

SANTA BARBARA REGIONAL ORAL HISTORY CLEARINGHOUSE

MOUNTAIN DRIVE PROJECT

NARRATOR: Natalie Daily
INTERVIEWER: Roberta Remak
DATE: January 18, 1987
LOCATION: Her home in Montecito
TRANSCRIBER: Roberta Remak

RR: How did you come to live in Mountain Drive?

ND: I was very happily married living in a beautiful suburb of Pittsburgh when my husband came home one day and said, "How would you like to live in Santa Barbara?" And I said, "Never. The world is tilted and all the kooks are in Southern California." The more I read, I was sure I didn't want to come. A sleepy little Spanish town, Catholic (with all the prejudices therein). No way would I come to Santa Barbara. But economically it was necessary, because he was with a research outfit. So I knuckled down, thought it over and decided yes. So we moved here in October of 1959. He was the forerunner. He came out in the car with our personal things, ...and I stayed to pack up the house until he found a place. Lo and behold, he called me and said he found a place on Mountain Drive, a fascinating community next to children of New England ministers (I thought, hmm, stability)--that's the Maurers--and that there was a very interesting philosophical gentleman who lived on the property--Bobby Hyde--who had adopted six Mexican Indian children after he was sixty. I thought, "Now that is really interesting." So I was looking forward to this community.

When Gus called me and told me about this house, he told me the price, which I thought was reasonable. The first thing I asked was, did it have a dishwasher. He said, "Yes, and it has a swimming pool." I said, Go for it. What are you waiting for? Rent it!" So he said, "I just wanted to check with you." I couldn't imagine why at that time, but now I can.

RR: Which house was this?

We rented Tommy White's house. It's called the "Castle." It's the one on the promintory about where Eric Katz lives, up the driveway from the Maurers. Fantastic view! Nevertheless, when he picked us up at the airport in October of 1959--this is my first experience in California--we drove through, you know, movie-star land, and didn't see a thing that was ugly. Driving up the coast I kept looking. So this is what everybody raves about. I thought it was ugly, dry, scraggly. I was used to verdant hills. I really didn't see any beauty.

And then he drove me up this precipitous thing, up the mountain with all the brush and sagebrush around--and this is suburbia? I expected sliding doors and swimming pools and things like that. So we walk into our home. I didn't say a word because I knew how much he loved it, but I fully expected to see a fully dressed pig on the table. [Laughter.] It looked like some baronial castle, you know, from the medieval times. And there was this chandelier hanging above the table that was 14th century Russian. And the fireplace was so huge that later I barbecued a whole lamb in it, and people used to throw their Christmas trees in it a

Twelfth Night. Or back up the truck in the living room to put the logs on the fire.

Well, it wasn't the way I was used to living with wall-to-wall carpeting. The one thing I was pleased about is [was?] that all my furniture went into storage, so no one needed to know how conventional I was or that I had things that matched. So I could sneak in and be accepted [laughter]. So that was my introduction.

And then the first night I was there Nina Maurer came up, just looking darling in a white starched blouse as prissy and proper as a good neighbor should be, with a tray of drinks to welcome me to the neighborhood. So we visited with the Maurers, and this began sort of a habit of having a drink with the Maurers every night. Then she said she was having people in for drinks on Thursday. That was my first meeting with Bobby and Floppy Hyde. It was a beautiful evening. Bud and Susie [Macy] were there, Bobby and Floppy and the Maurers and ourselves. I was enchanted with the Hydys.

RR: How old were they then?

ND: Well, in 1959--early sixties, because the book [Six More at Sixty] had just come out that year, or in 1960. He must have been born about 1900. I don't know, but I was enchanted with them.

So the following week Floppy invited us to supper. We went, and met many interesting people. That's where I met Jergen Hansen. There were writers and philosophers and Bud and Susie's friends, the Macys. But I was enchanted because we were talking about food from the sea--whether man will be eating seaweed--and Bobby reached behind his back and said, "Oh, I happen to have some seaweed here. Would you like to try it?" And then the fire was getting low in the fireplace. It was a little nippy in October. So he leaned over, and there was a broken chair--probably an antique one--and he broke off a leg and added it to the fire. And when you walked in there was a little rickety table--probably a lovely antique because his father was an antique dealer--that was covered with yogurt glasses. Then you had your choice of rum and fruit juice, which were the cocktails. And there were huge caldrons. There must have been about 18 people. But it was a lovely, lovely evening, the conversation intellectually stimulating, the food excellent, environment charming. It was something like stepping into another world. Floppy was an excellent cook. I don't remember what we had that night. It may have been a roast with yorkshire pudding. She was an excellent cook, an interesting cook. But it was always buffet style. We sat around, and their bed was in the living room. I sat on the corner of the bed, and had difficulty in looking over and under the wire from the floor lamp to see who I was talking to. It was almost like someone playing house and being very happy with it. It was charming. And then I met the Rodriguez children, and since we were the only people with a swimming pool and the only people with a television, needless to say, our house became the clubhouse of Mountain Drive.

RR: How old were your children?

ND: I just realized this morning, I was 34. So Marla was nine and the boys were, let's see, two and three.

RR: So they were of an age with some of the Rodriguez children?

ND: No. My children were smaller. Suelea Maurer, who was our neighbor, went back to the bottle because one of my children was still on the bottle. I still had bottle babies in diapers. So that the boys were quite young. But we thought it was ideal because of the dirt and the old cars and things they could play with. It was a safe neighborhood. You didn't have to worry about traffic. We had our own little area.

RR: Did you worry about snakes and animals coming in from the ...

ND: Actually, I'm not a worrier. No, I didn't. There were. And there were stray kittens that had litters around. And there were all of those things. At the beginning it was a transition from being a homemaker to just relaxing. I would run to Ott's [Hardware Store] and all the stores on what kind of material do you use to treat these Mexican tile floors? And how do you clean the chandelier? Now the problem was the timbers the house was made of came from an old pier. They were just whatever size timbers are, and then you get splinters when you put the lights on and off. Also it was dark. It was a bachelor's pad. It was a fun house. And it was a good experience to be there. Certainly different from what I had been used to, and I loved it. I used to sit there with Nina having a martini waiting for Gus to come home and say, "I would rather be in a tent up here than any of those houses down there. And the interesting thing, it was instant community. Moving from somewhere to here I didn't need to worry about Newcomers' Club or anything like that. It was instant community. Then they asked to borrow our house for their ceremonial events. I think the very first one--it wasn't ceremonial--Nina asked if they could have a jam session there for the Dixieland Jazz Group. That's Robin Frost and Bill Dodds, etcetera, and Eric was the drummer. It would be a Sunday afternoon, and we would make spaghetti. So I thought that would be pretty exciting. So they invited about fifty people. One end of the living room was raised like a stage where they "jammed". That was really pretty exciting, to have a Dixieland jam session in your house and all these people milling around. The only thing, it was written up in the paper about the fifty people with the Daily's jam session. It was embarrassing to me because when I ran into the personnel from my husband's office they obviously had read it in the paper, and I was wondering, did they think if we invited 51 they would have been there? It was embarrassing. So the News Press called to see if they could follow our activities, and I said no. What we did socially was private, and I didn't want our parties in the paper. And that was that. Then the next big occasion was Twelfth Night. They asked to use our home for Twelfth Night. Now that was fascinating because they came in costume, and all the people from upper Mountain Drive and lower Mountain Drive. They had a bean cake. A bean was hidden in the cake, and whoever got the bean was the Bean King. I remember Frank Robinson was the king that night. He was the Bean King. He had gotten the bean. Now that party was usually--what do you call it when you bring the stuff?

RR: Oh, pot luck.

ND: Pot luck. And Floppy usually brought a main thing, like a ham or something, and then the other neighbors would bring the auxiliary dishes. So Twelfth Night was kind of an enchanting thing.

RR: What did being the Bean King mean?

ND: Well, you stood at the table and, you know, for all the world you are the king. I mean, you order whatever. Just a lot of fanfare, and a lot of drinking of wine.

The next affair then--that was in January--that I was exposed to, they asked... In fact Bill Neely invited us down to dinner. Barbara was living at the time. I felt bad because I think they killed their rooster to have for dinner that night. But we had the rooster, and he wanted to borrow the house for Bobby Burns [birthday celebration]. Now that was interesting because on Bobby Burns night George Grayson, who was the chef then at the Miramar [Hotel], made a haggis. I had never had haggis before.

RR: What's it like?

ND: It is magnificent. He marched in with a platter this large [she gestures]. I mean how large is that, four feet?

RR: Well, three feet anyway.

ND: Three feet, with this huge haggis, which is a sheep's stomach stuffed with oats and grains and all these things. That night only scotch is served in honor of Bobby Burns. Well it was ceremonial. The bag-pipers came in and there were speeches, poetry readings and the ceremony to open the haggis and distribute that, and the pipers marched around.

RR: Where did the pipers come from?

ND: I think at that time--they may still be in existence--they were something like the 7-Up Pipers Band. What I thought was amusing that night, someone--we usually didn't know the people who were our guests. They came because they knew someone or they were connected with something. I don't know who did the inviting. I never did. I was just the hostess [laughter].

But on the bag-piper night--this was amusing--someone asked if he could play with the pipers, and they said no, they had their own group. Well, the fellow that asked had been bag-piper champion of Scotland [laughter]. It was George Grayson who coordinated the Bobby Burns thing, and Twelfth Night was usually Frank Robinson.

Then the next festivity after that--or I should say, what would you call them, communal rituals? The next communal ritual that I was exposed to was Bastille Day, where they came with chains and dirty faces and climbed the hill and entered. Stormed the castle. And Jack Boegle was heavily involved with that. So we had that party.

So you see it was--I couldn't understand what was going on, because my house was open house. In the morning there was coffee; in the afternoon there was tea and wine. It seems that it was getting to be like a

clubhouse. At first I found it lovely and charming. I made a lot of good friends there, many of whom I still see. And there were other things I didn't understand: their snobbery within communities. That is, upper Mountain Drive and lower Mountain Drive. People of lower Mountain Drive were, I guess, not as acceptable to the people of upper Mountain Drive. I think the lower Mountain Drivers thought the upper ones were snobs. I really don't know.

RR: Now Bobby Hyde lived on lower Mountain Drive, didn't he?

ND: Right. He did live on lower Mountain Drive. But, for example, the Maurers were more connected with the real establishment. Nina was Miss Democratic Politics. Eric worked in town. They were a very viable part of what was going on in the [larger Santa Barbara] community and in the world. They were so much a part of it. I mean they sat back and philosophized but they were not the wine-stomping type. Nina was really interested in politics.

And, above them, Mervin Lane was going to City College, where he teaches now, and June at that time was teaching dance in the high school--a very good teacher. She was one of the founders of the Youth Theater we have here. Jack Baker taught art and June Lane did the dance. So they were very involved with the community and the performing arts in the high school.

And then there were the artsy-craftsy pottery people. That was mostly Bill Neely. And then way at the way top was [Bill] Richardson, who lived as a recluse really. He wrote, and he tried to be self-sufficient. He dove for lobster and hunted for wild pig, and also taught ballet dancing. He was in good form. He was a unique individual who kept to himself. He had his own circle. He came to our parties, but he was not as social as some.

RR: Where did he find the wild pig?

ND: Up in the hills. In fact, after I moved here we gave a party for a fund-raiser for one of the Democratic candidates, Wynn Shoemaker, and Bill Richardson and Clint Hollister got me five pigs. And they dressed them. This was our party here, a fund-raiser for a local candidate. So you see, I could always call on those people to participate in something that was a good cause or whatever they believed in. Which was nice. It was unique, a community unto itself.

We used to go to wine-tastings the first Friday of every month, but I never went to a Wine Stomp. We were enchanted with the area but never really quite part of it. We were invited and we enjoyed it, but it wasn't our life-style. I think my husband would have liked that for his life-style. He adopted that kind of life-style of "what am I in the mood to do?" And you don't rear a family with that kind of life-style.

RR: How did you cope with the problem of being a clubhouse?

ND: At first, I thought, "How nice." See, where I grew up--oh, this sounds really unkind to say--where I grew up people had manners. For example, people would go in and out of the refrigerator. Or it would be a warm afternoon and I would want to read and maybe take a swim. I would go out to the pool and it would be full of children--the Robinsons and

the Rodriguezes and anyone from the neighborhood. I would be tired and not in the mood to take care of all the children, so I would just stay inside. I couldn't enjoy my house because it was sort of a public house. Then one night we were at a party at Ed Schertz, who was living nextdoor to us--a lovely party, drinking wine, etcetera--and my daughter was baby-sitting. The boys now were, I guess, three and four and she was ten. And she's also very gracious. And we have a swimming pool. So I came home every hour to check. And when I came home to check there she was handing out towels at the pool to people who were nude bathing. You know, they came up to enjoy the pool. Okay, that's fine. I'm not a prude, but with my kind of background I wasn't expecting to see my daughter handing out towels graciously at the pool. Which is what--you take care of your guests and that's what you do. So this is why it became intolerable to me, simply because I had a different idea than they did. I guess maybe I was a prude, or maybe I wasn't right with the times. I don't know, but I really didn't appreciate it.

That's when I decided to move out of Mountain Drive so that I could have more privacy. We bought a lot, and Frank Robinson designed a house for us--a beautiful house up on Gibraltar Road. My husband was making changes in his job situation; he was in between jobs. And he didn't have the personality to--I mean he fit into Mountain Drive. He was a dreamer. He loved to drink and philosophize, etcetera, but he didn't have the personality to get in the landscaping and all that's involved with building a house.

I knew it would be too much responsibility for me, so we sold that, and I heard about this house from Mervin Lane. Everybody knew I was shopping for a house. I looked for three years. In the meantime I was playing up there, and my clothes, everything, was in storage, all my furniture. When you move to a new territory you don't know what kind of life-style you're going to adopt or where you quite belong. As I said, I was enchanted with the Castle. We tried to buy it, and I'm glad we didn't succeed because it would have been hard for me to maintain my individuality up there. I didn't have the personality for it.

This house was for a while a satellite house for Mountain Drive. When they had the big fire [Coyote Fire] people didn't go to hotels. Everybody came here. It was just a sea of people. Bobby and Floppy sat in the kitchen and gave their reports to the radio stations, and Frank went up with Gus, and as he turned the corner saw his house go up in flames.

So you see, it's been supportive of each other. To this day I feel I can go there, have friends and feel close and warm toward them all. And it's the same with them. Any one of them who would come here would be welcomed.

RR: How many people did you have here the night of the fire?

ND: Well, all the families. Twenty-five, thirty.

RR: Did they have to stay out here on the back lawn?

ND: It was warm. I know there were dogs and horses and kids. We were up all night. At three or four in the morning we could see it burning San Ysidro Ranch here. So this was all bright light. The kids just slept in sleeping bags in the living room and the adults just sat around

out here. I had a huge coffee urn, and we would make runs to Winchell's for donuts--big boxes and boxes of donuts. We were all a very simpatico group.

Also one thing I did [up on Mountain Drive], something I always wanted to do, When we were having houseguests--my husband's brother was a psychologist in Palo Alto in the Bay Area. So when they came down I threw a party where I roasted a whole lamb in the fireplace. I had Gaviota Iron Works make me a spit, which I still have. Jack [Boegle] was in charge of doing the lamb, and Jim Steer, who was a veterinarian and a close friend of ours, had to carve it. What I did was just have the lamb and pilaf and loads of bread, and it was a simple party. A lot of wine--jugs and jugs. And the amusing thing about that, that was mostly all the local artists, and I didn't have enough furniture to seat thirty-four people. So we just got sawhorses and put a big board over top, and I put fishnet over it. Of course you got marks on your elbows if you leaned on the table. But John Burnhardt was there and Arthur Segunda and all the writers of that era.

Arthur asked if he could bring a friend. In the meantime they had moved to LA. So I said, "Of course." So he brought--I think her name may have been Kate Steinmetz, I'm not quite sure. Anyway, they got into a heated discussion on whether Mondrian was gay, and this woman finally lifts her head out of her cups--it must have been about one or two in the morning--and said no. She was his mistress and she had lived with him for many years. They didn't need to discuss that. I thought that was kind of fun [laughter].

RR: Did the opportunity the artists within the community had to talk to one another seem to help them in their work?

ND: My association with the artists was social. The artists did get together. If you haven't talked to Bunny Burnhardt yet, you should. Burnhardt and Hestal, McMinniman--there's a group of eight artists that formed a nucleus. And we started--I was one of the volunteers, Aida Siff and I--but they had a gallery downtown. Eight local artists, several of them from Mountain Drive, and they would meet regularly to discuss their work. Did you see this last month's issue of Connections? [Tape ends.]

RR: You were talking about the last month's issue of Connections.

ND: Yes, the artists did get together for whatever, and the last month's issue of Connections has an article on John Burnhardt with various other artists writing. John Burnhardt was more or less the nucleus of the art community because Arthur left town. And Mervin Lane wasn't an artist but intellectually he was involved with [them] and would title some of the works. But the Pedersens were in town--those two--and Olvie Higgins [spelling?] was in town. Jim McMinniman [spelling?] was in town; he was one.

RR: Now did any of those people live up there in Mountain Drive, or were they guests at the occasions?

ND: They wouldn't come to many of the occasions. Arthur did because we were friends. And John Burnhardt--it was hard to get him to a social

gathering. [Telephone call interrupts the interview, and on the way back she begins to talk about the Castle again.]

We tried to buy the Castle in 1960 because it was so charming, and it was insured with Lloyds of London for \$60,000. And Tommy wouldn't sell. We were unable to buy--fortunately.

RR: But he then later sold it to someone else?

ND: Yes, later he sold. He's come to visit us subsequently. He took us out to dinner to Talk of the Town and we had a wonderful visit.

RR: Just recently?

ND: No. This was after we were in this house, I would say it was in the middle sixties.

RR: Where does he live now?

ND: He was living on the Ibiza for a while. I don't know, I think he's still in Europe. But a mutual friend, a close friend of mine, just ran into his ex-wife, Raline [?], in Europe. I think at the luncheon we were at they discussed that.

RR: You said something about having coffee every morning and tea every afternoon. Who were the people who came?

ND: Well, since I had little children I was home. Usually Nina Maurer, and then after school June Lane would drop in, or Peggy Robinson would come by. And let's see--or one of the men to have some wine, maybe Frank Robinson or--and children, a lot of children looking for someone to play with.

So we tried to form a cooperative thing, and then I got the children in a nursery school, so we would have a carpool. And then when there were carpools--later, I remember it was raining, and I would always take the children to school or pick them up, and I called a couple of the other wives and said, "It's raining. Can we form a carpool?" The answer was that it would do them good to walk, and if you don't want to pick them up, don't pick them up. So I continued to pick them up. So you see. So it wasn't all--maybe it was fun and games for the grown-ups, but I think it was kind of hard on the children.

RR: The grown-ups were in what age bracket?

ND: Late thirties and forties. Well, I was 34 when I moved there. Of course I felt grown up; it's hard to believe I was only 34. And I think they were being philosophical about their manner of living, which was their right. But it must have been difficult for the children. I don't know. For example, I would serve supper when I was expecting Gus, and the TV room--Marla's room--would just be [full of] the neighborhood children watching television. And I'd say, "Well, I'm sure your mother's looking for you; it's time for dinner now." And they'd say, "Oh that's all right. We don't have to go home." So you're torn between whether to feed them, which you would resent, or whether to eat while they're there,

which makes you feel crummy. Those little family situations were difficult. Outside of that I thought it was charming.

RR: Let's get back to the Hydes. When Bobby Hyde bought this large piece of land, do you think he had in mind a community like this?

ND: Yes, I do. Because I think if you talked to any of the landowners--I'm not a landowner--I'm sure the Maurers would have told you that if he liked you, you got the land inexpensively, for whatever, a couple of thousand, fifty dollars down and fifty dollars a month, no credit checks, etcetera. If he liked you, if he thought you'd fit in with his way of life, well...

RR: What was his way of life?

ND: Well, I sat next to him at quite a few dinner parties, and I won't say it was nonmaterialistic, but he certainly was...he was interested in Buber, I thought maybe he was interested in free love, although I'm sure he loved Floppy. He was really a philosopher. He wrote quite a few books. In fact the night of the fire, when he was here, he said that a lot of his manuscripts burned. "Just as well," he said, "There's too much written already."

So, have you read any of his work?

RR: I read Six More at Sixty.

ND: Read that. I gave it to everybody for Christmas, and now I can't find my copy.

But what were you asking about, his philosophy?

RR: Yes, his philosophy. I know he encouraged people to build their houses themselves. Was that part of it?

ND: Well, that was a creative thing. They all helped each other. Didn't the Maurers tell you how they built in stages and they would put the roof on. It was a self-help community, unto itself. It was quite nice. I guess it's everybody's dream of what a neighborhood should be, with neighbors helping each other and building what they wanted to. I guess Bobby was anti-establishment, anti three-piece suit, anti punching a time clock and working for the government. He liked to go to the woods, he liked to look for mushrooms, he liked to read and think.

RR: Was he well to do?

ND: Land-wise. Susie's husband, Bud Macy is executor of the estate. He'd been married several times, you know that. Susie's his first child. I don't know if there was much cash flow, but I think there was plenty of land, and when you sell the land you get the money.

RR: What about Floppy? What was she like?

ND: Florence Tuckerman was a true lady. I can see her sitting on a garbage dump and being unaware of it. She would talk with her clipped accent and offer you a crumpet. She was a lovely, lovely person. I

never saw her out of sorts. She laughed, tinkled, just so warm and compassionate and full of love. And she accepted that way of life graciously.

I remember when I was carpooling and I brought Ruthie and some of the children they had adopted home. And she said, "Won't you have tea?" And I said, "That would be lovely." So we sat on her patio in this run-down adobe, and she made tea. The cups were handmade--all the children had put together the clay cups, [plates?] and the thing that held the tea. It was all crafts the children had made. We had cinnamon toast--quite good. But the table was so rickety you thought the cups were going to spill. But it was charming. The conversation was good, and her manner was most gracious. I've never once heard her referred to a domestic thing or apologize.

I've never heard her say--like when we walked in the very first night the motor for the refrigerator was hanging out and there was a string around it. Someone from suburbia would think, "Wow." I would have thought I couldn't entertain until I got a new refrigerator. But they were oblivious of those things that aren't important anyway. They really were interested in what they were doing. It was refreshing, really refreshing.

RR: You mentioned political involvement. Were you yourself politically active?

ND: Mostly through Nina Maurer. I did volunteer work at home, because I was the traditional mother-at-home. And then after my children got in school I opened the first Unicef Shop--I got active in Unicef. So in 1963 when my last went to first grade I got very involved in Unicef. Laura Dunn is running the Unicef Shop now. So I passed that on to her back in 1964 I guess.

Then when I realized that my marriage was very shaky--which I tried to keep quiet because we were living within a framework and I didn't want to expose how bad things were in the personal situation. Some knew. I started seeing an analyst, and I also realized that to survive I was going to have to work. Because there was no way Gus would have tolerated, number one a divorce, number two supporting me in or out of a divorce. So this gets to politics.

Cathy [.....?], you don't know about, a lovely girl, called me and there was an opening. Al Weingand needed someone to run his local office. Now before that, with Nina, I had been on the Democratic Committee. I was Secretary and I was on the Board of the Democratic League. I was very active in the Democratic League on the grass roots, nonpaying. So I attended those meetings, got speakers until 1965. Then when the job opened with Weingand I took it. That was my first paying job in politics. So you see, it was a natural because I had been so involved with grass-roots politics. The office was in the El Paseo. His executive assistant was Liz Weingand who later became his wife.

RR: Were people in Mountain Drive actively involved in politics as a group?

ND: I think they voted, but they were sort of apolitical, except for the Maurers. Like if you went to a political function the only Mountain

Drivers you would see should be the Maurers and myself and not even the Dunns, but occasionally. You know, they weren't political people. The other person who was up on Mountain Drive at the time who has contributed the most, I think, were the Dobyngses, who lived on lower Mountain Drive. Her family still lives up there--the parents. They were over on the other hill. And Frank went on to teach at City College and was practically run out of town because he was so liberal. There were always Letter to the Editor on whether he was a communist. It was all kind of ridiculous. But he and his wife moved back East. They were in Newport, and he worked for various foundations. And Phyllis Dobyngs, one of our neighbors up here is Vice President in Save the Children. You see her on TV. We saw her on 20/20 distributing grain in Africa. So now there's a Mountain Driver. [Revs 199-225 omitted, where the narrator is unable to reach a conclusion about Mountain Drive's effect on the larger Santa Barbara community.]

RR: Do you think Mountain Drive as a community affected Santa Barbara in any way?

ND: No, because it's a little pocket of individuals who wanted to live life their way. Very few of us got involved with the overall picture. Maybe they do now because they're concerned about issues that affect them. They basically like to be let alone. But as far as contributing to the community--I wouldn't know how to answer that. I wouldn't know. Like it's a neighborhood. It's a neighborhood with its own philosophical attitude. You can't say it's an ethnic neighborhood. You know, every town has it's neighborhoods. You could say it's maybe an artistic neighborhood. Nowadays they don't, they didn't then, they didn't use the word "Bohemian." They didn't use the word "creative," "nonestablishment." I considered it "creative nonestablishment," that was the way I looked at it--and charming.

RR: But they wouldn't have called themselves that particularly?

ND: I think they would have. They felt creative.

RR: What about the children? You mentioned something about manners. Were the children brought up in a more free atmosphere than let's say the people down below?

ND: Well, I can't say it was the children. I think it's me. I think it's my fault [laughter]. Every child feels at home in my home, and I don't discourage it. So I think that it's a personality problem I have, and not necessarily belongs to Mountain Drive. I'll say I don't have the personality to adapt to Mountain Drive.

RR: Did children have a good time growing up there?

ND: I think you'd have to talk to my children.

RR: Do they remember it fondly? Do they still have friends from there?

ND: Yes and no. My daughter doesn't have any friends up there. My sons will bump into someone they knew in Mountain Drive. It's like having gone to the same camp. You know, they're friendly. But none of my children have formed a lasting friendship from those early years. Don't forget, they were only three and four.

RR: That's true. Your daughter was older.

ND: She was nine.

RR: And how old was the Maurer's daughter at that time?

ND: Suelea was about three or four.

RR: Oh, so there wasn't any...

ND: Marla was the role model for Suelea. She just adored her. You know, when Marla got her bike Suelea wanted a bike. You know, Marla was the big girl around town. You know how a 9-year-old looks to a 3- or 4-year-old.

And I still have--I came across some pictures of the jam sessions and things like that.

RR: That's great.

ND: But getting back to--but tell me philosophically, what is your observation?

RR: Well, I can't tell you on tape. I'll have to tell you later, because you're not supposed to interview me [laughter], I'm supposed to interview you.

ND: Now I'm just telling you my initial enchantment, my living there for three years, and my strong need to get out. And all those things are true. And I enjoyed it. I think it was a rich experience. I wouldn't have given it up for anything. I think it would have been kind of dull if I hadn't know Mountain Drive. What would I have done? Joined the Newcomers and see who plays bridge what day.

RR: So it did have an effect on your life?

ND: Yes it did.

RR: Well, is your husband still in Santa Barbara?

ND: No, we're divorced, and he lives in Long Beach. I think he's retired now. I don't know. Philosophically he continued to like all that kind of thing, but he ended up working for Rockwell. And you can't imagine a Rockwell employee being on Mountain Drive [laughter].

RR: Are there any other questions that you wish I'd asked you?

ND: No, but I was thinking it was kind of amusing to see how some people--I remember when I first met Ed Schertz who lived up there, he was

a three-piece suiter working for the County, maybe a Probation Officer or something or other. I don't know. Just a three-piece suiter. And lo and behold! He really absorbed and became a Mountain Driver. You know, gave up that lifestyle to do what he wanted to do, which was pottery. So I think that it's a hubbub of crafts people. They used to have their craft sales up on the Hyde's property.

RR: That was the Pot Wars. But that was more than pots, wasn't it. Other people brought things.

ND: So I think it was really a little village that much of Santa Barbara was enchanted with. You know, they liked to go up to Mountain Drive.

RR: Were there men around during the day as opposed to other kinds of communities?

ND: I wonder, I think I figured out--I got the feeling they had a regular job. They would go on regular jobs.

RR: Did the men help take care of the children?

ND: Yes, they'd help. They did those things.

RR: Did you belong to any social organizations up on Mountain Drive, like the Sunset Club? Of course that was men. Some years later I understand that the women formed a Moonrise Club for the same purpose.

ND: No.

RR: Did you have a hot tub?

ND: No. We just had a swimming pool.

RR: Was it a real swimming pool, or was it a home-built one.

ND: Well the whole house was home-built. Everything was home-built. Tommy White designed it. It was a big circular pool over rocks, etcetera. You'll have to see it. The views were magnificent, and when you took a shower there was a skylight, and the only danger was slipping, because it was all granite rock. If you slipped in the shower you could get a concussion. But it was beautiful. It was right in nature. And the bathtub was up on, you know, the claws. Actually, it was very charming.

RR: How many rooms did it have?

ND: Up stairs, up the stairs was a huge bedroom were both of my sons were. It was like almost a loft. It was enclosed. And my husband and I had a room off the fireplace, like a large alcove. Then there was a library and a regular bedroom which my daughter had, which had a skylight. So one, two, three, four.

RR: Is there an outside staircase on the house?

ND: No.

RR: I was trying to remember what someone told me.

ND: Architecturally it's quite interesting.

RR: Reminiscent of a medieval castle?

ND: Well, you know, people build log cabins or whatever they want. They use the material naturally, and I think it was wonderful use of an old pier. It was built from an old pier. [The telephone rings, and the narrator goes to answer it. The tape recorder is turned off while she is away, and she changes the subject before the machine is turned on again.]

RR: You were talking about the Burnhardts. I'd love you to tell me more about them.

ND: Well as I said, I wasn't really involved in a clique. My good friends were the Maurers and the Hydes, particularly, and also the Macys, you know, the peripheral Mountain Drivers. But I was close to Bunny and John Burnhardt on lower Mountain Drive, and they were really my connection to the art community. That's where I met a lot of people down there. But they had parties on their own on lower Mountain Drive. Has the name McGeorge appeared in your... Well. the McGeorges lived there and they had a beautiful house with a swimming pool, and one of the most enchanting nights was stumbling up through the pathway and stepping on the deck around the McGeorge swimming pool, with the moon shining and Robin Frost playing the piano. And the wine drinking and the people. It was just a beautiful party.

In fact, I stopped to see John Burnhardt, whose studio was right near it, within fifty feet. And I used to say John wouldn't go to a party if it were next door, and lo and behold, he didn't. He was busy working in his studio and couldn't take time to go to the party. To him that was all a waste of time. He liked to work. He was a compulsive worker. So that was an interesting night.

But his wife was party girl supreme. No one loves a party more than Bunny, and no one loves to work more than John. So he was working and she was partying. She and I did a lot of things, lunch, running around. She introduced me to rummage, which has changed my life. I was appalled at the way they lived, and now it's become a lifestyle [for me]. Yes, rummage, they loved it, and when you read the article I'll give you to read in Connections, you'll understand.

So they freed me, and I began to see things differently. I began to see things differently. They had a different value system, which I appreciated. I thought it was a good one.

RR: That was very nice nice. Well thank you very much. And maybe we can then get off to the pictures.

ND: Okay.