and dad not having had college educations but, having been basically in the working world, they knew how important it was to have a college education. I think that was just part of — you don't end at high school, you keep going. High school's not the end of education.

Dorothy Friedlander: Right. But I think probably at that time there was less of a push for girls.

Doris Bloom: More for boy than girls.

Dorothy Friedlander: Right, to go on.

Doris Bloom: Girls were supposed to just be housewives.

Dorothy Friedlander: Right.

Doris Bloom: Or secretaries.

Dorothy Friedlander: Right. Or to be quiet. What activities were you involved in at Tam?

Doris Bloom: Okay, well, we had an organization called G.A.A., which was the Girls Athletic Association, and I belonged to that because I had played tennis since I was in grammar school and I enjoyed tennis. And I played golf. We had, at that time there was a girls golf team down at Tam, and I played on that. And I still remember the first time they played Vallejo and I had to tee off first. And what do I do? I swing and miss. So, I was active, I mean, because I really should be, at golf and tennis, having the activities along that line, but keep pretty busy.

Dorothy Friedlander: Anything that you remember about Tam in particular — I mean, football games, dances, any sort of rituals that Tam had?

Doris Bloom: No, not really. They all supported the football, of course. San Rafael was the big rival at that time so we thought games were the big thing. Because at that time Tam and San Rafael were the only two high schools in Marin county. And so consequently we met more people because of Tam drawing from Fairfax and San Anselmo as well as Mill Valley and Sausalito. Now I think it's just Mill Valley and Sausalito.

Dorothy Friedlander: Yes.

Doris Bloom: And so you really got to know more people in the other parts of the county. Not a lot from all the county, but a little bit.

Dorothy Friedlander: Did you go to San Rafael often?

Doris Bloom: Well, in those days, we didn't have the — remember, there was not the freeways. We took the old Corte Madera grade, and I hated that. I was never ever a big person that could enjoy driving over that road. So you'd go to San Rafael for some shopping, of course, and outside of that they didn't offer a lot up there. You'd go into San Francisco for the big shopping, but that was the easy thing to do, just hop the train or ferry.

Dorothy Friedlander: Did you go into San Francisco with your sisters?

Doris Bloom: We would do that occasionally, not often. Otherwise, if we were going over to my grandmother's then we'd go over — sometimes we'd go over in the car, if the whole family went. But otherwise, then we went over by ferry, then taking the trolley car, and so on.

Dorothy Friedlander: During the Depression, was there a tremendous impact on your life in Mill Valley?

Doris Bloom: I cannot remember having anything. I know people talk about that and some of them that would say, "Well, oh gosh, I remember my dad was out of work." My dad had a job the whole time. And so I think the only thing that I do remember is when there was a strike here in San Francisco.

Dorothy Friedlander: Yes, on the dock.

Doris Bloom: On the dock. And Mother would pack a lunch for him because I think there was a problem then. But otherwise, we were not affected personally. I can't remember ever having to do without something because of — and I can't remember them saying, "Oh no, you can't have that because — " No. Either they were able to carry everything over without that being a problem or they did not want to share it with us and make it a burden for us. Because what could we do about it?

Dorothy Friedlander: Was there an impact on the rest of the town?

Doris Bloom: I don't really remember an awful lot about that. I think there probably were some of our friends maybe, their dad might have had a little — but I don't remember really. The people that we were associated with us seemed to get through it all without a problem.

Dorothy Friedlander: Tell me about your uniform — ?

Doris Bloom: We had the navy blue skirt, the white middies, and we had the navy blue collars. San Rafael had the same thing except they didn't have the navy blue collars. And then we had black ties, and when we were seniors we had red ties, for stage.

Dorothy Friedlander: During the Depression, do you remember the building of the Golden Gate Bridge?

Doris Bloom: I remember walking across the Golden Gate Bridge. We had a friend that — this would have been about eighth grade, I think, about the time all that was taking place, and this one gal, her dad, Mr. Pomeroy, had a lot to do with building the bridge. I remember we went up there one time and we were playing Tarzan in the trees up there. You know, we were only eighth graders, but we were playing in the trees up there and having a lot of fun and games, and then when the bridge was finished we walked across the bridge the day it opened.

Dorothy Friedlander: The opening day, that must have been fun. The bridge is so beautiful.

Doris Bloom: But as a youngster, you don't think about what took to build it. You just accept it.

Dorothy Friedlander: Okay so you graduated from Tam in what year?

Doris Bloom: 1940.

Dorothy Friedlander: And you were off to Berkeley. Did you have a sense that there was going to be a war, or?

Doris Bloom: No. When I graduated from high school, my mother and younger sister and I, we took off and drove east. And we had most of the summer spent driving. We went all the way to the east coast and up to Canada and back down and then back up to Canada and back down. We were gone most of the summer, and then came home and I was packing up to go over to Berkeley. Just part of a normal routine. When the war was declared, I remember we were upstairs in what they called the “smoking room,” and somebody had had the radio on, and that was a shock, they kind of said, “Oh my god.”

Dorothy Friedlander: And yet you’re still —

Doris Bloom: Young enough that you don’t think about it personally. All of a sudden, lights had to be either off or the curtains had to be drawn and so on because being in Berkeley the blackouts and all that sort of thing — and then my husband went to Cal Aggies.² And it was at the time when Cal Aggies — they came down in ’43, so I had met him, and then of course being at the age the draft, they had what they called the O.T.C., which was Officers Training Class, and so he was in that. They went down to Camp Roberts and he then went to Fort Benning, and then he came back and we were married when he got his bars. Then he came here and we drove to Fort Benning, Georgia, and we were down there until he completed training and went overseas. And I came home, drove home.

Dorothy Friedlander: You drove home.

Doris Bloom: There was another gal, she and I drove home. And it didn’t bother me at all. My mother was absolutely stricken, apparently. And when I drove up to 403 Magee, what a relief it was when I arrived home safely. I dropped off this girl, and I drove from there by myself.

Dorothy Friedlander: And of course now you understand why your mother was —

Doris Bloom: Beside herself. I know. Oh yeah.

Dorothy Friedlander: So in what year did you meet your husband? Your sophomore year or your junior year?

Doris Bloom: It was junior year.

Dorothy Friedlander: Junior year.

² University of California, Davis.—Editor.

Doris Bloom: '43. I was class of '44. Davis closed down, Cal Aggies closed down because the Army took it over.

Dorothy Friedlander: That's Cal Aggies, okay. I didn't know that.

Doris Bloom: Cal Aggies was closed. The students from there, that wanted to of course, transferred down to Berkeley. And I met him through a friend of my friend's, who was crew manager, and so we were going to go down and watch the crew work out. And that's where I met Jack. He gave me a ride back up to Berkeley. That's where I met him.

Dorothy Friedlander: And what did you study at Berkeley?

Doris Bloom: I was a history major, and then I was a regional major because I couldn't get enough — at that time you could do a regional thing. I had taken some French and then I took some Spanish and then they asked, "Okay, which do you want to do?" But then I could see the handwriting on the wall. I thought, "Okay, I'll go into foreign trade." You know, you have a young person, a teenager, or just out of your teens, and you have these great ideas of where you're going to go and what you'll do. And of course the wartime changed a lot of that. You knew that travel was out of the question. Well, as we all know the world changed completely.

Dorothy Friedlander: Right. And you were married in what year?

Doris Bloom: 1944. At Trinity Church.

Dorothy Friedlander: Still in Mill Valley.

Doris Bloom: That's right. Going real well.

Dorothy Friedlander: And then you graduated, and he went to Fort Benning, Georgia.

Doris Bloom: He went to Fort Benning.

Dorothy Friedlander: And you drove across with him.

Doris Bloom: We were married and drove across the country. He graduated from Fort Benning, came out here and was married and drove back again. He had only a week's time. So then came in his commanding officer who said, "Lieutenant Bloom, you look terrible." And he said, "Well, I just drove to California and back again." And he said, "You go home and get some sleep."

Dorothy Friedlander: How long was he overseas?

Doris Bloom: Fortunately, one thing in our favor was our age. By the time that he went overseas, the war was just ending, and so he had to stay over a little bit longer because —

he had to put in, I guess they got out of the service by points or whatever at that time. He came back in '46. So he was over there for a year and a half.

Dorothy Friedlander: And what did you do in that time?

Doris Bloom: Went home to my mother. Well, I mean, that's reasonable. I had a baby by then. I had a baby while Jack was overseas, actually. I was pregnant when he went overseas.

Dorothy Friedlander: And you were living in your mother's house.

Doris Bloom: Yes. My mother took me over to Stanford Hospital, and Cathy was born over there in April of 1945.

Dorothy Friedlander: And why did you and Jack decide to live in Mill Valley?

Doris Bloom: I think because he couldn't get me out of Mill Valley. When he got out of the service, like all the fellows at that time, he thought "What do I do? Where do I go?" and so on. And we stayed with my folks and then he got a job with PG&E. So then we did stay with my folks for a little while until we bought this property. We happened to know this area, because I grew up here. And so we, my mother and I, went up to the house, and stopped there at her dining table, and we bought these three lots right here.

Dorothy Friedlander: So you built this house?

Doris Bloom: We built this house. Originally this house was chipboard. And then, as a little girl it got a little bit bigger, because basically it was two bedrooms. Then we added the upstairs, then a garage and then the upstairs TV room and bathroom.

Dorothy Friedlander: And how long have you been in the house?

Doris Bloom: Since 1947. We moved in here in 1948.

Dorothy Friedlander: And I imagine that there were big changes to this area after World War II.

Doris Bloom: You mean this immediate area or Mill Valley?

Dorothy Friedlander: Mill Valley.

Doris Bloom: Oh yes, of course, during the war, Goheen Gulch was now Sycamore Village. Anyway, that was about the time when there was the housing boom. Marin County was growing, and that's when all the little housing developments. Mitch [unintelligible] was a contractor-developer, and so I guess he just bought a hunk of property and built some houses. And I think that Terra Linda and various places where there's flat land got these houses built to take care of the influx of the population in

Marin County. The commute was getting better; I mean, not that I thought the Greyhound buses were so great, but the bridge helped the population here in Marin.

Dorothy Friedlander: In the sense that people that normally wouldn't live here were starting to live here.

Doris Bloom: I think so. Because I think a lot of people just — when you think about the number of fellows in the service, Hamilton Field. Okay, a lot of those fellows that had been up at Hamilton Field, they didn't know California from a hole in the wall. And I think also at the Presidio. I mean, there were so many young men that all of a sudden discovered California, and we knew it. Oh, that Golden Gate.

Dorothy Friedlander: Well, I imagine going back to a snowy Minnesota after living in California was — and if you were young —

Doris Bloom: Well, I had never seen snow like when Jack was stationed in Fort Benning and we were up in North Carolina. But that's when I learned how to talk very slowly and with a little bit of a southern accent. I did the wash, hung it on the line in the wintertime. I didn't realize what happened to clothes on a line. They were frozen stiff! I'd never been in that sort of thing. I'd always been in California. You don't have snow in California. Well, you might get some snow in some places.

Dorothy Friedlander: And in terms of, let's say, diversity, different kinds of people moving in, did you find that after World War II?

Doris Bloom: Yes, you'd find that. But of course, having lived here all my life, having friends here — I know this one time this one gal that was an import said that she felt that we were all very smug because we were not reaching out for new friends, is what it amounted to. I mean, we had friends that we'd grown up with that still lived here. So you're not reaching out for more people, because you don't need more people in your life, basically. I mean, you can do with a few more, granted. But you're not like somebody that's really new and really truly reaching out because they need to know more people and meet friends and have things to do and so on. I never had that feeling, having lived here all my life. I always felt very secure. Because you were.

Dorothy Friedlander: When your children were growing up, what changes did you see? I mean, in what ways was their childhood different from your childhood?

Doris Bloom: Well, Sharon had a horse. I didn't have a horse. I didn't want a horse. She did. She's our youngest daughter. When Sharon was growing up she loved animals. I know when she had her horse I remember the one time the horse got out. Bill Fleming and Jack — and don't ask me why at three o'clock in the morning I went out too because I thought, "How in the world would I ever corral a horse?" I'd probably go up and say, "Hi Horsey!" and I'd take her down to Tennessee Valley. At one time they were up here above Alto, on the hill up there.

Dorothy Friedlander: Horse Hill.

Doris Bloom: Horse Hill. People kept the horses there, and when the horses were up there people would try and catch the horses, and just get them. That was tough. So that's why she took them down to Tennessee Valley and have them down there. And then when she went to college she took them to college to educate the kids at school.

Dorothy Friedlander: And did she become a vet?

Doris Bloom: No, she's a vet tech. So she's still in the field.

Dorothy Friedlander: And the change that happened when they built 101, that must have been enormous.

Doris Bloom: Well, there again, that didn't affect us personally because it just meant it was easier to get up north. My mother's folks lived up in Ukiah, and okay it's fine. You can go up 101 instead of going through all the back roads. When we used to go up to Hopland, to Cloverdale and Hopland, you had to go up over the old Cloverdale Grade, which I hated. And then all of a sudden they opened up this River Road, which is now the main highway. And so that's what mainly changed, I think, the time of driving changed a bit when 101 opened. That you could get from X point to X point faster, but now it's slower because there's so much traffic.

Dorothy Friedlander: People talk about Mill Valley in the '60s and the '70s.

Doris Bloom: Very hippy place or whatever.

Dorothy Friedlander: Did you feel that? Not that you were involved with it, but did you feel that the place, that the town really changed as a result of it?

Doris Bloom: Well, I found that as the shopping centers started coming out that all of a sudden you were not going downtown as much. Before you went downtown because that was where you did your shopping. But then as the area grew and you had your shopping center, you had Strawberry and you had Corte Madera. All of a sudden, you didn't have to go downtown Mill Valley to do something that you'd go otherwise. And there again, the transportation got better. It's a lot easier to do things too. I find I don't go to downtown Mill Valley very often even now, because, well, what's downtown? A lot of boutiques. So that has changed completely, whereas before you had more services for the people that lived here. I'm going like way back, when the PG&E office was downtown Mill Valley, down on Miller, and then of course that even closed, so now what do you do? You mail your PG&E bill, and if you have a problem you pick up the phone and call them.

Dorothy Friedlander: So you would go downtown to pay bills at one time.

Doris Bloom: Oh yeah. On the corner there, across from the depot, there was the R&M Saddle Shop, and you would shop there. And then Mosher's Shoe Store. There were a lot of things you could do right downtown. And then as those places closed, you had to go to Albert's, you know, the old department store? And so you could do quite a bit of shopping right in Mill Valley, and there aren't those places now.

Dorothy Friedlander: When did Mill Valley become sort of a tourist place?

Doris Bloom: Well, I think in some ways it was. They had tourists coming through because this is a great place for the hikers that would come in on the train, to the depot, the hikers that would come to hike in Muir Woods or to go up the mountain. So a lot of people knew of Mill Valley because of using it for that purpose, of course, way back then. And I think that probably during the war years is when people discovered the city. A lot of the help fellows would come from Marin City — the fellows that would work in the shipyards and were living down there, well, they would get out and get their all of a dollar an hour in those days.

Dorothy Friedlander: And during the '50s and '60s, what major changes did you see?

Doris Bloom: Well, I don't know. Our kids took dancing, so we took them up to San Anselmo for that. So you're in the car doing a lot of things that, as far as I'm concerned, with the kids. They had their girl scouts. They had their dancing lessons. And the things that you're involved with the kids, you know I had the two girls, but still your time is divided. And like Mrs. Terwilliger, you've heard of her?

Dorothy Friedlander: Yes.

Doris Bloom: Well, she lives down the hill here. And Lynn Ellen was a contemporary of Sharon's, and so we would see the Terwilligers a bit because of that. I know one year Mrs. T had the girl scout tours. Anyway, they went down to help do their, I think it was a Thanksgiving dinner. That was how they were going to get their cooking badge. And then Jack, who was better than I about camping, took the kids up in the Sierras. We took the kids up there for camping so they could get their camping badge up there. So there were just these things where you're involved.

And then we were members of the tennis club, and we played tennis. The kids both played tennis, and so we were very involved with tennis because they did a lot of it. At that time you had the Whiteman Cup and you would be traveling around during the summertime taking the kids, like to Modesto, and they'd play in the tournament down there. So we were involved in that. I remember one summer the days were spent on the golf course in the morning and the tennis court in the afternoon, or the tennis court in the morning and golf course in the afternoon, because I loved the outdoors and I played tennis and golf myself.

Dorothy Friedlander: So you were very athletic. Did you do this at college also?

Doris Bloom: I played tennis and golf in college.

Dorothy Friedlander: And in terms of organizations, were you in any local organizations?

Doris Bloom: Well, as an adult, yes. Way back then, when the kids were smaller, not so much. Once they got, like everybody says, once your kids get to a certain point and they start doing their thing — I guess high school is when they really start — then I started working. Someone said, “You’re going to miss the kids. Find something to do.”

Dorothy Friedlander: So you graduate from Tam and you decide to work. How come? Why and where?

Doris Bloom: Everybody I had talked to said something about when the children leave home, you’ve got to find something to do. I had been doing volunteer work, the “Pink Lady” at the hospital, and then I thought, “Well, I’m doing a lot of volunteer things at various places. Why not work for money?” So with that I go down to Sausalito and go down to Village Market and saw Mrs. Winger and I started working part time down there. I came home and told the family I had a job, which they were shocked. And that job turned into more than what I had first planned, but it was very interesting working because it was — again, I didn’t get to do my traveling that I was going to do as far as what I was going to be doing foreign trade, instead I’m working in Sausalito. Oh, okay, that’s foreign trade.

So I was there for ten years, and then I come to see Chris start working down in Strawberry. And just one time he said, “Hey, if you ever want a job — ” So I thought “Okay, that’s right in my own backyard.” So I went down and started working part time next to Chris. And then that grew to be a little bit more. So I worked there for, I think it’s almost ten years now, down with Chris. And by then Jack had retired and we wanted to take off and do a few things. We also had a place up on Lopez Island. We had bought property on Lopez Island up out of Washington, up in the San Juans, and Jack built this little cabin. So what we were doing was going up there every summer for a month. Well, it’s tough having a job and trying to say, “Okay, I’d like a month vacation please.”

So finally I thought, “The time has come.” And so we did that for a while and then I finally decided, I’m tired of going to one place. It’s kind of shades of my mother. My mother, way back, had said, when people were buying cabins for Tahoe, she said, “If I buy a place at Tahoe, then I have to go there every summer.” And I thought, “Yes, Doris Bloom, just remember what she said. You do something like that, you have to go all the time.” So with that, we decided, okay, and we rented it. And so then we did start to do some traveling, like when we went to Europe. We were over there for six weeks. Well, you don’t take six weeks vacation from a job. So that’s when I really felt the time had come when we just do what we want when we want, and so it was, ’70, ’72, ’74, we went to Europe and then we went to New Zealand and we did one other thing. And then went over to the islands, you know Hawaii, and we did one of those cruises around the islands one time. We just enjoyed the travel bit and that’s why come February, we’re going to be

going down to our daughter and son-in-law's. We're going to — I'm not sure, we don't have the stuff that we're doing yet, but I know we go down to Buenos Aires or Rio and we board a ship and we go around the tip of South America and fly home from Valparaiso. So come February, that's our big thing.

Dorothy Friedlander: Sounds very exciting.

Doris Bloom: It will be interesting.

Dorothy Friedlander: And any other travel plans?

Doris Bloom: Well, that's the big thing for next year. I mean, we have done the bit of like we went down to San Antonio. They have a fiesta thing in the spring and we've been down there twice doing that. And we thought, "Oh well, let's just go a little bit farther afield this time," and then we came down through Mexico and Caribbean. We've done the Caribbean. And so it's a matter of picking and choosing. "Well, let's do something we have not done." Somebody said, "Well, why don't you go to Alaska?" And I said, "Well, we've done Alaska." So we just decided this is truly different from what we have ever done. I mean, we've been to Rio, but we have not been there again. It was because we've been up and down in that area.

Dorothy Friedlander: Do either of your girls live around here?

Doris Bloom: Cathy and George live up in Auburn, and Sharon lives in Dixon.

Dorothy Friedlander: Isn't your husband from Dixon?

Doris Bloom: He's from Dixon, yes. Sharon is divorced now but when she and Larry, when they were first married, and he was in the service, we went over to Japan just with them, and that was fun. And we did the Orient, of course. Well, what we did was we also went as far as Bangkok, and then we went back to Japan.

It's like when we were in Europe the one time when our niece was stationed there. We said, "Oh, we'll go over and visit you, Gail." We saw her one day. That was when we were over in Europe six weeks. Because we were doing other things and our oldest daughter, Cathy, had been an exchange student and so we visited the family that she had stayed with. And then another time when we had had an A.F.S. student here, Carol from New Zealand, Carol came over here and stayed, and then we met her husband when we went over to New Zealand and saw them again and met her folks. New Zealand people are so generous, so very generous. So hospitable. It's unbelievable. And we still hear from them, which is kind of fun.

Dorothy Friedlander: Anything that you want to add that I haven't brought to the surface? It's obvious that you love Mill Valley.

Doris Bloom: I've always said that I want to be packed out feet first.

Dorothy Friedlander: And does your husband share this feeling for Mill Valley?

Doris Bloom: Oh, to a point, I think, probably more so myself. And I know on Christmas morning we called our neighbors and said, "Oh, come on up and see us." "Oh, I don't know. I think it's our turn." We do things with the couple that live down here, and at Easter time we usually do a thing, and so she said, "No, we'll come for Easter, you come down here for Christmas." So we went down there Christmas morning. That's my first walk down the hill. I made it. And so we went down there, set the clock on the stove so that the roast would be cooked in time. This was for Christmas morning, which is always kind of fun to have visits like that.

Dorothy Friedlander: And these are people that you knew from traveling? Or you knew them from going to school with them?

Doris Bloom: No, this is a couple that we met here. They are younger than we are by a long shot. They've got a daughter that's probably about your age. And it was when "Little Annie" was I think three months old that they moved down here. So we have pictures of one time — Dixon has a May Fair every year, and one year Lisa and Walt and Little Annie went with us up to May Fair. And I have a picture of Little Annie when she's about like so, with a friend of Cathy's, or Sharon's, a friend of Sharon's daughter, the two little girls when they went to the May Fair, which is a big thing up in the area. I think the valley towns have a lot of that sort of thing, parades and the whole thing.