

Mill Valley Oral History Program

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KATHERINE KIRKLAND

**An Oral History Interview
Conducted by Robin Fisher in 2014**

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INTERVIEWER: Robin Fisher
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In this oral history interview, longtime Tennessee Valley resident Katherine Kirkland recounts tales an active life as part of a close-knit community. Kathy spent her childhood on her grandfather's dairy farm in Tennessee Valley, part of the community of Portuguese families that worked the land both in the valley and beyond. With a practical mindset, she relays some of the challenges of farming, from the rationing days of World War II to the high cost of feed today, and touches upon land use in the area and its evolution. Kathy's heartfelt and often humorous personal stories convey a picture of a vibrant childhood experienced not just in Tennessee Valley, but in Sausalito, Marin City and downtown Mill Valley. Kathy describes her dedication to baton twirling, the multiculturalism of local drum corps and the food-filled celebrations of the Portuguese community. She also recounts some wild local stories, including one about a ghost in Tennessee Valley and a more tangible tale of murder and Mafia in Sausalito. With fluid, easy-going recollection, Kathy describes a tenor of life that was at once very grounded and just a little surreal.

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Oral History of Katherine Kirkland
April 25th, 2014

Editor's note: The transcript below differs in ways from the oral history recording. The interviewee made changes to clarify information she shared during the oral history.

Robin Fisher: So could you just say your name and where we are today? And thank you so much for doing this.

Katherine Kirkland: My name is Katherine Kirkland and I am at 501 Tennessee Road, Mill Valley.

Robin Fisher: Thank you. Today is April 25th, 2014. Okay, great. Please be comfortable, if you want to sit or stand, whatever you like to do. So you were saying — I was asking you if you had lived here all your life and you were telling me that you were born in this house.

Katherine Kirkland: I was raised in this house. I was born in Cottage Hospital in San Rafael. My mom was actually born *in* the house because they didn't have hospitals.

Robin Fisher: Your mom's name was?

Katherine Kirkland: My mom's name was Dorothy. My grandmother, Lena, came here first of all, this was her house, her family, which was Seamas.

Robin Fisher: Wow.

Katherine Kirkland: There were five Seamas siblings.

Robin Fisher: She came here as part of —

Katherine Kirkland: Of that family when they moved from San Francisco. But her husband, Grandpa Pimentel, he jumped off a whaling boat and came here. Because you couldn't get married without papers, he went back and got papers. Then they got married and bought this property from her brother, which was still the same family.

Robin Fisher: Okay, great, wow.

Katherine Kirkland: They ranched across the street. My grandpa, J.C. Pimentel, had Coyote Dairy. That's where the ranch was. His milk was shipped to San Francisco by ferry. There were a whole lot of disagreements with George Christopher¹ and a lot of restrictions were imposed that were, you know — a lot of the stuff that was not right. So then he picked up and moved to Hamilton Field, where the overpass is now. That's where he moved the animals, too. He was already crippled, so they didn't stay in the animal business too much longer. But my dad's brother took over the animals and they moved to Petaluma. They had a dairy on Magnolia Road

¹ George Christopher later became Mayor of San Francisco, from 1956 to 1964.

for all the time we were growing up. When my cousin got married — her husband was from Wisconsin — they took the animals that were left in Petaluma to Oakdale to have a new ranch. In Oakdale, they were on the back of the Merced River and just couldn't keep up with the environmentalists and restrictions. Dairy men were paying an extensive amount of money and if you were a big operation you could buy exemptions. They were only milking 200 to 250 cattle, so it wasn't possible to make a living at this location. They are now in Monroe, Oregon with generations of cows that they bred in the beginning.

Robin Fisher: Wow. And where did that stock come from originally, do you know?

Katherine Kirkland: When we were teenagers, Jeannie² got a cow. Her name was Cejus. I still remember, I mean, why would you want a cow as a teenager? But that was her big thing. It cost like \$700, but that became her breeder that she used through all. They have national recognition and they still earn many breeding awards in the United States and Japan. Farming is not keeping them alive now; it is the fact that they still have good breeding stock that people are interested in purchasing. That pays the bills.

Robin Fisher: When you say the farming is not keeping them alive, does that mean —

Katherine Kirkland: Financially, you can't support it. Pretty much no one can.

Robin Fisher: Yeah, wow.

Katherine Kirkland: I mean, we have about 300 chickens right now, and we have 26 sheep.

Robin Fisher: That is for the Woolly Egg.³

Katherine Kirkland: Woolly Egg comes from — yeah. But financially it's not too cool because the feed and everything is so high.

Robin Fisher: Wow. I think you are selling your eggs in the local markets now, right?

Katherine Kirkland: Mill Valley Market. It's my son's thing. Both him and his wife have jobs: she teaches school and he works for the union. He's a grip on movies, but he has flex hours, plays and all that kind of stuff. He was busy totally nonstop when they were doing the races. He worked as a carpenter *and* electrician —

Robin Fisher: The World Cup races?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. And now that he's down — not much is going on right now — he has more time. But he's off some place today. He just takes jobs. With the union, you call in and get hours. That's how that works.

Robin Fisher: So what were your first memories of what it was like living here?

² Katherine's cousin

³ Woolly Egg Ranch is the Kirkland family's ranch in Tennessee Valley, Mill Valley.

Katherine Kirkland: We had no contact with other kids. I went on the school bus from here to Sausalito. We went all the way down Tennessee Valley. The Lopes kids and Bettencourt were down there and the Klockars were midway. We stopped at the Buckeye to pick up Rudy Bush, and we went to Central School. Sometimes we got off at Central School and sometimes we'd stay on the bus and go to Old Town and then pick up the kids from the forts. But I went to Central School, which is now the library — until Martin Luther King opened. Then we moved to — I think 7th or 8th grade — we moved up to Martin Luther King.

Robin Fisher: About what year did you start going to school?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, we just did normal.

Robin Fisher: You started in kindergarten?

Katherine Kirkland: Kindergarten in Sausalito. But you get on the bus. You have to get on the bus an hour before school started and then coming home, you had an hour. If we did everybody before they did us, it really depended on who was driving or what the school was, so we spent a lot of time on the buses. We'd come home and then my father had animals. When all the public housing, after Marinship — we had cattle out there, but then they'd get ran by dogs and we couldn't keep up because they were breaking legs. So then he went to work full-time at Marin Beverage. During the summer I would ride in the semi to San Jose, to Falstaff distillery. My aunt would pick me up so I could play with my cousins while he loaded the truck and trailer. I would be picked up on 101 for the return trip. There was no Richmond-San Rafael Bridge so we used the ferry. We were always the first on the inside because we were heavy, loaded or not.

Robin Fisher: Okay. So by that time, your grandparents had shut down the dairy?

Katherine Kirkland: My grandparents had taken their part of the dairy away. My dad just had a few beef and things he was raising. It wasn't something you could do because the dogs would run them. I can still remember seeing cows. They would put them hanging up on belts to see if they could get their legs back to supporting, but generally you'd end up losing them.

Robin Fisher: Because they were just exhausted and collapsed?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, yes. And people were having dogs and letting them run. And they'd run over the hills and then they'd run the animals because dogs run in packs. So that's when he decided that we wouldn't have any more animals.

Robin Fisher: So did you work at all with the animals, or you mostly went to school and came home?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, pretty much. My dad would. We had a couple things that needed to be fed. But over the years, I've seen pigs, my mother had chickens. During the war, milk — we sold the cream to other people because that's where the money was, with the cream. And then rabbits for food.

Robin Fisher: When you say war, do you mean Vietnam or World War II?

Katherine Kirkland: I was born in '42, so I was still a kid, 5 or 7 years old when she was selling cream and rabbits. There were food ration coupons for bread, sugar, gas, milk, meat etc.

Robin Fisher: And you remember that. Okay.

Katherine Kirkland: Well, we had a separator in the back porch. The milk would come in and she'd have to stand and crank and separate it. And we always had the blue milk. I actually liked the blue milk. They'd sell the thing that was expensive, the cream. People would tease me about the blue milk. I go to the ranch still now, coming from the barn. I don't go for the pitcher that has cream on top of it. Before you had refrigerators in the barns, the milk would come down over the cooler and you'd get this thing that is kind of like ice milk. And cream is kind of, like, yucky to me.

Robin Fisher: Did they call it blue john?

Katherine Kirkland: I just called it blue milk, I don't know. But that's the non-fat, super skim stuff. Everybody says that's blue milk.

Robin Fisher: So do you remember soldiers? When you say people at the forts —

Katherine Kirkland: No, I just know that I have a picture of a cousin who came back. Here is a picture in Novato. At that time, they were still ranching in Novato, because he's there and holding me and I'm just little, where the arch was. Hamilton Field was right there and it was the first ranch on the outside, right where that overpass is that goes from Burger King. And then my grandfather went to work for Pini's Hardware. The trains would come in with the feed and supplies.

Robin Fisher: Okay. Now where is Pini's Hardware? I remember it.

Katherine Kirkland: Well, now it's in South Novato, but it used to be on the main drag where the Whole Foods is. The trains could come and then they'd unload it. I don't exactly know where they came from, but the grains and hay and feed came into Pini's Hardware there.

Robin Fisher: Okay. Were there trains coming up through here at all?

Katherine Kirkland: No. But the train to send the milk to San Francisco was at Almonte.

Robin Fisher: Okay. So you had to get —

Katherine Kirkland: My mother had to drive. About six months ago maybe, on the bend, they took down the tree. She'd always told me that was the tree that stopped her truck. She had taken milk — she was driving at 13 — she was taking milk and she hit the tree. She was empty and said all the cans went down into the creek. But the tree stopped the truck.

Robin Fisher: That's good.

Katherine Kirkland: It was only about six months ago when they made that new walk down there that they actually cut the tree down. It is really actually quite huge, but I know that tree has been there all that time. It's kind of weird, because you say, "Oh, that was my mom's tree!" That was the tree that saved her life.

Robin Fisher: That was the tree! It saved her! [laughter]

Robin Fisher: So you said you didn't have too many neighbors.

Katherine Kirkland: Just the kids on the bus. So once you came home, you were home.

Robin Fisher: Did you play a lot up in the hills and the creeks?

Katherine Kirkland: Just went everywhere. The same thing was with my kids. My kids, for the time being, went over there to school. On the road, we'd see 30 cars a day. Now I see 30 cars just trying to get out of my driveway. It's not like it was. The end ranch belonged to my father's godfather, so we had total access to that. And then in the middle were the Lopes', who were also friends, and then the Bettencourts. All were Portuguese families.

Robin Fisher: Right. So is that your family heritage?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. My grandparents, well — on both sides — are from the Azores, one set from the Pico and one set from St. Jorge.

Robin Fisher: Wow. And how much was your heritage part of your growing up?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, it was the Holy Ghost Society and your church. If it was Holy Ghost, you would donate to the church and usually make a special request.

Robin Fisher: Right. You were one of the —

Katherine Kirkland: Queen, yeah. My girls were queens, my mom was a queen.

Robin Fisher: What happens in that festival?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, at the time, it was the only place you went.

Robin Fisher: The church?

Katherine Kirkland: The Holy Ghost Festival was what you did. We didn't get new clothes for Easter. We got a new dress for Holy Ghost. When I first started going, we'd have a meal on Friday night and they would crown the queen. A Saturday night dance and parade on Sunday. And now it's just Sunday afternoon. Sometimes they don't even have a night meal on Sunday.

For me, it was all of the above. Our hall, IDESST⁴ in Sausalito, has big vats for cooking whole cows for the celebration.

Robin Fisher: Wow. Special food?

Katherine Kirkland: It was called *sopa de carne*, meat that has been boiled with a lot of spices and then you serve it over French bread.

Robin Fisher: Oooh, sounds good.

Katherine Kirkland: It's very ethnic kind of poverty food.

Robin Fisher: Right. And through the years, did the same people sort of participate?

Katherine Kirkland: Pretty much, but that's what is different now, it's totally different. I usually don't because it is a totally different group. My aunt is 93 and I mean, there are very few people that are still there. They just gave us a picture for me to try to identify people from the 100th anniversary. Now, they have already had their 125th, so I can recognize those that were my contemporaries but I can't recognize most others.

Robin Fisher: The newer group.

Katherine Kirkland: So I took it to my aunt's and I gave it to her three people and one to my cousin, because he is trying to figure out all the people that are in the picture. But I have a lot of the old pictures which I gave him too. That's Mike Molland — they are going to do a walking tour of Sausalito. So they also did the history of various places and various people, I remember, that have old houses down there. He would say something and then it would just trigger, "Oh, that's so-and-so's mother and so-and-so did this and so-and-so did that and so-and-so is still alive." And then you ask me something specific and I don't know.

Robin Fisher: Well, I saw — I think on Facebook there was a Portuguese Society.

Katherine Kirkland: That's it. IDESST. They have sip and savor, and now they are having a walking tour. So he comes here every couple of weeks or something as he gets more stuff to see. I have been giving him old pictures and stuff and things I remember about the Little League. I had a picture of them in the parade, and then we tracked down a picture of St. Mary's Chinese girls. I'm not sure if the sister city is in Japan, but anyway, it was kind of interesting, the Chinese drum corps always participated in the Holy Ghost parade because there was interculture going on back then and stuff.

Robin Fisher: Right, right. And you have no idea how that happened?

Katherine Kirkland: How they showed up?

⁴ *Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo e Santíssima Trindade*. The IDESST was incorporated in 1904 and is an IRS 501(c)(8) non-profit association.

Robin Fisher: How the two groups got together.

Katherine Kirkland: Well, I was a majorette and I was twirling with the Native Sons,⁵ but I also twirled for the French — it was called the Lacoute Drum Corps. Anyway, the instructor was from France. We also went to the consulate from France, so here we were intermingling and we always competed against the St. Mary's Chinese girls that came out of Chinatown. So there was a lot of things that actually took place that nobody paid any attention to, so to speak, but it was just the way it was. All those girls in that drum corps were pretty much of French descent, so they wanted to keep their music alive. The Chinese drum and bell corps played their kind of music. June 14th I got to go to the consulate. We played inside for the dignitaries that were there.

Robin Fisher: The Portuguese dignitaries?

Katherine Kirkland: No, this was for the French. That was because I was involved in the drum corps. There were French and Chinese and there were Portuguese. Three different groups.

Robin Fisher: Oh, okay.

Katherine Kirkland: We played in the Native Sons corps, which was out of Sausalito and there were all Native Sons. Across from Central School, we had a building that was our hall that is now a retirement community. We practiced there every Friday night.

Robin Fisher: And this was in high school, or middle school?

Katherine Kirkland: I started twirling when I was eight or so, and then I went and quit, so to speak, when I went to San Francisco State, except when I taught P.E. So I mean, I didn't have too much else to do. I liked Tuesdays because my mom worked and I'd get to stay in Sausalito. I'd go to catechism and we'd walk up the hill to catechism and when we walked back, we could go to a store and get candy and then play on the street or something until my mom came to get us.

Robin Fisher: What kind of store was it?

Katherine Kirkland: Butterworth, where we could get candy or something. Bobby Hoover, her family had that store forever.

Robin Fisher: What did it look like?

Katherine Kirkland: A grocery store.

Robin Fisher: Candy in cases and jars?

Katherine Kirkland: No, we were already into candy bars and cookies. I don't remember soda. You just went in and got your own thing.

⁵ Native Sons of the Golden West are a fraternal organization, founded in 1875, limited to native-born Californians.

Robin Fisher: Right, right. So your mom worked late on Tuesdays doing what?

Katherine Kirkland: She worked at the hospital. So that time would be mine to be with friends in Sausalito, to go to a friend's house after or just play in the street. We actually played kick the can and hide and seek until I got picked up. Otherwise, you were on the bus and you went home.

Robin Fisher: Why did you get to do that on Tuesdays but not other days?

Katherine Kirkland: Because I had catechism at church.

Robin Fisher: Oh, okay, that's why.

Katherine Kirkland: Then they used to let us out early. It was part of the thing. Just like Good Friday, three hours, but now nobody closes anything. And then on catechism, I'd get out of school early to go to catechism and then we'd walk up and I'd be able to stay with some friends in the area.

Robin Fisher: Okay. So lots of kids didn't have a mother there to pick them up and take them someplace. It seems like now either a mother or a babysitter or somebody —

Katherine Kirkland: No, you just did your thing. Eventually when I was competing and I ended up driving by high school, at 15. I got my license as early as I could because the team I was competing with was all the way in Napa, so I spent every weekend at lessons, parades, and performances.

Robin Fisher: This was with twirling. Wow. It seems like that was a big part of your activity.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. I just practiced a lot, that's what I did. My dad was still in the Seapoint Drum Corps and all.

Robin Fisher: Oh, he was?

Katherine Kirkland: Yes, both my mom and dad marched across the Golden Gate Bridge on opening day. My grandson has never paid any interest in anything and all of a sudden, I don't know, somebody asked him. He is a sophomore and then decided he was going to be, he said, well, he didn't play. I said, well, this should be some place in your blood or something, and so then I don't know, about three months ago he joined the Color Guard. The whole Riordan marching band is in Hawaii. I think he just now started clarinet maybe three months or something. He has an ear, he should be able. My brother played trumpet in the jazz band and all, so I think it is there, but he is just going, "Ugh, yeah." So maybe he is going to kick off, I don't know. But I think probably someplace, he can hear the beat. It is kind of like, you know, he should be able to pick it up pretty easily. So then he decided, "Oh well," and then they needed somebody in the Color Guard. They really wanted him to play tuba. He is a big kid, see, and they like it when the band has the letters of the school or something across the back of the instrument, but he resisted. He said he'd learn the clarinet. So we'll see.

Robin Fisher: So for weekends, it sounds like maybe if your brother was in a band and you were —

Katherine Kirkland: My mom and dad, that's pretty much what we did. The big thing was state competition. Like in September, the Native Sons — because that is the Admission Day, everything would close down. And we'd compete on Admission Day some place in the state, because it was the big deal, California's birthday. That would be the only time we'd get to go in a motel, and that was a big deal.

Robin Fisher: Yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: To go to a motel and have a swimming pool and vending machines. I didn't learn to swim until high school, when you had to learn to swim to get out of high school. Yeah. People don't think about that.

Robin Fisher: Wow. So Friday night would be —

Katherine Kirkland: We would be practicing.

Robin Fisher: You'd be practicing and then both of you would play at some event on Saturday?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, if it was the drum corps, then my brother was in it, or I'd be off. We just had a lot of things that were related to that. He played with Seapoint; they were state champions for lots of years out of Sausalito.

Robin Fisher: So you went all over.

Katherine Kirkland: The majorette team I was with was out of Napa. Originally, the instructor was originally out of South City but she moved to Napa. I was looking at some of my junk the other day and I was very excited to see the Western Union message I sent to my dad the day we met Nixon. We were the Color Guard when he landed in Seattle. We were competing at the Sea Fair in Seattle.

Robin Fisher: What was that like? You went to the airport and —

Katherine Kirkland: It was kind of neat. The Color Guard was on both sides while he came down. I was so excited. [laughs]

Robin Fisher: Wow. How old were you?

Katherine Kirkland: Probably sophomore or junior in high school.

Robin Fisher: Wow, that's great. Did that make you become a big Nixon fan?

Katherine Kirkland: No, it was just exciting. It was exciting to be at the Sea Fair, and then the Portland Rose Parade at night with all the lights. It's kind of like the Rose Bowl, the Rose Parade. They take all of the floats, put them in a football field and then you can go see them in the day. It's amazing how they actually make them.

Robin Fisher: Yeah, all around. Were there ever national competitions? Where you went nationally?

Katherine Kirkland: We stayed state-wide. My cousin was out of San Jose and their troop went back East a lot. But we competed in Arizona and won that. So we pretty much did West Coast and then we won in Seattle.

Robin Fisher: Wow. Is that sort of where you got your friendships, from the activities that you were doing? Were you better friends with the kids that you rode the bus with?

Katherine Kirkland: No, not really. The kids I twirled with, but those are weekend and work people. But the people here on the ranch, we only saw each other on the bus or when we got dressed for Holy Ghost, when we went to Portuguese things. They were all Portuguese.

Robin Fisher: Did you go to church every weekend?

Katherine Kirkland: Yes.

Robin Fisher: So you'd see each other there.

Katherine Kirkland: Mm-hmm. But then when Holy Ghost starts, it is about six or eight weeks when you go to the different lodges, because each lodge has their own festival. Sausalito used to be the largest because we had all of Tiburon, Mill Valley, Sausalito — all those Portuguese people came in to Sausalito. At a lot of times, you belonged to more than one, but you have Novato and Petaluma and you have Vallejo and Benicia. And once a year, they'd go to Fort Bragg, but theirs was always later. It runs like six weeks in a row, the different lodges. First just Novato, then Sausalito, and then maybe — it was usually when school was back in, — the one in Fort Bragg takes place.

Robin Fisher: Is it related to Easter at all?

Katherine Kirkland: Pentecost. Six weeks.

Robin Fisher: Okay, so, yeah. So it was always at the same time.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, basically.

Robin Fisher: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Katherine Kirkland: I have one brother and one sister. There were three of us. I have double cousins, the ones that have the ranch, because sisters married brothers. My mother and father got

married, and then his brother married the sister. Because that's the only way you met people. He met my mother because he went to work for his godfather's ranch, the end ranch on Tennessee Valley.

Robin Fisher: When you say that's the only way you met people — because you centered your life around the church, that's how you met other Portuguese people?

Katherine Kirkland: Mostly, the ranch and the working and stuff. To do anything special you had to go to the festivals, or a Holy Ghost thing, to dance and meet and socialize.

Robin Fisher: But you met through the work.

Katherine Kirkland: Pretty much all those guys met on the farm.

Robin Fisher: Was there any feeling like, oh, your parents wanted you to marry someone who was Portuguese?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, he had, I don't know, half Portuguese in him, yeah. By then — we are talking, you know, 1956 or 1960 — things change.

Robin Fisher: Right. Did you feel you fit in just as much as any other kids in the area?

Katherine Kirkland: Oh yeah. We just didn't belong in Sausalito all the way. I laugh at this because I do work at the church and we still have the women's club. I can remember, like if there was a dance, they put on a dance for everybody. But I also have integrated with Marin City. So I mean, if we had a dance or something, when we were in middle school, when we were starting to integrate and they say things like, "Oh, dearie, you put your coat here, dearie, you don't do this," like, ugh. Then sometimes I'm working at the church and somebody will use the "dearie" term on me or something and then I go, "Agh." It's 55 years later and it's still "dearie" or whatever.

Robin Fisher: That's funny.

Katherine Kirkland: But we worked, we worked. I didn't speak Portuguese because even though my mother, grandfather, everybody spoke Portuguese, we didn't because we went to school and they would call us a "greenie" or something, which were the people who were just coming over and couldn't speak English. You didn't want to be a "greenie," you didn't want to be a "greenhorn," so consequently nobody pushed speaking Portuguese.

Robin Fisher: Do you feel like it is the opposite now?

Katherine Kirkland: Oh yeah. And especially my son, he married a girl from Mexico but she teaches Spanish, so she is more than fluent. She came here as an exchange teacher a long time ago and now she teaches at Rancho Nicasio, but Spanish is her first language.

Robin Fisher: Right, right. It is interesting how things change, isn't it?

Katherine Kirkland: Yep. They really didn't push it.

Robin Fisher: I understand that at one point there was a lot of — the salmon would come up here, in the creeks and things, and spawn. Or was that before your time, maybe?

Katherine Kirkland: I don't know so much about salmon, but my dad fished a lot. We fished off of Tennessee Beach. I've got some pictures in the room — eel and cabezon and all of those ugly-looking, deep water fish. He would come home with gunny sacks full of fish, and now there is no such thing.

Robin Fisher: Because it is overfished, you mean?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, they just aren't there. But that's what we did. It was not unusual. I can just remember them — he'd take a nail through the eel and then skin it. We'd do a thing called *vinho de alhos*, which is a Portuguese marinade, and then they'd fry it up into little pieces, the eel. It's not like fish and chips; it's got the vinegar in it. But we'd do a lot of fish and chips and stew. We always had fish. The Portuguese like the heads and the eyeballs and all, so you'd have to boil them up and break it down and then take all of the flesh off of the heads. It's that gluten stuff that comes off those fish, it's a horrible feeling in your hands. But I did it because my dad liked it.

Robin Fisher: So you didn't keep the actual fish head?

Katherine Kirkland: You boiled it all up, but then you when you served it, it was kind of like a soup. With tomato and onions and potatoes. But pretty much everybody has their variation, Italians or whoever, they have their variations and it's pretty much the same.

Robin Fisher: Did you like it?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, we ate it. Just like grass soup. I always say, "Oh, I didn't like grass soup," but it grew in the creek — watercress — so we ate grass soup. I didn't realize until I think I was an adult, shopping, that cows weren't really yellow fat. All we had were cows that were dairy cows that had gotten too old to produce, so we always had that yellowy fat, and that was always the Portuguese way. It was boiled up and spices were put on it. But it wasn't the kind of meat that —

Robin Fisher: It wasn't lean. Beef cattle or something like that.

Katherine Kirkland: When they'd cut up to do the *sopas* — it was always on Saturday — the workers — you'd get steak — they'd butcher the cows and cut them up originally themselves. And there would be steak and they would pound it down with seasoning. But generally you had pot roast or stewed meat.

Robin Fisher: How do you spell *sopas*?

Katherine Kirkland: Just s-o-p-a-s. *Sopa de carne*, soup with meat, it just means plain old boiled meat, just with a lot of spices.

Robin Fisher: Do you still cook those dishes?

Katherine Kirkland: A little bit. But I can still go to the Holy Ghost and have it. But now it's different.

Robin Fisher: A different recipe.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, a different thing. My aunt, it's so funny, she got upset because they cut the bread a different way. She said, "Those Brazilians, because they cut the bread long instead of this way —." It's evolving, a lot of things. The cabbage, like everything was put in the same pot and done, but now they put it on the table separate. It's different.

Robin Fisher: Yeah. Probably they are trying to accommodate people's different tastes and things like that.

Katherine Kirkland: A little more gourmet-like or something than dumping it into a pot. We always had it just in the pot. So it's just the way it is.

Robin Fisher: So this area was really good for dairy farming? Because I thought I read something about how it wasn't really good for hay, so you had to ship in the hay all the time.

Katherine Kirkland: We had hay, Haypress⁶ down there is where the hay was, but that belonged to Martins.⁷ It is still called Haypress. There's water up in there.

Robin Fisher: Where is Haypress?

Katherine Kirkland: It's when you hike down, you cut into the valley after the double gates and that was called Haypress. Grandpa had potatoes here. There were no willows. Till they built the school, this was all open, see. I'll show you. But it wasn't the way it is now. [Katherine moves to show Robin some artwork.]

Robin Fisher: Should I follow you?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, I just have some stuff along the wall.

Robin Fisher: Okay, great.

Katherine Kirkland: That's Tennessee Beach. See, when you go around this bend here, there's a place back where they get into the rocks when the tide was out, so they could get the eels and things.

⁶ An area of Tennessee Valley

⁷ Martin's Brothers Barns

Robin Fisher: Right back in there, okay.

Katherine Kirkland: This was painted by Rosemary Martin, who lived at the end ranch. She painted a lot. She had a showing at the Civic Center; a lot of her paintings were on display.

Robin Fisher: Those are old pictures of your house?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, not that old, but they're pictures.

Robin Fisher: They're beautiful.

Katherine Kirkland: This lady knocked on my door and her father had died and she was trying to sell some of his stuff, so I bought it from her for \$100. That, someone else painted for us. [Katherine gestures to another artwork.]

Robin Fisher: So she painted the one with the oranges in it? If it's okay, when I'm done I'll take pictures so that — yeah, the orange fence, that's beautiful.

Katherine Kirkland: That's fine. Now, this is [gesturing to another work] — do you hike to Tennessee Beach?

Robin Fisher: Yes.

Katherine Kirkland: Okay. That's Martins Brothers Barns. Rosemary painted this. This was on the lower, which is all muddy a lot of the time, but that's where the actual milking barns were. My dad, he's in front of the milking barns, he's on a horse. He had a trick horse. This area here that has the pond, they did that on purpose. Al Sanchez, the guy that owned Shoreline Market, they flooded that, because they'd deer hunt and duck hunt. So that's how come that was there. They used the tractors to make the brooms and that's where they hunted from. He had the little barn at the back. The barn is still there at the same location. That's just the backyard. That's right there in front. See how open the field is?

Robin Fisher: Oh my gosh. The picture — is that your grandfather and his dog? And looking over towards the school is just a field and trees?

Katherine Kirkland: No, this is going this way, but this one is looking towards the school. That's the ranch, the dairy part of the ranch.

Robin Fisher: Wow, wow. Yeah, it looks very different, doesn't it?

Katherine Kirkland: Yep, see this is that uncle that I told you about with the war. You can't really tell, but this is the ranch in Hamilton Field. That was just a picture of how it is now, looking up our driveway.

Robin Fisher: To compare it, yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: See, that's sitting in the front of the house. That's me with a couple of dolls. My aunt made those dolls. Here, over here, this was a whole line of euc⁸ trees where the Model T was parked before they did the housing. That's what caused the discussion, because my deed says euc tree to euc tree, it's supposed to be three acres, which was one for each of the girls, each of the daughters. But when they were done, it's under two acres, it's 1.78, but it was just no way to try to —

Robin Fisher: To try to work it out.

Katherine Kirkland: There were all kinds of stories, like the Corps of Engineers⁹ took it when they were coming down off the ridge. My dad worked for the Corps of Engineers making the bunkers on this end of Tennessee Valley, but they never ended up needing them. But supposedly they were going to drop from the Golden Gate through here rather than how they do it. Supposedly, that's maybe when the property got annexed or something, but nobody could ever find the right information. This is how that was totally open out there.

Robin Fisher: Wow.

Katherine Kirkland: This is how it is now, when they were tearing it down, when we were sitting on the steps when I was little.

Robin Fisher: So do you remember if your dad was very — were they really truly worried that somebody might attack and come in this direction, or was he just sort of —

Katherine Kirkland: No, you can listen to various people that talk about it. There are various stories about it.

Robin Fisher: Yeah. But you don't remember your dad or mom talking about it?

Katherine Kirkland: No, I just remember them saying that the war was over. I remember my mom saying that she was picking vegetables when she heard about it. I don't think that was when it actually happened. Because he was a milker, my dad didn't go into the service. He was running the Caterpillars, the heavy equipment right here, off of Tennessee Beach for the Army Corps of Engineers.

Robin Fisher: Oh. So did you sort of feel a difference between when you were living your time of growing up here and then when it all of a sudden became like, Marin, *Serial*, the whole peacock feathers?

Katherine Kirkland: My kids were involved in all of that. My kids were still in 4H. I mean, they went back East — they went to Tam Valley School and we had all of the open classrooms going on and classroom innovation. So when they went back East, everybody expected, because they had seen that thing that Marsha Heckman, I can't remember — you know, about them all

⁸ Eucalyptus

⁹ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

having hot tubs and things.¹⁰ The kids back East had even seen that. And they expected the kids to take peacock feathers when they went to nationals. I had three different kids actually went back to All-Star conventions and they took — one time we went to Cronkhite and got little things and said, “Part of the GGNRA.”¹¹ We filled up little vials, but they really expected them to bring peacock feathers, stuff of that nature. So it’s kind of like, weird. But I went through all of that and everybody still thinks if you live in Marin, you know, living here, that we’ve got a lot of money. But most of us are just lucky. If the property hadn’t been saved by GGNRA and Prop 13, then we wouldn’t be here. This is all the stuff Mike Moyle has been collecting for the Sausalito Portuguese Heritage Walking Tour. So if there is something that you particularly want, I probably have it.

Robin Fisher: Okay. As we go through, you tell me anything that you recall. [Katherine points out photographs.]

Robin Fisher: They are all dressed with their parasols and hats.

Katherine Kirkland: They decorated the cows to march in the parade, yeah. That’s just an old — but see, that’s the lodge, but the buildings are old in Sausalito. This is my mother’s thing that she told somebody about. See, there’s the ranch, that picture over there, and this is how it is now.

Robin Fisher: Yeah, with the school.

Katherine Kirkland: This is the front yard. I had a discussion with PG&E people and that tower has been there the whole time. It went across here, the front yard; it went all the way across. This is my mom and my aunt.

Robin Fisher: That’s 1935 and that electrical tower is there. Why was it there?

Katherine Kirkland: The electric, I guess, but we were having some problems.

Robin Fisher: What were the problems?

Katherine Kirkland: I don’t get enough power and they had the discussion — a couple of the people had gotten cancer in that Tam Valley School. There were two or three, one of them was a doctor that got it so they consequently were blaming the towers and things. So I said, “That tower has been there.” And I found this picture and blew it up to show them that it really had been there.

Robin Fisher: This biographical sketch — oh, so this is a taped oral history that was done with your mom, right?

¹⁰ In 1978 NBC News broadcast a documentary called “I Want It All Now,” exposing Marin County’s supposed hedonism at the time. The documentary references a woman who paid \$180 to have two masseuses stroke her with peacock feathers for four hours.

¹¹ Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. So any of this kind of stuff that you want to look at — [flipping through documents]. This is Sausalito's anniversary, and then this story about — this is twice, I've been in the paper. But when they came here about the body that they had found up on the hill here, I said, "Mmm, I don't know." And ironically, my girlfriend lives across the street and the ladies have a baby and they were digging up to make more room downstairs and I said, "Oh, maybe we'll find Mrs. Smith!" Well, about two weeks later, there's a cop knocking on my door and they had found — he said, "Do you remember anything?" and I said, "Eh." And then all of a sudden I called him back and said, "I think I know who it is! It's Mrs. Smith, she used to live over there and she totally disappeared and we could never figure out what happened to her." She had a 1964 penny in her pocket, so that's who it was and it was right on target with the DNA, they found out.

I always thought she was rich. I saw this lady walking all the time, but when I'd be at my girlfriend's, this big black car would come and I thought it was just because they had a lot of money. But I didn't know it was a Mafia car. Her husband actually was involved. She actually was a Russian immigrant and was involved with the Mafia, but I guess he killed her, and he had died by the time they found her body. They did send her remains back to her family back East. But there was a story, we always joked about it, Mrs. Smith under those stairs. We know he put her under those stairs.

You know, it was kind of like, we always figured. And then he went back and seven years later, he brought a girl. She was a Tongan princess and he brought her back as his bride. Patty was friends with her. But she was really nice, but she never kind of much left the area. I guess she was quite a bit younger than he was, because then he passed away. But when she decided to go home and she gave Patty stuff — every time something broke, he bought it new. So I think she went to church, but I think that's about all; she never did integrate in the area. He just pretty much kept her as his little woman or whatever. And the whole time, he had been involved. They said who he had testified against.

Robin Fisher: Was he involved in the mob in San Francisco?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, I guess so, there are stories about it in different things.

This was the other thing, it was one of those strange things, this was here in the paper about the ghost. So I said, "I know who the ghost is."

Robin Fisher: What ghost?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, this is bothering somebody in Marin View. This is just what I wrote about the ghost.

Robin Fisher: Can you read that? [Katherine reads from the paper.]

Katherine Kirkland: "I grew up and am still living in our family home in Tennessee Valley. My grandfather Joseph Cordoza Pimentel owned a dairy farm for years called the Coyote Jersey Farm, which included all the land above the Tam Valley School. I believe the area where the

featured home in the article ‘Ghostbusters’ is located near where an oak tree used to be. Many of the farm workers were Portuguese and would come from the whaling ships that visited the Bay. One hung himself from that oak tree, which is around where Carrera Drive is today. Perhaps the Bernsteins should try speaking to the ghost in Portuguese. Also, it is very common that the Portuguese had Asian friends; perhaps the first ghost was a friend of his.” [Katherine stops reading from the paper.]

They said they thought it was Asian. They were jumping ship too, but because they’d go to San Francisco, there were a lot of Asian workers that were in the area too. My grandfather didn’t have Asian people working for him, but these guys, they would work for a period of time and then go off on binges. And they’d be gone two or three days, maybe a week, and then they’d come back. And then they’d think, “Well yeah, I really want to go to gold country,” so they’d go back and hang around and then maybe not go to the gold country. But anyway. They wouldn’t have papers or anything.

We have a plot up here that says “Pimentel.” But there is somebody buried in it, that guy that hung himself, my grandfather buried him in our plot. But we didn’t know his, I mean, my aunt or nobody in the family actually knew what the guy’s name was. But he was buried because he was a worker, so people didn’t question things.

There is a Portuguese island, Macao, where they look Asian or Oriental, so possibly the guy — but he could have been one of the Portuguese that was from Macao too. So I said, “Oh, I think I know who the ghost is.” As a kid, we were told that behind the house was a tree and then when that house came down and they built the school, I went up there and we walked around, my dad and all, and we went to where the oak tree is. He said, “Well, this is the tree and this house they’re putting right here, and they shouldn’t put a house there because of the spring, but the spring is still there and they are coming, you know, the spring runs along the side and stuff.” So I had done a lot of things up there, hiking around and asking questions, and it was kind of funny when I saw that paper. I said, “Maybe he’s at rest now.” I said, “You’re only two houses away from where the guy hung himself.” I don’t know, maybe — ?

Robin Fisher: Yeah, interesting.

Katherine Kirkland: They had somebody come in from the university or something. They do the heat and seismic stuff and things.

Robin Fisher: Did they find anything?

Katherine Kirkland: I don’t know. Just like the lady. I remember the lady walking.

Robin Fisher: Mrs. Smith?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. But I don’t remember what she looked like. But they did find her in shorts. They asked me if she had glasses. “I don’t think so,” I said. He said, “Well —,” and then asked another question. I said, “Maybe she wore a hat,” and I guess there was a visor in the

stuff. She had taken it when she walked. I guess she came out and went walking, but she didn't actually really communicate with anybody. We just knew there was a Mrs. Smith in that house.

Robin Fisher: Is that house still there?

Katherine Kirkland: Oh yeah. They remodeled it. They continued to dig it out and they got a room for the baby and everything, but it was kind of funny. It was the consequences of the time. I mean, you wouldn't even think about it. You joked about it during that time frame, maybe for the next five, 10 years or something.

Oh, there was another guy and we called him "Nature Boy" or something. And he was up on the other side of the family and he was just kind of like, you know, hairy and everything. So you'd say, Ooh, you've seen Nature Boy?" "No, no." It was kind of like the same situation, you kind of knew that there was somebody around the valley, but you didn't know —

Robin Fisher: Who they were exactly, or what their story was.

Katherine Kirkland: What they were about. Like Mrs. Smith. We did know she had disappeared, but we maybe figured she had gotten tired of him and ran off or something. The big black car, that's all, we thought, "Oh, man, they must have money because they had such a big car." It was the Mafia coming and going, I guess, but you wouldn't know.

Robin Fisher: Did you ever have any reason to believe it was the Mafia?

Katherine Kirkland: No, until we read it in the paper there.

Robin Fisher: Wow, yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: No, we just thought they had money. It was a Lincoln or something that nobody around here had. None of my friends had cars like that. Things like that come up, which is kind of strange.

This is just trails and stuff. [Katherine is pointing out documents.] Coyote, how it became Tam Valley — McGee, she writes a lot for you guys, doesn't she? Elizabeth McGee.

Robin Fisher: I think so.

Katherine Kirkland: I just save things. Look: taxes that were only \$14.52.

Robin Fisher: \$14.52, wow. That was what year?

Katherine Kirkland: '30-something.

Robin Fisher: 1936, yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: The lot. See, this is what we were trying to save, but it just didn't help. Pictures of when we — it changed, but I save stuff. And if somebody really wants to investigate — this is my dad's father looking out. [Katherine gestures to a photo.]

Robin Fisher: Were these orchard trees back in here?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. We had pears here. This is one pear in the front of the house that is still out, and there were pear trees here. And then my mom had rabbit coops underneath because they sold the rabbits for food to make money. She had — right in here, like going this way, were the cages for rabbits, but there are not pictures of the rabbits. This is how it is up in the back. This is the gas station down there.

Robin Fisher: Where was that gas station?

Katherine Kirkland: This was a Portuguese, Alvarado, that had the gas station.

Robin Fisher: Oh. I love the gas man on top. That's great. What year is that, does it say?

Katherine Kirkland: Mmm, no. But you can sometimes tell by the cars.

Robin Fisher: The cars, a Model T.

Katherine Kirkland: I can't tell by the car, but guys can tell by the car. I just went down and took pictures of today, stuff in there.

Robin Fisher: So that's the same station today.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, that's it now.

Robin Fisher: Wow, Surf Shop Sports.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, 10 years ago or so, but it's still Surf. See, that's how the property was, see, we had all those cows.

Robin Fisher: Oh yeah. And this is '44, '46.

Katherine Kirkland: Yep. That's when my dad had dairy cows. Now my son has sheep all over there. This is when we built the house '52. We broke ground; it was actually built by my uncle and grandfather and a few other people, at least the foundations. This house was built from three other houses, is what we were told, but I've never been able to find anything. Not too long ago, I was talking to my aunt about all of it and she said when they moved out on Vineyard, she remembers that some tubs fell off and then they couldn't find them. She said she thinks those were the old pictures. I was looking for old pictures. I have windows out here that look like they should have had shutters or something and I sometimes try to find, you know, stuff that will relate, but I can't do that. I guess that's pretty much it.

Robin Fisher: So by the time you were in high school, was it more like the '50s, early '60s, or was it now the late '60s?

Katherine Kirkland: I graduated in '60. '56, I went to Martin Luther King.

Robin Fisher: Okay. So what did you see that was different as you were raising your kids here?

Katherine Kirkland: Oh, everything had changed already.

Robin Fisher: Like clothes and music and —?

Katherine Kirkland: Right, and the street was no longer quiet and the kids went off to activities constantly. My kids did not go to preschool or anything, but they did start kindergarten. I was just talking to somebody and they were saying, "Well, I've got to get into *preschool* preschool." I said "Oh, well, Kenny didn't go to preschool." But he knew — his grandpa taught him every name of every vegetable and every plant that was out there, or something. You just followed the grandparents around and stood underneath and waited for the chicken to lay the eggs, because it was like this, and you could look up, in the old days. They had wire and would lay onto the wire. I can remember a pig, but we never had a pig. I can remember a pig out in the back and I can remember the brooders, which were the hen houses. The feeders were inside, incubating kind of things. But we never were huge into chickens. But see, in Petaluma, after they had cows but they also had chickens because Petaluma was full of chickens. So next door the relatives that were across the street had lots of chickens, which was my dad's sister and husband. They had chickens and then cows over here on Magnolia in Petaluma.

Robin Fisher: So did you go into the city very much, San Francisco?

Katherine Kirkland: When I got into high school, I went to work for American Express one summer, so I went to the city. A girlfriend and I hand-cancelled American Express travel checks. We had ledgers by states. We would look up the number date and line it out.

Robin Fisher: How was it, what was that like?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, we'd go at Christmastime with my grandmother and you could go to Woolworth's. You'd have to get dressed up and then she'd let you stop at Woolworth's. We'd have turkey dinner at Woolworth's.

Robin Fisher: Where was Woolworth's, was it in Union Square?

Katherine Kirkland: No, right on the corner there where the cable car turnaround is. And then if you walk to the bus, you have to walk to 7th Street for the bus to come home. There was Crystal Palace and they had meat hanging and stuff, it was kind of a weird, like an old-fashioned grocery store, Crystal Palace.

Robin Fisher: Hmm. On 7th Street?

Katherine Kirkland: On the way to 7th Street. And before there, there were places that you could get a little box of jewelry for a dollar or something. It had the pin and it came in a little box so you'd have a treasure kind of thing, yeah. But I know the Crystal Palace was there. It always smelled, I think the fresh beef or something. I didn't mind Woolworth's but I didn't like going to the Crystal Palace.

Robin Fisher: Right. And why did your grandmother pick Woolworth's? Any particular reason?

Katherine Kirkland: Oh, we got to do that. We got to go to the roof rides at the Emporium and we got to go have their turkey dinner. Actually, it is like a TV dinner but Woolworth's always did turkey and dressing and cranberry sauce and they had a place upstairs to eat when it was really busy and then you had downstairs which was a little quieter.

Robin Fisher: Did any of your other friends do that or was that just a special treat for your family?

Katherine Kirkland: No, grandma would just take us to do that. She'd usually take Jeannie, my cousin, my double cousin and I. And my sister when she got a little bit older, I guess.

Robin Fisher: Was it the sort of thing where you wore gloves and everything?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, we had gloves, but a lot of times we didn't. But yeah, you had to wear a little skirt. We actually didn't wear pants until I was in high school when we paid to wear pants. People forget about what every day clothes were. We would have Capris Day and if you donated to something or bought tickets, you could wear pants. But up until that point, you didn't wear pants.

Robin Fisher: You wore a skirt every day, or a dress?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. And then if you had something that was nice, you had a skirt with a little crop jacket that was made out of the same material. It was to go to church or a special occasion.

Robin Fisher: Right, right. And did your brother wear a tie? What did your brother wear?

Katherine Kirkland: I have no idea, I can't remember. He must have worn jeans. I had cousins who wore jeans that never washed their jeans. [laughs] They'd come up to stay; they'd work for ranches. My dad actually had 13 brothers and sisters. Growing up, there were only seven or eight alive, but those had husbands and wives and then they had kids and then kids had kids, so there was a lot of family. There was family that was in apricots up above Eastridge Mall in San Jose. Uncle Pat had the grocery store nearby where Great America is now, but Uncle John had a dairy across the freeway where the entrance overpass is now. There was just a lot of family in that area. Uncle Tony had a dairy, but then they changed to chickens. Most Portuguese people were pretty much farmers.

Robin Fisher: It seemed like there were a lot of people around Sacramento, too. Was that part of your family?

Katherine Kirkland: No, Elk Grove area. They have a lot of Portuguese up in there too.

Robin Fisher: Did you all get together at various times, or was transportation —

Katherine Kirkland: San Jose was the big excursion, and then we'd go all the way to Lemoore, which became a naval base. But at that time, Hanford. Lemoore, that area was Portuguese but they were into cotton. Honey and Clara and that side of the family, they were into cotton, but they came from grandma Pimentel's side of the family. Aunt Mae was grandma's sister.

Robin Fisher: Did you go into downtown Mill Valley very often?

Katherine Kirkland: Not really. When I was in high school I did.

Robin Fisher: What would you need to go into downtown Mill Valley for?

Katherine Kirkland: Not too much. [laughs] You'd go to the library or something. Most kids that lived in Mill Valley, they would hang out at the ice cream store. Sometimes we would buy shoes at Mosher's. Christmas toys came from Brown Furniture. One year, there was a special doll upstairs at Brown's. The floors creaked, so my parents knew where I was looking. My doll Maggie came that Christmas! It became the Mill when my daughter was in high school — she used to work upstairs. It became a little boutique, a post office and a hair salon.

Robin Fisher: So it seemed like more of your activity went toward Sausalito as opposed to Mill Valley, but then had changed by the time you had kids? Were they going more towards Mill Valley or were they still going more towards Sausalito?

Katherine Kirkland: They were going everywhere. And then it was hard doing Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. So then I got everybody into 4H, so then we moved as a unit. Most of the time, we had to move farther like Point Reyes for activities. A lot of them were in Novato, but then I could move them as a unit.

Robin Fisher: Yeah, right, all together.

Katherine Kirkland: All together, if there would be some kind of field day. If they had separate projects, then those were small and at home. I taught sewing, cooking crafts and citizenship for 4H. Patty Bell and I had the 4H out of Mill Valley, so we had quite a few kids at one time.

Robin Fisher: So would you carpool up to Novato, or everybody drive separately?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, pretty much. And then pretty soon the kids got so they could do it themselves, just like, they were involved at Halleck Creek, which is a riding school for the handicapped. Pretty soon at least the oldest one could drive to Halleck Creek and take a bunch of kids.

Robin Fisher: Where was Halleck Creek?

Katherine Kirkland: Nicasio.

Robin Fisher: Okay. Did you guys have horses?

Katherine Kirkland: No. We had horses that didn't belong to us behind the house, but they tore up the ground. It got so muddy. Karen, one of my daughters, had a pony, Tony Pony.

Robin Fisher: Would you ever ride those, the pony, into downtown Mill Valley?

Katherine Kirkland: No. I don't think I've ever seen horses there.

Robin Fisher: Downtown Mill Valley.

Katherine Kirkland: No, I don't think so. I mean, out here on the trails and hills.

Robin Fisher: Somebody was telling me that although now people think of Mill Valley as very upper class, at one point it was not considered upper class at all. Do you remember something like that?

Katherine Kirkland: It was already broken into groups by the time I hit high school.

Robin Fisher: So what does that mean?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, you had downtown people and you had Tam Valley, right? And most of the people that lived by the tennis courts and up in the hill were different. All those kids did different things than we did. They usually had money to do more things than we did.

Robin Fisher: Was that more like dances, or was that more –

Katherine Kirkland: Just things in general.

Robin Fisher: Just everything, yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: I mean, if you went to the show, you went once every three months or something, where they would go every weekend. Or they'd go hang out downtown at the ice cream place or something because they always had a little more flexible money so they could do those things.

Robin Fisher: Right, right.

Katherine Kirkland: It was just, pretty much, kind of Sausalito, you got Old Town and New Town, you definitely had breaks, and you had kids that lived in the house boats. The kids in the house boats generally went around with us kids from out here and the kids from Marin City because they weren't part of the other group of kids.

Robin Fisher: Were there fights, or was it pretty civil?

Katherine Kirkland: There were some discussions at the high school level. People would get ticked off but it never got violent. I mean, I was driving — my brother played in a band and he had some buddies that were black that he was friends with, that played in the band. I had picked two of them up. I was older and I was driving to school and one day I got hit in the parking lot by a teacher. Oh my goodness, it was very dramatic. I had three kids, my brother and two kids in the back. That's when there was a lot of discussion. One of those kids ended up playing professional ball for a while and then he became a teacher. But we were already — I was in trouble because I was fighting the establishment. But it really was how it was interpreted. They drew lines, but they weren't set in stone. A friend of mine, she was the first black teacher in Mill Valley, Shirley, and she gets in a lot of discussions. People actually put a burning cross on her lawn and that was only like, I guess, 30 years ago now. I mean, she just had her 70th birthday, so she has been retired for a while, but being the first black teacher, and that wasn't that long ago, and they did such things.

Robin Fisher: It's hard to believe, yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: And she has kids now that come back and are so grateful for her for doing this and doing that, but it wasn't that long ago. My brother — when we started talking about the Little League, you know, being in the parade, we were going through pictures that I had. And I said, "Yeah, my father had a hard time trying to integrate the Little League, the pony league, because the lodge was paying for it." And he said, "Everybody should play," and they said, "No," and then so, there was quite a few meeting. But finally, he did it. Actually, my brother talked when my father died in the eulogy about him and his belief of fairness.

Robin Fisher: Being successful in doing that.

Katherine Kirkland: Breaking the system, yeah. But it was how it was. And now you got the Marin City School District. The people in Sausalito, some got to Willow Creek.

Robin Fisher: Right, right. Were most of the workers on the dairy, were they all the same ethnic group?

Katherine Kirkland: Pretty much Portuguese.

Robin Fisher: Pretty much.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, and if you lost one, you got another one. Just like, it's kind of unbelievable now that when someone gets sick, you can't get someone in to take care of them.

When we were growing up if somebody got ill or got old or something, you'd just send for another relative or a relative of another relative and pretty soon you'd have a caregiver, but that's not the way it is.

Robin Fisher: No.

Katherine Kirkland: Nope, it's high price to keep up. I don't think they do it anyway. Easter Sunday, no, the day before Easter Sunday, I gave a girl a ride home and her name is Kodomoru. She is very black, she has kind of a Jamaican accent, I don't know. But she has been hired as a caregiver. I said, "You just came?" "Yeah, I have a six-month contract," she said. Scary. I mean, wouldn't you be scared?

Robin Fisher: To come to a country and not know anyone?

Katherine Kirkland: She speaks English, wherever she came from. And it has just a little, maybe a French accent or something. I dropped her off. She's working for somebody in those apartments where Whiskey Spring is, where the distillery used to be. But before, it would happen within the family, like my aunt kept bringing people over. One time they had seven in the house there and then pretty soon, they would get jobs or the kids would work. Everybody would work doing newspapers or whatever and going to school. And eventually they'd be able to move out and then she'd bring in another crew. Aunt Margaret, my dad's sister — they just kept bringing people over.

Robin Fisher: From Portugal?

Katherine Kirkland: From the Azores. Nobody from our family is from the mainland, they are from Pico or St. Jorge. They just would bring them over. One time there were like seven. She had bunk beds, like three sets of bunk beds. Everyone would always go in sideways and pretty soon, they'd get jobs and go off and they'd be on their own.

Robin Fisher: Now would they pay her to come? How did it work, do you know?

Katherine Kirkland: The relatives, you mean?

Robin Fisher: Yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: I guess, once you got passage.

Robin Fisher: That was all you had to do.

Katherine Kirkland: And somebody in the family would have to kick in and get you set up. They always worked. In no time they were doing something and pretty soon, they were out of there and they would get homes and kids and raise them and be on their way. It works the same way with the Lebanese. My girlfriend, her husband, that was what he did. He was teaching and he really didn't want to teach anymore. He wanted to come to the United States, I guess. So his father said, "Okay, I'll sell this piece of land and give you the money, but you need to, once you

get where you want, you have to bring people over.” I went to his 75th birthday, I think. There were 13 children and he had gotten the last one brought over.

Robin Fisher: Amazing.

Katherine Kirkland: It was really amazing to look how things progressed, too. Because his older sister was there and she was in her black garb. Her face was out but she was pretty much in black and she had a wrap. And the youngest one, the last one before his own kids graduated and his wife went back to teach in Saudi where he was at, she was in boots to her knees and a short mini skirt. These are technically sisters. It was just like, “Oh my god.” But it was probably a matter of — I don’t know how the lady kept having kids, but it was 22 years or something between the kids. Seven or eight of them were at this birthday party. But it was just totally amazing, because she was very old fashioned and then the younger one works for Payless Shoes and she was in boots up to her knees. But that’s, they do the same thing, Lebanese families, though they think lesser of women. The Portuguese, they didn’t tell you to go to the kitchen.

Robin Fisher: Really. How was it with the Portuguese?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, sometimes you did, but generally it wasn’t your place. I mean, it was in your place to be in the kitchen to be working because that is what, you know, but it wasn’t like you had to be in the kitchen working. You could be out milking cows or whatever. You could be equal, so to speak, not that you had to fix the meals and then leave the room. The men had their room and the women had theirs —

Robin Fisher: More or less in their culture.

Katherine Kirkland: It wasn’t really that way with the Portuguese. It’s just, everybody had to work. I never really thought of it until I was with Pam and I see that, even to this day. Sometimes she doesn’t go into where the men are having their discussions or whatever. It is 50 years down the road — they have been married for 50 years.

Robin Fisher: Traditions.

Katherine Kirkland: Barriers, or whatever you want to call them.

Robin Fisher: Is there anything that she thinks is unusual? Or when she looks at — that she’ll say to you, I don’t know, she ever comments and says, “How do you do that?”

Katherine Kirkland: I know that she pretty much does a lot of fighting nowadays for herself, the family manipulations. When you get to be that age and you’ve got kids and property and elders, you end up in different situations than you did before. You have to take control, you have to say something, or things just don’t happen because they have a different mindset, just because that’s how they grew up. We just grew up, you had to work and you had to keep moving, keep moving.

Robin Fisher: So you went to Sonoma State, did you say?

Katherine Kirkland: I went to San Francisco State for two years, but I didn't finish. I got married and then I went to work at the hospital. Then after the kids started to go to school, I started volunteering, and there were openings for early childhood education. So then I went back and was trying to get an early childhood degree. Because I was teaching P.E., I had units. I picked up units in the things I wanted but I didn't have a credential. So technically I wasn't supposed to be left alone in the classroom, but I was.

Robin Fisher: So where —

Katherine Kirkland: I pretty much ran my program over there, and I ran it for three Mill Valley school districts. I taught perceptual motor, which was a P.E. program that integrated — everybody has a ball, everybody has a jump rope, that type of thing. It was mostly motor integration. And then I did work with some kids that were special needs, re-patterning and stuff like that, that type of thing. And then I was in school and Prop 13 came along, so I lost my job and I went to work for Safeway.

Robin Fisher: The Safeway out here?

Katherine Kirkland: Tiburon, actually. So I retired out of Safeway after 23 years. Bon Appetit, the gourmet one, I worked there for 13 years until they closed it, and then I came to Strawberry Safeway.

Robin Fisher: Oh wow, okay. And so any memories of your experiences in the different grocery stores and as things changed, or what you saw?

Katherine Kirkland: Well, I started with a 10 key register, and I couldn't go over \$9.99. [laughter] If your meat happened to cost more than \$10.99, you had to add up the dollar on the second key. \$9.99 was the end of my register. \$9.99. Now, hot dogs, \$9.99. I went from manual to touch, and into scanners. Just like when I was a freshman, we went into electric typewriters and then before long — you know, when I was at Safeway, I had to get glasses because I could read numbers, but when we got barcodes, I couldn't see. It was about that time anyway, but bar codes are not like numbers — you could always tell by the loops and things like that.

But Tiburon was the trial store. Bon Appetit, they put in three of them. They put one in Danville, one in the Embarcadero that is still there, I think, and then Tiburon. Most of the grocery stores at the time, they had to diversify, so Alpha Beta went into clothing, and then Safeway decided to go into three levels of stores: a gourmet one, the pack-and-save type concept where the gate would open and groceries would come out both sides, and then a regular Safeway. So what we did — supposedly we were picked. We were training to do things which are normal now. We had a lobster tank. Nobody had a lobster tank. We had liquor, we had home delivery, we had a deli, we had natural foods, and you forget these things weren't at grocery stores. All of that stuff happened out there in that store for a period of time and then they let it go into other stores, so they called it the gourmet store. But charge accounts, delivery, and what do you call it — fancy stuff.

Robin Fisher: Wow. Was there quite a different clientele between these stores? Do you need some water?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. Yeah, I'm going to get some. We went to produce school because those things weren't in grocery stores, a lot of those things. Basil, cilantro, all of that stuff wasn't there.

Robin Fisher: Wow.

Katherine Kirkland: We went to learn about them, training schools, all that stuff. My girlfriend, she wanted some pants yesterday. I said, "Well, it's not the color, it has to be the Pantone color," and I said, "I remember when I first learned about colors. I was working natural food and we had pantyhose and they only made pantyhose in nude in summer." They cut the machine off and changed over. They do the same thing now, we don't realize it. You can't get certain colors because they've already done with it and it's over with.

Robin Fisher: Wow.

Katherine Kirkland: You know, we take everything as endless. She wanted a light blue pair of pants. I said, "Well, you better find them now, because when it is really summer, they are not going to be available because they have already changed the machines over to something else." That is the only reason I remember it, because we were talking about it yesterday. I said, "You better go looking for now because it will be too late." I mean, pretty soon a swim suit is going to be too late, they are already on to something else. Snow bunny clothes or whatever, but it is kind of like I said, I remember the pantyhose. All of a sudden, something pops into your mind and like I said, I couldn't, for the store. I was ordering for the store but I couldn't even get them in because it was the wrong seasons. They'd change the machines over. That's when they still came in those eggs.

Robin Fisher: Eggs, yes.

Katherine Kirkland: Most people wanted nude or suntan but it was the wrong season and I couldn't get it. They had the tendency to be demanding people, in Tiburon, especially if she had a corporate job or something. Women were just getting power then, they were just getting corporate jobs.

Robin Fisher: Was that the thing you noticed, the change in the demand?

Katherine Kirkland: A lot of them were very demanding. We used to laugh about new money versus old money. The people that had money, they just accepted things, but people who had just got money liked to take control and, "Don't do it that way, do it this way," things like that. We'd say, "That's old money," or, "That's new money," because they just started to get power. For whatever reason, whether it was stocks or their relatives left it to them. I was working out there at a time when the Iranians were buying houses with suitcases of money. They were actually paying cash.

Robin Fisher: In Tiburon?

Katherine Kirkland: In Tiburon.

Robin Fisher: Wow.

Katherine Kirkland: But that was when the heyday was going, whatever it was. They'd buy houses with cash.

Robin Fisher: Did they actually live there too, or did they just buy them?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, some of them lived there. Some of them would have deliveries and stuff.

Robin Fisher: Did you notice a difference at some point, where all of a sudden instead of driving regular average cars, all of a sudden now there are a lot more BMWs or whatever?

Katherine Kirkland: The one I really like, though — she was kind of nice, but her license plate said “doctor's ex” and I always — [laughs]. So I guess he paid for the car.

Robin Fisher: Sounds like it. And she was happy about that, let everybody know.

Katherine Kirkland: Sometimes you remember people for strange reasons, but that was something I remember, “doctor's ex.”

Robin Fisher: I forgot to ask you — we talked about Christmas, but did you have a Halloween tradition growing up, or because you were out here by yourself —?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, because Central School would always have a Halloween parade and you'd get to go across the stage in whatever you had for a costume and they would give you something.

Robin Fisher: Okay. So no trick or treating at houses but kind of a pageant kind of thing.

Katherine Kirkland: That you get to go to. And when my kids got to Halloween age, we would go to the mother-in-law's in Corte Madera because they could go do the trick-or-treating at houses.

Robin Fisher: Lots of the little houses next to each other.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. Halloween, we'd go there. And for Christmas, you'd have a Christmas party for the hall, a Portuguese Christmas party.

Robin Fisher: Okay. Special food for that different than the Holy Ghost?

Katherine Kirkland: No, we'd just have dessert, probably, and Santa Claus would come and Santa Claus would bring everybody a present. When my father was president and I had small kids, I had to go shopping, go to the list of the members and try to find the age groups. And I'd have to get age appropriate presents for 250, 300 people. And then the lodge members would come and they would wrap them all.

Robin Fisher: And on a budget too, yeah. Wow.

Katherine Kirkland: So we had to mark them according to ages, zero to two, and then — but I'd go to the city —

Robin Fisher: Where'd you go in the city?

Katherine Kirkland: Kindle and Gran.

Robin Fisher: Where was that?

Katherine Kirkland: It's a toy distributor or something. They did all the carnivals and all that kind of stuff too. So you'd try to get age-appropriate toys, a girl-boy mix, stuff that would be animal rather than a doll so it would be for a boy or a girl. Crazy. I hadn't even remembered that. I did some crazy things, but my dad was president for like 25 years.

Robin Fisher: Oh wow, that is a long time.

Katherine Kirkland: It was a lot of work.

Robin Fisher: Did your mom have to do a lot, too?

Katherine Kirkland: Oh yeah. But she was still working, too.

Robin Fisher: Yeah. Well, I've asked a lot of questions and maybe I haven't hit some of the things that you thought I would ask about. Is there anything else?

Katherine Kirkland: I don't know, I'm just rambling on and on.

Robin Fisher: No, it's great, there are so many stories. It really gives a flavor for life.

Katherine Kirkland: The things that you remember are strange most of the time, they pop up and I think, "Oh, that's strange."

Robin Fisher: Yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: It was how it was.

Robin Fisher: Well, thank you very much.

Katherine Kirkland: Oh, you're welcome.

Robin Fisher: You know, it's really interesting to just know everybody's different lifestyles and what it was like.

Katherine Kirkland: This is pretty much — we've never been the peacock feather type of people. We used to laugh, that was the image, because especially Tam Valley, Tam Valley School.

Robin Fisher: Was this school known more so?

Katherine Kirkland: It was just because they had made a documentary of Mill Valley and Tam Valley School had been in it, with the hot tub and the teacher and the person they had interviewed. And the kid had a birthday party and they used a limousine to pick him up to take him to the pizza place. So there was all this hype on that kind of thing.

Robin Fisher: What were your kids' birthday parties like?

Katherine Kirkland: Pretty much, I was a baker, so they always had a special cake or something. I remember Kenny's 13th birthday because we rented the whole dome at the Exploratorium when you used to have the thing and could go through.

Robin Fisher: The tactile dome, yeah.

Katherine Kirkland: We came home and had birdseed because the jeans — he had landed into birdseed or something, there was birdseed all over and that kind of thing.

Robin Fisher: Yeah, my kids loved that too, for their birthdays.

Katherine Kirkland: That kind of thing. I've got pictures of Karen for a birthday. We went to Old Mill Park. It was a big deal to go to Old Mill Park and take over the whole place and have dessert or something out there in the park. We usually didn't do, maybe pizza, once I went to Ferrel's ice cream store and I'll never — I thought, "Oh my God, I'll never do that again." I just took my kids — and maybe each of them had a pal or something — but it was in Stonestown and they came out with the ice cream on the stretcher, oh, man.

Robin Fisher: Too much, right?

Katherine Kirkland: Way too much. I think it was Ferrel's. They'd made a sundae that was big enough for the whole party, and they brought it in a stretcher, with bells and sirens, those things that you use at ballparks — no, no. [laughter]

Robin Fisher: Yeah, I agree, I agree.

Katherine Kirkland: How could I have done something like that?

Robin Fisher: Thank you again, really a pleasure. I forgot to ask you about Marincello, you mentioned that right at the beginning. What do you remember about that? That was when they were going to build houses all over.

Katherine Kirkland: Down here at the arch. [Katherine refers to a document.] It wasn't actually right here. It's down where the gates are, that's locked across now, to go to the ocean. That's Marincello, that arch is there with the stables on the side, it was going up in the hill. See, the only thing — nobody wanted it, they wanted to keep it open, but I did want it, selfishly. It would have brought me water and I would have been able to build my house. We had moved back just right before then, back into this house so we could build in the back, because my dad had rented this to somebody and they had moved out and we had moved in and just supposed to stay.

Robin Fisher: About when was that?

Katherine Kirkland: Oh, Kenny was a baby. Probably '61, '62.

Robin Fisher: So it just got shot down.

Katherine Kirkland: Well, one group bought part of it, and then eventually they got the GGNRA going — that was Bill Wayland that lived over here, GGNRA — so it worked out better. But it was a whole community. I mean, they were putting the grocery stores and everything back up there.

Robin Fisher: Yeah, it would have been much different.

Katherine Kirkland: See, the road was going to get widened and fixed, and the water and stuff, that was before, this was all just all trees because this was still —

Robin Fisher: What is the name of that addition?

Katherine Kirkland: Tennessee Glen.

Robin Fisher: Tennessee Glen.

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah. It says right here, "Branches off of Throckmorton Avenue in Mill Valley." When I was cleaning my aunt's stuff, I said, "Well, I'll look at these later," and then I saw Mill Valley. Maybe those will work for you. [Katherine provides documents to Robin.]

Robin Fisher: Yeah, thank you.

Katherine Kirkland: Somebody might, there might be a name or something in here.

Robin Fisher: Is it something we can take?

Katherine Kirkland: Yeah, I'm giving it to you. Certain things, I feel strange throwing them out.

Robin Fisher: Oh, thank you. These are great.

Katherine Kirkland: Into the — 1956. [Katherine looks over other documents.]

Robin Fisher: Switchboard, my mom was a switchboard operator.

Katherine Kirkland: I did that.

Robin Fisher: Did you?

Katherine Kirkland: At the hospital when I was very pregnant. Pretty soon, my arms couldn't reach anymore because it was the old board. [laughter] It was Ross Hospital and I did it part-time at night and couldn't get close enough.

Robin Fisher: Now, if you don't mind, I'll take a picture with my phone of some of those things that you showed me. Thank you.

Katherine Kirkland: These are kind of fun.

Robin Fisher: Yeah.