

Mrs. Harry S. Thompson

Selections from Growing up in the Cities: Oral History Transcripts of Tape-Recorded
Interviews: Interviewee: Winifred A. Thompson
BANC MSS 79/34c (Thompson)

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Mrs. Harry S. Thompson

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Rossmoor

August 16, 1977

A: My birthdate was January 24, 1896.

Q: What neighborhood were you born in or reared in in San Francisco?

A: I was born in Burnell Heights.

Q: What was it like?

A: Well, I have not too much recollection of it. It was way out in the mission area. I have been reading about it lately, it's come into the news again as a developing, a redeveloping area. It was just very old, and you know the Mission District in San Francisco at the time I was born was sort of deluxe area. But Burnell Heights was not. Burnell Heights was, I would say, in South San Francisco.

Q: How long did you live there before you moved?

A: That I don't know. We moved from there to, I think to Dolores Street. I remember we lived on a hill on Dolores Street and the streetcar ran down the hill in front of our house. I remember that it was while we were living there, if my history is correct, was, when was McKinley assassinated?

Q: About 1903.

A: Well, we were living on Dolores Street in 1903 because I remember my mother, having heard the news from some source, of course there wasn't radio, there wasn't the media then that we have now. But I remember Momma said, "President McKinley has been killed." So I know I remember that that was on Dolores Street. Then we moved out, uh, I know the name of the street just as well as I know my name, but I was there not too awfully long because in the interim, my father had left. My father came and went. He was a well-educated man, I believe an accountant, and his work took him, he liked to have it take him places. We moved there and my brother had diptheria there and it was about that time, I think, that my father decided that he wasn't coming back to the family. I think that was about it. So from then, I was about two, I would be around two, I was sent down to Santa Cruz to my aunt and uncle and spent seven years with them. So that seven years was out of my life. But I would go back to the city to visit my mother on a vacation. If you want to know how we lived at that particular time, how my mother and my brothers lived, I can tell you in great detail about that. My mother felt at the time my father left, that she and the two boys who were older than I am, could get along. She could make it with the two boys, some way or other because there was nothing. My father went to the Philippines,

the attorney said it was too far to fight, it would cost more to fight. So there was nothing coming in. So my mother figured she and the two boys could make out in some way, but what would she do with a two year old? So that's how she sent me to Santa Cruz. Then when I came back to visit, my mother and two brothers

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lived in one room, they had a room on Market Street. I don't know how they were making out just then, I can't remember that, but I do remember that just when I was, just before I was ten years old, I went to live with my mother and my two brothers. Jersey Street was the other street I lived on.

Q: We'll cover the period from the time you returned to San Francisco up until the time you were twenty-five. What did your mother do for a living?

A: Well, now of course you understand that in those days, young ladies didn't go out to work, they weren't trained for work. They waited at home for husbands. Now, there's one very great regret that I have, and that is that I don't know where my mother met my father. I wish I knew this, but I have no idea now. But she went to whatever would have been considered a welfare department, whatever it was at that time, and told them her story. They said, "Mrs. Taylor, what do you want us to give you?" She said, "I don't want you to give me anything. I want you to find me some work." So they did, and it was the most menial kind of work. It was cleaning office buildings. She went to work at four o'clock in the morning and she cleaned offices, worked in an office building, until, well, probably four hours. You see, when the people would begin to report for work, then she would of course have to be out of the office. But that's how she started. She finished as a very well known woman in San Francisco in a very special line. In the days when all draperies and curtains were custom made, my mother was Mrs. Draperie in San Francisco. She worked for Sloan's, she worked for the White House, and she worked for the Sterling Furnityre Company. All the big departments knew her.

Q: Between the time you were ten and twenty-five, had she reached this eminence?

A: Yes. Yes. No, not when I was ten.

Q: But before you were twenty-five?

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes, she did because I went to live with her and my brothers just before the earthquake, and she was working for Sloan's at that time, then. This is very interesting note, on that day of the earthquake, my mother took me up Market Street and rented a room from some friends she knew and put me to bed, told me to stay there until she came after me. Both of my brothers and my mother reported for work the day of the earthquake. When she went down to Sloan's, the watchman of course was there, and he said, "Mrs. Taylor, what are you doing here?" She said she'd come to work, and he said, "They'll let you know when they want you. Nothing can be done now." The place was a shambles. My oldest brother worked for the Pacific Hardware and Steel Company, I believe he was a stock clerk, stock boy. My youngest brother—now both of these boys went to work from grammar school, no high school for them—my youngest brother had just gone to work for the Southern Pacific as a messenger boy. He went down and reported for work and carried messages until the windows of the building got so hot they had to be evacuated from the building.

Q: How about yourself about that morning? Were you awakened by the quake?

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A: Oh, yes, Yes. My mother got us up. We four were living in one room at the time.

Q: Did it bounce you out of bed, or something like that?

A: No, I was sleeping on, I slept on a trunk. I have to tell you, I have no sympathy with poverty. I mean, people who, it's not something to be glorified. It's glorified a great deal these days, they talk too much about the poor people. We were four people living in one large room in what was called the Old Supreme Court Building,

which was diagonally situated across, located across from the City Hall. Larkin and McAlister Streets. It was a six story brick building. We were on the third floor. When we finally got out of the building, there were just, uh, we were on the top floor. The top three had gone off. We were, my mother got us into the doorway and stood us there. I was ten years old, I'd just had a tenth birthday, but I had never heard of an earthquake, I didn't know the word. She says, "Now stand right here." And she stood us in the doorway. "Stand right here." I said, "Well, what is it?" And we could look across the room and out the building and see the buildings collapsing out there. So we stood there until things settled down, and then we very gently, we grabbed something to wear, and we very gently, we were afraid to move, we gently got into these clothes and crept out of the building. We had to walk down the three flights of stairs. We went across the street to sit on the coping around the city hall, you know, the lawn was elevated and the cement coping. We sat there and watched the world go by for a while. I can remember that morning, I had my first taste of peanut butter. I amn came by and looked at me, and I guess I looked forlorn, and he said, "Would you like a sandwich?" I said yes and he gave me a peanut butter sandwich. That was my first peanut butter. But then my mother looked me over and she said, "Well, there's nothing you can do around here," Because there was rubble every place. She said, "You can't walk in those slippers." I just had on a pair of slippers. So my youngest brother said, "Well, I'll go back into the building and get her a pair of shoes." So we watched him go back in, and we literally held our breath until he came back out the doorway with these shoes. We watched people go by with empty birdcages, wheeling empty baby buggies. You know, in a state of complete shock. We, my mother as I say, took me up and rented this room, put me to bed. Then she went down, walked down—of course, this was walking over heaps of rubble. She walked down to Sloan's and they sent her home. By the time she got back up to where I was located, that building had been evacuated. The people didn't know what to do with me, so they sat me there and said, "You wait for your mother." So my mother came back and found me sitting in the building. I don't remember whether it had been burned yet or not, but they had been ordered out of it.

Q: When do you remember seeing fire in this sequence?

A: Umm, I think my first impression of the fire was when we got out onto, we went out to my aunt's, and she lived out on Oak and Buchanan. Then we went over to a lot where the Mint Building stands now, the new Mint up on the hill out Market Street. The Protestant Orphan Asylum was on Haight and Buchanan and we went a block beyond that and we parked in that lot. We had gotten some blankets from my aunt.

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Of course, we went out with nothing from our building except what we were wearing. We got some blankets from my aunt and we slept in that, we stayed in that lot. That's my first recollection of the fire, because from there we could watch everything burn. We watched them blast down on Valencia Street and down on Mission Street, sort of backfiring, watched them blast the old theater out there, the Valencia Theater. We slept under the blankets that night, and had to wake every once in a while and shake them because they were heavy with ashes. That's my recollection of the fire. My first recollection of it. Walking from down town up to that area was so much later, that I don't think the fire was around us there.

Q: That's quite a long walk, even without rubble.

A: Yes, Yes, it was a long walk. I think we were there for, I know we were there for the one night, it may have been two nights, I don't know, but I had a cousin living in Alameda, a very dear cousin who used to live in Rossmoor here, and he had a mother and sister that he took care of. He was a very young man, but he was the head of the house. They had a home over there, and he managed to get across the bay, I don't know how, and he worked his way out to my aunt's place and found out that we were all over on this lot. People had been evacuated from that house. They weren't supposed to do any cooking in their buildings at all, you know. They had to take the stove out onto the sidewalk and do the cooking out on the sidewalk.

Q: Do you recall your mother or aunt cooking out on the sidewalk?

A: No. no. We were over on the lot, and I don't know how we were fed over there, I really don't. I have no recollection of our eating. The fire and the bombing and all of that, and the excitement, of course, there was trauma and shock, but we didn't realize it until much later on. But my cousin took us, got us across the bay, and we stayed with him, then, for several months until Sloan's sent for my mother to come back. They were cleaning up the mess then and getting started on rebuilding, and people were refurbishing their homes. When my mother went back, then, we had to get back to the city and both the boys had to go back to work, their jobs - and they were jobs, that's all you could call them—were waiting for them. So we moved back to the city.

Q: Trauma and shock, you mentioned. A ten year old girl in midst of one of the great cataclisms of American history. Did it leave any nightmare effects?

A: No. No, I think I was very fortunate to have had the experience because I had a very remarkable mother, and I can remember my mother saying she thought that was a good thing to happen to San Francisco, it cleaned it up. Maybe a little of that rubbed off on to me. No, I am panicked by an earthquake. There have been quite a few lately, and I have been told they have been around here, but I haven't, fortunately, haven't felt them. And being alone now, I would be in a panic from an earthquake. I've been in many fires. This place burned the year after we moved into it. We had a beautiful property down in Santa Cruz Mountains, we had seven acres down there, and that was burned around us. It didn't touch us, but we were here and the fire was all around us. All the fire equipment was on our property.

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This was just a mountain cabin. They patrolled it for a couple of months afterwards, but we were right in the midst of that, and yet, we didn't have sense enough to be afraid. We went to bed out on our screen deck, and we watched the men with these lights on their foreheads, the firemen working down below us here, but we went to sleep, and that didn't bother us.

Q: Just for a little bit of background, were your mother and father native San Franciscans?

A: My mother was.

Q: And where did your father come from?

A: I'm not sure. I know very little about my father.

Q: What was your maiden name again?

A: Taylor. My father came back into my life when I was about fifteen years old, and that's another story. That's a personal story, that really has nothing to do with San Francisco, but it's a very...

Q: Did you have any sense that you were a (put in an ethnic name)? For example, Irish, Italian, English?

A: No. no. No, My grandmother, my paternal grandmother came from Kentucky, I think. She was from the south, and my maternal grandparents came from New England, either New Hampshire or Vermont. My mother's grandfather was a minister, but I'm not sure of what church, and was reputed to be the wealthiest man in the state at that time. None of it rubbed off.

Q: As you look over those years from ten to twenty-five, would you say that you moved gradually from being what we call poor to some stage that we would call comfortable or even better, well-off?

A: We were always poor. But we progressed. I mean, when we moved back to San Francisco, we moved out into the Haight-Ashbury area, really not into the, not where we later went. We lived on Central Avenue near Fell, and it was, had been a nice old, sort of a Victorian home, and we had, we went in right off the street, we didn't go in downstairs or upstairs, we went in right off the street. We had what were the servants' quarters there. So we had progressed from a room to this. The only thing that has ever been in my mind was a home, since I was a little girl. I can remember drawing houses and drawing bicycles. I always wanted a bicycle. I

didn't get that until World War II, and my husband bought it for me. But I drew these houses. After we lived in this, it really wasn't a basement because it wasn't down, it was just off the street level, we moved into a flat, a six room flat. I thought that we had reached heaven then. Now, that was on Clayton Street, between Waller and Frederick, and that is the very heart of the Haight-Ashbury district. Now, I want you to know these two brothers of mine who left school at graduation from grammar school, they graduated from the Horace Mann School, were self educated men, very will read. One is interested in history, he's still living, he'll be eighty-six next month,

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and the other one passed away about six years ago. He studied music for years, and I would say I don't know of anyone who ever acquired a finer appreciation for music. But he never was an artist. He didn't, there was something missing in his being, he was very peculiar—he was a difficult man, very difficult, and there was something lacking, to be a musician, you have to have soul, and he lacked that. But he had a marvelous appreciation for music. Up until the time he died, he worked for twenty years with the opera in San Francisco. He had charge of the supers, and I have been told that he did a very superior job, he was a perfectionist, a very superior job, and I think he was paid something like twelve hundred dollars a year for this work that he did, which he gave back to the opera. He turned out to be a successful man, financially, but emotionally and socially, no. He never arrived.

Q: In those early days of yours, did you also have jobs after school or on weekends?

A: No, no. No. I had one little job. On Saturday night there was a little, um, I don't know what you'd call it, it was a store where they sold corsets and roushings (?) that the women used to wear in their collars, and stockings. A small dry goods store, two blocks down the street from us. And they paid me a dollar on Saturday night to work in there. I thought it was big money.

Q: How long did you do that?

A: Oh, I did that for, I don't know. I really don't have....

Q: A year? More?

A: Probably a year, yes.

Q: Did you all contribute your money in a pool to the family's development?

A: Well, my dollar was my dollar. But yes, this was something that influenced my life, the fact that I had to get to the point where I felt I should contribute because I was the fortunate one of the family. My mother said that I was going to go to high school. Nothing was going to keep this from happening. Well, my two brothers were working, the one brother who is eighty-six had to leave San Francisco because he came down with tuberculosis and the doctor said he should not be in the city. He never returned, but he'll be eighty-six next month and he's doing very well. I chose Lowell High School, I don't know why. Lowell High School at that time was over on Sutter Street in the Japanese area. It was the academic high school. I shouldn't have chosen it because I knew that that was it. You couldn't go to college then the way you can now. You can make your own hours, you can go at any age, you can do anything now. But you couldn't then. Twenty-one, you could enter as a special student. But I don't why I chose Lowell. But I suffered through six months and I nearly died. I hated it.

Q: What was it?

A: Well, I was not too young to be there, I was the regulation age, to be a freshman there, but I was immature. Too immature to be there.

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Most of the class was made up of, there were very few girls, of course, it had originally been a boys' school.

There were very few girls in my class, and the boys were Japanese and Jewish. You know and I know that the Japanese and the Jewish are very smart. The Japanese were diggers, they were there, this was when they were first taking over San Francisco, first coming in, and they were there to learn. And of course the Jewish boys were, they were collegiate material, all of them. I was, I was just nothing. I was so immature. There was a boy in my class, his name was..one part of his name was Simon, he had Greek letters on, you know how they put them on the end of your book? Well, he had Greek letters on the end of his book, some fraternity, apparently, and I liked that, so I put the Greek letters on the end of one of my books. And he came to me and he told me in no uncertain terms, I had to get rid of that. I later found out in later years, maybe four or five years later, he was involved in a great homosexual scandal in San Francisco and was arrested. So maybe that was his fraternity!!

But my mother came home every night to find me, I yearned to sing in the Glee Club, but there was no communication in the school. Nobody came and said, "Now if any of you girls or boys would be interested in joining in the Glee Club, we will meet such and such a time." This was never done. I used to stand at the window and watch the girls play basketball. I wanted to play basketball so badly, but I didn't know how to get there, how to arrive. I was just desperately unhappy, and every night there were tears, and every night I wasn't going to go back the next day. As I tell you, I had a remarkable mother, and she said, "You're going back and you'll finish out the term, and you're going to go to high school. You may go to any school you wish, but you're going to finish high school."

Q: And did you?

A: Yes. And I got out my book, did you ever hear of the, do you know of the Legomerdy (?) Schools? They are very superior boys schools. At this time was called the California School of Mechanical Arts, but it was endowed by James Lick. The Wilmerding School was the Wilmerding School of Industrial Arts. The two schools were under one head, George Merrill was the head of both schools, and they were a block apart. There were girls attending Lick, but there were no girls attending Wilmerding. The academic rating of Lick was extremely high, and girls preparing for college went there simply because they liked the school. But the schools had very high ratings. Then I decided on Lick, and I went over and took an entrance examination and I was going to go. I went for one year, there was the formation of the Lux School. Now, you've heard of the Miller and Lux combine in California, did you? They were big, big cattle people in California, big cattle people. They owned property and Miranda Lux came along at just the wrong time, decided that young ladies were not being properly taught to be home makers. It was just at the time when young ladies were beginning to pull away from home. But she endowed this Lux School, it was misnamed. It was very poorly named, it was called the Lux School of Industrial Training, and it was not industrial, it was purely home making. Home economics.

Q: May I see your program for a minute? Miss Taylor of the Class of 1915 from the Lux School, had a poem that was in the front material, that was dedicated to the flower of the school, called the "Matilija

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Poppy." It begins:

*Were thou, o queen of California's bowers.
Away from home, far from thy native strand
Thy beauty'd still exceed all other flowers
And place thee on the throne in foreign land.
For men of far do prize thee as do we
Who seek thy blossom on steep canyon side
Or seek in fertile valleys eagerly
To learn of thee, thy gentle grace and pride.
At dawn thy beauty reaches beauty's height*

*For then thy bud unfolds unto the day;
Matilija, fair flower of the light
Thy radiance illumines all our way.*

It's signed Winifred Taylor, 1915.

A: This poem was given as an assignment. We were supposed to write a poem to the Matilija poppy and it was to be in our first journal. It was a three month assignment, so that we had plenty of time to work on it. I wrote mine the night before it was to be handed in, which is quite typical. But this school was a beautiful school. You will find pictures in there, we had everything there. We had a beautiful cooking department. We prepared, in our classes, we prepared the lunches for the teachers. The dining room was apart from the kitchen, of course, a beautiful, formal dining room, and we learned how to set formal tables and serve formal meals and all. We had a bedroom and once a week the girls went down to clean the bedroom. We wore dust caps and properly cleaned. We had a living room, there's a picture of the living room there, which is a very beautiful room. Her sister-in-law lives here in Rossmoor, I found out. We had a laundry, we were taught how to launder properly. Everything about it was very, very beautiful, and in 1915, this school was new, at the time of the Exposition, and educators from all over the country came out to see it. The good little girls in the class were called out of class to escort, this was always a very big deal if you were called out of class. But it was a very, very fine school. It only endured for about forty years. They found they had to change the concept, the whole concept of the thing, because girls weren't interested in learning homemaking any more, they wanted to learn how to earn a living. You see, this was just, she came along at just the wrong time with the school. So they changed it and they put in merchandizing and commercial art, and got into the business world. My husband always wondered how they did this because the money was specifically left for this kind of a school. But something else I don't know is how they ever closed the school because the endowment had grown. The McNears (?), now the McNears are moneyed people, a part of the clan, part of this Miller-Lux clan, and they were the ones I think, who finally took care of the closing of the school. I think it lasted about forty years. But you see, it started out at the wrong time and they couldn't keep a pace with the...

Q: Now, you finished in this school?

A: I graduated from that school. And I cried when I graduated. We all did.

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Q: Did you have class reunions in later years?

A: Yes, we had a fiftieth reunion several years ago.

Q. Did you go from this to a job?

A: Yes, my English teacher, Miss Coffin, a very superior teacher, went to her dentist one day, and her sister-in-law was the dentist's assistant, and her name was Alice Lindsay, and she was going to leave. Dr. Vogel(?) asked Miss Coffin if she knew of anyone she would recommend to come in and work as an assistant. She said yes, she knew just the person. So she gave him my name and telephone number. Then she hurried home and she called me up and told me that she had done this, and to expect a call from him. He called me, and I went down to see him, and I went to work for him. I worked for him for ten years.

Q: Your duties then were.

A: Dental assistant. But I was absolutely untrained. See, I had no typing, I don't know how to type, I'm not a bookkeeper. I can handle money, my husband always said I handled the money better than he did, but I had no actual business training. But he was very proud of my handwriting, and he used to have me write letters, personal letters for him because the typing was unimportant. His wife always paid me the compliment of saying she hoped her daughter would turn out like me, so I had.. He treated me like his daughter. Now, I went

to work at ten o'clock in the morning, and my mother was working at the White House at that time, which was right across the street from where I worked. Of course, I was very young, I was just out of high school, and some of my friends were going to school in Berkeley, and if I'd say to Dr. Vogol, "I'm going to a dance tonight over in Berkeley," he'd say, "Don't bother to come in until eleven in the morning." My very closest friend, Grace Logey(?), Grace was very, very brilliant girl. She was attending Berkeley and she would come over to see me occasionally and talk at the office, and she'd always come in to talk to me and say hello to Dr. Vogol. He would say, why don't you take some money out of my pocket and take Miss Logey down for an ice cream soda? But I received \$25 a month.

When I left after ten years, I was receiving a hundred.

Q: Did you leave to become married?

A: No, I left because of a broken romance. Does that enter in? But I later married the man. He came back six years later, and we were married and had a beautiful marriage. He was a beautiful man. But this enters into this, enters into the life style of that time to some extent. My friend, Grace, was going to school in Berkeley her mother had a rooming and boarding house for boys in Berkeley, and Grace helped her mother, of course, cooked and helped around the house. The man I later married lived there when he was attending the college of Berkeley. He entered the '17 class, but he didn't graduate until '19 because he took time out to go into the service, World War I. He was a pilot. Later, Grace, uh, following the war, he came back and he went back to school and finished school, then taught school for a year. He graduated, got his degree in agriculture, he wanted to be a farmer. Wanted to be a farmer terribly. But when he graduated, he

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didn't have a nickel, and he found all he would be would be a farm hand. So he taught school for a year and he knew he would never make a school teacher, so he decided on a profession and he sent his application in to the University of California dental college and was accepted. Well, I was a dental assistant and Harry was going to go to dental college. Dental college was right close by me and Grace thought we were meant for each other. So it was all arranged that he should come down one evening and spend the evening with my mother and Grace and me, she told me what dress to wear and we played whist and we had refreshments, and we spent a very pleasant evening. When he left, he said he would call me. So he called me about two nights later and asked if I'd like to go on a blind date. Now, he was taking someone else, but one of the boys at the fraternity house didn't have anybody. So I said, sure, I'd go on a blind date. So we went out to the Sutro Baths, the old Sutro Baths, went swimming, I can't swim, but I went swimming. Then we walked down the beach and we went to one of the places, Roberts at the Beach, or one of those places, and we had something to eat and we danced. This boy I was with said to Harry, "I can't get along with her. Harry said, "Alright, we'll switch girls." Now, I didn't know that we weren't getting along. I had no idea that we weren't getting along, but he evidently figured we weren't. So they switched girls. When it was time to go, of course, we went on the streetcar. The others went on the streetcar, I think there were two other boys and two other girls. And Harry and I went and sat down on the beach. We sat there for about two hours and we talked and he asked about my family and my ambitions. Actually, I was ashamed to tell him my ambitions because all I wanted to do was get married and have a home. You don't just tell that to people, you know. But anyway, I think I told him and he said that after he graduated and was established, it would be five years. I said, yes, I'd wait for him.

So I was engaged to be married. I didn't tell my mother for quite a while, and then finally I thought I'd better. She said, "How long is this going to be?" And I said five years. She said, "I don't approve of it. Long engagements aren't good." I said, "why?" She said, "Well, they're just—" Now I didn't know, I was naive, I tell you I was immature in a way. I didn't know why long engagements weren't good. I would have waited for ever. In fact, I did wait ten years. But she said she didn't approve. But anyway, the engagement stood. He was working from four thirty in the afternoon until one thirty at night. He would get home just before three o'clock and then be at school the next morning at eight and work until four and then go down town, all streetcar travel,

of course. So we didn't see much of each other. This was alright. But later on the fraternity got into financial difficulty, and where he ever picked up his ability to handle money, I don't know, because he'd never had any. His father was a minister in a small town and they didn't have any money, there were five children. But he had a magic about him. He said, "If you'll hire me for a hundred dollars a month and my room and board, I'll get you out of the hole." They said alright, and so they did. And he got them out of the hole. But we began to see more of each other. Then the picture changed and we decided we wanted to get married. Now this is very important because it's so very different from today. I said to my mother, "Harry and I want to get married." She said, "Married?" And I said, "Yes." She said, "How would you get along?" I said, "Well, I could keep on working for

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Dr. Vogol and Harry has his room and board and gets a hundred dollars amonth up at the fraternity house." You know, a hundred dollars then wasn't a fortune, but it was more than it is now. She said, "Where would you live?" Now, there was no question, there wasn't any question about my living at home. I said, "We could have a room someplace." She said no, she said, "What would people say?" She didn't want me to have a hard life because she had had many years of hardship and she didn't want me to have a hard life. So we broke off the engagement. It was you get married or else, and we broke it off. Two years later, he married someone else. He was married for six years and then he came back and we were married in 1930. We had a very beautiful marriage.

But I thought this was important. Today, today there isn't any question if they want to get—they don't even think about wanting to get married. They just live together.

Q: I'd like to ask some questions about your religious training. What is your earliest memory about your religious training?

A: Well, when I lived with my aunt and uncle in Santa Cruz, I attended the Congregational Sunday School, we are Protestants. But my family, my immediate family, my mother and brothers, leaned towards the Episcopal Church because the boys always sang in the choir. They sang at St. Luke's, and they sang at Trinity Choir. And at All Saints Choir, too. You know, as we moved, the churches changed. But I attended a Presbyterian Sunday School, Congregational Sunday School, I was baptized when I was eighteen in the Episcopal Church.

Q: What is your earliest memory of religion? The training?

A: Well, in Santa Cruz, in Santa Cruz when my aunt sent me to the Congregational Sunday School. I remember, they were having a visiting big wig at the church one day, and each class—I was a little girl, you know—each class was going to perform. I think my class, yes, we were giving the Twenty-Third Psalm. We receipted the Twenty-Third Psalm, and at the very end, all alone, I came out with an "Amen." All by myself. But about my religious training, I attended Sunday School regularly, but I never was much of a Bible student. I don't know a great deal about the Bible. But I am a very, very firm believer.

Q: Do you recall the role of your mother?

A: Well, my mother always got me out to Sunday School. Yes, and my mother attended church, too, it was the Episcopal Church that we attended. And even up to her dying days, she was 95½ when she passed away, and she would attend services at Grace Cathedral. She told the minister that she knew Bishop Pike when he first went there. She didn't like his service because it was too high, the church became very high all of a sudden and she told him she didn't like that.

I believe in prayer. I'm a very firm believer in prayer.

Q: Have you been that way all through your life or was that something that came on later?

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A: Well, I would say in, maybe when this romance, this broken romance came about. I think then, I think then. I had a great many years of illness with my husband. Since we moved here, he was hospitalized eight times in ten years, and very ill. Something different each time. We had, he and I had taken the Dale Carnegie course for fun. He was getting ready to retire, so he didn't need it but it was being held right across the street from us. We took it just for fun. I remember from there that there was one woman giving her little speech one evening. She told about, she was from the south, and she received word that her father, who was a diabetic, was going to lose, was going to have to have a leg amputated. All the time she was getting ready to fly down south, I mean the deep south, all the time she was getting ready for this, she was thinking, "Please, God, don't let him die. Please don't let him." And she prayed and prayed that God wouldn't let him die. He didn't die, but he had both legs amputated. She said she always thought after that that she learned from that how to pray, "Thy will be done."

Q: You had children?

A. I had one son.

Q: Was he brought up with any particular religious training?

A: I must add, I had a step-son. I raised a step-son, too. Young Harry was four when his father and I were married, and we raised him.

Q: How about the religious training of them?

A: The boys, we lived in Sunnyvale, and there were only thirty-five hundred people when we went there. Oh, before we moved there, my husband took young Harry to Sunday School in Imperial Valley when we were living down there for two years. It was the Congregational Sunday School because the Episcopal Church in Sunnyvale when we moved there, didn't have a Sunday School. They had a circuit rider preacher, and they had no Sunday School. My husband's father had been a United Bretheran preacher, but they had no United Bretheran Church. So it was a Congregational Church. We contributed, generously, to the church, and I worked in the church, but we never joined it.

Q: My question, though, was on the sons. Did you insist on them going to Sunday School pretty regularly?

A: Yes. Oh, yes, they went to Sunday School regularly, yes. In fact, up until the time Alan was about three, my husband took them to Sunday School and went into the adult class while they were in their classes. We finally changed. That was at Cupertino Union Church, we changed from there into the Congregational Church because they wanted my husband to be a teacher and he didn't want to be a teacher.

Q. I want to shift to an area we haven't discussed before, your political training. Do you remember any political events that took place locally?

A: Oh, Abe Rufe and, yes, it was terrible. It was a turmoil. Who was the other one?

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Q: What was it all about?

A: Well, it was just, it was just dirty politics. Money. Wish I could think of the other man. Schmitt. It was just crooked politics. Dirty politics. I remember it very well. And I remember the conversations around the table, our dinner table at night. My brothers, of course, were men of the world although they were very young. And my mother, and I, they used to kid me all the time. I was sort of, well, that's why I was immature, they'd laugh at me, and they'd have reason to. But they discussed things at home. At the time of the San Francisco earthquake and fire, there was a great scandal came out then. There had been a tremendous reservoir built on the top of Twin Peaks for emergencies. The emergency came and there was no water in the reservoir. So that was part, that was the beginning. Then they had municipal ownership of the car line, the streetcars. It was very

poor, I guess it's still poor, but for a different reason now. But I used to hear a great deal at the dinnertable about municipal ownership and what a curse it was. Well, one day in school, I was in grammar school, we were given the assignment to write a story on the municipal ownership. Everyone in the class except Winifred thought it was a wonderful thing. Municipal ownership was wonderful. But I told about the reservoir on the hill without any water, and I told about the streetcars that had square wheels that clunkety, clunkety, clunk, down Market Street, and all these other things I'd heard. I was the only one in the class, but I got a very good mark.

Q: So talking about politics around the dinner table was a regular thing in your early life?

A: Well, yes. What did you talk about if you didn't talk about what is happening today?

Q: Were those brothers of your involved in politics? Directly?

A: No, this one brother of mine, the oldest brother, the one I say was difficult, could, had he lived later, would have been a radical. For example, there was a streetcar strike one time, and he ordered the car, ordered the streetcar and drove it down Market Street. He hated unions. He detested unions, and he had no use for them. My mother, when she was working for the White House, was being urged, all of these people in this particular line of work were being urged to join the union. That is, the women were. The men were already unionized. The women in the workrooms were being urged to join the union. My brother would have no part of it. In fact, my mother didn't want any part of it, either. It was a reflection, she reflected his views, somewhat. She went to Rapheo (?) Wheel (?) who was the owner of the White House, and she said, "Mr. Wheel, do we women have to join the union if it's formed?" He said, "Mrs. Taylor, do you want to join the union?" And she said, "No, I certainly don't." He said, "Then you don't have to." But it was only a short time before they were, it was either join or get out, so she left.

A: Thinking back to the time the women got the vote, did your mother vote?

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A: Yes. Yes. My brother didn't speak to us for a week.

Q: Now why was that?

A: Because my brother was a radical. What did women know about. . . ?

Q: What things would he say?

A: Well, he just wouldn't talk about it. It was, you know, it was a terrible mistake.

Q: What were his arguments?

A: Women. Just women didn't know much. My mother really, he went overboard about my mother, really made it difficult for the other two children of us because he went overboard on her. Anything she did was right and he did things for her that made it difficult for the other two. I think he was jealous of me, possibly because I did get the better education.

Q: When you became eligible to vote—

A: I've never missed a vote.

Q: Did you regard yourself as a Democrat or a Republican?

A: We were Republicans. As poor as we were, we were Republicans. I enjoy hearing people talk about the Republicans, they're all the rich people. My family were dyed in the wool Republicans.

Q: And you have voted regularly since then?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Were your brothers Republicans?

A: Yes. yes. Although this one living brother I have is so thoroughly fed up on politics, of course most people are now.

Q: Do you think since your early days, that government has become better or worse at the local level?

A: Well, I think I understand more about what's going on now than I did then. I wasn't vitally interested.

Q: What was your general impression or feeling about that government today, that it's better or worse?

A: I would say that it's probably just about the same, only it's out in the open now.

Q: What political events do you remember taking place at the state level?

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A: I remember when James Rolf, who was a San Francisco mayor, became governor of California. We thought James Rolf was God's gift as a mayor, but we thought he was a crook when he became governor. That's about it.

Q: How about events that took place at the level of Washington? Do you remember anything about that level?

A: No, I don't believe that I, I don't believe that I have any recollection.

Q: How about an international event?

A: Yes. All my boyfriends went into the service for World War I.

Q: Did you lose any friends in that war?

A: No. No.

Q: Do you recall the Armistice?

A: Oh, yes. Yes. We were spending the weekend with some friends who had a home in Mill Valley. The news, how did we get the news then? It blasted, the news blasted. Everybody knew it. Nobody went to work the next day. No one showed up for work the next day. There was a lot of drinking. It was a very, very hilarious and happy occasion.

Q: It was also the occasion of the Spanish Flu epidemic.

A: Yes, I remember that. I remember that.

Q: Was your family affected by it?

A: Um. No. But friends of ours, young friends, friends of my brothers, died, husbands and wives. My mother volunteered to go out and help. They needed people who lived in one room or people who lived in basements and were sick and they were dirty and they had no food. My mother went out and went into this and did her share. Never came down with it. I got it every time the word appeared in the newspaper.

Q: Incidentally, did any of your childhood friends go into politics?

A: No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

Q: Do you think the government in Washington is better or worse that when you were younger?

A: Well, as I say, everything was undercover when I was younger. Perhaps I wasn't thinking in terms, I never thought of our government as being bad. I thought we, I still think we have the most wonderful country in the world. But my son keeps telling me, "Mom, it isn't any different now than it was before only they get caught." So, this you see, I wasn't aware of anything. My son. ..

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Q: You look back on those early years, and what political figure, local, state, or national, impressed you the most?

A: I don't think I was impressed by them. I don't think I was.

Q: I want to ask another set of questions about defining our roles as a man or a woman. What is your earliest memory of your training about being a woman, a young girl, about what ladies were to be?

A: Well, um, I just always thought I was to be a lady.

Q: How were you taught to be?

A: Well, I was, I don't know. It's something, something I. .. You know, it's very interesting for you to ask this question, because every night when I say my prayers, I thank God for the leadership I had, which means, the aunt and uncle, the mother, who guided me and showed me which way to go. Now, I can't. ..

Q: Do you recall, for example, your mother saying, "Little girls do this or little girls don't do this"?

A: No. I have no recollection of my mother ever saying to me, "I don't want you to ever smoke a cigarette. I don't want you to ever smoke." She never said to me, "I don't want you to ever drink." Now, we never had liquor in our home. Our grocery man would give us a bottle of wine for Christmas every year, that stood in the pantry until it turned to vinegar and then it was used. But I remember during World War I, we sort of adopted a young man that we met over at Calvary Presbyterian Church. I was married at Calvary Presbyterian Church. But during World War I, the groups over there used to entertain boys from the Presidio. We met this young man and he was very nice, and he used to come and spend a lot of time at our house. I remember, to me he was just another big brother, and I sat on his lap one time, and my mother was very sharp with me about that.

Q: But you don't recall why she was sharp? You did not know at that time why she was sharp?

A: Yes, I didn't belong there. I was aware that that was something I wasn't supposed to do.

Q: As a young lady growing up, what was your notion about what a perfect wife should be like?

A: Oh, as I say, my whole life's interest was to have a home and to be married and have a home and of course, have a family.

Q: What would your role be?

A: A homemaker. Purely a homemaker. Purely a homemaker. I have a very, very brilliant daughter-in-law who is a delight. She gave me one of her cards the other day, her new cards, she's gone back to work for the state now, State Department of Public Health. She is an epidemiologist, and they have two children, a daughter just getting ready to enter San Jose State. Barbara isn't interested in homemaking persay. It's something you have to do if you're going to live. She

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loves her work and she's very sought after and very clever and very bright.

Q: But this was far removed from your notion?

A: I didn't want to work, no.

Q: What was your idea about what being a perfect mother would consist of?

A: Just bringing up my children right. Just teaching them the right things to do, the wrong things to avoid.

Q: Before you were married, did you want to act the way your mother had acted toward you, or did you want to act differently?

A: Oh, I think my mother was a good example. Um hum. However, there were things that, there were so many changes had taken place in our life style, life style in general, between the time I was growing up and the time that I was raising a family. For example, even as a little child, you didn't run from the bathroom to the bedroom without anything on. That, you were in a towel, or you were in something. But this, this whole scheme of things changed in raising children. Children saw each other, even saw their parents.

Q: Let me ask you some things about certain ideas you had. For example, before you were married, what was your notion of how many children you wanted?

A: Never entered my head. It never entered my head.

Q: Do you think children act different today toward their parents than they did when you were a child?

A: Yes.

Q: In what way?

A: Well, I not only loved my mother very much, I respected her a great deal. I think children, young people now adays, I don't know how much affection they have. For example, my grandchildren, they're good children, they've never been in any trouble at all, they're not outstanding, Mike is a better student than Susie, but there isn't a great deal of affection exchanged in that family that I see. Displayed. My mother used to, I used to be on my mother's lap a lot of the time, and pawing her, and she'd laugh at me and say, "What do you want now?" But we always kissed when we meet and kiss when we say goodby. My son comes over here, and he always kisses me. Barbara always kisses me, too. But the young people are not—

Q: This need not be a lack of respect. It could be a lack of demonstration of affection. Did you have something in mind when you said lack of respect?

A: Well, yes I did. I think they speak differently to their parents than I spoke to mine. Well, if my mother said to me, "Winifred, I

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want you to do such and such," I would turn around and go and do it. But I've heard my granddaughter say, "No, I don't want to do that now," and not do it. I would never have done that.

Q: What did you know about divorce? What were your attitudes on it?

A: Well, of course, my mother and father were divorced. My mother never poured her problems into us. I mean, her problems about the divorce in the family. There was no money, there was nothing. All that she received from my father was the money to pay for the divorce. If that hadn't of come through, there wouldn't have been the divorce, you see.

Q: So did you have any feeling about the concept of divorce or a divorced person?

A: No. I don't think so.

Q: It wasn't something horrible to you or outside the pale?

A: No. No.

Q: ANother aspect of this, how old were you before you knew what the term homosexual meant?

A: Gee. I was pretty old. It was a word that didn't come into my vocabulary.

Q: Well, if not the word, than other terms for it?

A: Queers. Queers or fairies.

Q: How old were you before you heard those terms?

A: Out of high school.

Q: Did you understand what they meant?

A: Not exactly. I still don't exactly understand what the picture is. I'll tell you what I will say about this. I think it's too bad, now to use the expression that is commonly used today, I think it's too bad they've come out of the closet and made a big public, national, international issue of this. I just don't think it's right.

Q: Before your marriage, what source of sex education did you have?

A: None.

Q: Nothing in school? Lux Sxhool?

A: No. No. That was a Victorian, it was a little bit Victorian. In fact, when knowledge on this subject, we had one teacher we adored well, we had several, but the one was our physical education, and hygiene teacher, and she told us. We learned things from her that we had never learned at home. All of us. I think we were all the same.

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We learned a great deal from her and we felt very close to her because we could talk to her. We couldn't talk to our mothers. You didn't, I don't think my mother knew anything to tell me, so there wasn't any, we didn't discuss it. But this teacher was let to go because she was too close to the girls. I think, uh.

Q: Was there some intonation that there was some lesbian tone about it?

A: I think so, I think so. Now, in my mature thinking, this has come to me, but at the time, we all just wept. And yet there was nothing. My family and her family were very close. We used to go on picnics together. It was, it was, we loved her. She was a great person.

Q: Now, moving to another subject, when you were growing up, you were living in one of the most varied ethnic cities in the country. People tend to look at groups in terms of their nearness to them. What groups did you most like? Irish, Italian, German, Jew, black?

A: Well, actually, I would say that I had no thoughts about any of them. There were very few blacks, there were practically no blacks. I had all these Japanese, I didn't dislike them, and all these Jewish boys, I didn't, they didn't bother me, except that I couldn't keep up with them. Scholastically. We had German friends, we had old German families, there was an old German colony in San Francisco, my mother had a lot of old German friends. I would say we probably were closer to Germans than anyone else.

Q: What were your feelings about what Italians were like?

A: Well, I never thought of them.

Q: Irish?

A: Well, my mother had a lot of Irish friends, but because of the religion, I would say, I hesitate to say it because it's...?.. but they were Micks. Now this was a very common expression, a common expression. But my

mother had many very close Irish friends. And German friends, too. We had no, she had one Italian friend, very close. My mother belonged to Native Daughters of the Golden West, was very active in that.

Q: Did any of your girl friends at Lux School, were they Italian, Irish, and so on? Anybody who was particularly close to you.

A: Well, not particularly close to us, no. I had two very close friends, very close. Grace Logey and Hazel Jeans. We were a trio. We had about seven boys from Lick, so we were a group of ten. We never knew who was going to invite us to the dance, but we always knew we didn't have to worry about that.

Q: Was there any way you could characterize them ethnically?

A: Yes, I guess I can tell you this. One of them comes out, boy friend, comes out to see me occasionally. His wife comes and visits a friend

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of hers here and leaves him here and visits with me. This is a very interesting story. His name is Paul Hynamen(?). What would you think he might be?

Q: German.

A German what?

Q: German American, I guess.

A: German, Jew, wouldn't you think? Well, I went with Paul for quite a while and I have to add this, too. I went with these boys, we went with these boys for several years, all through high school and after high school, and there was nothing but platonic friendships. They were absolutely nothing but platonic. I never even was kissed by one of those boys, and yet I went with one of them for five or six years. Now this is, my son can't believe this, but this is true. Alright, Paul Hyname. My mother's good Presbyterian and Episcopalian friends were worried about my association with Paul. Now, Paul's folks were very wealthy people, they lived in a great big, three story home on Clay Street, they had a cook and a second maid and a nurse maid for the younger sister. It wasn't about until two months ago when Paul was visiting me here that I said, "Paul, you know you and I have lived in different worlds. I was poor. We three girls were all poor." He didn't know that. He didn't know that. We have gone together, we have known each other for so long now that we can talk about things now that we wouldn't have talked about before. My mother's friends were afraid of this association of mine with a Jewish boy because Hynamen was considered to be Jewish. I ever asked him if he was Jewish or not. But when he was here two months ago, I said, "Paul, are you Jewish?" And he said, "Well, my mother was Jewish," and I said, "Orthodox," and he said, "No, she was Jewish because her mother and father were Jewish." I said, "How about your father?" He said, "He was part Jewish." They were very, very nice people. He said, "You know, it's kind of interesting about religion in my family." He didn't know whether it was his great-grandfather or his great-great-grandfather went to Australia to engage in the cattle and wool business way, way back. At that time, there was a law in Australia that all children born there must be baptized within the first year, within their first year. You had a wide choice of selection: either Roman Catholic or Episcopalian. So Paul said all the Hynamens are Episcopalians. But actually, I guess he's more Jewish than anything else.

Q: Let's take that situation. Say you two had wanted to be married. Do you think you would have had pressures from your mother and your family, real strong pressures not to do it?

A: Well, it's hard for me to think of myself as wanting to marry Paul. I mean, there wasn't the, he was a year younger than I am, and this was very important to me. I was not ashamed, and he was a little bit shorter. This, never thought in those terms. But there was another one, too, there was another Jewish boy who took me out quite a bit. I don't think it would have made any difference if I there was no, it was also a very platonic relationship. But I don't think that would have mattered.

Q. Did you have any spending money when you were ten years old?

A. No.

Q: Fifteen?

A: No.

Q. Twenty?

A: Well, twenty, yeah. I was working.

Q. And then at twenty-five you were working, too.

A: Once in a long time, when we lived down on Larkin and Mc Alister and I was walking to school at the Hearst School, on Filmore, Herman and Filmore, that's quite a walk. I walked back and forth to school. Once in a long, long time, my mother would give me a nickel and say "Why don't you ride home from school today?" No, I never had spending money.

Q: When you were twenty and working—

A: I paid fifteen dollars a month home. Fifteen out of the twenty-five.

Q: Do you remember what you did with the rest of it? Did you budget it?

A: No, it just..car fare and lunches and that was it.

Q: Did you save any?

A. No.

Q: What was the main leisure activity you would have engaged in at age ten?

A: Well, at age ten, I attended San Francisco Turnverein two days a week. It was a German turnverein and I went on Wednesday afternoon and Sat—

Q: What was it?

A Oh. It was a gymnastics class. We wore uniforms, we had a uniform, blue serge uniform with bloomers and a pleated skirt and all. On Wednesday afternoon after school, I went to this. It was down town, closer to my home. I always liked to go up to the front of the room on Wednesdays and write on the board, and I pulled my bloomers down a little bit so they showed, so that it showed that it was a uniform. That was, that was it. As far as I was concerned. You see, I went home from school and I was alone until my family came home. But on Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning. Of course, people worked a six day week then. That was it.

Q. When you were fifteen years old, what would be your main leisure activity?

A: Well, when I was fifteen, I was a basketball star. Basketball, now these were at school. I was good at basketball, I was good at volleyball, I was on the debating team. I tried tennis, but I never was worth a hoot at that.

Q: Now at the age of twenty, when you were working?

A. Going out with the boys.

Q: And what kinds of things would you do when you went out?

A: Go to movie and then go and have an ice cream soda. Or go dancing some place, there used to be places to dance.

Q: This would have been 1916. The movies were silent, of course. Do you remember your favorite stars in those days?

A: I remember my mother and I used to go down to the nickleodeon, this was when I was younger, between ten and fifteen, we'd go down to the nickleodeon and there were the "Perils of Pauline" and those movies. I don't remember the others. Pearl White.

Q: Now, when you were twenty-five—

A. When I was twenty—five, I went to New York, this was to heal the broken heart.

Q: How long did you stay there?

A: I stayed a year. And I would have stayed longer, but my mother decided.

Q: That's a long lady to go for a young lady, across the continent.

A. With no business training. I went by ship around through the Panama Canal. I had a beautiful trip. There was a young man on the ship, he was a freight clerk and I had known him before, and I had a beautiful trip around through the Canal. I saved money—you asked me if I saved money. Before I made that trip, I really worked at saving money. That was while I was still working for Dr. Vogol, and I, for a while, he let me off a little early and I'd go over and work at the Western Union until one thirty in the morning and then take the street car home. Then later on, I gave English lessons to a Russian couple. Later on I worked in the library. This is an incident I think is very important: I worked in the library in evenings and on weekends over in the Richmond district. The library was over on Ninth Avenue, and I lived on the opposite side of the park in the Haight-Ashbury district. In order to get home, I had to take a Geary Street car down to Fillmore, take a Fillmore Street car over to Haight Street, and a Haight Street car out home. A giant U. And it cost a nickle. So when I left the library at nine o'clock at night, I walked home, through Golden Gate Park. I never had one incident. I don't know whether I ever met anybody or not, but never any incident. And I was a young

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woman and I wasn't bad looking, you know, and I dressed nicely. My clothes were always made from my mother.

Q: Did you use that park much or the parks of San Francisco?

A: Yes. Yes, we used to go take picnic suppers out there quite a bit.

Q. Just a Sunday event?

A: No, in the evenings. Sometimes this gym teacher of mine and her mother and my brother and my mother and I would take our supper out there and we'd all have supper together. I used to go down to the parade ground and ride on the goat carts and ride on the donkeys and the merry-go-round.

Q: Can you recall for these years we've been talking about, was there some leisure activity you would have liked to have engaged in but couldn't?

A: Yes, now this has just come to mind again lately. My daughter-in-law said she would like to have my granddaughter and grandson get into the Sierra Club. I said, I would have liked to have joined the Sierra Club or the Alpine Club when I was young because I liked to hike. Oh, we used to go on hikes, too, that's another thing. I would have liked to have joined one of those, but I couldn't afford it. See, we still were poor?

Q: Did you have summer vacations?

A: Usually, I spent them with my aunt and uncle down in Santa Cruz.

Q: Take a train down?

A: Uh huh.

Q: What would you do down there?

A: Well, I had, my mother gave me fifty cents spending money when I went down.

Q: How long a period?

A: Couple of months. This is why I say I am not in sympathy with what we read about poverty today. When I hear about this poor family of five living in a five room, only five room house with only one bathroom, and they're getting welfare and everybody's so sorry for them, and we lived in one room. We have no scars from our way of life. Now, I can go back and tell you that when we lived in that one room, our dinners came from the delicatessen. Twenty-five cents was a roast beef and mashed potatoes with plenty of gravy for four. What it was supplemented with, I can't remember. It must have been, because we certainly lived to a ripe old age.

Q: Let's shift to another area, three wars. World War I, II, and Viet Nam. On those three wars, how justified at that time, did you think that World War I was?

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A: Absolutely.

Q: What did you think that war was about?

A: Well, what did they do? I've forgotten now. Did they sink one of our ships? What started—Ooooh! I've forgotten what started that, but we didn't think it was wrong.

Q: Now World War II. Did you think it was justified at the time?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you think it was about?

A: Well, World War II was Pearl Harbor, wasn't it? Yes, well, what else could we do but go to war?

Q: The VietNam War. Did you think it was—

A: I have never taken a side on the VietNam War. I am not able, I'm not able to judge because if I thought it was wrong, if I think it's wrong, then I think in terms of deserters and what are the others? Not the conscientious objectors, I think there's a place for conscientious objectors. Draft dodgers. If I think the war was wrong, then I have to relate to draft dodgers and I can't believe that men should not defend their country.

Q: During those wars, did you change your feelings of support for the war? During World War I?

A: No. No.

Q: How about World War II?

A: No.

Q: Viet Nam?

A: No. But the Viet Nam, as I say, I'm numb on VietNam. I don't know whether you can understand that, but I have never, I have never been able to take a side on that. Or think of...

Q: What good came out of World War I?

A: I don't think a great deal.

Q: How about World War II?

A: Well, an awful lot of good came to some other countries. Japan, Japan got an awful lot out of that. Now, to be sure, they suffered, but look what we did for them. When my husband and I were in Berlin not too many years ago, we were taking a taxi ride one night and the taxi driver was a, spoke very good English. We said to him that we were astounded to see the look of prosperity in Berlin, the tailored clothes and the automobiles, and there was very little destruction in evidence. We said, "How could a country that was beaten to its knees, look like this in this length of time?" And he said, "Well, if I'm real honest with you, I have to tell you that the Marshall Plan gave

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us a start. Our people worked, our people worked from daylight to dark. Now it's different, the unions are in now."

Q: Let me ask you this, then: Was there some good that came out of the VietNam War?

A: All that I hear about is bad. All that I hear about is bad: drugs and bad marriages and illegitimate children. I think we're being swamped by this. Our country's being swamped by it now. They bring them over in droves, and where are we going to put them?

Q: Do you think anything bad came out of World War II?

A: Well, yes. I think the Japanese are buying us out.

Q: How about World War I? Anything bad out of that?

A: I have no recollection of anything bad out of that.

Q: Did you participate directly or indirectly in World War I?

A: No, I wanted to but I had no training. I was poorly, see, I had no business training. I wanted to be a yeomanette, and I...

Q: Did you participate in any way in World War II?

A: I wish my beautiful husband was here to tell you about that. We lived in a town that had two canneries, and we moved there during the depression. We had nothing, now I say nothing. The depression took us down to zero. I wanted to work in the cannery in the summer. Everybody else worked in the cannery, why couldn't I? My husband said, "You couldn't work in the cannery." I said, "They're not any smarter than I am. Why couldn't I bring home a check every week?" He said, "They've grown up in the cannery." Well, during World War II, we had an intimate friend, one of my husband's poker players, who was superintendent of the Nice cannery. He had a big ad in the paper, the local paper, advertising for help. I called him up, and I said, "Ellis, do you really need help as badly as you say?" He needed to need it badly if I went in. He said, "We sure do." I said, "I'll come down and help and I'll get somebody." He said, "Okay, that's fine." So we went down. The first job they gave us, they were switching over from cans to glass bottles, because metal was short. The labeling didn't go on the bottles the way it went on the cans, so they put us in this huge room with cases and cases and cases of bottled goods, and we were to check it. The man who told us, who was in charge of this, not the superintendent, the other man, told us, if it's off just the little bit... I told him, "If the label, if it's off just a little

bit, put it aside." So we lifted cases, which we weren't supposed to do, and we worked like demons, and we had this whole side filled up with badly labeled bottles. This side was alright. Now, I don't like to say into this what really was said when Ellis came in to check on us one day. He said, "Hello girls. How are you doing?" We said, "Oh, fine, we're ready for more." He said, "Well, how about it?" We said, "These are the good ones and these are the bad ones." He said, "WHAT?" He said, "Jesus Christ, you'll have to do them all over again. We can't have that." So we had to do them all over again, and these little lap overs didn't matter at all. Now, that sounds very vulgar, but that's the way it was.

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Q: How about Viet Nam? Did you participate directly or indirectly in that at all?

A: No. Not in any way.

Q: Did you lose a family member or a good friend or their sons in World War I?

A: Not World War I. I lost a nephew in World War II.

Q: Particularly close to your family?

A: This was my brother's daughter's husband.

Q: How about the Viet Nam War?

A: No. No.

Q: Leaving the question of war, you lived in a number of houses or apartments in this early period. Was there any one particularly that you liked in that period?

A: Well, I can show you a picture of it.

Q: This was before twenty-five.

A: No, no, no, no, no. No, this flat that we lived in in the Haight Ashbury, came the nearest to being what I liked, but always, always I looked at empty houses and empty flats. Always. Homes were a thing with me, I don't know why. As I say, when I was a little girl, I drew pictures all the time of two story houses with windows and a door and shutters and tieback curtains. And bicycles. Whenever I had a pencil, I drew bicycles or these homes. And this was the kind of home I got, a Cape Cod home, my dream house. But no, the flat came the nearest to being.

Q: If you were given paper and pencil, could you draw the interior design of that flat today?

A: Unm um. No.

Q: How often and how far did you travel outside San Francisco before you were ten years old?

A: Santa Cruz and Alameda.

Q: For a period of eight years?

A: Santa Cruz, and Alameda just going back and forth, that would be a Sunday. That would be a Sunday excursion to go over on the ferry boat to Alameda, you see.

Q: Between the ages of ten and fifteen, how far and how often?

A: Between ten and fifteen I would say we went to Yosemite, and I'm very grateful for this, because we saw it in its beauty, and its beauty is scarred now.

Q: Did you travel just once to Yosemite?

A: A couple of times. And Lake Tahoe. I guess that's it.

Q: Between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, how often did you travel outside of the city?

A: Well, it was Yosemite and Tahoe and Santa Cruz.

Q: How often did that take place?

A: If we made it once a year, and I would say maybe once every other year.

Q: Always vacations or visiting with friends, relatives?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: What was your mode of travel?

A: Well, my brother bought an overland car. Of course, we went to Santa Cruz, we went by train a lot of the time, but my brother bought an overland car.

Q: You went to Tahoe or Yosemite with that?

A: Yes, he had a four speed transmission put on it. I don't know what a four speed transmission is, but I know he had it on and we'd pass cars going up the grades. The next day in the valley, people came up to him and asked him how he did it. He had a four speed transmission.

Q: If you had a time machine that could take you back in time and you could go back to one day in your first twenty-five years, what day would you chose to go back and re-do? Not to change anything but to live through it again?

A: . . . One day. To pick one day. I'd say my days in Lux were such happy days. But one day. I don't know that I could select one day. I could select one day that was sort of, um, earthmoving to me. My father appeared and wanted to see me. I went up to see my father, and I was about fifteen. I'm afraid I'd view him differently. No, I can't nail a day.

Q: What year of your life, if any, during those first twenty-five, would you like to live over?

A: I would say probably my senior year in high school.

Q: What was special about that?

A: All four years were special. It was just that it was a very happy time. Happy, carefree time. This very close friend of mine, a very brilliant girl, she took her Masters at Lawrence, then studied in Europe and then taught at the WestLake School for Girls for several years. She has a very, very brilliant son who's a physicist. But when I talk with her, she says, "Our days at Lux were the happiest days of our lives." And yet we both had beautiful marriages. But we were young then, we had no problems then. When you're married, regardless of the perfection and beauty of your marriage, there are things pressing in on you. But we had nothing then. I would say, my last year

there.

Q: If you could go back to a few days at any time and any place in the entire history of the world, when would you chose?

A: Nothing pops right out.

Q: What is the greatest difference between living in San Francisco today and when you were growing up there?

A: Oh, I wouldn't live there today. I'd be afraid to walk the street there today.

Q: The difference then is fear?

A: Oh, yes. Yes. I couldn't live there today. When I talked about walking home through the park, you can't step out of your front door there now.

Q: Can you think of a single event or episode that would best explain to an outsider, what it was like?

A: Well, no. I don't know that I can. I couldn't, I read about it now, and I read about the wonderful restaurants and the, well, the wonderful restaurants, that's what you read about most of the time, and the rest of the time it's about the dirt and the trouble.

Q: But when you were growing up, what would be something that happened or you saw, which would explain to an outsider, what it was like to grow up in San Francisco?

A: Well, I would just say it was an easy place to grow up in. Now, when you stop to think that I was a little girl, left alone for hours upon hours, day after day, never had anything to worry about—however, this brings to mind something. When I was growing up, if my mother was going out—as I say, she belonged to Native Daughters, and if she was going to a meeting, she wouldn't leave me home alone. She took me with her and I'd sit out in the anteroom with a book. That was alright. That age now, the youngsters babysit. I was thirteen, fourteen years old. She wouldn't leave me home alone. One night, I remember, I don't remember what the occasion was, one brother ushered at the theater, one brother was living out of the city, my older brother ushered at the theater. Some nights they came home as soon as the performance started, other nights they had to stay until the performance was over and close up the theater. This night, my mother couldn't take me, and she was terribly distressed about leaving me home alone in this six room flat. There were two, and ours was the first, second, third. We were on the first floor. My brother had a revolver, and he showed me how to operate this thing, and he said, "When you go to bed, you take this with you." So I took the revolver to the bedroom with me, and I thought, "Well, where should I put it? I don't want to put it under my pillow because I might reach under there and. . . I thought I might put it on the floor, but something might happen, Mom might drop a shoe (we slept in the same room, we had separate beds), something might happen to it down there." So I put it over there, under the dresser. When my brother got home, around eleven, eleven thirty, he came right back to the bedroom to see if all was well, and it was. He said, "Where's my revolver?" I said, "Over, under the dresser."

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He said, "What's it doing over there?" Then he went on and said a little more about it which doesn't sound too good on that.

But there was that dread in my mother's being, about leaving me home alone, and yet when I was older and would walk home through the park, or came home late at night when I was working at the Western Union, come home on the streetcar late at night and have a block to walk, she didn't worry about that. Maybe because I was a bigger girl and she figured I could take care of myself.

Q: That was the city then. What's the picture in your mind of San Francisco today, if you had to put it in a sentence or a few words?

A: Oh, I think it's a sort of a jungle. I think it's a sort of a jungle.