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Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence

THE GHIRARDELLI FAMILY AND CHOCOLATE COMPANY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Including Interviews with
Margery Menefee Tingley
and
Ben W. Reed

With an Introduction by
Lawrence V. Metcalf

An Interview Conducted by
Ruth Teiser
1984-1985

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Clarisse Lohse Ghirardelli, for her bountiful spirit and humorous tolerance of what she termed "ancestor worship." To my father, Alfred Ghirardelli, whose common-sense advice and sage guidance never failed me and for his meticulous teachings of the whys and wherefores of football. To my husband, Sidney Smith Lawrence, Jr., for his love of life and me and all that is implied in the lyrics of "Go Home and Tell Your Mother." To my daughter, Clarisse Ghirardelli Lawrence Watson, for her quick humor and ever cheerful helpfulness. To my son, Sidney Smith Lawrence, III, for his tremendous artistic talent and his sensitivity in all his endeavors. To my grandchildren, John Lawrence Watson and Victoria Ghirardelli Watson, may they reach the realization of all the good things on their journey through the celebration called life. To my beloved son-in-law, William S. Watson, for his generous advice and friendship toward his wife's family and his unselfish sharing of his time and affection with us. And to my cousin, Jerome Magee, for his efforts in making this history possible.

August 30, 1985

Sidney Ghirardelli Lawrence

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INTRODUCTION

To read these recollections of the Domingo Ghirardelli family is to recapture in a very personal way a significant portion of San Francisco history through the remembrance of fourth generation members of one of its earliest and most influential families.

The name Ghirardelli (who in the Bay Area will not remember the colorful parrot logo?) is better known than that of a host of other San Francisco luminaries: The Big Four--the moguls of the Comstock--the Bankers--the Publishers. What service man, returning from the Pacific War, will forget the giant illuminated "Ghirardelli" sign over the old chocolate factory at North Point, a brighter welcome indeed than the "Well Done" banner over the Ferry Building. What tourist today has not visited Ghirardelli Square. Too little has been recorded of this family whose influence in San Francisco spans five generations.

Polly Lawrence shines a many-faceted light on her large and individualistic family, portrays them with humor and sympathy, and in the process provides an illuminating insight into their life styles and personalities--a kind of Forsyte Saga in miniature.

There is a continuing thread in this account of commitment to the community, stemming from Domingo's arrival from Italy via Peru as a member of the Gold Rush generation. Hardly is there a community board, from the Vigilante Committees of the 1850s to the hospital boards and United Way of today that some family member has not served with some distinction. The independent spirit that brought Domingo here, epitomized by his renunciation of the Italian Catholic Church, is a recurring theme in the diverse, if occasionally eccentric activities of the family. Typical of this spirit, his granddaughter, Esperance Ghirardelli Alvord, early-day president of the San Francisco Junior League and a founder of the Telegraph Hill Association, was a pioneer in the emerging involvement of women in community affairs. Her activities bring family commitment to community service into the twentieth century.

Here, too, is an exposition by those in a position to know of a significant (some would say tragic) trend of our times: the decline of the "family" business which once dominated the commercial activity of our Western communities. What are the reasons--talent, tradition, taxes, fecundity, recalcitrance? The answer is only hinted at here.

From this thoughtful if sometimes random account of an unusual family, highly diverse as individuals, but held together by the commonality of a family company, there emerges an absorbing portrait of the social and family life of the area in an era when everyone who was anybody knew everyone else who was anyone.

I have known Polly since she wrote the "Fight Song" for the Katherine Delmar Burke School, subsequently at "Cal" as UC Berkeley was then known, and in Washington where her father served gratuitously as a member of the War Production Board in World War II. Her own life has been colored as she herself says by carrying a well-known name but dominated by dedication to husband and family and a personal commitment to community service--a woman of courage and strong conviction. On perusing her account I find I can claim acquaintance with some twenty-five of the extant family and can vouch for their colorful character and distinctive individuality. Here is the story.

Lawrence V. Metcalf

26 August 1985
San Francisco, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

The impetus for these interviews about the Ghirardelli family, one of San Francisco's oldest and best known families, came from the realization that a significant amount of information lay unrecorded in the memories of its present members. By coincidence, a Regional Oral History Office interviewer, Ruth Teiser, had worked with Alfred Ghirardelli many years earlier on a brief history, An Account of Domingo Ghirardelli and the Early Years of the D. Ghirardelli Chocolate Company, which was privately published by the D. Ghirardelli Company in San Francisco in 1945. She was assigned to the interview. The thirty page book had little more than outlined the history, as documented, up to the year 1906.

This interview clothes the skeleton, so to speak, bringing to life Domingo Ghirardelli and his descendants through the eyes of those who have known them by way of family tradition and first-hand. A valuable corollary to the personal recollections of Mrs. Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence are those of two other family members, Mrs. Margery Tingley on the Domingo Ghirardelli, Jr., family, and Mr. Ben Reed on the chocolate factory.

In preparation for her interview, Mrs. Lawrence read the Ghirardelli papers that had been deposited in The Bancroft Library by William M. Roth, whose family had bought the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company property, and the diary of Virgil Jorgensen in the same repository. She also surveyed material in the libraries of the Society of California Pioneers and the California Historical Society. In addition, Mrs. Lawrence gathered information from many relatives, created the genealogical charts included in the volume, and suggested that interviews with Mrs. Tingley and Mr. Reed be included.

Mr. Reed was interviewed on December 18, 1984, at his home in Alamo, California. Mrs. Tingley, of Fairfax, California, was interviewed by phone on October 23, 1984. Both read the transcripts of their recollections and returned them with few changes.

Mrs. Lawrence's interview, in six sessions between October 19, 1984 and January 18, 1985, was more detailed. In order to achieve as chronological an account of the family as possible, a certain amount of editing was required, particularly the rearranging of the sequence of some parts. The recording sessions were held in the comfortable study of Mrs. Lawrence's apartment in Pacific Heights, San Francisco, a room with walls bearing paintings and photographs of many of the members of her family she discussed.

Clarisse Marie Ghirardelli was the name Mrs. Lawrence was given at birth. She is known, however, as Polly. Although the chocolate company's famous symbol was the parrot, as Lawrence V. Metcalf mentions in his

introduction, Mrs. Lawrence's nickname is derived from her middle name, as she explains in her interview. (To add to the confusion, she also explains that the Ghirardelli bird was not a parrot but a macaw.)

Thanks are due to her son, Sidney Lawrence, III, for encouraging this project and making constructive suggestions. The Regional Oral History Office is grateful to Lawrence V. Metcalf for adding perspective to this volume through his introduction. Mr. Metcalf, a contemporary and friend of Mrs. Lawrence since childhood, is a San Francisco businessman, active in cultural and civic affairs, a member of another well known California family, that of Henry E. Huntington. We are particularly grateful to another family member, Jerome Magee, who coordinated securing funds for the project, and to Dennis DeDomenico, General Manager of the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company, who provided matching funds to augment the individual donations.

Ruth Teiser
Interviewer-Editor

27 September 1985
Regional Oral History Office
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I DOMINGO GHIRARDELLI AND HIS FAMILY

[Interview 1: October 19, 1984]

Teiser: Where and when were you born?

Lawrence: I was born in San Francisco, California, on October tenth, 1921, the daughter of Clarisse Lohse Ghirardelli and Alfred Ghirardelli.

Teiser: And Alfred Ghirardelli's parents were--

Lawrence: Alfred Ghirardelli's parents were Johanna Legler Ghirardelli and Louis Ghirardelli, who was the son of Domingo Ghirardelli, or "Domenico" as he was born. He changed his name when he lived in South America.

Italy and South America, 1817-1849

Lawrence: Domingo was born in Rapallo, Italy, and his parents were Giuseppe and Madelena Ghirardelli.

Teiser: He was your great-grandfather, then. What was the family tradition about what kind of man he was? How do you visualize him?

Lawrence: The overall impression I get of everything that I have read about him and heard about him is that he was a rather enterprising young man. He was born in Rapallo in 1817, and he left there in 1836 I believe it was, because, one, he believed ardently in the

Lawrence: unification of Italy, which at that time was not a very popular cause with the majority of the people. He also, somewhat violently, disagreed with the Pope at that time--Pius IX--as far as Catholicism goes.

Teiser: He disagreed but from within the church?

Lawrence: From within the church, temporarily. And that is another story which we can go into.

Presumably he was married to a lady by the name of Bettina with whom he left Rapallo. They went to Montevideo, Uruguay, and stayed there a year and then moved to Lima, Peru, where Bettina died. He then married Carmen Alvarado, who is the mother of the various descendants of Domenico Ghirardelli, who came to California.

There was a child of Carmen Alvarado by her first husband whose name was, strangely enough, Dominga. She came to San Francisco with the family and she died in San Francisco early on, some time in the 1860s, I believe. She was the legitimate daughter of Carmen Alvarado, so she was related to all of us. I have a portrait of her in the other room.

Now, an old wives' tale, which has gotten quite a bit of credence in the family, is that Domingo was engaged to be married to his childhood sweetheart, and on the day of the wedding a disgruntled suitor sent a box of candies to the bride which were poisoned, and she ate them and died on the wedding day. (Very Italian.) So Domingo, heartbroken, left his family and home and came to the New World and settled in Uruguay.

That could or could not be true. But many of my cousins tell the story, and I've heard it at parties being told by strangers as being a very romantic thing. I really think that Bettina was the wife by whom he had no issue, and she is the one who got to Lima with him.

Carmen Alvarado had been married to a gentleman by the name of Martin, who was a Frenchman. I don't know his first name. Dominga was his daughter by Carmen. Why she was named Dominga, I don't know, but I know it wasn't changed.

Domingo lived in Lima, Peru, for quite a long time. There his next-door neighbor was James Lick. Lick arrived in Lima in 1837, and he did a lot of other things which are all documented.

Lawrence: I got this from James Lick, Pioneer and Adventurer: His Role in California History by William H. Worrilow.* James Lick was a cabinetmaker by trade, a piano maker. He settled down in Lima, and he had a shop there. Next door a young Italian gentleman opened a confectionery business and he was an importer of spices, and his name was Domenico Ghirardelli, which then he changed to Domingo because he was learning to speak Spanish.

They became fast friends. They were, I think, the same kind of people. They were rather adventurous and ambitious. Lick was probably the best cabinetmaker in South America at that time, according to Worrilow.

Lick decided that he would go to California. He arrived in San Francisco on January eleventh of 1848. He brought his own work bench, his iron strongbox containing nearly \$30,000 in gold, his tools, and 600 pounds of Ghirardelli's chocolate. So he settled there and he shrewdly bought land. Gold was discovered January twenty-fourth of 1848.

Now, in the interim, Mr. Lick had written to Domingo Ghirardelli saying, "This is a place of opportunity, and I would suggest that you bring yourself and some of your chocolates up here. I have sold the 600 pounds that I brought and I feel there will be a great demand for it."**

Teiser: Let me ask how Domingo became a confectioner.

Lawrence: His father, whose name was Giuseppe, was a merchant, not in Venice but in Genoa. Rapallo is a suburb of Genoa, which was a very mercantile city and a great port. And the father was a merchant. He dealt in importing spices from the East, and apprenticed his son Domenico to a confectioner and also an importer of exotic spices. So that's how he learned the trade. This was, I guess, the only thing he knew, which he did in Montevideo, and then when he moved to Peru.

*William H. Worrilow, James Lick (1796-1876), Pioneer and Adventurer; His Role in California History, New York: The Newcomen Society of England, American Branch (1949).

**Worrilow, op. cit.

Early Years in California

Lawrence: In February of 1849, on the ship Mazeppa--there's controversy over the spelling of it--Domingo arrived in San Francisco, having left his second wife, Carmen Alvarado, their daughter, Virginia, and his stepdaughter, Dominga, in Lima while he investigated San Francisco.

He talked to Lick about the good business locations and soon established himself in San Francisco. He, like Lick, decided that his future lay in the business end, but he did, however, go into the gold fields and established several stores near the mines. That comes from The Generous Miser; The Story of James Lick of California by Rosemary Lick, published by the Ward Ritchie Press of Los Angeles in 1967.

To finish James Lick. He became extremely wealthy because he bought land very cheaply and sold it very expensively. He was called, I believe, "the miserly philanthropist," because he was a very generous man also. But he and Domingo Ghirardelli remained friends all of their lives.

Teiser: It's curious because, so far as I know, Lick had very few friends; he was very reclusive.

Lawrence: Very few friends. Apparently they saw each other through philanthropic organizations, not that there were very many of those, but they were both interested in the future of the area. And of course, Domingo was a member of the Vigilante Committees, both [1851 and 1856] of them.

Teiser: He took up local causes right away.

Lawrence: Immediately. And that is all documented. He also, Domingo, was a founder of the Italian Benevolent Association.* My father went on the board of that as a young man. When they formed the Community Chest they incorporated all those things into it. That was in 1922 that the Chest was formed.

The logo of the company says Domingo established it in 1852, but he had been in business long before that because he had gone into the gold fields with supplies--coffee, chocolate, liqueurs, and everything else--and sold them to the miners.

*La Società Italiana di Mutua Beneficenza.

Lawrence: And he had a store in Hornitos, the ruins of which are still in existence and they belong to my cousins, Hap* and Jerome Magee. When the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company was sold, the Magee cousins bought that land.

Before 1852 Domingo and Captain [Charles D.] Weber, who was the founder of Stockton, were friendly rivals. He tried to buy some supplies from Captain Weber, and Captain Weber would only sell him a huge amount, and he didn't wish to buy that. So he went all around the town of Stockton and bought all the supplies and went into the gold fields and beat Captain Weber to the punch because he sold his goods before Captain Weber got his large shipment transported to the gold fields, to the Mother Lode country.

His goods were very much in demand. Then he came back and went in business. He went under many names. There's "D. Ghirardelli's Branch" on a corner in Oakland, Ghirardelli & Girard, but the main store was in San Francisco, in various places. He ended up, I believe, in the late fifties, in a building that is still standing in what is now Jackson Square, which was near Hotaling's liquor warehouse, and they both survived the fire of 1906. And my grandfather, Louis Ghirardelli, was born there in 1857, above this chocolate factory.

Paterfamilias

Teiser: You knew some of Domingo Sr.'s sons, I suppose.

Lawrence: Yes, I did.

Teiser: What was your impression of what kind of a man he was from them? Was he a paterfamilias?

Lawrence: Well, he was very much a paterfamilias. He was very proud of his family and his sons. The sons were all eventually involved in the business.

His oldest child was Virginia Ghirardelli Mangini. She married a man by the name of Angelo Mangini who, in about 1857, became the manager of the chocolate and spice factory. They manufactured coffee, chocolate, mustard, and imported exotic spices, as I've said before.

Teiser: Do you have an impression of Domingo being a big man?

*See page 98.

Lawrence: He wasn't tall. This is what he looked like in his prime, I would say. [showing picture]

Teiser: Did he learn English well?

Lawrence: Yes, he made a great effort. He became a citizen as early as possible. Of course, he spoke Spanish and Italian. (His wife Carmen, who was born in 1829 and lived until 1889, never learned English, and she lived here for forty years.) He thought the greatest men in the world were Giuseppe Garibaldi of Italy and George Washington.

He was very patriotic and learned English, well, I would say almost perfectly. However, they did speak Italian at home in deference to his wife, Italian and Spanish. So all of his sons and daughters grew up speaking three languages really.

Teiser: His wife spoke Spanish?

Lawrence: Yes, but she also spoke enough Italian.

Teiser: His sons, I suppose, were expected to go into the business. As they went in, in his time, did he keep a strong hand on affairs? Is there that tradition?

Lawrence: I would think so. That's a very strong tradition that has come down to my generation, because my husband worked for the company after he and I were married in 1944, for, I don't know, eight or ten years, and it was always a patriarchy, and the orders came boom, boom, boom. However, I think it was a benevolent despotism. I think the articles of incorporation, when it was incorporated after Domingo's death, would show that everybody had something to say about what the future business was going to be.

Teiser: Yes, it's implied in them.

Lawrence: I have this ad from the Argonaut of 1886, which advertises something called "a white chocolate." Well, now, any new product like that the sons would all be consulted on, and they had their various ideas. I think they were rather divergent people from what I can gather.

Teiser: Was it your impression that he was a good businessman?

Lawrence: I think he was probably a very good businessman. He came from Genoa, Italy, where they're known for being very astute businessmen. He went through bankruptcy three times in his career, and paid, and just said, "Well, all right, that's that; I'm going to start over," and did. He came back each time having paid

Lawrence: off everybody, so that his credit rating was probably one of the better in the early days in San Francisco, because people would scoot out on their debts and things like that. He was meticulously honest. When he bought the woolen mill [buildings for his chocolate factory] he was really firmly established.

Family Home in Oakland

Teiser: He lived in Oakland, did he?

Lawrence: Yes. Well, he first lived in San Francisco. Then he moved to Oakland and had a big house with a great garden. I have the description of it written by Angela Ghirardelli Jorgensen, which she wrote for her son in 1935.

"D. Ghirardelli Garden was among the largest gardens in Oakland in 1860. (75 years ago) It was situated on 3rd St.-- it occupied one block with house in the center of it, 2nd & 3rd Clay & Jefferson. Mr. G. being an Italian, felt that his place would not be complete if he had not something in it from his native land--so in 1858 he sent for marble statuary--marble dogs, urns for plants, fountain, life sized statues of Washington, Columbus, Count Cavour, Mercury, Agriculture, etc. These were placed all through the garden, with Columbus and Washington in front of the house on either side of the steps, with the two dogs at foot of steps-- Wonderful fruit and vegetables in back of lower garden--large summer house with table and benches-- the outside roof and all sides of wall covered with pink rose vines and honeysuckle. Saturday and Sunday the garden was open to the public. We children played in the backyard those days. Two large fig trees that bore delicious white figs were my father's special pride--he and the gardener inserted one drop of olive oil in each fig when almost ripe, claiming that this was what made them so sweet and delicious. The only thing sold out of our garden was an immense magnolia tree that Mr. Chauché the liquor merchant bought. I never forgot that, as four men worked for days preparing it. A large truck built out at the sides for that purpose was used in moving it. I thought half the population of Oakland was there to see it being moved out.

"On opposite side of summer house there was an oval marble fountain surrounded by calla lillies and filled with gold fish.

"Twas the only member of our large family born in that house-- Mother always going to San Francisco just before her confinement--her doctor lived over there--Dr. D'Oleviera. That Dr. was the gentleman that gave me the little mahogany clock that I gave Florence [Mrs. Virgil W. Jorgensen]."

Lawrence: My grandfather, Louis, born in 1857, seems to be the last child who was born in San Francisco. Angela was born in 1859 in Oakland. Oakland itself really was the bedroom community, and everybody came over by horse and buggy and ferry.

Teiser: It was a job to get back and forth, so he must have wanted very much to get his family into a rural or suburban atmosphere.

Lawrence: I believe that having lived in Rapallo, which has a suburban atmosphere-- His original house there was really kind of in a country setting.

Teiser: Did you know the Oakland house?

Lawrence: No, I did not know it. It was in what is now downtown Oakland. And it was surrounded by, as Angela Ghirardelli Jorgensen described, beautiful Italianate gardens and lots of statuary. There was a statue of George Washington and Garibaldi, and others. Then, during one of the bankruptcies, he lost that house and it was sold for his debts, and then he somehow got it back.

Teiser: I suppose what he was doing was recreating an Italian estate rather more grand than he grew up in.

Lawrence: Oh, very much so. I'm sure that was part of his driving force, coming to the New World to do better than his father had done.

An Italian in the Melting Pot

Teiser: Italians in northern California--I know that socially they separated themselves by periods of arrival, which every immigrant group does.

Lawrence: That's true. The earlier you arrived the more important you were and the more you were respected by the other Italians.

Teiser: Were his friends, do you think, more Italians or simply the mix that was here?

Lawrence: From what I can gather, it was the mix that was here. He did not want to be insular because he wanted to be an American. That's why he became a citizen very early.

Lawrence: Now, my father is my source, of course, because he was terribly interested in the man, whom he knew, and the courage that it took to come and be a pioneer. He certainly wasn't the only one, but the impression I get, is that he was a very strong character who was a good family man and, until a certain point, which I will get into, did attend church.

Teiser: By the time I knew about the family, which was in the forties, there seemed to be no particular feeling of identification with the Italian community here.

Lawrence: Well, there never has been. I used to be a member of the Italian American Club really because Ann Giannini McWilliams asked me to be. And when you go down to the second generation, Virginia is the only one who married a person of Italian heritage. Everybody else married really very American, and that goes down to the next generation.

II THE SECOND GENERATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Virginia Ghirardelli Mangini and Her Family

Teiser: Let's go to the second generation in America.

Lawrence: All right. Well, now, Virginia, who is the oldest, who was born in Lima in 1847 and died in Oakland in 1867, she was married to Angelo Mangini. They had a daughter whose name was Amelia Mangini, and she was born in 1863 in Oakland, and she died in Oakland in 1879, as a child. Her mother had already died, so she was, I presume, living in the house with Domingo Ghirardelli, his wife Carmen, and probably Angelo Mangini.

Lawrence: She became ill in 1879 and was obviously very sick, and so Domingo sent for the priest, and the priest refused to come because it was raining. The poor child subsequently died.

So that was very annoying to Domingo, who was rather disenchanted with the doctrines of Catholicism, and that did it. So he said to the rest of the family, "You may never enter a Catholic church again as long as you live." They had never been, I don't think, devout Catholics, but they were Italian Catholics, which are like French Catholics--not like Irish Catholics--they take it rather casually.

Teiser: Was Angelo Mangini an employee of the company?

Lawrence: Yes. He was also from Genoa. He was a northern Italian, which is very important. He was a good worker, apparently, and he became the superintendent of the manufacturing operation before he and Virginia were married in 1862. There is no mention ever again of Angelo Mangini. I don't know what happened to him. The child died, and I'm sure he probably stayed on with the company, but he probably demised at some point in time.

Now, to go back to Domingo, that was the end of his Catholicism.

Domingo Ghirardelli Junior and His Family

Lawrence: By that time Domingo Ghirardelli Jr. was in the company.

Teiser: I have his dates from your notes as 1849-1932.

Lawrence: Yes. He was born in Lima, Peru, in 1849, and he was naturalized an American citizen in 1871, which is kind of interesting.

Teiser: His citizenship didn't occur when his father was naturalized?

Lawrence: No, I don't think so. He was probably in Italy being educated.

Now, his father retired in 1892 and Domingo Jr. became president of the company in 1895.

Domingo Jr. had been sent to Genoa, where he was educated. I believe he attended the University of Santa Clara for a short period of time, but not very long. He was a very, very smart young man.

Teiser: It's interesting that Domingo Sr. should have sent his sons back to Italy to be educated. There was another too--

Lawrence: Yes. That was Caesar. He was born in '54, and he was sent to Genoa, where he died in 1864.

Teiser: You were saying that Domingo Jr. was an intelligent man?

Lawrence: Very. And very interested in the business. Somewhere I have a poem that he wrote to his sister, Angela, before he was married. The Bancroft Library has been given her memorabilia. It's typical of the time. They wrote letters with poetry in them. It shows he was a rather romantic young gentleman and very fond of his little sister, which she was.*

Teiser: So he was intelligent, romantic, reasonably well educated--

Lawrence: I would say quite well educated. In the Encyclopedia of the Pacific Southwest, published in Berkeley in 1911, "Men of California," on page eighty, Domingo is listed as being the president of the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company, a director of the California Institution of History, and a director of the

* See Appendix for genealogy.

Lawrence: California Cotton Mills. The chocolate factory was at that time at 940 North Point Street, which is where they had moved from the original buildings downtown. And he resided at 3000 Pacific Avenue, which is on the corner of Baker. The brick wall is still there.

Teiser: Here in San Francisco?

Lawrence: Here in San Francisco.

He was made president of the company in 1895, which was after his father had died. He was acting president before that. And in that year he moved his family to San Francisco. He was a member of the commission on the [Panama-Pacific] Exposition of 1915, and the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company had a beautiful pavilion at that exposition, a picture of which is in the files of The Bancroft Library.

He married Addie Cook, who had been born in St. Joseph, Missouri. With her family (this is from the files of the California Society of Pioneers), her mother, father, and brother, she came across the plains. They started for California March seventh, 1861, arrived in Salt Lake on July fourth, and soon after settled in Colusa, California.

She has written a book which is on file at the California Society of Pioneers.* Her family bought a ranch and settled at the Buttes, outside of Colusa. Then they finally moved to San Francisco, where she met Domingo Ghirardelli Jr.

This is something that Addie wrote which I found in the Florence and Virgil Williams Jorgensen Memorial Collection at The Bancroft Library. It's a poem that she wrote: "A place in thy memory, dearest, is all that I claim/To pause and look back when thou hearest the sound of my name." Now, that was written to Domingo Jr. on September third, 1877. That was the year in which they were married. Whether it was before or after the wedding I don't know. It's kind of interesting.

She was a very up-and-coming woman and interested in all kinds of things, and also, as I stated, deeply religious, which she impressed on her children. They had eight children and six of them survived to adulthood.

Teiser: Do you remember her?

*Addie Cook Ghirardelli, "My Life on a Ranch in the Early Days of California," typed copy of manuscript of Mrs. D. Ghirardelli, California Society of Pioneers.

Lawrence: Yes. Very well.

Teiser: What was she like?

Lawrence: Well, she was a very brilliant woman. She wrote this beautiful book about coming across the plains, with descriptions that are unbelievable, of the Indians greeting them and things like this.

She was rather old, of course, when I knew her, which was in about 1926 or '27. She died in 1950, so she lived a long time. She was born in 1858.

They had a big house up on Pacific Avenue. I think she probably was a great help to Domingo in establishing a place in the community, which he really did.

I think he was a respected member of the community, and I think he was accepted by both the business community and the "social" community because I think at his house up here on Pacific Avenue they did a lot of entertaining, and he was not considered an Italian but an American. As I say, he was naturalized in 1871.

He was on the boards of many banks, including the Bank of Italy and the Italian-American Bank. He made a place for himself and the company in the community, that carried it on for his father. The Bank of Italy was A. P. Giannini's. And the other bank was the Sbarboro family's, founded by Andrea E. Sbarboro, which merged with the Bank of America in 1927.

Teiser: Were they friends of your family?

Lawrence: Yes, they were family friends. My father and Remo Sbarboro [Andrea's son], who were the same generation, were great friends and used to kid around about both being "Genovese."

Domingo Junior's career is rather impressive. And I remember him quite well. My father started working for the company in 1906, and Domingo retired in 1922. I was born in '21, so I didn't remember much of what Domingo said then, but my father always had tales of what happened between '06 and when Domingo retired.

He was the chairman of the board after he retired because he really knew so darn much about the business. The cacao market, as they call it, it's like the coffee business; you

Lawrence: buy futures. And if you make a mistake, you're going to lose your shirt. And he was very, very smart about that type of thing and how to keep ahead. And he was very progressive as far as advertising was concerned. In those days, you know, you weren't supposed to advertise very much. Well, he pushed it very far. They had pictures of movie stars in the chocolate bars and things like that, of which I have some right here in my desk. And this was very aggressive for the time.

Teiser: I should say.

Lawrence: I can remember talking to a man whose name was Wheeler, who was a partner in the advertising company in Los Angeles [that represented the chocolate company], and he happened to be a friend of my father-in-law. He was about my father's generation. I was having lunch with him one day, and he said, "Do you realize that your uncle Domingo"--because they had always had the account--"was a far more aggressive and forward-looking leader than any subsequent leader of the company?" And I said, "Well, I can't agree wholeheartedly because my father happens to be the president at the moment, and I think he's rather forward-seeing, too."

But I think that was really true. And Domingo Jr. did rule with kind of an iron hand. My father, in '06, had just graduated from the University of California, in the earthquake-and-fire graduating class. He went immediately to work and was made the manager of a plant in Vallejo, which was a way of learning the business.

Teiser: What was the plant in Vallejo?

Lawrence: That was a manufacturing plant which did a certain process of manufacturing ground chocolate, and then it was shipped, by boat, to [the chocolate factory on] North Point Street. He was in charge.

Teiser: Domingo Jr. had a long, long career, didn't he, with the company?

Lawrence: Yes. Well, from 1895 to 1922. He didn't have to retire, but his son Lyle, who was his oldest son--D. (Domingo) Lyle Ghirardelli, which I think is a marvelous combination of names--was a very smart man. In 1922 he took over as the president.

Teiser: But Domingo stayed on as board chairman?

Lawrence: As chairman of the board.

Teiser: I see. Did he, then, continue controlling things?

Lawrence: A little bit. As I remember my father saying, Domingo Jr. really turned it over to D. Lyle. He would preside at the board of directors' meetings and he was very fair, and actually he was a very good administrator. He could run a good meeting, he knew Roberts' Rules of Order, he knew how to let everybody speak, but he was sort of a martinet; he thought he was absolutely right.

Teiser: Ben Reed Jr. lent the directors' minutes to The Bancroft Library to copy. The first minutes are in 1895, at the incorporation. I suppose it had been a family partnership before then.

Lawrence: That's when it was D. Ghirardelli and Sons, I believe.

Teiser: Yes. And then it became D. Ghirardelli and Company. And apparently all of the children were stockholders.

Lawrence: That's right.

Teiser: Domingo Jr. had the most stock and they went down to Angela who had the least. Domingo Jr. had 900, Joseph had 800, Louis 640, Elvira had 200, and Angela had 180.

Let's go on with Domingo Jr. After he retired he seemed to be taking an interest in public affairs.

Lawrence: I believe that's the truth. He also moved to Hillsborough at that time.

Teiser: So he had ten years after he retired.

Lawrence: Right. And he was active in the company, in an advisory capacity and ran the board meetings. Then he became somewhat ill and couldn't take as active a part.

He was terribly interested in the elderly and whether they were well taken care of, I remember that.

Teiser: The elderly of the community?

Lawrence: The elderly of the community. And whether or not there were sufficient welfare organizations to tend to these people who could no longer care for themselves, which was rather altruistic.

Lawrence: His granddaughter is a contemporary of mine, Margery Menefee Tingley. She and I hadn't seen each other for about twenty years, until we met for lunch in November 1984, and now we talk back and forth constantly. She really knows an awful lot about Domingo [Jr.] because she spent a lot of time with him. She would go down there and visit.* I got an awful lot from her on all the children. You see, Domingo and Addie had eight children, but only six of them survived. Two died in infancy. It's a very tragic story of what happened to that family.

Elvira Ghirardelli Sutton and Her Family

Teiser: To return to the children of Domingo, Senior-- Elvira was born in 1856.

Lawrence: She was born in San Francisco. She married a man by the name of Charles Sutton who was born in England in 1854.

Now, I have to explain something about all these children, and I think Domingo Jr. is included. They all lived in sort of an enclave in Oakland which is near Fourteenth Street and Poplar Street. Louis lived on Poplar Street, and Elvira lived across the street on a corner. Joseph also lived in this group and so did Domingo and so did Angela. But then when Angela married she moved away, and I think Joseph, when he married Ellie Barstow, moved away. But the rest of them, Elvira and Charles Sutton, the Louis Ghirardellis, and I guess Domingo Jr., until he became the president, all lived there.

Addie Ghirardelli, Domingo Jr.'s wife, was considered perfectly beautiful. My grandmother, Mrs. Louis Ghirardelli, was considered the plump Mrs. Ghirardelli. And Joseph Ghirardelli's wife, Ellie Barstow, was considered the fat Mrs. Ghirardelli. And they all lived in Oakland, in this little enclave.

Teiser: Did Mr. Charles Sutton work for the company first?

*See interview with Margery Menefee Tingley, pp. 143-153.

Lawrence: No. As I say, he was born in England, a very scholarly gentleman and a nice person. I remember him. Elvira died in Paris on a trip in 1908, leaving a daughter, Carmen Sutton, who was born in 1884. So Charles Sutton was left alone with this one child, and my grandmother, Johanna Ghirardelli, who lived across the street, sort of made Carmen a member of her family. Carmen Sutton and my father were first cousins and exactly the same age and really grew up together. Of course, in 1908 he was pretty well grown, and so was she, but she became kind of part of the family.

Teiser: Elvira was secretary of the company when it was incorporated in 1895. Later Johanna succeeded her husband on the board at his death in 1902. Both of these women were active board members.

Lawrence: That's right! Johanna was my grandmother and she was a very definite woman. That's true of both of them.

Teiser: Elvira resigned from the board in 1902, and Charles Sutton was elected in her place as secretary?

Lawrence: I don't know much about Elvira, except I did know Carmen, her daughter, quite well. She was one of the most amusing women I have ever met. She married Ben Reed.

Joseph Ghirardelli and His Family

Lawrence: How about Joseph?

Teiser: Joseph was born before Elvira?

Lawrence: That's right. He was born in San Francisco in 1853. He was twenty-six years old when he entered the store which had been established by his father in Oakland, which was a branch. Then he was taken into the firm.

Teiser: Do you know anything about his education?

Lawrence: I believe that he went to the University of Santa Clara. At a comparatively early age he was sent with two brothers to Europe. One of his brothers, Caesar, died while studying in Italy, in 1864. He must have been very young because Joseph was born in 1853.

Teiser: They were just on a tour of Europe?

Lawrence: Caesar was sent to be educated, and I guess Joseph was, too, and I don't know who the other brother was. It probably was Domingo, I would think.

Joseph became the vice president of the company. [reading from materials] "[It] was one of the very successful industries of Oakland and San Francisco. At one time Joseph Ghirardelli was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and at the time of his demise he was an Elk of many years standing and a very active member of that organization.... In young manhood he had voted the Democratic ticket, but in later years inclined to independence in political matters."

Teiser: What are you reading from?

Lawrence: I'm reading from History of the State of California and Biographie of Oakland and its Environs, Volume 1, published in Los Angeles by the Historic Record Company, copyright 1907, by J. M. Guinn. The subtitle is Oakland Environs.

Joseph died in 1906, on May eleventh, as a result of the earthquake. It says here, "superinduced by the shock received at the time of the great earthquake being the cause of his demise. He was sincerely mourned by a large circle of friends, won in both business and social life, for he was of a genial, kindly temperament, fond of sports, especially of hunting, taking an active, normal interest in all that was going on around him. He was a public-spirited citizen and liberal to a degree.

"In Oakland, in 1885, Mr. Ghirardelli was united in marriage to Miss Ellen Frances Barstow, a daughter of David Pierce and Elizabeth (Reed) Barstow, whose personal history is given elsewhere in this volume."

Teiser: He was a joiner of men's clubs--

Lawrence: Apparently, of fraternal clubs.

Teiser: Those were rather less socially prominent than the kind of clubs that I suppose Domingo Jr. belonged to.

Lawrence: I think so, yes.

Teiser: They're the kind of clubs that a salesman belongs to generally.

Lawrence: That's right, that's true. And he seems to have been "a public-spirited citizen," and "liberal to a degree," which is interesting.

When Joseph and Ellen married they moved to Oakland. The original family home of the [Domingo] Ghirardellis was at the corner of Fifth and Brush Street. [reading] "After Mr. Joseph Ghirardelli's marriage, he built a residence at the corner of Market and Nineteenth Street, where he made his home until his death. Since that event the widow has removed to Piedmont, where she owns a beautiful home."

Teiser: Did you know her?

Lawrence: Yes. She was called Aunt Ellie. They had two children, Joseph, Jr. and Carmen.*

Louis Ghirardelli and His Family

Lawrence: That brings us to Louis Ghirardelli, who was my grandfather. He was born in San Francisco, in 1857. He married Johanna Legler Ghirardelli.

Her father, Henry Theodore Legler, was a physician who had fought in the Civil War. When I went to Washington, to the National Archives, I discovered his discharge papers and all that. He was in the Union Army and was taken prisoner, so he had quite a good story to tell.

He was born in Leipzig, Germany, and he went to the University of Leipzig to medical school. During the unification of Germany, he too--like Domenico Ghirardelli--decided that he would get out because he was on the side of the unification. I guess he was a radical student because he had to hide in a barge going, as they call it, up the Rhine, in order to get out of the country. And he arrived in New York and wended his way to Buffalo, New York, where he practiced medicine and married a woman of German descent. They moved to Oakland. They had a daughter, Johanna, and a son, Hugo.

*See pages 41-43 of interview.

Lawrence: Johanna met Louis Ghirardelli and became very entranced with him, and her mother said, "I do not wish you to marry that Italian because he is apt to stab you; they all carry knives, you know." My grandmother, even then, was a very strong-minded woman, so she did marry that Italian and they moved in with Domingo and Carmen. Johanna, who spoke English and German, and some Italian, but not very much, found this rather trying because her mother-in-law could not speak English. And Johanna was also not a Catholic. So I think they had kind of a hard time for a while. Then they started having children.

Louis wanted to buy a house near all of them, and so he did buy a house on the corner of Poplar and Fourteenth, which I think is still standing. In order to do that he had to sell part of his shares of stock in the company. So he sold some shares and it made a difference, frankly, even in my inheritance because he had a smaller cut of the piece of the pie than anybody else. Maybe he sold them to Angela, because she ended up with an awful lot!

Louis and Johanna built a house on Poplar Street, where they lived, and he was, obviously, in the company. He and Johanna were in the company at the same time.

Louis was educated at the University of Santa Clara and he also attended the University of California. The University of California Alumni Golden Book of California, which came out in 1937, listed him as a missing person, which enraged my father!

Teiser: I should think.

Lawrence: I don't know what class he would have been. I would think maybe seventy something, something in there.

Teiser: And he became superintendent of the plant, then?

Lawrence: Yes.

Teiser: Did he go to Europe to be educated?

Lawrence: As far as I can gather, he was the one who did not. He went probably from Oakland High School to the University of Santa Clara, for two or three years, and then he went to the University of California.

Teiser: What sort of a man was he? Did you know him?

Lawrence: No, I did not.

Teiser: Your father would have told you.

Lawrence: My father loved him dearly. I think he must have been a very funny man. In this picture, this is his wife, Johanna, and this is Louis, and he's the only one who's acting silly.*

Teiser: [laughing] With a great mustache.

Lawrence: He was very handsome. I have pictures of him. A very good father. He didn't get to know all of his children very well because he died at a very early age. But he used to take my father to baseball games and soccer games.

My father was the oldest son, and Louis died in 1902 when my father was eighteen years old. (My father was born in 1884; so I imagine his parents were married in the early 1880s.) So my father grew up having great admiration for this man and also imbued with great loyalty to the family and the company and all things Ghirardelli-ish.

Before Louis's death, Johanna's father had been widowed, so he came to live with them. He was a physician, and he was also someone who my father greatly admired because he had tales to tell, of course, about the Civil War. Then, he did practice medicine out of their house for quite a few years.

Teiser: Was his office in their home?

Lawrence: Yes, in the home. So they were all there together.

Louis Ghirardelli developed pneumonia because he had been caught in a rainstorm. He came home and went to bed, and they closed all the windows in the room and lit a fire, so that there was no oxygen. My father was sent out in the terrible rainstorm, on his bicycle, to get some medicine. He was gone an hour; he had to go quite some distance. And when he returned to his house his father was dead, which was a terrible blow.

Henry Legler, who probably had ordered the fire and the windows closed, was very upset. He said, "Oh Lord, why couldn't it have been I?" because he was a lot older. It was terrible. And my grandmother was very upset and went into sort of a decline.

*See photograph, p. 22a.

- Lawrence: Anyway, she recovered from that and continued to be the secretary of the company. She had quite a few children she had to raise by herself.
- Teiser: The corporate notes show that she stepped right in at the time of his death and took his place on the board. She voted; she was very active.
- Lawrence: I knew her very well. She felt a tremendous responsibility to her children to see that nothing went wrong with the company. There was this eldest son thing that was very, very strong, and her husband was not the eldest and so she wanted to be sure that her children were protected; she felt extremely strongly about that.

Her five children were known as "The Tribe of Johanna." They were Alfred--the oldest--who was my father, Louis Legler next, then Harvey Theodore, and then Elva Ghirardelli Dinsmore, and Juanita Ghirardelli Magee. All of these Ghirardellis lived across the street from each other.

Among the descendents of "The Tribe of Johanna," are my first cousins who have helped make this Ghirardelli family interview project possible.

Angela Ghirardelli Jorgensen and Her Family

- Lawrence: Angela I also knew. After her daughter-in-law died, her executor gave all of Angela's diaries and everything to The Bancroft, which is marvelous. That was where I got the poem written by Domingo to Angela.

Angela was born in 1859, in Oakland. She was a very pretty lady. She was, of course, the youngest and, I guess, kind of a favorite of everybody, including her brothers. She was a very independent person and she decided to go to art school in San Francisco when she was a young woman of about seventeen.

She went to the California School of Fine Arts, which I guess was called the Mark Hopkins Institute then.* There she met Chris Jorgensen, who had been born in Norway in 1859. Virgil Williams was the director of the art school, and he was Virgil Williams' assistant and kind of a protégé, and they became dear friends.

* The California School of Fine Arts was known as the California School of Design prior to 1893. From 1893 until 1916 it was called the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art.

Lawrence: Catherine Lytell, who was the executor of the will of Angela's daughter-in-law, Florence Jorgensen, has written me a lengthy history. I'm not sure whether I believe this or not, but she says that Angela told Florence that Domingo Ghirardelli was very much opposed to the marriage of Angela and Chris Jorgensen, because Chris Jorgensen was a foreigner. Or probably more because he was an artist and earned his living in that manner.

So Chris and Angela used to have to meet surreptitiously in very unfrequented places in Oakland. Finally (Catherine Lytell is quoting Florence, and I think Florence told me some of this, too, because Florence and I were quite good friends) Angela just said to her father, "I don't care what you say; I'm going to marry this man and you better give me the wedding." And so he did, and they were married in 1881. And everything was peachy-keen.

Teiser: Was she a good artist?

Lawrence: Yes, she was wonderful. I have a painting of hers which I will show you. I also have a box she did. She was a wonderful artist. Oh yes, I must quote her because when she and Chris were married she made the statement, "Well, I think that one dabbler in painting is enough for one family."

Teiser: Did she then stop painting?

Lawrence: Yes.

He was a very prominent California artist at that time.* He had his Yosemite period. They lived in Yosemite for about ten years, summer and winter. He painted and Angela was kind of a pioneer woman. When Theodore Roosevelt was the president he came to visit Yosemite and he met Chris and Angela because they were in residence there. Of course, Roosevelt was a great conservationist and outdoor man, as were Chris and Angela. I mean they loved nature and they loved the beauty of Yosemite. So they were summoned to the White House, which was very exciting. They were invited for dinner with some other very important people. It was quite thrilling for them because Roosevelt was the epitome of what Chris Jorgensen admired in

*See George Wharton James, "Chris Jorgensen--A Versatile California Artist," in California Scrapbook: A Collection of Articles. Los Angeles: N.A. Kovach (1945). Originally published in August 1915 issue of National Magazine.

Lawrence: a leader. Chris Jorgensen was the artist, but here was a man who could lead men and influence the way the world went 'round, so to speak.

Teiser: When he went out in the field to paint, did his wife go with him?

Lawrence: Mostly she did.

Teiser: I've seen his paintings of California missions at the Sonoma Mission.

Lawrence: The reason the paintings are in the Sonoma Mission is that Florence Jorgensen donated them. She was Virgil Williams Jorgensen's wife--Chris and Angela's son was named after Virgil Williams--and she inherited all of the Jorgensen paintings except a few. I have a few, and other members of the family have a few, and they're in some collections. Unfortunately he is not as well known as he should be because Florence kept them in her home during her lifetime and then she left them to the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History. They're down in Los Angeles, but the Pioneers are having a Jorgensen show some time in 1986, so they'll be up here.

Teiser: The Bancroft Library has a few of them.

Lawrence: Yes, I know they do. I think given by Florence Jorgensen. Catherine Lytell is putting this collection together with Dr. Joseph Baird.

Chris died in 1935 in Piedmont, where they had a lovely house up on a hill, on Mountain Avenue. It was just beautiful. I used to go there to play with their grandson. Shall I interject a story now, because it's sort of interesting?

Teiser: Yes.

Lawrence: My husband and I were invited to a dinner party on Mountain Avenue in Piedmont about four or five years ago. I walked into this house and I said to the hostess, "You know, I have the most peculiar feeling of déjà vu that I cannot stand it." And she said, "Well you might have. This was the house of Chris and Angela Jorgensen many, many years ago, in the 1930s." That's where they lived. Their grandson lived with them there, and my grandmother lived down the street. I used to go up and play with this young child, Chris Jorgensen Anderson, who was about my age. It was the strangest feeling I've ever had. And it was true.

Lawrence: After Chris died in 1935 Angela went to Palm Springs for her health and she died in Palm Springs in 1936. But they left behind them many very interesting anecdotes and paintings.

He had a Yosemite period, as I said. Then they lived in Carmel for several years; the old part of the La Playa Hotel was their house. He painted many Carmel scenes and Monterey Peninsula scenes. He also painted--they went to live in Arizona for a while--scenes of the Arizona desert. And he did many oils in Italy.

Angela and Chris went with Domingo, the original Domenico, when he was slightly elderly--in 1892 I believe it was--so that Chris could study in Italy. They went back to Rapallo and took a house there. Chris studied painting, and Domingo wandered the streets of his home town and went to see where his mother and father had lived, et cetera, and Angela more or less took care of him. They had their one son with them. Chris did a panoramic view of the Bay of Rapallo, which is perfectly lovely. It's owned by the Ghirardelli Square company now, and is in their corporate office at 900 North Point Street. But in the middle of this bay there's a little tiny boat and in the boat is Virgil Williams Jorgensen and his nurse. It really is a great, big thing. I've always coveted it.

And Rapallo is where Domingo died, in 1894, from influenza presumably. There is in existence--I guess The Bancroft has it--a notebook that Angela kept of medicines and visits from the doctor and everything else, because I guess it was a prolonged illness and was rather expensive for them, so she kept a record of all that.

Teiser: Do you think that Chris Jorgensen made a sufficient amount on his paintings to support the family, or was Angela using her inheritance?

Lawrence: Well, there was an article in Time magazine in maybe 1937 which enraged my father also. It was a write-up about Chris Jorgensen. It was a very complimentary write-up, that he did very well with his paintings, "however, he married Angela Ghirardelli and from then on didn't have to work very hard." I'm quoting Time magazine. My father didn't care for that very much, because Chris did work hard and he sold a lot of paintings; they are around. But I'm sure that she used part of her inheritance. The house in Piedmont was perfectly lovely, as was the La Playa residence.

Teiser: Did she dress like an artist?

Lawrence: No. She had sort of flamboyant hair; she didn't coif it, the way they did in those days. It was just kind of loose, which might give you kind of a hint.

Eugene Ghirardelli and His Wife

Teiser: You've mentioned Caesar, but what of Eugene?

Lawrence: There's not very much to say about Eugene. He was born in Oakland, but I have no date, and nobody else has either. That is the only information I can get. He married a factory girl, and he disappeared in 1909 and was never heard from again.

He ran out on his wife.* She later lived in Larkspur. Her name was Rose Ghirardelli. They had no children, but she did have the name.

Lawrence: My father told me that when Eugene disappeared in '09, they realized they had to do something about Rose, who had worked in the factory but was now married, legally, and had the name Ghirardelli. So every year from 1909 until she died in about 1945 or '46, the stockholders, who were all family members, voted to send her a yearly stipend so that she would not go without anything. And that went on for quite a while. I think I became a stockholder in 1944 when my grandmother died, and I used to go to the meetings. As I say, we never heard of Eugene again.

Teiser: I checked Eugene through the San Francisco city directories from 1900, and he was a salesman for various companies.

Lawrence: He did work for the [chocolate] company, but he probably didn't do very well.

Teiser: His residences varied, indicating that he wasn't very stable.

Lawrence: Right, right.

*In 1921 Rose Ghirardelli brought suit to have Eugene Ghirardelli declared legally dead, reporting to the court that he had left their home on July 3, 1909, and she had not seen him or heard from him since. See San Francisco Chronicle, July 30, 1921.

Teiser: For a time he was a salesman for a coal company. Then in 1905 he was president of E. Ghirardelli Mercantile Company, called "manufacturers and packers," on Clay Street. That must have been his own brief flurry into business for himself. Then he wasn't listed there on Clay Street again. In 1908--the listing would have been collected probably in 1907--he was a salesman at 707 Divisidero. After that, Mrs. E. Ghirardelli was listed at Divisidero as "delicacies." So she must have had a candy shop or something of the sort.

Lawrence: She probably knew how to make candy.

Teiser: Then he, I guess, disappeared, and I assume that she was the one who carried on there.

Lawrence: Yes, absolutely, Rose. I'm sure of that.

Teiser: I wonder if his disappearance got into the papers.

Lawrence: I'll tell you why I don't think so. Charles Sutton, who was married to Elvira, died not until 1934. My father was a great favorite of his, and Charles left my father his library. In the library there was a booklet this thick [indicating about six inches] of newspaper clippings about the family. There were many scandalous things in there, there really were, and I read them all as a child. I was fascinated. But there was never anything about Eugene. Whether they kept it out of the press or what, I don't know.

Teiser: What happened to the book?

Lawrence: That I wish I knew. Let's see, my father died in '56, and I couldn't find it after he died, nor could my mother. So I don't know whether it was lost. They had moved from a house to an apartment about two years before my father died. It must have been lost then.

Teiser: That's a good place to stop for today, with the last of the children.

Lawrence: Well one thing we must remember. In order to maintain some sort of continuity we must go back to Carmen Ghirardelli's death, because this is when we come to the leaving of the church and all. And that was in 1889. That's a good place, I think--to go back to her, the mother of them all.

Teiser: Good. We'll begin there next time.

The Family Break with the Catholic Church

[Interview 2: October 22, 1984]

Teiser: We were going to begin today with Carmen Ghirardelli's death.

Lawrence: The only reason that's important is the religious situation. As I told you, Domingo was wavering, his Catholicism was in doubt in his own mind, and then when the priest refused to come to give the last rites to the dying child, that finished him.* Carmen remained deeply religious during this period. The child had died in 1863, and Carmen lived more than twenty years after that. She died in 1889. During that period, Domingo had refused to let her go to church or have a priest in the house or anything. She presumably went along with his ideas and agreed with him. However, when she died she was clutching a crucifix, and so she was buried in a Catholic cemetery in Oakland, which is next to Mountain View, where Caesar and the others who had preceded her in death were also buried.

So this is where the story comes from and this is really true. Domingo Sr. was very upset about this, as were his sons. So one evening he gathered his sons--Domingo, Joseph, Louis, and I guess Eugene was around then, too--around him, and they hatched a plot whereby Domingo had a large mausoleum built over in Mountain View Cemetery which is the Protestant cemetery in Oakland, with a large Masonic emblem above the door. And one night they went and moved the entire family from the Catholic cemetery, which is right next door, into this crypt which is over there still today, where the members of the family are buried. They had the cooperation, obviously, of some undertaker or someone who helped them move this and put the cement on the graves and all that. You can go in and look at them; they're there today. So that's the story of how that generation of Ghirardellis gave up their religion, as did the succeeding generation.

Teiser: I have in mind a story that your father told me. When was this move made? It couldn't have been so long after her death.

Lawrence: No, it wasn't.

Teiser: And your father was born when?

*See page 10.

Lawrence: In 1884.

Teiser: Then it would have been correct. He told me, and I can't remember how it happened, but it seemed to me it was in reference to drinking.

Lawrence: I think you're the one who told me this, my father told you, that they did this and then they came back maybe to Louis' house and they all had a drink.

Teiser: That's right. He said they always had brandy or whiskey on the sideboard, and he remembered his father and uncles coming in very, very early one morning and going immediately to the sideboard and each having a drink. Apparently that was unusual.

Lawrence: Very unusual. At five in the morning it would have been. You're absolutely right, that's true. My father remembered this, and he would have been five years old.

Teiser: And somebody must have explained it to him.

Lawrence: His father probably explained it to him because I think his father probably felt he would think that was quite odd.

Teiser: You mentioned the Masonic symbol. I think your father said that the Church objected to his Masonry.

Lawrence: Well, the Church objected to everything about him, I know that, because he was very vocal in the fact that he had left. This is a biography by the Pioneers. [reading] "All the junior members of the firm are thorough businessmen, young men, and the house enjoys an enviable reputation for enterprise, solidarity, and scrupulously honest dealings. Mr. Ghirardelli affiliates with a number of social and benevolent societies. Amongst these are the Italian Benevolent, the Masons, and Odd Fellows." And he was a life member of the Pioneers and of the Garibaldi Guard. This is the Society of California Pioneers' Record, Volume 2, page 89 to 90. And this is a typed copy of it. It ends with, "He is one of the sterling and influential citizens who have aided materially in building up this gigantic young commonwealth on the shores of the Pacific sea."

There's one other thing, while we're on this subject. When Domingo Sr. went to Italy with Angela Ghirardelli Jorgensen and Chris Jorgensen and their son in 1892, I believe it was, he was back in his old home town, and he was a very kindly older gentleman. He would talk to the children and the ones who weren't well dressed he would take out and buy them clothes.

Lawrence: Well, then the word got around that this man had been excommunicated from the Church and so therefore their children couldn't associate with him, and they returned all the clothing and everything, and he was very upset about this. Angela Ghirardelli recounted this to her son, Virgil Jorgensen, and it upset him and it made him even madder than ever at the Church.

Teiser: Had he been actually excommunicated?

Lawrence: I think the story goes that he was. He was not in good standing with the Church, because he was a supporter of Garibaldi when he left Italy and sent money to the Garibaldi forces when he got over here. So the Church didn't like that very much either. It's interesting that it followed all the way down through the generations.

My mother was Catholic, so my father said he would raise me a Catholic, but it didn't last, it didn't take.

Teiser: Did your mother continue to be a Catholic?

Lawrence: Yes. And he was very tolerant about it. He was sort of an agnostic. He said, "All right, go to church if it makes you feel any better."

Now we've gone back to Carmen and finished that, and we know why we're all Protestants.

The Chocolate Company under Domingo Junior

Lawrence: The time of great growth of the company was under Domingo Jr.'s presidency, and he was very forward-looking and very up-to-date. One thing they did was they built in 1916 what they called "The Watchtower," which is where the offices of the company were located. That's sort of the logo of Ghirardelli Square now, this watchtower, which you would think would have been patterned on an Italian tower, but it's a French clock tower that it's based on.

This is also the time when the ground chocolate was being advertised and pushed because it was a whole new product, as you know, which Domingo Sr. had invented, which is called "broma."

And they manufactured mustard.*

*See page 37.

Lawrence: It was a time of expansion. Then, of course, there was World War I.

Teiser: In the minute books I think almost the last entry is that in 1918 the board of directors decided to hire an outdoor watchman for the period of the war.

Lawrence: Oh, for heaven sake.

I'm going to have to diverge a little bit here. My mother and father were married in 1916. My mother had grown up in Oakland, as had my father, but he insisted that they move to San Francisco to be near his work, which was at 900 North Point Street.

So they rented a house at 2626 Larkin Street, which meant he could walk down the hill to work. My mother hated San Francisco because the wind blew and it wasn't like old Oakland at all.

During the war they were busy. They worked twenty-four hours a day--this is under Domingo's presidency. They supplied confectionary to the army and navy, whatever. My father was the secretary of the company then, and D. Lyle was the vice president.

Teiser: He had been secretary since about 1911. The treasurer was the bank.

Lawrence: The bank?

Teiser: For years it was listed as the Anglo-California Bank, or its successors.

Lawrence: I know that the big company money was all in Crocker Bank, which absorbed the Anglo-California Bank, so that makes sense.

After the war the flu epidemic came along, it was shortly after the Armistice, and it was terrible. It affected the business because the work force were dropping like flies. And most of the work people--this has been true all the way through the existence of the company--were of Italian descent, and mostly from northern Italy.

Anyway, though the factory had been going twenty-four hours a day, during this flu period they cut down to one shift because they didn't have enough people. All of the officers, like Lyle and my father, and probably by that time my uncle

Lawrence: Louis was working there too, went with their wives on these errands of mercy, bringing hot soup and things to the households of the workers who had many members of the family who were ill.

That's when my mother learned how to drive, because she drove an ambulance with a nurse in attendance. The policemen would wave her through. So she became a superb driver, having learned the skill during that time--a rapid, but superb driver all her life.

III THE THIRD GENERATION

The Children of Domingo Ghirardelli, Junior

Alida Ghirardelli

Teiser: Will you tell about the children of Domingo Jr. and Addie?

Lawrence: Their first child, Alida Ghirardelli, was born in 1878. She was a very talented artist. I guess she went to the California School of Fine Arts,* and did some oil paintings which are still in existence. The de Young Museum has some of her paintings, but they haven't shown them for years.

She, tragically, died in Carmel by drowning in 1909. The story goes that Domingo Jr. went and sat on the beach for twenty-four hours, hoping that she would either wash ashore or come ashore. Anyway, it was a great blow, obviously, to the parents. At the time I believe they were visiting his sister Angela and her husband Chris Jorgensen, at their house in Carmel.

She never married. That's about all I know about Alida. I think she was supposed to have been perfectly beautiful. I think I've seen pictures of her.

D. Lyle Ghirardelli and His Family

Lawrence: Then the next child was D. Lyle Ghirardelli, Domingo Lyle, who was born in Oakland in 1881. He was the oldest son. He was educated at public schools in Oakland, and then he went to Stanford University, from which he graduated, and then went to work for the company while his father was still the president.

*See footnote p.22.

Lawrence: Domingo Jr. resigned the presidency of the company in 1922, and D. Lyle was appointed to succeed him. Domingo retained the chairmanship of the board. My father was made the vice president. By that time, my grandmother's other two sons were in the company, Louis Ghirardelli and Harvey. Louis Ghirardelli was the sales manager and Harvey was the secretary.

So through the twenties, of course, business boomed and everything was just peachy-keen. I believe they introduced a couple of new lines, like Nu-Malt, which was an instant chocolate malted milk, toward the end of the twenties.

Teiser: What sort of a man was Lyle?

Lawrence: Lyle was a good community person. He was very quiet and rather shy, but he was not dumb or anything. He was a good president. He was certainly a man about town. He belonged to the Bohemian Club, and he and his wife lived in a great big house on Jackson Street, which is now the French Consulate.

Her name was Alice. I can't remember her last name. She was a very nice lady. Some time in the early twenties they were walking across the street--they then lived on Vallejo Street, on the hill between Divisadero and Broderick--and they were hit by an automobile. She was severely injured and she never recovered really. She was an invalid after that.

They had two children: Ynez Ghirardelli, who was born in 1915, and Kent Ghirardelli, who was born in 1919. Now, Kent is the one who is somewhat my contemporary. I knew him, and he was a very handsome man. But he decided he did not wish to go into the family business, nor did he wish to continue a banking career which he had started with the American Trust, I think it was. So he went to Honolulu and has become an entrepreneur in Hawaiian customs, music, and history. And he changed his name to Kent Ghirard.

To my knowledge, he is still there. Margery Tingley did take her grandchildren over there about five years ago. She wrote to him and said she was coming, and he met her at the plane with a band and leis and everything else. They're first cousins. I called him once when I was in the islands, and he said, "Well, you know, I'm sort of estranged from the family, and I don't see that there's--" I just said, "Well, I just wanted to say hello. Goodbye." And that was that.

Lawrence: Now, Lyle and Alice's other child, Ynez, was a very brilliant student academically. She went to Burke's school here in San Francisco and attended the University of California, where she belonged to the Alpha Phi sorority. After she graduated she stayed on. She was a graduate student for about thirty years. I entered the University of California in 1939, and Ynez was still going to school. She also went to Radcliffe and got her Master's in art history, and then came back to Berkeley and I believe got her Ph.D. in art history.

She wrote a very presentable book on the history of art which is out of print now. I once had a copy, and something's happened to it and I'm rather upset. My grandmother bought the book, but her copy has disappeared too.

Teiser: It was titled The Artist H. Daumier: An Interpretation, published by The Grabhorn Press in 1940.

She was, as I know you are aware, a Berkeley character.

Lawrence: Oh yes. Very much so.

Teiser: And people still remember her. I do.

Lawrence: I do, too, of course. You know, she was a very nice person. She once came to see me. I was in a sorority, and she rang the bell and she said, "Now, I don't want to embarrass you." Because, you know, she dressed like a man. She wore a suit and tie and long pants and had kind of a crew cut. And she said, "I won't come in, but I'd like to talk to you." I'd had my appendix out or something. So I said, "Well, I'd love to have you come in."

But anyway we sat out in front on the lawn and had a little visit. She said, "You know, I know I'm considered an eccentric and I don't really care, but I'm doing what I like to do and I'm living my own life and I'm not doing anyone any harm." And I said, "Well, I understand that, and I don't care what you wear or look like." She said, "Well, how does your grandmother feel about me?" I said, "She's very fond of you."

Ynez went to call on my grandmother, who was in New York at the Plaza Hotel. Ynez called her and said, "I'm coming to see you but I'm coming in the back way because I don't want to embarrass you." And my grandmother, when she got up to the room, said, "Well, that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard of; you should be proud of yourself, no matter what." So Ynez asked me how my grandmother felt about her at that point in time, and I said, "Why, she's always spoken of you with great affection, so I wouldn't worry about that."

Lawrence: Anyway, she was very odd-looking. People wouldn't believe it that she was my cousin, and I said, "Well, she is, and I'll have to introduce you." But I didn't want to do it in that way because it would have been ridiculing her.

The crazy thing that happened was we both went to the same place to get our hair done. She went to get hers cut in a crew cut, and I went to get my set! So I'd call to make an appointment, "Now which Miss Ghirardelli is this, please?"

Teiser: Did she live in Berkeley then?

Lawrence: She lived in Berkeley for years. She built a little house for herself up on the hill, above Euclid, I think somewhere. I've never seen it. My son, Sidney Lawrence III, went to the University of California in 1966, and he used to see her around. He went up and introduced himself, and she was very nice to him. He was an art history major, so she was very interested in that. He went to her house after her death in 1970 at the request of a friend from The Bancroft Library to which she had bequeathed her book collection. He said one whole wall was books and then you went up a winding staircase and there was a little bedroom with a little pallet upon which she slept. I don't think there was even a kitchen in the house.

Her mother, Alice, died in 1951. I think when her father died in 1958 she became more of a recluse and I don't think saw anybody. I believe the coroner's verdict was malnutrition. She just kind of gave up and didn't care. It's a very sad story, but this whole family is rather sad.

Lyle resigned as president of the company about 1944, and he remained as chairman of the board. Having moved out of his big house after Alice died, he lived in an apartment. But he was a member of the Bohemian Club and he kept himself busy and went to the board meetings of the company. He had a hand in the business.

Teiser: Was he a good president?

Lawrence: Well, I think so, but he was very conservative. Too much so, I think. Under Domingo, you see, they advertised. My goodness, they had a radio program and all kinds of things. And Lyle didn't like that. He felt the company trademark was so well known it didn't have to be advertised. Now, if you remember, Hershey's chocolate never advertised. And he said, "Well, if they don't have to advertise, we don't have to advertise, so I won't do any of this."

Teiser: There was at least one other chocolate company here.

Lawrence: Guittard.

Teiser: They were not at all the size and fame, were they?

Lawrence: No, they were not. Well, it was founded later, for one thing, and it wasn't as big a factory. In fact, what is now Ghirardelli Square was the largest chocolate factory west of the Mississippi River. Did I tell you about the mustard thing?

Teiser: No.

Lawrence: There is a building in Ghirardelli Square there called the Mustard Building and the reason is, I have to go way back now, to Domingo Jr., who had a friend whose name was August Schilling (born in 1854). He was an importer of spices, and he and Domingo Jr. were contemporaries and friends. So they combined, and the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company made all the Schilling mustard right down to when we sold the company. In the Mustard Building they manufactured dry mustard under the label of Ghirardelli and the paste mustard, which was marketed under the name of Schilling.

One of my son's friends is Charles Schilling, so we get sort of hysterical every time we get together because there are books with cross references to both of them. The 1895 incorporation papers read, "Manufacturers dealing in chocolate, cocoa, coffee, spices, seeds, oils," and other things.

Corona Ghirardelli Hyde

Teiser: We were continuing with Domingo Jr.'s children?

Lawrence: Yes, I started with Alida and went to D. Lyle. The next child in age was Corona, who was born in 1889. And she married a man by the name of George Hyde. She was a real living character. The family laughed at her a lot because she was very--she was just different. I used to have a picture of her. Florence Jorgensen and I would trade this picture back and forth. Every Christmas we'd send it to each other upside down in a frame. She was a very sort of "posey" woman and not awfully attractive.

Teiser: Posey?

Lawrence: Posey. She would strike a pose, but not really attractive. But anyway, I suppose in the days she was growing up that was what young women did; they thought they were adorable.

Anyway, while Domingo was the president of the company, she used to go around saying, and I quote, "I am the chocolate heiress." So naturally the rest of the family thought she was a little strange.

The family was based on I guess an Italian feeling or a Latin feeling, a European feeling of family structure. Up until recently, my generation got together a lot, so we saw a lot of the second cousins through my growing up. And George Hyde was a very nice man who always had dandruff on his collar, and we had the nerve to laugh at that.

He died some time in the late fifties, I think. And she moved to Santa Barbara, where she died in 1979. She did not have any offspring, and so she left everything to Margery Menefee Tingley, her niece, which I think was a very fair thing to do. By this time everybody else was dead in her family, except for Margery and Kent. And Margery put the inheritance all in trust for her grandchildren's college educations, and one of them is now in college, benefiting from this woman's generosity, which I think is really quite a nice little story.

Edwin Ghirardelli

Lawrence: Edwin Ghirardelli was born in 1884. He was exactly my father's age and they were very good friends. He and his father did not get along terribly well. In 1912 he was sent to Seattle as the representative of the company up there. They had an office up there at that time. They had offices in Seattle, Portland, Oregon, and Los Angeles. This is why I'm saying Domingo was an enterprising person. Edwin--his nickname was Sid--killed himself, in Seattle, in 1912, a terrible thing. I told you this is a tragic family, it really is.

Teiser: Does anyone know why?

Lawrence: Well, he wasn't happy in Seattle and he wanted to come back, and his father said, "No, you have to stay there and do what you're supposed to do." My father, who was close to him, really never understood what happened either, except that because of Addie's overbearing personality-- My father would

Lawrence: visit Edwin at the Domingo Ghirardelli house, he'd spend the night. And every Sunday they spent on their knees praying. It was a repressive atmosphere, so that's part of it, I guess.

Esperance Ghirardelli Alvord

Lawrence: Now, the next one is Esperance, who was born in 1892. She was a twin, and the other twin did not survive. She was very active in the community before her marriage and after. Before her marriage, she and her mother did not get along, and Esperance worked closely with Miss Alice Griffith, who was quite a San Francisco character. She was sort of a protégé of Alice Griffith's, and they together founded the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Association. And Esperance was so unhappy at home that she used to go down and sleep at the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Association rather than go home at night.

Esperance became a Christian Scientist. I don't know why, but that had something to do with her relationship with her mother. Anyway, she met and married Vernon Alvord in 1924. Before that she had been the president of the Junior League of San Francisco, under the name of Esperance Ghirardelli. Then, after her marriage, she served another term as Mrs. Vernon Alvord.

She was very well thought of in the community. She helped found Pinehaven, which was a home for bereft women with children, under the auspices of the Junior League. Eventually that was taken over by the Salvation Army. But she was one of the leading lights of that.

I met her but I don't really remember her. She was a great friend of, strangely enough, my mother-in-law, my husband's mother. They were about the same age. She was a lovely woman. I can remember going to tea at Aunt Addie's house, and Esperance was there and she was very attractive. But she became pregnant and died of a fallopian pregnancy because she didn't go to a doctor. She died in 1927.

Ruth Ghirardelli Menefee

Lawrence: The youngest child was Ruth Ghirardelli Menefee. She was born in 1898. She married Mr. Menefee from Portland. I think he was part of a large family from Portland, Oregon. Anyway, the marriage didn't last, and he left her with a child, Margery, who was born in 1920.

Ruth was a very entertaining woman who simply did not accept her mother's rigid standards and just led her own life and did whatever she wanted to do. However, they were never estranged. She spent a lot of time at the mother and father's house in Hillsborough. She died tragically in a fire in 1961.

So that's Domingo and Addie Ghirardelli's children.

Addie lived a long time. She died in 1950, in Hillsborough. She wanted to leave a memorial to her husband, Domingo. So, in about 1935, through the cooperation of the city, she built sort of a shelter in Golden Gate Park, which is off Stanyan Street, for older men. There was a building, which was a shelter, and then there were tables for dominoes and cards and things like that. It was maintained by the city through an endowment which she established for the purpose. It had a bust of Domingo and it was dedicated to his memory.

I can remember the opening. We were all there, and it was very exciting, and the mayor spoke. I think the mayor was James Rolph at the time. And now Margery Menefee and her family are sort of in charge of this and she tells me the city has just let it go. I don't know whether the endowment has run out or they don't care, but the place is going to wrack and ruin. Margery and her children are going to try and do something about it, go to the Board of Supervisors. Margery has established a trust they might be able to do something with. It's too bad for something like that to go to pieces. It was done with a very good intent. I think I told you earlier Domingo was very much concerned about senior citizens, and, of course, this was the perfect thing for Addie to do for him.

Also, I just remembered something. While Lyle was the president, they used to have a reenactment of the landing of Columbus down at Aquatic Park. They still do. So the entire Ghirardelli clan, every year, would go down and sit on the roof of the factory and watch this thing. I can remember doing this as a child. Not everybody remembers this, but I do. So, you know, the parade would come and it was right down there in

Lawrence: front of you, and we'd all wave to Columbus and he would wave back to us. It was just a great big Genovese party. And that was during the twenties and early thirties. That was fun.

The Children of Joseph Ghirardelli

Carmen Ghirardelli Baker

Lawrence: Now, we discussed Joseph, his career and the fact that he died in '06 as a result of a heart attack brought on, ostensibly, by the fire. He married Ellie Barstow and they had two children. One was Carmen Ghirardelli Baker, who was born in 1896 and died in 1967. And Joseph Nicholas Jr. was born in 1898 and died in 1962.

Carmen was married to George Washington Baker Jr., who was quite an active Democrat, and he and Carmen had really quite a lovely life. They lived in Piedmont. Remember, I told you there was an enclave of houses down on Poplar Street in old Oakland. When the family got up to Piedmont, they kind of did the same thing.

Carmen and George lived on Crocker Avenue in a lovely, great big house. On the corner, behind them or next to them, was a beautiful Julia Morgan house where Carmen Reed and her husband Ben lived. Carmen Reed was a first cousin of Carmen Baker. Then across the street lived my Aunt Juanita Ghirardelli Magee, who was a first cousin. My grandmother lived about two blocks up the hill at 6 King Avenue. Then, the interesting thing is that my husband's grandfather, Walton N. Moore, lived behind them on Farragut Avenue. So it was all kind of crazy.

Carmen and George had animals in their garden. They had parrots, and they had a monkey. They used to give wonderful parties. They were kind of on the fast track, so to speak. You'd see movie stars and people like that there; it was awfully exciting.

Then, during the war, Franklin Roosevelt appointed George Baker as the liaison officer between the United States government and Manuel Quezon, who was the Philippine president in "exile." Quezon came to this country, and George and Carmen went to Washington to live--I believe they lived in the Shoreham Hotel,

Lawrence: which was new then--and stayed throughout the war doing whatever business George did with Mr. Quezon; I've never understood it. I visited them once. Wartime Washington was somewhat dull, but I met the president.

After the war, George was made the vice chairman, I guess, of the Economic Recovery Organization in Italy. He was sent to Rome to administer helping our foes.

Teiser: Was it under the Marshall Plan?

Lawrence: Yes. Definitely under the Marshall Plan.

So they lived in Rome for three or four years. Carmen spoke fluent Italian by the time she got home, and she was also decorated by the Italian government while there because she was very active in promoting good will between Italy and the United States.

She was also a founder of the AWVS, American Women's Voluntary Services, during the war, with Mrs. Nion Tucker. It was funny because Mrs. George Cameron, who was Mrs. Tucker's sister, was a very big wheel in the Red Cross, so they were sort of vying with each other! But Carmen was very active until they were sent to Washington, which was in '42.

George and Carmen Baker had three children. George Washington Baker III was born in 1920. He graduated from the University of California and then he went into the army during the war. During the war he was married in Pasadena to Barbara Bruck, who had been a sorority sister of mine at the University of California. George Baker III was a member of Chi Phi Fraternity at UC, as was Sidney Lawrence III, in '66-'67. George returned to alumni parties. He was a great piano player. After the war he went to work for the chocolate company, in the sales department.

We got ourselves into a real family vendetta because Carmen Ghirardelli Baker and I were against the management of the company. We were agitating to either sell the company or do something, which would have made it 1954.

George [III] was working for the company at the time. My husband had worked for the company until 1957, when he was employed by the San Francisco Chronicle. George was on the side of management. And in the interim, the bakers' second son, Joseph Ghirardelli Baker, who was born in 1922 in Piedmont, was killed in Normandy in 1944.

Lawrence: Their other child was Carmencita Baker, who was married to Niven Busch, the successful writer. Then she divorced Niven Busch and she married Jose Antonio Sanchez Cardoza. Carmencita says she was born in 1932. She had quite a few children by Niven Busch. They are all rather successful and are around. And then she has two girls by Mr. Cardoza, Jessica and Marina. They live in San Jose, where he has a gainful job and they live in a very nice house.

Joseph Ghirardelli Junior

Lawrence: Then there's Joseph and Ellie's son, Joseph N. Ghirardelli Jr. He was a very talented musician. He could play anything on the piano and he sang and danced and everything else, and he was very entertaining. He used to be on the board of directors of the company, but he did not have a gainful position in the company.

But my father was very fond of him, and when my father was vice president under Lyle, Joe would always say, "All right, Al, how do you want me to vote today?" He was a very attractive man.

He was married twice. He was married first to a lady by the name of Dorothy, who was older than he was. I remember they came to my wedding, which was in 1944. She came down the receiving line and spent about half an hour telling me why they had been late to get to the wedding because she had two Pekingese dogs and the dog sitter did not get there on time.

Then he married a very nice woman. Her first name was Farrell. She had been Dorothy's trained nurse because Dorothy was not well the last part of her life. So Joe married her after Dorothy died.

Teiser: You said she might be still alive?

Lawrence: Yes. Farrell and Carmen got along well enough. Carmen tried to be nice to her after Joe died; I don't think Farrell really spoke to Carmen very much.

The Daughter of Elvira Ghirardelli Sutton

Carmen Sutton Reed

Lawrence: Now, Elvira and Charles Sutton. Their only child was Carmen Sutton, who was born in Oakland in 1884 and died in Piedmont in 1930. She was my father's first cousin. Elvira, she died in Paris on a trip, so Carmen sort of became a part of Louis and Johanna Legler Ghirardelli's household because they lived across the street from each other, and she was my father's exact age, so they grew up together.

She, I remember quite vividly, was a perfectly adorable woman. She was quite good-looking and rather Italian-looking, and she had a very fey sense of humor. And they had animals all over their house. They had rabbits and things because they had a huge garden, you see, right next to Carmen Baker's.

She married Ben Reed, Benjamin Reed, and they had two children, the oldest of whom was Elva Reed, whose nickname was Benjy. She was born in 1913. Then, Benjamin Reed Jr., who lent you the articles of incorporation, was born in 1918.

Teiser: What did they call him if his sister had already the nickname Benjy?

Lawrence: They called him Pecky. Now, this is his mother, who had this very fey sense of humor, so she called Elva Benjy and Ben Jr. Pecky. Pecky doesn't like to be called Pecky any more.

Elva, poor darling—she was only eighteen years old when her mother died in 1935. That was a terrible blow. It was very difficult for her because she was going to the University of California that fall and the mother died during the summer.

Carmen had not been seriously ill and she became quite ill suddenly. The doctors thought it was appendicitis and they operated on her, and it wasn't; it was cancer, and she died within a few days of the vain operation. It's amazing that as late as 1930 they didn't suspect something else besides what they thought.

Benjy then married in about 1938. The wedding was at my grandmother's house at 6 King Avenue. She married Joseph Hendricks. They had two children, Carmen, who was called Candy, and Joseph Jr., who they called Jay. Candy was born in 1943, and Jay was born in 1944, both of them in Oakland. They're a generation below me.

Lawrence: Joe left Benjy in about 1948 or '49. She had inherited her mother's fey sense of humor, but it was almost too fey. I guess she was probably rather difficult to live with, and he just said to her one day, "I can't stand it any longer, and I'm leaving you." She died in 1971.

Ben Reed Jr. went to the University of California and then he went to work for the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company. He was the plant manager for quite a long time.* He married Susan Henshaw, from Piedmont. The Henshaws are a big huge family in the East Bay. My father said the wedding was like the Montagues and the Capulets, because one side of the church was filled with Henshaws and the other side was filled with Ghirardellis. They were married in about 1934 or '35. And they had three children, Bambi, Robin and Daphne.

The Children of Louis Ghirardelli, "The Tribe of Johanna"

[Interview 3: October 24, 1984]

Alfred Ghirardelli

Lawrence: My father, Alfred Ghirardelli, was the oldest son of Johanna and Louis. He was born in 1884 in Oakland. He went to public school, Oakland primary and Oakland high school, and then he went to the University of California and got his degree in mechanical engineering. He was in the earthquake class, the class of '06.

His father had died, of course, in 1902. The morning of the earthquake--or the fire, as my father always insisted on calling it, which struck at five o'clock in the morning--he was in his fraternity house at the University of California and was very concerned about what had happened to the chocolate factory, which then was at 900 North Point Street.

So he hired a boat and came across the bay and landed down by what is now Aquatic Park in order to see that the factory was all right, which is very funny because he didn't even work for the company at that time. It was just he wanted to be sure.

*See interview with Ben W. Reed, pp. 154-172.

Lawrence: Of course, it was a brick building, which is what concerned him. At that time the whole family lived in Oakland. He found that the factory was intact indeed, and they continued to manufacture even while the city was in flames.

Teiser: So the equipment wasn't damaged or anything?

Lawrence: No, which is very amazing. Except I think the equipment probably is so heavy. Well, the woolen mill building certainly was very old, but the other building was built in 1898. I think they call it the Mustard Building now. So it must have been a very sturdy job of construction.

Teiser: It's not on fill, of course.

Lawrence: No, it's not. I would assume it's rocky because it's certainly rocky at Fort Mason, which is right there too. But it stood throughout the whole thing, which is amazing.

Teiser: There must have been disruption because of the workers' difficulty getting back and forth.

Lawrence: Well, I'm sure there was disruption because of the fire, but, of course, it never got to that area, and I guess the workers probably all lived in North Beach and most of that was pretty well preserved.

So anyway, Alfred did that, and of course his class didn't have a graduation because it was the year of 1906, though he did get his diploma! They had to mail them out. The end of his college career was disrupted. I think they had their finals some time in May and then school was out because people were needed other places.

Teiser: Whom had he studied with?

Lawrence: He never mentioned whom he studied under. Mostly he talked about his classmates, the people he'd gone to college with, and the College of Engineering building.

Teiser: Who were his friends from college?

Lawrence: Well, Leroy Briggs, who is dead, was a physician and he was an undergraduate in the same class. Then he went on to medical school and became a very well-known physician. They were lifelong friends. And Arthur Fennimore, whose family owned the California Optical Company, was in the class of '06, and they were lifelong friends, too. Oh, Florence Ziegenfuss Briggs,

Lawrence: who was married to Leroy Briggs, was in the class of '06, too. Louis Frye was someone he spoke of often. That's all I can remember. But Leroy Briggs and Arthur Fenimore--their wives were friends of my mother--were friends for a long time.

When my father was a freshman he was the coxswain of the crew because he weighed very little at that time. He was a great spectator and was always very upset that he wasn't a bigger man so that he could participate in sports, but he was very proud of having been the coxswain of the crew.

Teiser: How tall was he?

Lawrence: He was about five-eight. He was medium height. He was very conscious of it, however, being really a sports fan at heart. When they won a race, of course the coxswain was thrown in the water, and this was the Alameda Estuary, which must have been rather uncomfortable! But he enjoyed that.

Anyway, as I said, he grew up in Oakland, and there he had known a young woman whose name was Clarisse Lohse, my mother, who was a dear friend of his dear cousin Carmen Sutton. They were the same age. My mother was born in Oakland in 1884, I think.

My mother's mother had died when my mother was eighteen years old, and so she had kept house for her father and had to sort of raise her younger brother, who was about ten years younger than she. She was very busy doing that. The younger brother went to the University of California also, and my mother had to go out to the Mothers' Club meeting of the Phi Delta Gamma house. She said it was really quite arduous for her because the other ladies were a great deal older.

As a consequence, she was unmarried at the late age of about thirty-two, having taken care of her father and younger brother. Her older sisters were married and had their own children. Finally--Alfred Ghirardelli had not married either--they re-met. I guess they'd known each other in high school. Their courting days were spent at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. So all my life I've heard about that.

My mother's older sister, Anita Lohse Gregory, was very domineering. I think my father wanted to get my mother away from both his very strong mother and this other person, because my mother was motherless. Anita was married to McClure Gregory and had a daughter, Jane, and a son, David McClure, and they lived in Piedmont and they were around a lot. When my mother and father were married, it was "Mr. and Mrs. McClure Gregory invite you to the wedding of her sister."

Lawrence: The McClures and the Gregorys are old California families that owned a lot of land around Santa Cruz. My Aunt Anita was a beautiful woman. McClure Gregory had been educated in Europe and was a mining engineer, but he was the kind of a man who couldn't really work for anybody else, and she had a hard time in life. My Aunt Anita was a wonderful woman, she really was. She outlived my mother, which was always a sore subject with Anita. She said, "I don't know why poor Clarisse had to go first." Well, Clarisse knew when it was time for her to go.

My mother and father were married in 1916, and they moved to Larkin Street in San Francisco. I told you about how during the war they worked a twenty-four hour shift at the factory.* My mother finally got accustomed to living in San Francisco, but it took her five years.

Teiser: In 1907 I see that your father is listed as a "clerk" with the company.

Lawrence: That was when he was sent to Richmond, I believe.

Teiser: Let's trace his career in the company.

Lawrence: As I recall it, after he graduated from college he went right into the company--Uncle Domingo was the president--and he was sent to Richmond where they had a plant. He was the superintendent of that plant or whatever the title was. I think he was there for quite a few years, not liking it terribly much because it was kind of isolated, and he wasn't where the action was. I think they did some stage of the manufacture of chocolate and then it was sent down to the plant to be finished. After that, he came back to San Francisco.

In about 1912 his mother took his two younger sisters, who were not married, on a grand tour of Europe. She felt the young ladies needed this trip. He was living with them, so he came over to San Francisco and lived at the University Club. He lived there for as long as they were gone, which was I think almost a year.

Teiser: When your father came to San Francisco, then, do you know what his duties were?

*See page 31.

Lawrence: Well, he was very much involved in the "mechanical," engineering, aspects of the manufacturing process. He and Italo Vasconi, who was the chief engineer of the company, were great friends. Italo was a very good engineer, and he and my father became very close friends and they did all kinds of things. They sort of invented various processes. I remember one thing they did. It was much cheaper to get your sugar for the manufacture in a liquid form, so they invented some sort of a pipeline that would take the sugar from the tanker cars--there was a railroad spur that went right by the bottom of the factory--and put it into vats so that it could then be put into the manufacturing process.

In 1922 when Domingo became the chairman of the board and gave up the presidency and Lyle became the president, my father became the vice president, and his brother Harvey became the secretary. His other brother, Louis, was the sales manager. That continued until Lyle retired and my father became the president.

Teiser: Harvey is listed as "superintendent" in 1922.

Lawrence: Harvey was the superintendent for years. I used to go down to the factory, and he was always out in the little house in back that was the superintendent's office. But I think he also had the title of secretary.

Teiser: Ghirardelli was and is a well-known name, and that must have carried both privileges and problems. People must have thought, "Oh, they're wealthy," whether they were wealthy or not. Were you aware of that?

Lawrence: Yes, I would say so. When my father asked my mother to marry him he said, "Now, I want you to realize that if you accept, you are marrying an advertised name, and it has its advantages and its disadvantages, and I want you to be aware of that." My mother always said later she didn't realize how deeply it did affect your life.

During the General Strike of 1934 in San Francisco they threatened to kidnap me. I was an only child. So I had to be sent away for the summer. And I was aware of that. My father also carried a gun during that period because they threatened him. It was the big longshoremen's strike.

The company had never been unionized until that strike. There was a teamster who was not an Italian, he was someone who had been working on a Public Works Administration project down in Aquatic Park, and my Uncle Harvey saw the man. This man was working, and the rest of the men weren't doing anything.

Lawrence: So he went down to him and said, "Pardon me, I've just been watching you"--he'd watched him for several days--"and you seem to be a very hard worker. Would you like a job in the chocolate factory?" And the man said, "Well, yes, but I am a truck driver by profession." So Uncle Harvey said, "Well, that's perfectly fine, we need someone. We have lots of trucks that we send out," et cetera.

So this man came to work for the company as a teamster. As an aftermath of this strike in the thirties, he, I think, came to my father, who was a more liberal person--and I mean that with a small l--than many of the other members of the family, and he said to him, "I'm terribly sorry, but I've had to join the Teamsters' Union or I can't work."

And my father said, "Oh, that's perfectly all right, just behave yourself! And keep out of trouble. Don't get involved in union politics and things like that because we're not going to have the rest of the workers organized into the Candy Workers' Union or any of those because we pay better wages than the union scale anyway," which was true. So they really never had any labor problems, and this man worked for the factory til it went out of business.

To be perfectly honest, I would say that the family probably was extremely wealthy before World War II and even during and after because the factory supported all these families, and very nicely. As my grandmother, Johanna, used to say, "You know, that red brick building over there is really just a little gold mine." And it was. You see, it was a closely held corporation.

Unfortunately, what happened to the business was that the men, members of the family, who were running it weren't realistic enough to realize that you have to change with the times.

My father had been the president and he became ill in 1952. He didn't resign, but he went to the office and he came home at noon, and Harvey, his brother, was the acting person. So it was very unfortunate. Then, my father died in 1956, and nothing worked out very well after that.

Alfred Ghirardelli was a very community-minded person. He was an original founder of the Community Chest of San Francisco, which grew into the United Fund. He and my mother were very hard workers in that cause for many years.

Lawrence: My mother was also very community-minded. She was on the Girl Scout Council and worked for the Red Cross and was a member of the Little Jim Club of Children's Hospital, of which she became the treasurer. She really knew very little about being a treasurer, so my father used to have to do the books for her every month! But it was a good cause.

Then, strangely enough, I became a member of the Little Jim Club and then also went on the board of Children's Hospital, so I have a great background in community work.

Teiser: Your father served on the board of the Bank of America?

Lawrence: Yes.

Teiser: Did he serve on other boards?

Lawrence: He was on the board of the Downtown Association for many years, as someone who worked on North Point Street. But the president was a friend of his, and he said, "I need you on the board of the Downtown Association." He was an advisor to the Expansion Committee of the Chamber of Commerce for a while. And he was on the board of the Italian Welfare League. He was the one who made them become part of the Community Chest. And he was on the board of the Community Chest for ages, and a trustee of the University of the Pacific.

I also was on the board of the Community Chest, and I will tell you one of my most treasured memories. My father was ill (he had a heart attack in about 1952), but I was the nominating chairman of the Community Chest before it was going to be turned into the United Community Fund. As such, I had to give a speech at a great big community luncheon at the Palace Hotel, to which my father was invited.

So I said, "Well, I'm going to have to give a speech." And he said, "Well, I'll just come right along with you then." So he went, and as I looked out from the head table and from the podium, there he was sitting with Emma McLaughlin, and Alice Griffith, all the old-time people who had been the movers of this thing. Ward Mailliard was there also.

Anyway, they had a table to themselves, and so I made my speech. The only thing I said that I can remember was that, "the Community Chest has been very fortunate over the years in its leadership and that's what's made it a success. We have only to look around this room to see why it was successful,

Lawrence: because the people here represent the best of this community. And now it's going to be the Community Fund, so I, as nominating chairman, really have no report except to congratulate the new organization."

I think that tells the story. He was very interested in things like that and did a lot.

During the first World War my father was absolutely mad to get into the fighting forces. I have a file here of letters from prominent people recommending this sterling young man. This is Leon Sloss, [reading] "My Dear Cocoa"--that was one of his nicknames--"I am enclosing herewith letter to the commanding officer of the Field Artillery, as requested. I believe you will find however that in addition to the letters, the men writing the letters have to sign on the face of your application, at least I did so in Burnham's case."

However, they didn't want him because he was in the food industry, and by that time he was also a little bit old, thirty-two or -three.

This is another letter from the Quartermaster Corps, somebody stamped it "Major, Quartermaster Corps." "To Whom It May Concern: I have known Mr. Alfred Ghirardelli for more than five years and highly recommend him for a commission in the office of the Reserve Corps. Mr. Ghirardelli possesses all the attributes which tend to make an officer and a gentleman and he is a man of unquestionable ability, of decided mark in the business world, energetic, painstaking, and trustworthy. His integrity is beyond question. He attended the training camp at Monterey last year and was extremely enthusiastic and acquitted himself with great credit. The service will be distinctly benefited with the acquisition of men of the calibre of Mr. Ghirardelli."

There are many, many letters like that. But that came to naught.

Teiser: Your father belonged to the Family Club?

Lawrence: Yes.

Teiser: What was the particular distinction of the Family Club?

Lawrence: Well, the Family Club was founded by a group of Bohemian Club members who were dissatisfied with the Bohemian Club's policy at the time about Jewish people becoming members, and so they founded the Family Club, which was just an offshoot of the

Lawrence: Bohemian Club, and it had very much the same aims, which were, oh, culture and--I mean, the Bohemian Club really was founded by Bohemians. They were artists and writers and composers and people like that, and that was the premise upon which it was founded. But some of them disagreed, and I don't remember who the founders were of the Family Club, but that's how it was founded.

My father must have joined, oh, I guess after he was married, about 1916 or '17. He enjoyed it. He agreed with the Family Club's policy on taking Jewish members, but he also quoted Judge M. C. Sloss who was a member of the Family Club. Judge Sloss said, "Now, don't get too many Jews in here or they'll take over your club." There's not that much difference between the two clubs now, except the Family Club has very good food. They do not allow women on the premises, and the Bohemian Club does. The Family Club has the Family Farm which is down in Woodside, off Woodside Road in a redwood grove, which is their camping place.

Teiser: Did your father go there?

Lawrence: Yes, he did. Oh yes, he was an ardent Family Club member. He was in all their plays. Let's see, they had their Spring event over the Memorial Day weekend. Then their Midsummer Night's Dream was in the middle of the summer. Then their whatever-it-was was Labor Day weekend. As my mother said, "Why do they have to always have it on a holiday which spoils any plans you might have had for a family vacation or anything." And he was the president of the Family Club for several terms when he got a little older in life, and really enjoyed it.

Teiser: My impression was that people who belonged to the Family Club were more fun than the people who belonged to the Bohemian Club.

Lawrence: Well, I think that probably is true. There are fewer of them, and I think they're probably much less stuffy. My brother-in-law belongs to the Family Club, Sid's brother, and Sid was a member of the Bohemian Club because Roy Briggs had put him up years and years ago when we were first married and then died, then Sidney's name came up and somebody else had to step in and sponsor him. But he became a member in the early fifties.

Teiser: Was your father a member of E Clampus Vitus?

Lawrence: Yes.

Teiser: Dr. Albert Shumate remembered your father was one of the early members.

Lawrence: Yes, he was, and he used to go on those trips where they'd go to Sonora and probably Columbia and places like that.

Teiser: Did he enjoy that?

Lawrence: Oh yes. He loved E Clampus Vitus.

He also was a member of the Trail Blazers, if you've ever heard of that.

Teiser: Yes.

Lawrence: Well, Virgil Jorgensen, his first cousin, who was his age, was a rancher in Sonoma. He had Laurelbrook Farm. He was kind of a gentleman farmer. He raised Hereford cattle and was a good rancher. But anyway, he belonged to this Trail Blazers. And he talked my father into joining. They used to go on these four-day-long horseback trips, and I'm sure there was a good deal of drinking and hilarity and everything else, and my father used to come home absolutely exhausted from these things. It was somewhere near Pleasanton where they ended up, because that's where my grandmother had this house, and it always happened in June, and they would ride in through Pleasanton and down to Livermore where there was always a rodeo going on at this particular date. And these men would all ride in the parade. Well, they all were, you know, practically falling off their horses. But that was something he enjoyed, too. He liked things like that.

Then, of course, the Pioneers were very close to his heart.

Teiser: Yes, he was president of the Society of California Pioneers for some time.

Lawrence: Yes, he was. For several terms, as I recall. The whole family belonged to it.

Teiser: I suppose your father maybe was a more interested member than some of the others?

Lawrence: Yes, he was, and he's the one who talked his brothers and his cousins and everybody else into joining it, because he thought they should, they should be represented. One must be a descendant from some man who was in California before 1850 in order to join. My father proposed our son Sidney Lawrence III for membership when he was born in 1948. As a young man he accepted.

- Teiser: In your father's time the Pioneer Society was an interesting organization.
- Lawrence: Yes, I wish it were more pulled together now; there doesn't seem to be the tremendous interest. The people today who are the paid staff are not like Helen Giffen, who was a real live wire.
- Teiser: She was your father's secretary for a while.
- Lawrence: Yes, she was wonderful. She knew what she was doing. They used to have parties there that were wonderful, and they don't do any of these things any more. Of course, one thing my mother refused to do was join the Society of California Pioneers Women's Auxiliary.
- Teiser: Your father, I know, contributed a great deal to the organization.
- Lawrence: Well, he did. Including his recipe for some kind of punch they used to serve.
- Teiser: Was that his recipe for Pisco punch?
- Lawrence: Yes. Deadly. He used to go down and make the stuff before these parties.

FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD

- Lawrence: Well, back to 1916. Alfred married this young woman, Clarisse. Then they moved to San Francisco, and in 1921 their only child, Clarisse Marie Ghirardelli, was born, and that is I. They were then living on Green Street in San Francisco. Then they built a house on the corner of Scott and Pacific. They were renting the house on Green Street and they had to leave, so they lived at the Hotel El Drisco, which is up on Pacific Avenue and Broderick for a year.

They had a baby nurse, a German lady whose name was Emily. They took her with them to the El Drisco Hotel, and she just didn't like it because it was too "unconvenient." But she stayed with them for the year they had to stay, and then they moved into their house. They said, "Well, Emily, you've said you're going to leave." She didn't want to leave by that time because I guess she had had the life of Riley living in the El Drisco Hotel. But my father said, "Well, you gave us notice," so that's that.

Lawrence: So she went on to greater things and was a baby nurse for a lot of people I know, one being Barney Conrad, who is an author, from an old San Francisco family. So we always feel we have a lot in common because of this very Germanic lady. During World War II I was married and was living at home. My husband was overseas, and my mother and I were sitting in her bedroom one day having a little visit, and the doorbell rang. I went down to answer it because we didn't have any help. This was still on Scott and Pacific. Here's this lady standing there, and I said, "Won't you come in?" She said, "My name is Emily Ashtomak" [approximating the sound of the last name with a heavy German accent].

I said, "Oh, my goodness. Well, I'll go up and tell my mother you're here." And she said, "Don't bother," and with that she just marched up the stairs and walked into my mother's bedroom, and we had the most uncomfortable time because she sat there for about an hour telling us how wonderful Adolf Hitler was. And here we are in the middle of this terrible conflict, and my husband is overseas, and everybody else in the world that I know is too. There was nothing we could say. "He is a wonderful man! Germany has come back!" [affecting a heavy German accent] Oh, it was incredible. So that was Emily, and I don't know what became of her after that.

Teiser: Were you born at home or in the hospital?

Lawrence: I was born in 1921 at St. Francis Hospital, which was then a brand new hospital. The physician was Reginald Knight-Smith, who was a very well-known gentleman. And this was sort of his hospital, and he insisted that my mother go to it, which was a terrible experience for her. It was so new that there were rats crawling around on the floor, and she said to him, "If you don't get me out of here, I'm going to go nuts." So he did, and she came home and subsequently recovered. But I've always remembered that story. It must have been a terrible experience.

Teiser: He was a neighbor of yours.

Lawrence: Yes, he lived right around the corner. My mother was very admiring of him.

I do remember hearing the story. I think she had a rather difficult time, because she was a little old for childbearing. I was born, and my father walked into the room and he had seen the child, and she said to him, "Isn't she perfectly beautiful?" And my father said, "Well, yes. There, there, dear." I evidently had a big thing on the back of my head or something,

Lawrence: you know, one of these elongated craniums or something. He said it took him a long time before he could ever break the news to her that it was one of the ugliest things he'd ever seen in his life! But he kept it from her until she was able to bear hearing the whole thing.

Teiser: Would you describe your home at 2460 Scott Street?

Lawrence: That, of course, is the first place I remember because I went there when I was a year old. It was on the corner of Pacific Avenue and Scott. There was another house like it up on the corner of Jackson and Scott. The builder had built this block of houses, not a square block, but one block on Scott Street between Jackson and Pacific. Our lot had been the site of the stables of the old Talbot house, which had been up on Jackson Street. We had a small side yard that was maybe twenty feet wide and thirty feet deep. My mother, of course, put in a garden, and every once in a while the gardener would come across a horseshoe in digging, so that's why we believe the story that it was indeed the stables of the Talbot house. That whole block had been part of the Talbot estate, which had been, obviously, sold.

My mother fought strenuously with the contractor-architect the whole year the house was being built, but I guess she got her way because it turned out to be quite an attractive house.

It had quite a large living room, which was to your left as you entered the house, and then there was a hall and a large dining room with sort of a glassed-in solarium off the dining room, which opened off into a small garden. Then, upstairs there was the master bedroom on the south side, which was a large room. My mother had a dressing room off that and there was a bath off that. And it looked out on the garden on the south side and on Scott Street on the west side.

There was a small room down the hall which was my nurse's room, and at the end of the hall was the baby's room. Then, there was a guest room next door to that. There was a bath between the nurse's room and the baby's room, with a door opening out so that the guest room had access to that bathroom.

Teiser: Did you have a basement?

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Teiser: Was there a Chinaman's room?

Lawrence: Yes. There was a basement and a two-car garage and then the Chinaman's room was off the garage, which had a bath. There was a Chinaman in it for many years, not the same one, but we had a series of Chinese cooks. Then, there was a furnace room. It had a gas furnace, and a water heater, which was an instantaneous water heater, and then a laundry room that had a gas burner so you could boil the laundry. Great big washtubs.

Teiser: Did you have a woman come in once a week or twice a week to do the laundry?

Lawrence: Yes, a woman came in. Her name was Mrs. Denny. Her clients were numerous. One of them was my future mother-in-law, Mrs. Sidney Lawrence, who lived down the street on Scott Street.

I usually had lunch in the kitchen with my nurse and the cook and Mrs. Denny, and I was just fascinated; Mrs. Denny was so full of gossip of all the people she worked for. I'm sure she went and told people terrible things about our family, too! It was very entertaining. I think my mother let her go--she was rude or something like that--but she was there for about twenty years, I would say. Because you had to have somebody like that; you couldn't do it yourself.

Teiser: Let me think of the other things that happened in households at that period. Did you have a man come around in a truck with fresh produce?

Lawrence: Yes. A Chinese man came every day. And the cook and my mother would go out and talk to him about what they wanted. I think it was horse-drawn for quite a while, and then he got a truck.

And the iceman used to "cometh," with the big thing on his back. The icebox was on a back porch, off the kitchen, so the iceman could get into it. There was a swinging door that was not locked on the days the iceman came.

The Chinese cooks were kind of interesting. A judge who knew my father called him one day and said, "I want you to know that I have a Chinese man who is under arrest, and he has given your name as his employer." And my father said, "Well, what's the matter?" I think the man had not come home one night or something. And he said, "Well, he was selling opium out of the garage door of your residence, and he was caught, and that's why I'm calling you." And my father said, "Well, all right."

Lawrence: My father's attorney said, "Well, you better go down there and find out what the evidence is and everything because otherwise you'll be involved." Well, it turned out that it wasn't true at all. He had been caught selling opium, but not out of our house. So I think my father got the man off and paid the fine, but held it out of his wages because he was really upset with the fact that he was dealing in opium, but I guess they all did. And they were doing illegal gambling and things like that.

Then we once had another one who had something wrong with him. My mother and father went away for a weekend, leaving the nurse and me and this Chinese man, and he went sort of crazy one night and came after us both with a knife. So we locked ourselves into what was kind of a suite; we locked my bedroom door and her bedroom door. And we had no telephone or anything with us. The phone was at the other end of the house.

He stood there and banged on the door and was swearing in Chinese and everything. We were quite frightened. Then he went away. When we felt safe we went out. I think my mother and father were at Del Monte for the weekend, at the old Del Monte Hotel, so we called them and they came home, and my father fired the man. But it was quite a frightening experience.

Teiser: Was he drunk or on drugs or something?

Lawrence: I think drunk, and, you know, just nuts.

Then, as the years went by, finally the Chinese men were not available any more, so we had women cooks and the nursemaid for the child. I think it was in about 1927 that we started getting the female cooks.

Teiser: Did they live in?

Lawrence: They lived in. They didn't have the Chinaman's room. There was a better room downstairs that had been the cloak room or something that had a bath off of it, so they lived in there.

About that time my parents hired as a nursemaid for me a very nice woman whose name was Marie Schreiber. She had been born in England before World War I of a German family, so she spoke very good English. But what stories she would tell, if you can imagine a poor German family stuck in London before the war. They were really persecuted quite a bit. Then they went back to Germany, and I think they lived in Bremen or someplace.

Lawrence: But she came over here and took a job as a nursemaid. When I grew up she became the upstairs maid, and she was with us for years. She got married in about 1938 and left, but she still came back. After I was married she would come--she did catering--and help me with a party or something like that. She also sat for my children when they were babies. She's still alive and she lives in Rossmoor, and her husband, Harry Stillman, died a couple of months ago at the age of eighty-four. He was an Englishman who she met here and married, quite a nice man. So she was an important part of my life.

Their son was Edward. They had just this one child, who couldn't have been a nicer child, and he used to come and see us every Christmas. Marie would bring him around, and my mother was very nice to him. He is some sort of a genius and he grew up to be an electronic engineer before Silicon Valley and all of that. He's maybe ten years younger than I am.

He got a wonderful job, and then married a very nice girl and has children. Marie and Harry Stillman put him through college--and he did work on the side. But then when he became so successful he bought them a house and everything else at Rossmoor, and that's where the mother is now. Until then, she went out and did catering and things like that, and her husband was a shoe clerk. But they managed, and it's quite an interesting success story about what happens in America.

Teiser: Where did you shop?

Lawrence: Well, my mother shopped at a grocery store called Ceretti and Son, and they were on the corner of Jackson and Webster. I think the place is still there. It was a one-story little thing. They had a relative who worked for the chocolate company, and they were, I think, a father and son. It was a corner grocery store, but my mother ordered everything there.

Lawrence: Ceretti delivered, and then we also bought from the Chinese produce man. But Ceretti had groceries, like cereals. And it was, of course, charged. They were very nice and they had good stuff.

She ordered by phone. The cook would come up and they would have a conference every day and decide what the menu would be, and then my mother would get on the telephone and do the ordering. The butcher was not in Ceretti's. I wish I could remember where it was. But it was an Italian butcher. I think they were on Chestnut Street.

Lawrence: She didn't go to market very often, didn't know how! And also didn't know how to cook. She was a very good housekeeper. We had a cleaning man whose name was Paul Grossman who did the heavy cleaning and also washed the cars. He came three times a week, so the cars were, of course, spotless. And she knew how to tell people how to cook things. I mean she could read a recipe and say, "This is the way this is done," because her family had been extremely well off.

Her father was in the grain business. His name was Paul Lohse. He was from France. He had been born in Mexico City when his mother and father were there with the court of Maximilian. And then, when that went phooey, they went back to France. He grew up in Paris and then came to California, around 1870, I think, he and a cousin. The relatives are still alive. One of the cousins' descendants, named Charles Lohse, married my husband's cousin, whose name was Betsy Glover Flye, which is crazy. That makes our children double cousins or something.

Anyway, Paul Lohse, my mother's father, had been very well off. They had a big house on Webster Street in Oakland and they had the first telephone in Oakland. My mother said she used to love to pick up the telephone and call the livery stable for the carriage to be brought, at the age of ten or something.

My mother told this story. Her mother's name was Mary Taylor Lohse, and she was a very active lady in welfare work. She was the founder of the Catholic Ladies' Aid in northern California in the eighties some time, and a very active person and well liked and well known in the community.

She died when my mother was eighteen, as I said, so she kept house for her father, who by that time had lost a great deal of his fortune. So they bought a house on Linda Vista Avenue and sold the big house. They were not terribly well off, but they always had two in help, because this was the way you lived in those days! So this is why the woman never did learn how to boil water very well.

Teiser: But she learned how to run a house.

Lawrence: But she learned how to run a house very well. Back on Scott Street, my mother and father used to entertain quite a bit because they enjoyed it and they enjoyed their friends.

They really had a wonderful life, in a way, because in the twenties everything was booming. And then came the Crash. It never affected the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company at all.

Teiser: Is that right?

Lawrence: Which is astounding to me, because there were people dropping like flies around you and all over the country. Well, it didn't really reach California until about a year later, the terrible ramifications.

Teiser: But people didn't stop buying chocolate?

Lawrence: No, which to me would have been the first luxury you might have given up. But I suppose it was a food and nourishing and whatever. I never understood it, and neither did any of my mother's and father's friends!

Teiser: Is that right? So they never had to cut back on the employees in the factory or anything?

Lawrence: No.

Teiser: You said they entertained frequently. Did they serve alcoholic beverages throughout Prohibition?

Lawrence: Indeed yes. Well, I know some people who didn't. There was a man by the name of Lawrence, who was no relation of my husband's family, who was an attorney. He said, "I will not break the law of the United States," and he never served a drop in his house. Hamilton Lawrence was his name.

Teiser: You remember it because he was unusual.

Lawrence: Well, I remember it because I went to school with his daughter whose name happened to be Polly Lawrence, which is quite funny, and we have remained quite good friends over the years. I knew that about him, and my father knew it, because he knew him slightly through a club or something. And he couldn't understand why he felt this way, but he was very conscientious. He's the only person that I have ever heard of who really felt that strongly, except somebody who was a Prohibitionist, of course.

Teiser: Did they serve hard liquor and wine both?

Lawrence: Yes. Now, my mother's uncle was a Jesuit priest, and he used to supply things like port and sherry which came from the Jesuit wineries, which is interesting. His name was Father James Taylor and he used to come for dinner quite often when I was a child, and I can remember he was very happy to take a couple of drinks of hard whiskey and things like that.

Lawrence: Some of the supply, of course, was obviously from a bootlegger, but my father had some middle person that he went through; I think it was his club, which was the Family Club, and he got the liquor through them. Then also, his physician friend Leroy Briggs would write a prescription for medicinal purposes. Then, another good friend of his was George Broemmell, who owned Broemmell's Pharmacy, and he would fill these prescriptions written by Dr. Briggs.

I must interject a story here. During Prohibition sometimes you had very bad liquor. My mother and father were going to a party of some friends they didn't really know very well, and my father said, "Now, I want you to be very careful because it might be very bad and it'll make you sick. So just look at me when they pass you a drink, and if I shake my head, just say 'No, thank you.'"

So they got to this party, and my mother went in and they were separated. My father took a drink, and my mother was watching him and he shook his head. And the host came over to her and said, "Won't you have a cocktail?" And she said, "Oh, no, thank you, I couldn't possibly; I've been drinking all day." She couldn't think of anything else to say. That is something that we've laughed about for years.

So anyway, they did have quite a nice time.

Teiser: Did you have a wine cellar in the house?

Lawrence: Yes. A big one. And it was locked. I think it was next to the Chinaman's room.

DAUGHTER POLLY GHIRARDELLI

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Teiser: The chocolate company had a famous advertisement, a parrot saying "Say Gear-ar-delly." Were you named after that parrot?

Lawrence: I was named Clarisse. That is a French name, naturally, from my French mother. And Polly is a nickname for Mary; my middle name is Marie, which is French, after my grandmother whose name was Mary. So my aunt, my mother's older sister, named Anita Gregory, said, "Well, I think we ought to call her Polly

Lawrence: because that's a nickname for her middle name. They weren't thinking of the company parrot. Everybody thinks, "Oh well, that's why you're named that," but it really wasn't.

Teiser: Do you know the origin of the parrot?

Lawrence: As near as I can gather, it really was because of the pronunciation of "Ghirardelli." Some smart advertising man thought, "Well, why don't we have a parrot," and from that evolved the macaw, which is the most colorful parrot and the prettiest really, which sort of became the trademark for this, "Say Gear-Ar-Delli" thing.

My cousin Robert went to an advertising conference in Chicago, and they used that as the worst possible type of advertising that you could possibly do because you were misspelling the brand name. They spelled it phonetically, and therefore the name itself would not be as recognizable on the product as the way they did it. I don't know whose idea it was.

Teiser: It was said to have been thought up by a woman working for Foster and Kleiser, the advertising billboard company.

Where did you go to school?

Lawrence: About the time Marie came to work for us, I was going to the Sacred Heart Convent. My father was not a Catholic, as I've explained before, but my mother, being of French extraction, was. So I was going to this convent and I hated it, in the first grade.

Teiser: Why?

Lawrence: It was oppressive. As I look back I probably didn't think this way. There was one nun who was really awfully nice, Mother White, who was the first grade teacher. I was called Clarisse, and I'd never been called Clarisse before, but the Mother Superior, who had been a friend of my mother's mother, insisted that I be called by my Christian name, which was Clarisse, and I didn't like that. Well, this nice nun called me Polly, so she made a great hit.

But anyway, in the middle of this first year in school I developed a mastoid, which is a terrible ear infection, and I was very, very ill. Then they had to operate, and most people never survive this. And it was an awful thing. Good friends of my family, Tom and Katie Rolph--he was the brother of the one-time mayor and governor--had a son who died of a mastoid about two months before I came down with this thing. So it was a terrible experience, but I did recover.

Lawrence: We went to Ross for the summer, and I had to be taken in twice a week to the doctor's office to have the dressing changed, which must have been awfully horrible for my poor mother.

Teiser: Did you have a home in Ross?

Lawrence: No. My mother and father rented a home. My grandmother Ghirardelli had had a home in Ross years earlier, but she had sold it.

Anyway, this summer was spent going back and forth, and it was the days when you went over the Larkspur Grade--if you recall that, it was very windy--and then down into Sausalito. And you waited for the ferry boat and finally it came, and then over you went. At the time I had a cat who loved to ride in the car, and we used to take the cat with us, who would sit up on the back seat. It was a kick. And Marie was with us over there too, and the cook, whose name was Hilda I think.

But the mastoid did not heal, so they had to take me back in and do the whole thing over. Then at the same time they thought, "Well, we'll take out her adenoids," and something crazy happened and I had this terrible hemorrhage. I can remember waking up in the hospital where there was blood spurting all over the wall, and they had to go get the doctor back in and send me back up to surgery and stop it all up and everything was okay.

But I had to have a thing down my throat, and I couldn't talk, which was some sort of a catheterization I guess. I remember Marie coming to see me in the hospital, and she thought I was being funny. I was going, "Ah, ah, ah."

Teiser: That was a hard way to get out of going to Sacred Heart!

Lawrence: It was.

Teiser: So you recovered.

Lawrence: I recovered. I am a walking medical history, however, because I had another one when I was about fourteen. They had to go in again, and this was before the sulfa drugs had been invented. The fact that I can hear anything is a medical miracle. I am written down somewhere, because the same doctor took care of me all the way through.

Teiser: Who was he?

Lawrence: Well, there was a doctor named Houston, who was the well-known ear, nose, and throat man, and he had a young assistant whose name was Robert C. Martin. Ky Martin is what they called him. He assisted at the first operation, and then when that didn't heal he said, "I will do the second operation," which he did, and, I might add, for nothing, and that's of course when the hemorrhage occurred. It wasn't his fault. So then he was my ear doctor for the rest of my life, and then he had to do this thing when I was fourteen. Finally, the funny thing, years later we both ended up on the board of directors of the San Francisco Hearing Center. He used to tell the story of this miracle person.

My mother and father took me and my nurse Marie on a motor trip to San Diego after this operation, with just a dressing on the back of the ear, and we were gone about three weeks. When we got back I went to the doctor, and it was a very dramatic moment because they had to open the thing and see if it had worked, and it had healed. So that was a joyous day.

Then I was taken out of the convent and sent to a school which was in the neighborhood, which was called Miss Kennedy's School. Helen Kennedy, who had been a teacher at the Katherine Delmar Burke School, left and started her own school. A lot of my mother's friends' children were sent there. It was a small coeducational school and it was on Scott down the hill from Jackson so that one could walk. I started there in I guess the second grade and have many lifelong friends from there.

Next door to our house at 2460 Scott lived a family by the name of Holman, at 2440 Scott. They had a son, Richard, who was about my age, and we were great friends. We really grew up together and used to play football and all kinds of unladylike things, ride our bicycles up and down the street on Saturday mornings and everything. He also went to the Kennedy School, so we could walk together.

Then there came the time in 1934 of the kidnapping threat,* and that was crazy because I had to be walked to school a block every day by an adult for, I would say, six months. Six months that went on.

*See page 49.

Teiser: Was Pacific Heights a good place for a kid to grow up in those years?

Lawrence: Oh, I think so. We used to go to Alta Plaza Park at the top of the hill on Jackson Street every day of our lives after school, with our nurses or without. My husband-to-be and I used to play together up there in Alta Plaza Park, and Richard Holman and I used to head up football games and play touch football. My mothers' friends thought, "My goodness, something is happening to this child."

But anyway, I thought we had a very nice time. It wasn't a privileged life or anything because there were children from all over town that we played with in the park. I can remember a German boy who couldn't speak English, and we were very mean to him. Then there were lots of people that lived in the area. They had tennis courts, and we played tennis too, and basketball courts and all kinds of things. And it was wonderful. I learned how to ride a bicycle up there.

Teiser: Did you own a bicycle?

Lawrence: I was given a bicycle. As a matter of fact, I didn't learn to ride it for quite a while. Funny, one day, I just said to myself, "I'm going to do this." So I took it to the park and I tried and I tried and I tried, and finally all of a sudden I could do it. You know how you learn how to ride a bicycle.

Teiser: Yes.

Lawrence: So, of course, when my father came home and my mother came home I made them come up and watch me ride this bicycle.

Anyway, I was an only child and I was, I guess, somewhat pampered, but both my mother and father, having come from large families, were very careful not to be too indulgent, and I don't think they were really. They were really very sensible people.

Teiser: Did you have a little stipend every week?

Lawrence: Not then. I did later. I think I eventually got ten cents a week or something like that, at the age when you were supposed to learn how to handle your own money.

Teiser: Were you a good student?

Lawrence: Oh, yes. I liked learning things, and this Kennedy School, they taught you the basics in arithmetic and spelling and they were good teachers. Then, as the years went by, people dropped

Lawrence: out. They went to Grant School, which was a very good public school up here on Pacific Avenue, or if they were female they went to Miss Hamlin's or Miss Burke's. The boys, especially, stayed maybe three or four years and then they went to another school.

By the time I got to be in the seventh grade, another young woman and I were the only people in the seventh grade, and one of my dearest friends today was the only one in the sixth grade. We were taught by a very good teacher. Her name was Mrs. Minnie Woodard, and she came from Sacramento, and we all remember her because she was a wonderful woman. But she taught this class of three people, and it was very difficult. My mother sort of realized then that this was not a very good thing because I was not out in the world really.

But we learned enough so that when I then went to Burke's in the eighth grade I was all right. The only thing I wasn't up on was French because Miss Kennedy hired a French teacher who taught French by rote, and we used to put on plays. I was once a queen in a play, rattling off these lines and everything. Of course, the parents thought it was just marvelous, but we didn't know what we were doing. We really didn't. So anyway, I had to be privately tutored by Mlle. Emilie Lasalle, who was a wonderful teacher at Burke's school, and she got me caught up with the class.

Teiser: Well, what was it like to go to Miss Burke's after this small class?

Lawrence: Well, it wasn't too scary, but it was a little scary. Being the oldest people in the Kennedy school, we were the ones with all the knowledge and blah, blah, blah. So I can remember the first day I went to Miss Burke's. Another girl who had skipped a grade, Joan Easton was her name, came up to me and said, "Are you scared?" And I said, "Well, kind of." She said, "Well, so am I. I've skipped the seventh grade, and I don't know what I'm going to do." And I said, "Well, then we'll just stick together." So it all turned out fine.

Teiser: Did you go to Miss Burke's through high school then?

Lawrence: Yes.

Teiser: Did you like it all the way through?

Lawrence: Yes, very much.

Teiser: What was Miss Burke herself like?

Lawrence: Well, Miss Burke, the founder, who was Katherine Delmar Burke, had died by the time I went there. She died of typhoid fever in Egypt in 1929, I think. I went to Burke's in 1935, and Katherine Delmar Burke had been gone for quite a while. Her niece, Barbara Burke, who was the principal, was a wonderful woman. A very human person, who had been trained for this all her life! You know, she'd gone to the University of California and gotten her teacher's degree. So she had to take over, which she did with grace.

In eighth grade we had a teacher who was an older woman who had been there years and years and years. She could remember World War I; she could remember the flu epidemic when they used to hold classes in Alta Plaza Park. It was kind of a privilege to have her because that was the last year she taught before she retired. Her name was Mrs. Wright. She was a really old-fashioned teacher, and if you misbehaved in class you had to go back into "the dungeon," which was sitting behind a palm in the back of the room. And she had some interesting stories to tell.

In high school, I personally found, and I think my classmates did too, Miss Burke's School challenging in that we had very good teachers. The English teacher's name was Lelah Craig Brown and she was kind of an inspiration to many of us. She was rather an intellectual woman. We had a writing society called the Penguins, which she founded. You were invited to belong, and luckily I was invited to belong. We met once a week in the library of the school and you had to have a composition or a short story or something like that that you had done, and I enjoyed that for the four years I was there.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Lawrence: As a consequence, when I went to the University of California in 1939 I became an English major. That was a story unto itself, because the way Miss Brown had taught English and how to write was full of imagery and alliteration. Well, my Lord! The first man I got as an English major was a rough and tough young fellow who I'm sure was a rather liberal person, as many of them were in those days and still are, and he just thought everything I wrote was rubbish, and said so over and over again.

Teiser: What was his name?

Lawrence: I can't remember. I do remember the second one I had was James Hart, and he and I got along very well together.

Teiser: What was he teaching? Literature or writing?

Lawrence: He was teaching literature. We had Shakespeare in his class. He was fun, and we got along, as I say, nicely. But this other person was just too much. So it gave me a writer's block, it really did, because I thought, "I'm going to try and write like Ernest Hemingway," which is what the man wanted us to do, and that's easier said than done!

I remember Miss Madelaine Waddell, the science teacher, was a wonderful woman. I, like a fool, had never taken physics in high school, so I took it in college for one of my science courses--Physics 10--because it was supposed to be a snap course and all the football players took it. So I thought, "Oh, I will just have to take that course." Well, my God, I got myself into a real living mess, and so when final time came I called Miss Waddell--I had gotten through the first semester, but the second one it got a little bit thick--and I said, "Help!"

So she said, "All right. Bring the book over and come to me at school. I'll meet you and we'll have a real drill session." So I did, and she drilled. I can remember going and taking the examination and thinking, "Well, I guess I did all right." So I called her when I got the blue book back and I said, "Well, we got a C." She's still around, she's never gotten over that, but it was awfully nice of her to do for me.

I had another man who was a journalism professor. He came from Oregon. He had worked for the Portland Oregonian, and I don't know why he was a professor, but he must have had some sort of credentials, and he didn't like me at all. So one day I was sitting--

Lawrence: --in the journalism class, which was a large class, and the professor was at the rostrum and he said as follows: "Today I'm going to give you an example of a lead sentence and that is"--and I now quote him--"Polly Ghirardelli, the belle of Emeryville, was seen walking yesterday down Bancroft Avenue with a lot of books under her arm." So this caused great laughter in the classroom, and I do think it is sort of funny; if you know anything about Emeryville you'll agree.

Teiser: Do you think he just picked your name out because it was a well-known name?

Lawrence: I think he just picked it because it was a well-known name.

Teiser: Not because you were a well-known character in the class?

Lawrence: I don't think so. No, I really don't think so.

However, when I was a freshman there was a thing called, not the Berkeley Barb, but it was another underground sort of newspaper, The Raspberry, that was just a bunch of nuts. And a person I knew quite well, whose name was Gurney Breckenfeld, was the editor of it. He was a Chi Phi, a fraternity brother of a boy who I was going out with. And this came out. It wasn't radical or anything, it was kind of a gossip sheet, and an article came out about me saying, "Pi Phi Polly flubs the dub," or something like that. And it told the story of me going through rushing and how I had gone to one sorority house and asked for my dinner backwards, so that they had dinged me, which was what they called it in those days, and then it went on with a lot of other stuff, all of which was not true.

I can remember going home to the sorority house for lunch, and there was dead silence when I walked into the dining room because I hadn't seen the thing. It had come out on campus, and they sold it down by Sather Gate. So finally one of my sorority sisters took me aside and said, "Here, I want you to look at this," and showed it to me. I was kind of mad because I had been on double dates with this young gentleman who was the editor of the paper. In the first place, it was not true at all, any of it. I think I did say at one of the sorority houses, "Wouldn't it be funny if we had our dinners backwards, and if we had to start out with dessert, and what difference would it make in our manner of eating?" or something stupid like that. So she must have repeated this to somebody else who then repeated it, so they printed it. So therefore, yes, the name was well known and I was vulnerable.

And then there was my cousin Ynez, who was also a student there at the time.

Teiser: And was better known than you?

Lawrence: That's right.

Teiser: And more remarkable than you.

Lawrence: Yes, more different.

Teiser: Was there anything, in fact, remarkable about your rushing?

Lawrence: Not really. It was a barbaric custom and still is, I think. You had to go over with your mother and stay at the Durant Hotel. And then you got your bids on the last night of rushing and you chose what you wanted to do and did it. And then you had to wait in your hotel room till they came and picked you up and took you up to the house.

I remember a girl who was with us who was living at the hotel, and we all had been through the whole thing together, and I remember they didn't come to get her for hours and hours, and I had left already and gone with the house of my choice. The poor girl was in tears by the time they came to get her. Well, you see, that is kind of silly to put people through things like that. But that's an editorial comment I'm making! In those days you didn't have any place to live, which is also true now. You were just stuck.

Teiser: A few dormitories.

Lawrence: Not enough.

Teiser: Did you enjoy college?

Lawrence: Oh yes, I loved it.

I did not finish college, however, because in my junior year (1942) my father became quite ill. It was during the summer. He had some sort of a circulatory incident--something outside the brain walls--so we rented a house in San Ramon for the summer. Then, instead of going back to college, I lived at home where I could be of some help.

He recovered completely, but he was handicapped somewhat for I would say about five months, and that's why I didn't go back to school. I just said, "Well, I'll just stay in the city," and I worked for the Army Quartermaster Corps at Fort Mason, on the swing shift for a while, which was very disconcerting!

Teiser: You said you stayed in San Ramon?

Lawrence: Yes, we rented a house in San Ramon, which is out by Danville. We chose a quiet place to be because my father needed to be quiet. My Uncle Harvey had given us a horse. Harvey played polo, and he had given my father a horse for therapeutic reasons. He thought it would be good for him to ride. Well, he couldn't because he had a hernia, so I inherited the horse and I had a wonderful summer because this place we rented had stables and everything. It was just great. And it was a

Lawrence: wonderful horse. His name was Topper and he was a polo pony. You pressed his side one way and he made a complete U-turn, so it was very fun, it really was.

Teiser: Had you ridden as a child?

Lawrence: Yes, I'd ridden all my life.

Teiser: Where did you ride when you were a child?

Lawrence: At Golden Gate Park. My husband-to-be also rode in the same group with us. We would go once a week out to the St. Francis Riding Academy, which was on Seventh Avenue, and go out with a groom or ride in the ring or whatever.

Teiser: You rode English style?

Lawrence: We rode English style at that time.

My grandmother had a house in Castlewood Country Club, which is near Dublin, and we used to spend one month of the summer there every summer--she gave it to each one of her children for a certain period of time. There was also a man who taught riding there and a stables, so I rode western there and learned quite a bit. She sold that house right before this happened to my father, which is why we had to rent this other house in San Ramon.

WORKING FOR THE ARMY AND RED CROSS

Teiser: What were your marketable skills at that point?

Lawrence: Well, I'd taken typing in high school and I typed all through college. I could do that well enough. I could write a letter. But anyway, when I was interviewed by the Army Quartermaster Corps they would have taken a moron, I'm sure, because it was almost make-work. This was during the war, and this was the western terminus for all the stuff going overseas to the Pacific. The docks at Fort Mason were always full of supply ships going overseas, and I was in rail coordination.

When I was on the swing shift, which is where I started out, I went to work at four in the afternoon and got off at eleven. It was not much fun. However, on that shift, you won't believe this, I was the office manager. Well, there wasn't very much to do, and I guess I may have had more intelligence maybe

Lawrence: than some of the other people. There were only about seven of us on this shift. They had to keep the office open twenty-four hours a day in case a shipment came in during those hours.

Anyway, I finally said, "I can't stand these hours any more." It was playing havoc with my social life! So they said, "When there is a vacancy on the daytime shift we'll put you on it," and that was from seven in the morning until three in the afternoon, or whatever it was. And at that time I was the assistant office manager and I was also the coordinator of collating, which means you take several pieces of paper and you put them together. I spent my time doing that.

Teiser: If you do it wrong, then you get the wrong copy.

Lawrence: Yes. We were dealing with carloads of potatoes, and they would have gone to the wrong place. So I did that for about six or seven months and I finally couldn't stand it because I had to get up at dawn, and my poor mother used to have to get up with me. I don't know why, but she felt she had to. So I resigned from that, which was all right. You had to guarantee you'd stay six months, and I did that.

Teiser: What year was that?

Lawrence: This is 1942. It was at the beginning of the war.

Teiser: And nobody said, "Why don't you go into the chocolate factory?"

Lawrence: Yes, they did, and my father wanted to get me into it, and his cousin Lyle said no. And this went on for about four months. I would say, "Did anything happen today?" "No." This was when my father was now recovered from his illness and back at the office, and he said to Lyle, "You know, I'd kind of like to get my daughter in. She's out of college." And Lyle said, "No, we're not going to start that." Which I guess meant they didn't want women in the company any more, or something like that. So that did not work.

Teiser: I'm surprised.

Lawrence: Well, as I say, it was a difficult situation. Family corporations are for the birds, really! Lyle's son didn't want to go in--Lyle was the president--and Harvey's son was already in it, and Louis, the other brother, didn't have a son, so my father didn't see any reason why he couldn't ask the question, because I really wanted to do this. I wanted to go and learn the business, I really did, and he wanted me to, because he didn't have a son, unfortunately.

Lawrence: The reason I liked to play football and all those things was that my father used to take me to football games and baseball games, all the things that he would have done with a son, and I, luckily, loved it, I really did. I enjoy football still. So anyway, that didn't work.

At that time you had to go to, it wasn't called the Human Resources Department but it was a government-employment department. So I went there, and there were all kinds of awful things that they offered me, such as working for the Carnation Milk Company in Oakland and things like that. You could refuse.

Finally this opening came up in the San Francisco chapter of the American Red Cross, which was a receptionist's job and also helping the office manager, and I went down and was interviewed and I got that job, which was great. It was on the corner of Sutter Street and Mason, and I could take the street-car, and we wore a uniform. I had a uniform anyway because I had worked as a volunteer for the Red Cross.

Teiser: While you were working at Fort Mason?

Lawrence: No, after that. While I was working for the army I did sometimes, when I was on the swing shift.

I should go back now. My mother and a group of her friends founded the Alta Plaza Center of the San Francisco chapter of the Red Cross. Mrs. James Black was the chairman of it, and Mrs. Louis Sloss was the vice chairman, and my mother was another vice chairman, and Mrs. George Broemmell was the head of the sewing department. They all lived in this neighborhood. There were many other volunteers who worked there. Mrs. Charles Kendrick was also involved.

They did things like re-upholster furniture for the army recreation rooms, and would go around and pick up rummage and things, and I drove a truck for them for a long time. So I had the ready-made uniform. I mean all you had to do was take the volunteer button off your collar and put on the Red Cross insignia.

So I went to work for them. By that time I had become engaged. This is in '43. I announced my engagement in October '43. And the "benedict," as they then called the affianced, then promptly went overseas. So at that point I did go to work for the Red Cross, and I rose to be the assistant office manager and the assistant director of personnel. I was then called a coordinator, and I drove to all the Red Cross offices all over town delivering messages and supplies. If the Red Cross on

Lawrence: Grove Street needed some bandage-making material, I would get that from the warehouse and take it down there. So I really became sort of a glorified taxi driver, but I enjoyed it. I also drove all the visiting bigwigs, so to speak, of the Red Cross around. If they came to visit the San Francisco chapter, then I would be their chauffeur while they were here. And that was interesting.

MARRIAGE

Lawrence: So I did that until about June, I guess, of the following year, of '44, when I got a coded message from my fiancé saying "I think I'll be home within the next three weeks." We had a manner of doing this so that it would pass the censors.

Teiser: An understanding between the two of you?

Lawrence: Yes. Which was saying, "Spring is late this year," or something like that. He was in the navy in the South Pacific. So at that time I said to the Red Cross, "Well, I think I better give you my notice because I probably will be getting married soon.

My mother had the wedding invitations printed with everything except the date. So weeks go by, and I am visiting a friend of mine at Aptos. This is a friend whose name was Marylou Raggio, and she had gone to Miss Kennedy's with me. She also was engaged, to my cousin Joseph Chirardelli Baker, who was subsequently killed at Normandy in 1945.

Anyway, I was visiting her at Aptos, and I had gone up to the country store to get something and I came back with my arms full of groceries. I walked out on the porch, and everybody started singing, "Here comes the bride," and I said, "Well, what are you talking about?" Well, the young man had gotten in, his ship had come in that afternoon while I was at the store, so I said, "Well, I guess I have to go now."

I had a car with me, and my friend Marylou drove me up, and we got to San Francisco about five o'clock, and my husband-to-be, Sidney, and his parents were at my parents' house, so I walked in the front door and there he was.

That was a Thursday. He said, "I have no idea how long I'm going to be here, but I really think we probably ought to get married while I'm here because I don't know." So my mother

Lawrence: said, "Well, all right." So the next day she got a group of women in to fill in these invitations. He got in on a Thursday, and we were married on Saturday, the first of July of '44 at St. Dominic's Church at 4:00 p.m.

Anyway, my mother always claimed that he misrepresented his orders because he didn't have to go. He was assigned to a ship that was under construction. What happened to us was, we were married, had a lovely wedding, which my mother put together on two days notice, and I was ever so proud, and so was she. Then we went to the Del Monte Lodge on our honeymoon. It was awfully hard to get into, but Mr. James Black, who was a dear friend of the family's, got us in because he was on the board. And that was just wonderful. And there we were, and, my God, I think it was two days later or something, the phone rang at five o'clock in the morning, and it was the navy saying, "You have to report for duty at eight o'clock this morning in San Francisco." So he said, "I can't possibly make that, but I'll do the best I can."

So we had to get up and drive to San Francisco, and I let him off wherever he had to be, at the navy building or something, and said, "Well, I'll go back to my family's house, I guess." And he said, "Okay, and I'll let you know." Well, he called about five o'clock that night and he said, "This is the biggest foul-up I've ever known, but they've assigned me to Treasure Island, to fire-fighting school, which means I'll be here for quite a while." Why they had to call us at five in the morning, we don't know. So that was fine.

My grandmother had died the April before we were married, and my Aunt Elva was living in her house with her husband and children at 6 King Avenue in Piedmont, but they had a house in Danville and they were staying there, so Sid and I moved into my grandmother's house and lived there for about three months while he was going to school at Treasure Island. It was wonderful. It was up on a hill. Every once in a while some member of the family would come in, but that was all right. It was a big house. We had my grandmother's quarters which were in a remote part of the house. So anyway, that worked out nicely.

Teiser: You had known your husband since childhood?

Lawrence: Yes.

Teiser: And he'd lived down the block, you said?

Lawrence: Down the block. Our parents were acquaintances. They went to kind of the same parties and things, knew a lot of people in common.

We had been friends, and he had been very fond of me for quite a long time, and I really couldn't make up my mind. Then, I think the war did a lot of things to a lot of people. I think one realized that life's too short and one had better make up one's mind pretty quickly.

Teiser: So you got married.

Lawrence: That's the way it happened.

Louis Legler Ghirardelli

Teiser: Continuing with your father's brothers, Louis Ghirardelli was your father's next younger brother, I believe.

Lawrence: Louis Legler Ghirardelli. He married Marian Rodolph, whose family owned a moving company. She had been married before to a James McCandless of the Hawaiian Islands, and I believe that's a rather substantial fortune. She did have a son, James McCandless, who was rather a burden to her and to his step-father because he was a little bit slow.

Louis was a very outgoing, very funny man, who belonged to all different kinds of organizations such as the Masons and the Shriners and the Olympic Club. He was on the baseball team at the University of California. Then, after he graduated, he was on a semi-pro team and he was the pitcher. He was a very good athlete and traveled all over California doing that.

After he and Marian were married, I think they lived in the Mark Hopkins Hotel. She didn't like to be a cook very much or anything like that. It was kind of a glamorous life.

He founded an organization, and I don't think it even had a name, which brought baseball games to the convicts at San Quentin. I think they were allowed to play, and he used to go and coach the teams. He felt that prisoners were a segment of humanity who were forgotten men, and I think that's quite true. He was also an advocate of prison reform.

Lawrence: Then, he also was the sales manager of the company and a very good one. He was outgoing and he was a good salesman. Sometimes he overindulged in the alcoholic beverages a tiny bit. Once my father and my Uncle Harvey and my husband, Sidney Lawrence, who then worked for the company, had to go and get him out of the bushes he had fallen into and carry him into his office.

He was really a very, very likable man. During the war he helped found the Stage Door Canteen. It was at the Odd Fellows Hall, I think. It's now a movie theater. He was a friend of a lot of people in show business. Boris Karloff and his wife were dear friends of Louis and Marian. He helped Otto Preminger, I think it was, who came here to found the canteen. Louis was his assistant.

As a consequence the Ghirardelli family had one of the angels' boxes at the Stage Door Canteen, so that we were privileged to go once a month. The whole family used to sit up in this box, and then we'd watch this usually not-very-good stage show, but it was all right, and it certainly helped the servicemen.

Teiser: It was for the servicemen?

Lawrence: It was for the servicemen. It was like the Hollywood Canteen, a little less glamorous perhaps.

Both my mother and I worked down there at night, on different nights, once a week, handing out coffee and doughnuts and things like that to the servicemen. Then sometimes you got to meet some of the celebrities. It was very exciting.

Louis also had a heart condition to which he paid no attention, and so he died, unfortunately, very suddenly, in 1948.

Lawrence: Louis and Marian together built the apartment building on Lombard Street, which is an eyesore, a great big white building. It stands out at the base of Telegraph Hill on that curve. It obviously was before height limits or anything else. It was right before the war. They lived on the top floor. They rented out the rest of the building.

I can remember, when my husband was in the service, that I would go up to their apartment and wave sheets as Sidney would go out under the Golden Gate Bridge. As my mother said, "You know, I don't know how you can stand doing this." And I said,

Lawrence: "Well, it's something to do," which is what it was. He would be standing on the bridge and he could always look up and always see the sheet waving. It gave a little ceremony to the whole thing.

Teiser: When was that apartment house built?

Lawrence: I recall about 1940.

Teiser: I can remember that your uncle was considered a villain for having built that monstrosity.

Lawrence: Yes. Very much of a villain. And he was. But in those days-- my father saw nothing wrong with it. He thought the building was ugly, but he didn't see any reason why you couldn't build a high-rise there if you wanted to. In later years, he realized that that was wrong, that you shouldn't block off views and things like that.

Teiser: It changed the character of the area.

Lawrence: Oh, of the whole hill.

Harvey Theodore Ghirardelli

Lawrence: The next brother of my father that we're coming to is Harvey Theodore Ghirardelli, who was the youngest son. He married Gladys Ostrander who was from an old Berkeley family. And he worked for the company.* He was listed as the superintendent.

They went on their honeymoon to Yosemite and were always very romantic about Yosemite, and they had quite a few Chris Jorgensen paintings of Yosemite. Harvey worked for the company all of his life. They had two children, Henry Theodore Ghirardelli and Robert Ostrander Ghirardelli. They lived at 109 Tunnel Road in Berkeley in a big house with lots of grounds. They were rather reclusive people. They, of course, came to all the big family parties, of which there were many.

Gladys was a very nice woman. She always had something nice to say about everything. She was the living example, I would say, of a good Christian Scientist because she tried.

*See also page 88.

Lawrence: When my grandmother died, which was in 1944 also, my father was ill and couldn't go to the funeral, so I went in his place, which meant I went to the interment. So here we were in this limousine, and Gladys was in the same car with me. My grandmother was eighty-one years old and had a perfectly lovely life. I mean we all were heartbroken because it had been a very, very close family, but Gladys really stood up awfully well and cheered up the rest by her upbeat attitude. I was proud to be with her that day.

Then when the business started to become a little less than successful--

Teiser: When was that?

Lawrence: I would say in the very early sixties. My father died in 1956, and he had been nominally the president of the company and had been drawing the president's salary, and my mother and father had been living on that, obviously, and he died. He was ill; he had a heart condition, but he did die suddenly.

Teiser: During the time when he wasn't well, who took over?

Lawrence: Harvey took over his duties, but Harvey came to see him. He and Harvey rode downtown to lunch at their separate clubs every day. My father and mother lived on Jackson and Franklin, in an apartment; they'd had to move out of their big house. My father really should have been the chairman of the board, but he preferred not to have that title. Things had not been going well, and I am not being prejudiced when I say that they went downhill more after my father was gone, because they did.

THE DECLINE OF THE GHIRARDELLI CHOCOLATE COMPANY

Lawrence: In about 1958, two years after my father's death, Harvey called me down to the office and said, "I want to talk to you." And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, I'm giving the stockholders an option of either sticking by me or buying preferred shares." And I said, "Well, what's going on?" He said, "I'm having a financial reorganization." I said, "What does that mean?" "Well, if you buy the preferred shares you will always get that amount, but if you stick with me and keep the common stock, when business gets better you'll get more money." And he said, "Now, I'm speaking to you as your mother's representative. I promise you that by 1960 everything is going to be just fine; I have all these new ideas. So you stick with the common stock and you'll be all right." And I, like a fool, said okay.

Lawrence: Well, two years go by and I am called down to the office again, and I said, "This is not working."

Teiser: What did you mean?

Lawrence: The dividends were very low, and my mother really had very little else because my father had had a life insurance policy which was far too meager. He thought this little "gold mine" down here was going to keep going, and that all she would need would be his income from that, and he never diversified his stock holdings. He never owned anything except the company, which was very shortsighted of him, but part of the Ghirardelli-ism syndrome.

So I said to Harvey, "Well, my mother is just having a perfectly awful time, and I am not making recriminations but I certainly should have gone for the preferred stocks for her, because all the rest of you, or whoever it is, are sitting pretty." Such as Lyle, who was an ex-president, had taken preferred stock. Of course, he died in 1958, but this was when Harvey was offering it. So he said, "Well, I'm awfully sorry, but I have to tell you we're cutting all dividends; nobody's going to get anything." And I said, "Well, thank you, and goodby."

That's when this all came out. I was really so angry I could hardly bear it, for my mother's sake. She had had to move out of a lovely old apartment house on Jackson near Franklin which had one whole floor and was wonderful and a view and everything else. She had to move into a tiny apartment over the hill on Clay Street, where she had a nice view, but there wasn't room for help in there. She had a wonderful colored lady, Ruby Trent, who'd been with her ever since the war who was devoted to her, but she couldn't stay with her because there was no place for her to lie down in the afternoons. So it was a very bad situation.

So then I can remember Harvey coming to see my mother. I had torn some ligaments in my knee or something and I was in a cast, and he came to see her, and I said to my mother, "Well, I'm going to be there when he comes." Well, he came, and he was just as pompous and proud. "Well, I don't want you to worry about anything. Everything is going to be perfectly fine." Anyway, he and I had a little contretemps and he left very angry.

So that is when Carmen Baker and I--she hired an attorney and I did, too--got together, and we called special meetings of the stockholders of the company and went in there with our

Lawrence: attorneys. There were lots of people involved, like Chris Jorgensen Anderson's estate was all in trust, so the trust officer for that piece came. We had maybe twenty people in the room. And we had a court reporter.

It all came out that Harvey had indeed, as we thought, refused to talk to the people who wished to buy us out or do a stock trade or whatever, and there were absolute proven things. He also had had a model built of an apartment building which could be put on the factory site, which would have been way above the forty-foot height limit and everything. I was appalled. He had it there, he was showing it to us, and I said, "Harvey, you couldn't possibly have considered this." "Well, yes, I would consider anything."

So this went on and on and on with, you know, these factions. Both Elva Ghirardelli Dinsmore and Juanita Ghirardelli Magee, who were my aunts, of whom I was extremely fond, stood by their brother. Elva's answer to me was, "I will go down with my brother with our flags flying." And Juanita felt the same way. And Carmen Baker's son George had his wife buy extra stock from Harvey so that they would have more of a voting crowd, and he stuck with Harvey also. Carmencita Baker, Carmen's daughter, was then married to Niven Busch, and Niven Busch was, of course, on our side. We had a wonderful little Italian sort of vendetta going.

Finally Bill [William M.] Roth made the offer for the property. Then we forced the board of directors of the company to look for a buyer of the business. And that's how it all worked out.

Teiser: When Bill Roth made the offer, did everybody say, "Okay, this is it"?

Lawrence: Yes.

Teiser: So it was unanimously approved?

Lawrence: To my knowledge, it was not unanimously approved. I was there, and I think that Harvey probably voted no. Ben Reed was awfully mad about the whole thing. He was loyal to the company and not to the person, but he hated to see the company go down the drain. I think we all felt that way, but there was no alternative. When this offer came in, we didn't vote then; we had to look into it. It depended on how much each stockholder was going to get, et cetera.

Teiser: When Bill Roth made the offer, did he tell you what he was going to do with the property?

Lawrence: Yes. He said, "I am going to develop the property in a manner that will be suitable with the family's wishes," and that was in writing.

Then the offer came for the business, and that was the Golden Grain Macaroni people, who made a perfectly legitimate offer for the business and the name, which is worth something. They did continue to manufacture chocolate there on North Point Street for a period of time. Ben Reed stayed on and Bob Ghirardelli stayed on for a short period of time. Then the factory moved, because there was a time limit with the Roth Investment Company of how long they could use the property, because at that time the Roths owned the property and the factory, and the Golden Grain Macaroni people, the DeDomenico family, owned the business and were renting the factory from the Roths. So they built a factory in San Leandro, and then they moved. They moved some of the machinery that was movable, because the machinery was not that outdated.

That's when Ben Reed went with them to San Leandro. He lived in Danville, so it wasn't so bad. He knew a lot about the business, and he stayed for two years in order to get them going in the right way. He said he really liked them very much except it was a matriarchy, and the men would make a decision and then the decision would come down from mama, "No, we don't do it that way." So he said he couldn't stand it. He was being paid a perfectly good salary and everything, but he could not stand this manner in which it was done. Ours was probably a patriarchy, but this was really a woman up there ruling with an iron hand!

So that's that, and they're doing very well, I think, and having this retrospective exhibit about Domingo Ghirardelli in 1985.*

Teiser: Let me ask you why the company started losing money. Was it weakness within the company or did it have too many stockholders to feed, or what?

Lawrence: Well, I think probably both reasons are valid. I go back to 1952. That is when my father had his first heart attack. I think it was a lack of being able to change with the times, and

*The exhibit was later put over to another time.

Lawrence: I think that all of the stockholders, including my grandmother, who died in 1944, were always saying to them, "Why don't you diversify? Why don't you make another kind of chocolate coating? Why don't you put some money into some real estate around the town? Why don't you do this? Why don't you do that?"

And, pardon me, but I guess the men who were working for the company were somewhat pigheaded! Their attitude was, "Well, we've done all right so far, why can't we just continue to do all right? We haven't advertised since the 1930s and we haven't ever needed to advertise since the 1930s. We don't want anybody else telling us what to do, so of course I'm not going to talk to Hunt's Foods." This is very simplified, but I'm afraid it's true.

My husband, Sidney Lawrence, worked for the factory until my father died because he felt that that would be a terrible blow if he didn't stick around. So my cousin Ben called my husband and said, "My advice to you, Sid, is to get out of here and get out of here quickly. Go find yourself another job, because we're not going anywhere in this company unless we change." And so Sid said, "Thank you very much." Sid knew he didn't have a prayer to change it because Harvey, I don't think, really liked him very much anyway. So he got out and went and got a job with the San Francisco Chronicle as the director of financial advertising, and everything was all right. So that's an example. I think Ben saw the cards on the table.

Teiser: Could Ben have changed it?

Lawrence: I think he tried. I don't know, but I think he was close enough to Harvey to have been able to say, "All right, look, Harvey, we should try to do something. Maybe we should consider--" There were mergers going on all the time. Schilling merged with McCormick. This was the way you did business in those days. From what I can gather, Ben got nowhere.

We had one meeting which was extremely emotional, and we all spoke our minds. I made an impassioned speech against the company, and Ben was in tears. He said, "I think you're being terribly unfair, and the company should exist, and you're deserters and you're deserting your heritage and your own company." And I said, "We're not deserting anything. The talk around town is that it is a very, very sick company, and it's better to try and do something about it now rather than let the sickness turn into rigor mortis."

And it was awfully hard to have both my Aunt Elva and my Aunt Juanita--I was extremely fond of both of them--be so blind. But I understand them. They were going with their brother no matter what he did, because their other two brothers were gone.

Lawrence: So that's that. And frankly I think we lucked out. We may not have the wherewithal that we once had in any way, but I'd rather have that square sitting down there and what the members of this family did meaning something to this community than have a horrible apartment building there. I'm very grateful to Bill Roth for that. I wrote something to that effect in 1964 when Ghirardelli Square became a reality. It was published in the Junior League Magazine. That's the way I feel.

Teiser: Let me go back to the causes of the decline. Were there too many stockholders living? I know other companies have had to sell because there were too many people dependent upon one company as the generations went on.

Lawrence: That's right, which is true.

Teiser: Did that dilute the power of the company?

Lawrence: I don't know, to be perfectly honest with you.

Teiser: Somebody must have felt bad about your mother?

Lawrence: Yes. Well, pardon me if I seem somewhat miffed, but nobody offered to do anything.

I'm wondering whether I should go into all the problems that my poor mother and I had when she had no visible means of support. I went to Harvey once, and I said, "I don't know what I'm going to do." And he said, "Well, you know, my mother-in-law lived with us for years, and we just got along beautifully and everything was fine, and I missed the old girl when she died." And I said, "Harvey, I can't do that. I live in a small house with just enough room for four people, which is my husband and my two children and me, and my mother wouldn't like that anyway." And that was his only suggestion. So anyway, we managed nonetheless.

One mistake the company made earlier was Harvey was hedging when he offered some preferred stock, and he shouldn't have done that, because someone like Florence Jorgensen--and I have that documented in this correspondence from Catherine--went immediately down and turned in her common shares for preferred. And she had lots of it because Virgil had been an only child--I mean, his sister had died--so she lived very comfortably and made other investments from her income.

I think what happened was the loss of vitality in the leadership of the company. The company had gotten along perfectly well, I would say, throughout World War II because there was a big boom. They had big government contracts.

Teiser: What were the government contracts?

Lawrence: For navy ships. Chocolate bars, great big slabs of chocolate, barrels of ground chocolate. You know, food is a very big part of financing a war.

I remember my father had to go to Treasure Island to see some lieutenant commander who was a procurement officer, and the man kept him waiting an hour. He was absolutely wild. And he walked in, and it turned out to be someone he had known. His name was Beach Soule. His daughter is also a friend of mine. And my father just gave him absolute holy hell! He was younger than my father. Anyway, he did get the contract, but it was close there. That went over into the post-war years.

Teiser: Was there rationing of chocolate? Was the nonmilitary use of chocolate restricted?

Lawrence: Sugar was rationed, if you remember, during the war. I had to have a coupon to get sugar and so did you, but the chocolate company had a quota, depending on what percentage of their business was government contract. So they had no trouble getting sugar. And I suppose people bought chocolate too because they couldn't make their own chocolate cakes and stuff without sugar and they didn't get enough sugar.

It sounds a little bit like war profiteering, but I don't think it was. I think what happened was that they didn't take advantage of the financial climate at the end of World War II and do a little playing around with mergers and things like that.

Ward Mailliard, who was a great friend of my father's, was a very philanthropic man in San Francisco and very well known. He was the chairman of the grand jury several times, and my father also served on the grand jury at one time. And Ward Mailliard came to my father before the war, and said, "There's a new company that I'm asking some friends to put up two thousand dollars each," or something. "It's called S.O.S." They were stainless steel pads. And my father said, "Oh, I don't think I'd be interested in that."

Well, of course, you know what happened to that. Within six months, they got every month what they put into it in the very beginning. So my father, I'm afraid, was a little bit too loyal to the ideal of this company being the great thing that would save them all. That's an example, I think, of one thing that kept it from changing.

Lawrence: But my father was much more community aware and much more financially aware--having been on the boards of banks and knowing William Crocker Sr., and lots of things like that--than either Louis or Harvey. Harvey didn't move in financial circles at all. Had my father been well, perhaps positive action would have been taken.

Teiser: What was Harvey's education?

Lawrence: He went to the University of California, but I don't think he did graduate. He and Gladys were married before he graduated from college, which made his mother wild. Then he went to work for the company after they were married.*

Teiser: But no special business background?

Lawrence: Not really. I think he was probably a perfectly intelligent man, but he also was a very prejudiced person and rather stubborn. He even had red hair! And my husband had red hair. And my husband and Harvey used to--when my husband worked for the company, which was a mistake at the beginning, and I knew it, but his father told him to do it--

Lawrence: --he and Harvey used to have little run-ins. And my father would say, "Well, it's just the two redheads fighting with each other; we won't pay any attention to that."

I don't know what the deep-down malaise of the company was, except what I've said, which is my feeling, and I'm sorry but it seems to be the truth. And that was the only time I ever wished I really were a man; I would have gone in there and tried to help in some manner.

Teiser: The stock was quite widely disbursed to family members, but a little had been sold outside the family in the nineties, and some had been given to employees.

Lawrence: Yes, but I think that all reverted back as the years went by. To my knowledge, when the company was dissolved there were no nonfamily stockholders.

*See also page 80.

The Alfred Ghirardelli Family, Continued

DEATH OF CLARISSE LOHSE GHIRARDELLI

Lawrence: There's an interesting thing I'll tell you about. My mother was perfectly fine after my father died; we had a little financial problem, but she did all right. Then, about four or five months later, she had a very severe stroke and was hospitalized.

I was looking for some place to put her. I did not have room at home, and I knew she was going to leave the hospital. So I had her admitted to Garden Hospital, over here on Geary Street, which is subsidized by the Community Chest. I had known a lot of people who were on the board, including John Callander, a doctor, who called me and said, "Well, does your mother have any income at all?" And I said, "Yes, she does," and I told him what. He said, "Well, that doesn't matter, that's okay. We will accept her, but you will have to pay the full fee for the cost because it can't be subsidized." And I said, "Well, that's perfectly all right; I just want her to have good care." Because every place else I'd looked was just perfectly ghastly.

So a friend of my mother's called me and said, "I hear your mother maybe is going to Garden Hospital, and a group of us have gotten together and we would like to send her to Notre Dame Hospital and we will underwrite that," which is the old Dante Hospital, right on Broadway and Van Ness Avenue. I said, "Well, I'm terribly sorry, but I can't accept that, and I know my mother wouldn't want to accept that. I know she's going to get good care where she's going because I know about the people who run it." And the woman said, "Well, you're making a mistake," and hung up on me, but that's all right.

Well, in about five minutes the phone rang and it was Harvey Ghirardelli saying, "Hey! I hear that some of your mother's friends are going to pay for putting her in Notre Dame Hospital." And I said, "No, they're not, Harvey; I could not accept that. Do you now realize what terrible straits she is in?" And he said, "Well, you wouldn't do anything like that, would you ever?" And I said, "Well, you know, I might have had to at some point in time, and you didn't help me any," and then he hung up on me, and that was the end of that.

So she was in this place, which is nice, and I went to see her three or four times a week.

Lawrence: And her brother was still alive, and he went to see her, and she was getting along fine. She had a television. They loved her. They called her Lady Bird. The nurses just thought she was marvelous.

One day I was visiting her and I noticed that she didn't look very well, so I called the nurse and we wheeled her in, and my uncle, her brother, was there, and he didn't think anything was wrong. She was having another one of these things, so they called the priest. The priest came and gave her the last rites, and he finished it up and as he finished, he said, "Well, have a nice trip, Mrs. Ghirardelli." And the nurse, who was kneeling beside him said, "Father, this is the woman's daughter." Anyway, he was the most terrible priest I've ever known, and with that he walked out.

My mother made one of her miraculous comebacks and she recovered. I told her what had happened when she had recovered, and she and I got hysterical with laughter. She said, "I don't believe it!" And I said, "Well, I don't either, but all I can say is, you don't ever have to have him back again; you've got all the last rites and everything's all set." And she said, "Well, you know, Polly, seriously, when this happens again just remember I'm not coming back." And I said, "Okay." I remember that, and I will remember that, and, by God, the next time it happened she didn't.

I was in my house on Washington Street, and I had all her furniture because I'd had the movers out at her apartment. I didn't move her out till she died because I didn't think that was right. And I had all her furniture in the dining room, and Father Haze, the priest over at St. Edward's, walked into the house and he said, "Well, what finally got the old girl?" And I said, "Oh, she died of a stroke."

A friend of mine was in the living room using the telephone, calling somebody in the opera field or something. There was furniture all over the dining room. My children were going up and down stairs, and he finally looked at me and he said, "This is a madhouse!" and turned around and walked out.

Teiser: This sounds as if it were fulfilling your great-grandfather's view.*

*See pages 10, 28.

Lawrence: Well, exactly, and that certainly finished me!

Then, when I had her funeral, they wouldn't allow her to be buried from a church because she wanted to be buried in the Ghirardelli vault, with her husband. So I went to the arch-bishop, and they said, "No, it's not a consecrated plot site." It depends on when the cemetery was founded and everything, and none of it worked. So the funeral had to be at N. Gray and Company, and this man sent another priest who was Polish and couldn't speak any English, and it was so awful it was funny, it really was, it was just terrible.

Then my husband went over for the interment in the vault, which was a couple of days later. He was delayed by traffic, and he got there, and Harvey was there, and he said, "Well, it's all done, Sid; we don't need you here." He had been late, so Harvey had just gone ahead and done it, which I thought was really quite mean!

FAMILY TRIPS

Teiser: I came across a reference to an article in the San Francisco Examiner of January 8, 1928 about your parents at Lake Tahoe, with a picture of a snow scene.

Lawrence: Well, I do remember that trip. Why they took this child, I don't know, but I went. My mother had sort of not thought the thing through because I didn't have very good snow clothes. We were going to stay with some friends who had a house near the tavern.*

If you remember the train days, the trains left at six o'clock at night. From here you took the ferry over to the Mole in Oakland and got on the Pullman car. The train left around six or six-thirty, and it was terribly exciting, I can remember that. Then we went into the dining car where we had our dinner. We had a drawing room, as I remember. There were upper and lower bunk beds and then across from that there was a little sort of settee thing that could be made up into a small bed. So I slept there, and my mother and father slept in the upper and lower.

After I had been put to bed, we stopped in Sacramento where there was much--this is say ten o'clock at night--hoopla going on outside the windows of the car and men yelling back and forth. Roseville was the next place along the line

*Tahoe Tavern

Lawrence: that we stopped, and that was where we put on an extra engine in order to get over the Donner Summit and down into Tahoe Valley.

We arrived the next morning, and it was, oh, ever so exciting. I think we had breakfast on the train on the way into Lake Tahoe. Then we arrived. The railway went all the way in and there was a dead end right beside the Tahoe Tavern.

So we disembarked from the train. I can remember getting out into the snow and starting to run to greet some person, an adult who I knew--I guess probably our host or hostess--and I fell down and I did not have anything covering my knees or hands. So I thought, "Oh, my goodness, I've fallen into a white fire," or something like that because I'd never been in snow before, so the cold felt like hot. Of course, I immediately burst into tears and everything else, and I think my father said to my mother, "Why did you insist on bringing this child?" [laughter]

But I do recall it was perfectly beautiful. The trees were all covered with snow and it was really a white paradise when I got over my initial shock.

The trains were very comfortable in those days, and the porters were most solicitous, and it was a delightful way to travel, really.

I can remember in later years going across the continent. In 1933 we went to the Chicago World's Fair. I think it took three days in those days. The train was called the Overland Limited.

I remember it was in the summer and it was extremely hot. Of course, the Middle West was almost unbearable, and there was no air conditioning on the train except in the dining car, so that everyone took an awfully long time eating their meals! That was the only haven you could find. But in those days we didn't really know the difference; it didn't matter that that was the only air-conditioned car on the train because you were just sort of inured to being hot going across the continent.

I can remember the Great Salt Lake, and that was a thrill to see the first time. Then we got off in Omaha. I think we had a four-hour layover in Omaha, so my father hired a taxi to take us around the town of Omaha. I can remember thinking, "What is so exciting about this?" The taxi driver took us through a park, and I kept making remarks like, "Well, our

Lawrence: Golden Gate Park is much bigger than this and better, too," and my father kept saying, "Now listen. Let the man take us around and show us what to see in Omaha, Nebraska."

So we did, and then we got back on the train and shortly, I guess the next day, arrived in Chicago. We stayed at the Stevens Hotel, which was then I think the largest hotel in the world when it was brand new. It occupied a whole block on-- is it Michigan Avenue that's right on the water there?

The fair was across the way from us, and it was called "A Century of Progress." It was quite an exciting experience. As I said earlier, for my mother and father, the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition I think was probably the highlight of their lives! They always expected every other world's fair to live up to that one. This was in the art deco, 1933 era, and of course it didn't live up to the Panama-Pacific because it had all the 1930s decor and all the new inventions. But I had a wonderful time, and I think we enjoyed it thoroughly.

We also took a tour of the city on a Grey Lines bus, and the driver was driving terribly fast. But he allowed me to sit up in front with him in the front seat. Finally I said, at the age of eleven or whatever I was, "Excuse me, sir, but why are you driving so fast?" And he said, "Well, my wife is going to have a baby. She's in the hospital now, and I want to get back as quickly as I can." So I said, "Well, you better not tell anybody else that; they won't understand. You're supposed to be directing a tour." Anyway, that's the fastest tour of Chicago we've ever had.

I loved trains, anyway, and I still do. When our daughter, Clarisse, graduated from the University of Denver, my husband and I took the Feather River route. Which train was that?

Teiser: Western Pacific.

Lawrence: Western Pacific. And it was just a glorious experience, except, of course, they were about to take the passenger lines off, and our porter I think had been born in 1800 or something. He was the nicest old man but he slept most of the time because he was very, very elderly and there were not very many other people on the train with us. But we had a wonderful time, and we went up in the Vista Dome when we went through the Feather River Valley, and that was a great thrill. We just had one night on the train, but we had a wonderful time. We got to Denver and were met by our darling daughter. My mother-in-law and our son flew up for the graduation, so we went the old-fashioned way, and Mrs. Lawrence Sr., who was a little older than I, went the new way! We all had a very good time.

Lawrence: Well, I had many other train trips. I went to a wedding once in 1942, and went across the continent by myself which was great fun.

Elva Ghirardelli Dinsmore

Lawrence: Now, my father's sister Elva, who was the next youngest one, married Welby Dinsmore in about 1922, I believe. He was a very handsome man and he had been in World War I and was a war hero.

So, as agreed upon by Elva and her mother, Johanna Legler Ghirardelli, when Elva married, would come and live with the family. So it was in the early twenties that Johanna Ghirardelli commissioned Virgil Jorgensen, the architect, to design her a house for a lot that she had bought at 6 King Avenue, Piedmont. It was perfectly suited for two families. It is mentioned, not quite correctly, in Queen of the Hills: The Story of Piedmont, a California City by Evelyn Craig Pattiani. She grew up in Piedmont, and this was originally published in 1953 by the Academy Library Guild of Fresno, California. In 1982 it was reissued by the Yosemite DiMaggio Company of Oakland, California. It was sold as a benefit for the Campfire Girls of Piedmont. The foreword is by Allan Chickering.

The author had a very clever way of doing it. It's kind of a walking tour of Piedmont. On page 158, there's a heading called, "Meandering Along King Avenue." [reading] "At Number Six, King Avenue, is the large and well seasoned home that ties the Ghirardelli name to that of John Welby Dinsmore. This gentleman served as mayor of Piedmont (1947)"--that is incorrect; he was mayor of Piedmont in 1944--"and carried on with the traditional acumen and tact of his own family and that of the clan of his wife Elva, daughter of the late Mrs. Louis Ghirardelli. This notable lady long reigned as social mistress of the home she designed." But she did not design the home; it was designed by her nephew by marriage, Virgil Jorgensen, the architect.

So Elva and Welby moved into one part of the house, and then my grandmother had a large bedroom, a sewing room off of that, a bath in between, and a little kitchen, and then a sitting room off of that. She could close her sliding doors and shut out the rest of the household completely.

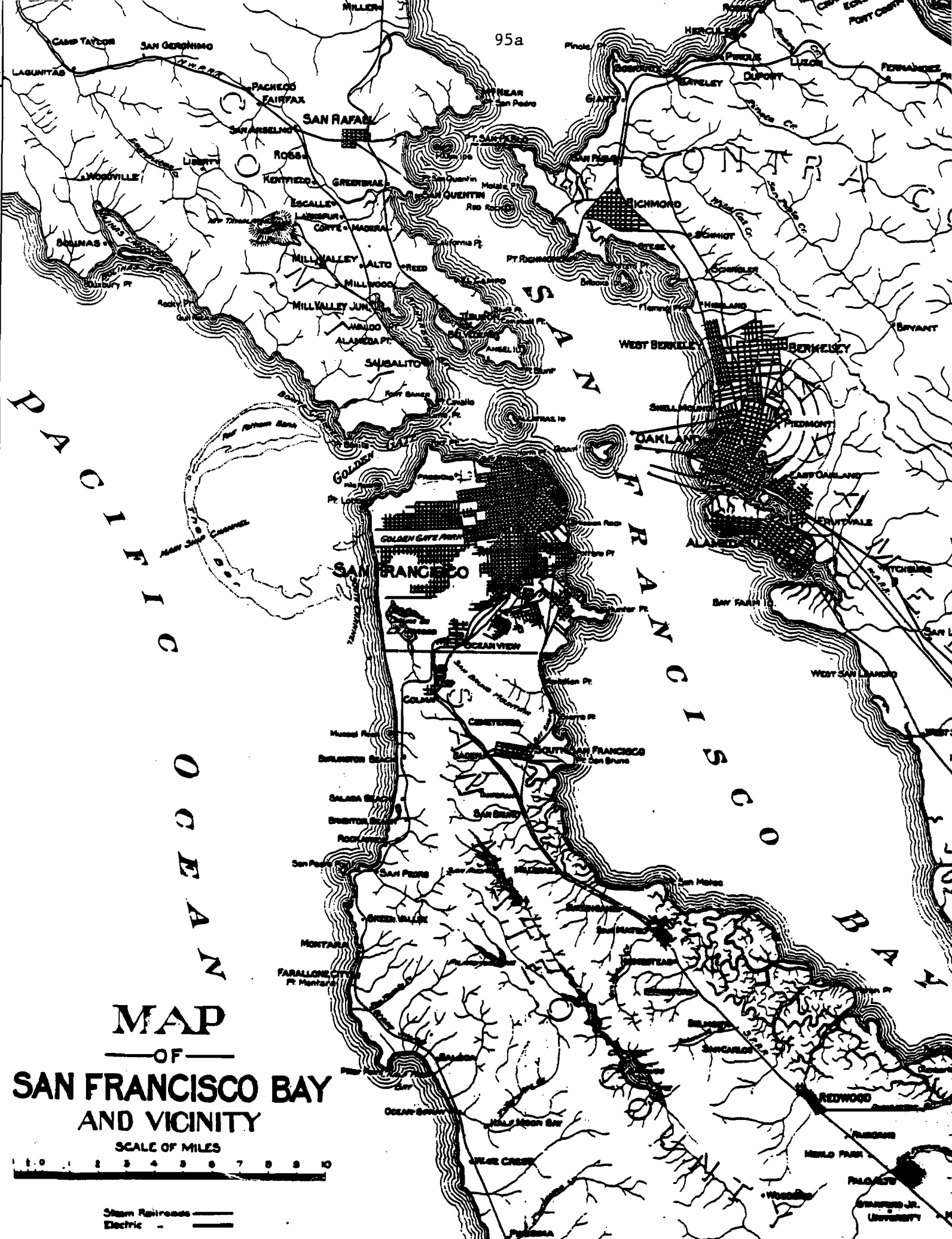
Lawrence: As the years went by, Elva and Welby Dinsmore had a female child, Joan, and then they had another female child, Natalie. When the second baby was coming along, they added onto their end of the house so that there was another wing, which was made into a bedroom for the baby and a large servants' wing for the servants because they needed three people to run that house.

Elva died in 1964. Her husband, Welby, was just desolated by that, and he died in 1969. Elva was a wonderful woman. She was also very strong-minded, and when my grandmother died she made Elva and my father the coexecutors because she had so much faith in Elva. Elva went to Miss Ransom's school in the East Bay years ago, and she graduated as the Optima girl, which means the young female who has the most intellectual future ahead of her. In those days, of course, young women didn't go to college, so she didn't, but she was always a very aware person and knew what she was about.

They all lived at 6 King Avenue together. When I was growing up, we would have Sunday lunch there, I would say on an average of once a month. It was slightly difficult for my mother because she was surrounded by Ghirardellis, and the Ghirardellis of this particular group, "The Tribe of Johanna," all thought that they were extremely amusing. And one would try to talk the other ones into being hilariously funny. And my husband said this too, when he came into the family, he said, "Honestly, your family. You know, they are quite funny, but watching them is almost too much." My husband's grandfather had lived in Piedmont and was a great friend of my grandmother's, so my husband had known my family for a long time, so he knew what he was getting into, fortunately for him.

But anyway, once a month on a Sunday my family would take the ferry in our little motoring car, the three of us--Louis and Marian also lived in San Francisco, but we seemed to have traveled "overseas" separately--and crossed the bay and got off the ferry and motored up the hill into Piedmont, the Queen of the Hills, and arrived at 6 King Avenue, and as my mother said, I was always all dressed up in my lovely pink organdy dresses and everything. I can remember this from the age of about four on up through high school.

And so we would get out, and then the children would be sent out to play. Of course, I was kind of a tomboy. I had two female first cousins and three male first cousins. So we would get out there and we played football. We had a glorious time. Then they'd call us in for lunch, and I could look at my



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PACIFIC OCEAN

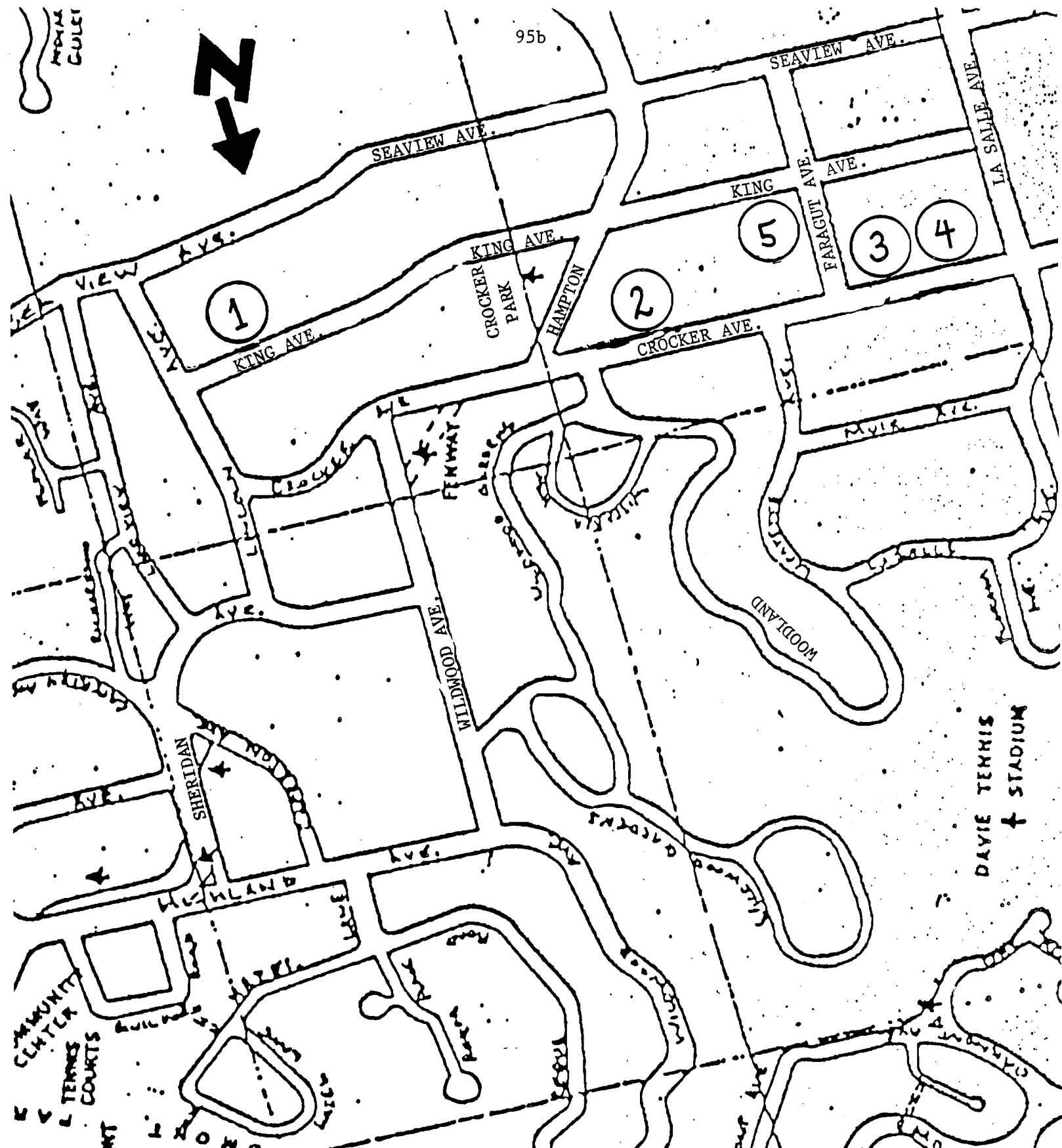
SAN FRANCISCO BAY

MAP
 OF
SAN FRANCISCO BAY
 AND VICINITY

SCALE OF MILES



Steam Railroads ———
 Electric ———



THE "GHIRARDELLI ENCLAVE" AND SURROUNDINGS, PIEDMONT - 1920s

LEGEND

1. 6 King Avenue: Mrs. Louis Ghirardelli
2. 201 Crocker Avenue: Juanita Ghirardelli (Mrs. Harry H. Magee)
3. 300 Crocker Avenue: Carmen Sutton (Mrs. Benjamin Reed)
4. 210 Crocker Avenue: Carmen Ghirardelli (Mrs. George W. Baker, Jr.)
5. 44 Faragut Avenue: Mr. and Mrs. Walter N. Moore (Sidney Lawrence's grandfather)

Lawrence: mother and see that her face would fall because my lovely dress was always ruined and I had dirt on my face and everything. "Go wash up, wash up."

Then we would go in for a great big lunch, the grownups all at one huge table. What we called the Little Folks' Table was over in the corner, and we would sit by ourselves. We, of course, would also try to outdo each other,

Anyway, it was really quite a wonderful experience, especially for me, being an only child, because I felt as though I really had a family and I had contemporaries. Robert was the oldest of us all, and then I was the second oldest, and, of course, anything that ever happened was always our fault!

And then I am reminded of one time in the very early thirties or the late twenties. There is a place called Castlewood Country Club, it's the old Phoebe Hearst estate out near Pleasanton, and my grandmother was talked into buying a lot on the golf course there, and she was building a house. So my Aunt Anita Lohse Gregory, who was my mother's older sister, was invited to bring me out and spend the weekend, and we stayed at the country club while this house was being built. And my grandmother had her two granddaughters, Joan and Natalie, who were the offspring of Elva Dinsmore.

We children were fooling around and we were out in the back of the house. So Natalie said, "Would you please hold me up, I'd like to see into the window." There was a swimming pool inside this thing. And I said, "Sure." So I lifted her up, and we both fell over backwards. Of course, the howl that went up, the screaming and yelling! And Joan was standing by, looking, and she, too, burst into tears and was crying.

My grandmother came out, and had heard this whole thing, and looked at me and said, "You God damn little wop, what do you think you're doing!" She never swore in her life, she never called anybody by that name, but it was the first thing she could think of because I was the oldest and I had caused whatever had happened. And she was German, so "wop" meant nothing to her. But to me, it was one of the funniest things, and I don't think I'll ever forget it. I must have been six years old at the time. My Aunt Anita Gregory thought that was sort of funny, too. But we did have fun, and everything went smoothly.

Lawrence: My grandmother used to take Elva and my mother, Clarisse, and Joan and Natalie and me to Palm Springs in February every year, and we'd stay two or three weeks. I don't know, they just took us out of school and it seemed not to matter to anybody in those days. We stayed at a place called the Oasis Hotel in Palm Springs, and it was lots of fun.

The people who owned it were named Garlik, and they were friends of my grandmother's, and so we always had a very pleasant time. We had a nice cottage. We took tours. She would drive down with Elva and the two girls in her limousine. Her chauffeur, Walter, who had been with her for a hundred years I guess--we always expected them both to grow old together--left her later during the war because he got a job in a shipyard, which was a real blow. Anyway, that was another part of our lives growing up. We all got along nicely and enjoyed ourselves.

Juanita Ghirardelli Magee

Lawrence: My father's sister Juanita was probably the funniest woman who ever lived. She was the youngest, and she was only about three or four years old when her father died, which was very hard on her. She married Harry Magee, Harry Hush Magee, who was a member of a very prominent family. Thomas Magee and Sons were an old real estate firm. William Magee was Harry's father. William and Thomas Magee were in the real estate business, and it was quite a well-known firm.

The whole Magee family was rather social, I would say. Harry Magee's parents had a great big ranch out in Fruitvale, which is now east Oakland. I can remember going out there to play with my cousin Hap Magee [Harry, Jr.] and riding horses all over that area. The Mormon Temple is there now.

Juanita was very attractive. She was very dark and she looked somewhat Italianate or even Spanish, more than any of the rest of the family. Carmen Sutton was kind of Italian-looking too, and Carmen Ghirardelli Baker was somewhat dark that way. But Juanita really had very good looks, and she was just a character.

She had two sons, and we, of course, always used to play together. We used to be out at Castlewood, my grandmother's summer house, and Juanita would be sitting up with the rest

Lawrence: of the adults, and we would be down in the play area, and she would call down to her boys and say, "What are you doing?" And we'd look up and say, "Nothing." And she'd say, "Well, stop it!"

And Harry was a marvelous man, too, he really was. He was a great hunter. The two boys are wonderful offspring of two wonderful people. The oldest one, Hap, is my age.* He is a rancher and fattens cattle and brings them to market. Hap is married and has a daughter, Julie. Harry Magee was also in the oil business and was extremely successful. The younger of Juanita's sons, Jerry, lives in Piedmont and is married to a lovely young lady, Barbara. They have three children and four grandchildren now. He is president at the Magee Investment Company and is doing very well. He's a very smart businessman. He is the gentleman who is the finance chairman to raise the money for this interview project, and so far he's doing quite nicely.

Both Hap and Jerry are athletic and very active outdoorsmen. They're both great hunters. And, of course, we used to play wonderful football together!

Teiser: You said that you were the only members of your father's family who lived in the city. Do you think your father and mother were pleased to have this distance?

Lawrence: My father was pleased. It was his idea. My mother really didn't want to leave Piedmont, and he insisted when they were married. And that's when they moved to Larkin Street, which was right above the factory, so that he could walk to work.

The Jorgensen Family

[Interview 4: October 29, 1984]

Lawrence: My father and his cousin Virgil Jorgensen, son of Chris Jorgensen and Angela Ghirardelli, were born the same year, and they were very, very close. He was the one who did this diary of Rapallo.

*Hap died in February, 1985.

Lawrence: Virgil's wife's maiden name was Florence Jennings Wallace. Her mother was one of the earliest suffragettes and used to make speeches which Florence had many copies of. They're gone now because Florence died in 1980.

Anyway, Florence had a very interesting life. She was one of the few women who went to Stanford University and graduated in 1914. Virgil Jorgensen studied at MIT and got his degree in architecture. He was an artistic person. So they were rather well suited because they were both somewhat intellectual.

So in 1924 and '25, Virgil and Florence took an extended trip to Europe. Virgil had been in Italy in 1894 as a child with his parents and grandfather. In the diary, which is in The Bancroft Library, I found many things such as business cards from the American ambassador to Italy, so they evidently had a very VIP trip.

On February 21, 1925, they went by car across the peninsula and dropped directly into Rapallo. After they had lunch, he went out wandering around with a view to questioning every coachman that he came across whether or not they had heard of the name Ghirardelli, if they knew where the old Ghirardelli house was.

He spoke fluent French, so he was looking for somebody who spoke French because his Italian was not very good. Well, he did find a man who referred him to a gentleman who was sitting in a sidewalk cafe. Virgil went over and spoke to him, and he turned out to be Giacomo Castagneto, who was the consul of Chile in Rapallo. When mentioned the word Ghirardelli, the man looked very startled and said, "He is my uncle."

Castagneto was "reputed wealthy, and my second cousin, I guess." This is Virgil speaking. "He took Florence and me to a cafe for a snack and talked of everything but the old home and the relatives." He did take Virgil to see a painting by Chris Jorgensen which was in a club there, a sailboat on a bay.

Later on Virgil found a taxi driver or a carriage driver who conducted him to Number 2 Via Alessandro Volta and presented him with a few more relatives. There was an old Mrs. Antoinetto Ghirardelli, "two married daughters, and their numerous offspring. Mrs. G[hirardelli] was the wife of a son of my grandfather's brother." That's Virgil's grandfather's brother. "When my identity was established, photos were brought on and a toy gun which was 'Virgilio's,'" who lived there as a youth.

Lawrence: "They seem kindly, simple people. We drove up the Santa Anna road and saw the ruins of the old Ghirardelli home," which was destroyed by a bad flood ten years before. "We left the family and drove to Cassa Rafo, where we used to live"--this is 1892 and '94; that's when Virgil was there with his mother and father and his nursemaid--and the concierge knew it well and "pointed out the window of the room where Grandpa G. had died."

"About the same time along came another old-timer. When he learned the situation he exclaimed, 'per bacco,' said grandfather was an old friend of his and he rememberd well his son-in-law, 'the little artist.'" That was Chris Jorgensen, Virgil's father. "This fine gentleman is Captain A. Solari, he speaks English quite well."

This is dated, then, February twenty-fourth, 1925. They took photographs, and they talked to an old native who knew the family well, and called on the relatives again. He made many sketches of the town, which I think are lost, unfortunately, now. They were "very sorry" to leave Rapallo on March fifth, 1925. So they did come home with all this information and the diary. That is a very short part of the diary. So that is that story. Virgil then came back to San Francisco and they lived in Piedmont for quite a long time.

About that time my grandmother, Mrs. Louis Ghirardelli, Johanna, decided that she would like to build a house in Piedmont, up on a hill. So she persuaded Virgil to be the designer of same, which he was. It's still there, and it's a perfectly lovely Italianate house at 6 King Avenue, standing up on a hill. It has a porte-cochère in the back for a limousine or a carriage or whatever to drive through. It's very large, and it housed two families because when my Aunt Elva Ghirardelli married Welby Dinsmore, they lived in the house with my grandmother, who had her own separate quarters. I think I've told you this before.

In the book Queen of the Hills; The Story of Piedmont, A California City,* they say that Mrs. Ghirardelli designed the house. Well, she did not, indeed. Her nephew-in-law designed it and did a beautiful job.

*See page 94.

Teiser: Who lives in it now?

Lawrence: I don't know. Elva Dinsmore stayed on after my grandmother died in 1944 for two or three years, and had the same old Christmas Eve dinners and everything to which we all went. Then she and her husband moved into a smaller house and sold that house.

Chris Jorgensen and his wife, Angela, had another child, Aimée. She was born in 1889. She was younger than Virgil, and she was married to Ralph Anderson. She had a child whose name was Chris Jorgensen Anderson, and she died in childbirth in 1920, which was very sad, so that Virgil and Florence and Chris and Angela had this motherless child. Ralph Anderson then remarried, and he and his wife raised the child. That was, say, 1934 or '35.

Florence and I were very good friends, and my father and Virgil were very good friends. So we'd spend quite a bit of time together with the family in a group, went riding up on the ranch, and we had wonderful times together.

In about 1950, Virgil, who had a heart condition but paid no attention to it, died very, very suddenly, which was a terrible blow to everybody, including Florence, who was alone; they had no children of their own. My father, of course, had to sort of step in and take care of everything, which he did. Florence stayed at Laurelbrook Farm for a while, and then she finally bought a place in Sobre Vista, which is a lovely section outside of the town of Sonoma, where she moved, and her servant Wong went with her.

She lived there very happily for many years. She had lots of friends up there. One of her favorite friends was the singer-- I can't remember his name--who did "Most Happy Fella," a marvelous baritone. Anyway, he was a wonderful man, a dear friend of hers. She led a very nice life and took part in the affairs of Sonoma.

It was during this period, however, some gentlemen from the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History came to call on her because she had inherited by that time all of Chris Jorgensen's paintings that hadn't been sold during his lifetime. And these men talked her into the fact that she should leave them to the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History and have control and possession of them during her lifetime. Unfortunately, she signed the documents, and that's what happened to the paintings. I have the inventory in my possession of what paintings are

Lawrence: there. The Bancroft Library has slides of all the paintings that were sent there. I thought we could get the slides from The Bancroft Library of his portraits of Carmen and Domingo Ghirardelli, and use those in the book.*

Chris Jorgensen had died in Piedmont in 1935, at a ripe old age, and Angela Ghirardelli Jorgensen had bought a house in Palm Springs, and she died the next year in 1936, in Palm Springs, leaving more of the responsibility for Aimée's child, Chris Jorgensen Anderson, with Virgil and Florence. Then Virgil died and Florence moved.

While I was in the University of California, Chris Jorgensen Anderson became engaged to a young woman whose name was Adele De Fremery. He had graduated from college then, and they were married in about 1942. I was asked to be a bridesmaid, and it was a very interesting wedding. They married and settled down and lived in Piedmont.

Young Chris had inherited, being an only surviving child of an only child, a great deal of stock in the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company. The war was going on, and he went to my father, who was his friend and the vice president, and he wanted to return the dividends because he wasn't earning them and he felt that that wasn't right. By this time he and Adele had a family and they were living in Piedmont. They had four or five children. My father said, "Well, that won't prove anything, Chris. It will just go back into the company, and you are entitled to this."

"Well, can't I give it to the war effort?" And my father said, "Well, if you wish to give part of it to the war effort, it will be a drop in the bucket; it will not mean anything, but you do whatever you want, but please don't turn the dividends back." So he convinced Chris, and he didn't.

Chris and Adele resided in Piedmont for many years. He was a very intelligent young man academically, but he was very mixed up emotionally. They moved to Florida, where he was some kind of a marine biochemist, I believe. They moved with their family. He committed suicide, which was very sad, leaving Adele with the children. But she remarried and still lives in Florida with their children.

Florence continued living at Sobre Vista, with her servant, Wong. As the years went by she sort of aged. I think that young Chris's death was a terrible blow to her, as was Virgil's.

*See page 6a.

Lawrence: She became ill, and she had some next-door neighbors who had been very dear friends of Virgil and Florence. I don't know what happened, but Florence wasn't well, and these people came in and sort of took over and hired nurses and people like that.

Finally my husband and I went up to have lunch with her. (She was also very fond of my son, Larry, Sidney Lawrence III.) Wong called me out into the kitchen and in his own way said, "Missy not being taken care of." And I said, "All right."

I couldn't decide what to do, so I asked another relative, and she said, "Well, get in touch with Catherine Lytell," who is the lady who is now corresponding with me constantly. She was the daughter of Norman and Catherine Mather Lytell, who were friends of Virgil and Florence, good friends. Norman Lytell was an attorney in Washington, and he was the attorney for the Navajo Indians and was quite a well-known man for a while.

Anyway, the daughter of these people were devoted to Florence. She was the head of the German department at Bucknell University, and she came out to Florence's house, presumably for a visit, but really to straighten this whole thing out because it was a perfectly terrible mess. There were nurses who were stealing from her. It was bad.

Florence gave me her engagement ring. She said, "I want you to have this." And I said, "Thank you," and I took it. This was when she was in her right mind. I had it appraised, and I was sentimentally attached to it. Well, these people, the villains of this piece, wrote to me and said, "You must send the ring back. She can't keep her wedding ring on without it." And I said, "Fine, I will bring it back." So I did, and I could see what was going on, and it was not good.

So Catherine came and took over and got rid of all the bad nurses and everything else. Wong was always there through thick and thin. Catherine hired good people. Florence recovered her health. She was really kind of dotty; she got much better. She knew people who would go to see her. She knew what was going on. She had gotten rather repetitive, but she at least knew what she was talking about. So that was a great job.

So Catherine gave up everything. She moved into the guest house, which was out by the swimming pool, which had its own bath and kitchen and everything else, and lived there for the next, I would say, ten years. Florence really did get very senile and difficult to deal with and everything, but this woman stayed by her and Florence did make her one of the executors of her will with the Bank of America.

Lawrence: When Florence died, Catherine stayed on. The most material part of her estate went to the children of Chris Jorgensen Anderson in Florida, as it should have. The house was sold, and I think she left that to Catherine; I'm not positive. She left me a painting by Angela Ghirardelli, which I thought was very dear of her, and I have that in my living room.

Now then, after Florence died, Catherine Lytell suddenly developed a terrible allergy, an asthmatic condition. In one of her letters to me she said, "Well, I know it was partially an allergy to something, but I've never been allergic to Sonoma before, and it's 90 percent nerves."

So she moved to Twain Harte, California, which is up above Sonora in the Mother Lode country. She had to leave the house and everything, and she said to Wong, "Now, I will put you on a pension, and you'll be taken care of for the rest of your life." "Not at all, Missy."

Today Catherine has Wong with her in Twain Harte, California! And he has remained loyal to Florence's memory and to the family and everything else, and I think that's an astounding thing.

We have gone entirely through the Jorgensen branch of the family. Catherine is putting together the exhibition of Jorgensen works which will be shown at the Society of California Pioneers.

IV THE SIDNEY LAWRENCE JUNIOR FAMILY

[Interview 5: November 1, 1984]

Sidney Lawrence Junior

Teiser: You were married to Sidney Lawrence, Jr., in 1944, I believe you said.*

Lawrence: July 1, 1944. My husband was here, going to school at Treasure Island, for six or seven months after we were married, and my mother was convinced that he had told a lie because he wanted to get married, and said he was probably going overseas.

Eventually he did indeed go overseas, and by that time I was going to have a child. He was gone for quite a long time, and he came back. He sort of wrote me in code that he was probably coming into port but he didn't tell me exactly when. So he came home and he thought he would surprise me and that I would be sitting at home in my parents' house at Scott and Pacific with a little baby in my arms.

He rushed out, left the ship, and got a taxi and came tearing up and rang the doorbell, and there wasn't anyone home except I, and I had not given birth to the child. So all he heard was this clump, clump, clump, clump coming down the stairs, and I opened the front door and here I was as big as house, with a pair of flat shoes on, and he almost fainted because the child was about four weeks overdue at that point. He couldn't believe it! That was our reunion. And I said, "Well, I'm terribly sorry, but there's not much I can do about this!"

*See pages 76-77.

Lawrence: It's very coincidental. He was in port for four days, and the child was born, indeed, on May 26, 1945, the second day he was here. Also, that happened to be my parents-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Lawrences', wedding anniversary. My daughter's natal day is May 26, 1945. Her name is Clarisse Ghirardelli Lawrence Watson, and she is married and has two children.

So "Daddy" went off onto the briny deep again. Then he came home, and she was, oh--this is sort of funny, too. The child was six months old. He had landed in New Haven, Connecticut, and he was going to take the train to come home on leave, which he did. So I sent him a wire saying I would meet him at the Sixteenth Street Station, over in Oakland.

So the day he was coming home, I got the baby all dressed up in a darling pink little outfit and a bonnet and everything and put her in the car seat and drove over to the Sixteenth Street Station. Again, the Overland Limited was the name of the train, and it came into the station and just went right on through; it didn't stop at all. And I was standing with the child in my arms, waiting for this person to get off the train.

So I had to rush back, put the child back in the car seat, and dash over to the Oakland Mole in the automobile, which I did. I was standing, of course, in a crowd of hundreds of people also meeting people, with the child in my arms. Finally, he came off, and there I was with the child and we had a wonderful reunion. And I said, "Pardon me, but why didn't the train stop at Sixteenth Street?" He said, "Well, I don't know why it didn't, but I never heard from you; I didn't know you were going to be at Sixteenth Street at all." He never got the wire.

So he was home. By that time I had gotten a little apartment on Arguello Boulevard at the end of Jackson Street. But he was not discharged from the service, he was only on leave.

His grandfather, Walton Moore, lived in Piedmont, on Farragut Avenue, around the corner from Carmen Reed. So the grandfather and his daughter, Elizabeth Moore, who is Mrs. John Logan, invited Sidney and me to come for dinner and bring the baby with us, which we did. But that happened to be VJ Day, which was the day the war was really over, and we were sitting in the garden with the baby when we heard about this.

Sidney's grandfather was in the city, and finally he arrived home. He had had the most terrible experience because the whole downtown went crazy. His office was on Fremont and Mission Street, and somebody, a sailor, had rolled a dolly in

Lawrence: front of his car. He was then about eighty years old and drove his own car and was a very vigorous man, but he was very, very upset by this whole thing.

But it was a wonderful day, and they decided they would have to have us spend the night, which we did; our little family just went to bed over there because there was no way of coming back to San Francisco safely, especially with a baby.

So that was glorious, and the next morning everything was calmed down. We went back to our little apartment, and we were excited because the war was over. However, my husband received orders to join a ship. The name of it was the Roamer, and it was a supply ship. He was to join it here at a certain date, in San Francisco, which he did. And he sailed out again! On Alcatraz Island they had a great big sign--I don't know if you remember it--saying, "Welcome Home, Well Done," for the returning servicemen, and he sailed out overseas past that sign, which is rather ironic.

So he was gone for a long time. The reason was that in order to get out of the navy you had to have a certain number of points. In 1941, I guess, he went to school in the Merchant Marine at King's Point in New York and became a third mate. He got a college degree, actually, from the government, going to the Merchant Marine Academy. So he went on one cruise in the Merchant Marine, and then he transferred to the navy, but his time in the Merchant Marine didn't count [it didn't add to his points].

Lawrence: He felt he was the oldest naval lieutenant by the time he was released in 1945. But he finally came home. I actually moved back to my family's house while waiting for him. Then Sidney and I moved back into our little apartment on Arguello, where our daughter always slept very late in the morning. No one could understand it, but the poor child, her room was on a light well, so that she didn't get any light till I got up at eight o'clock or something and went in and got her. She was a good child.

My husband went to business school because my father was then the president of the chocolate company and he had offered him a job, which Sidney's father, Sidney Sr., advised him to take because he only had a degree from the Merchant Marine; he hadn't finished Stanford before going to war.

Teiser: What business school?

Lawrence: He went to Heald's College for about six or seven months, and then--this is by now 1946--went to work for the factory. He was sort of in the plant. He was supposedly learning the business. He stayed there for as long as he could.

Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence

Volunteer Work

Junior League and Little Jim Club

Lawrence: While he was in the navy, I was living with my parents, with my baby. I really was very lucky because my mother, of course, was crazy about the child, and I had a built-in babysitter. I did do most of the caretaking myself. But I had been recently made a member of the Junior League of San Francisco, so I could do my provisional work and all that type of thing.

I can remember the provisional course which they give you. The Junior League of San Francisco is an organization that is supposed to train young women in voluntary pursuits so that they are able to help the community to the best of their ability. So the provisional course was like going back to college, and of course college was closer to me then. I realized that the person who was giving the course, the Junior League member, was a very liberal-minded woman politically. I had to write a thesis on public housing in San Francisco, so I slanted it as far to the left as I possibly could, which was not very honest, but the woman said she had never seen a finer paper turned in by a provisional member! Thereupon I was made an active member.

Something happened to the woman who was the editor of the magazine put out by the Junior League. Her husband was transferred, and she moved East. So they hurriedly made me the editor of the Junior League Spectator, which was a very interesting experience because I knew a little bit. Having gone to the University, majored in English, and taken a journalism course, I had some sort of knowledge of what I was doing, not an awful lot, but it was very interesting. I was living with my parents, and the people who were working on the thing would come and we would meet in my parents' house. I guess my mother was bouncing the baby on her knee or something and keeping it quiet. They were very envious. They said, "Well, you know,

Lawrence: you have the best of all worlds." And I said, "That is true, but I would like the child's father to be around at some point in time!"

So that was the beginning of my so-called "career" with the Junior League. After he came home and went to work, I of course continued my League work. It was enjoyable because you do your volunteer work, and you're learning all the while, but you're also working with very congenial people.

Also, I was a member of the Little Jim Club of Children's Hospital, which is one of their auxiliaries and is still in existence today. My mother had been, as I think I mentioned earlier, the treasurer of that organization. After the war they reorganized it and they got some of us to take it over. If you became a member of the Little Jim Club, for something like ten dollars a year you could get group health insurance, which was just starting to come into its own.

Well, they put me in charge of the Blue Cross program for the Little Jim Club, which was just a terrible job because hundreds of people were joining the Little Jim Club. We were making money out of it, mind you, but I had to keep track of who they were and fill out all the forms. It was a terrible job.

I remember a friend of mine, Barbara Hall, who lived upstairs from me in this apartment house, was also a member of the Little Jim Club. Strangely enough, we both ended up being on the board of directors of Children's Hospital of San Francisco. But this one day she was trying to help me with this terrible clerical work that I had to do. We were doing the best we could. We were in the living room, and the baby was in the playpen in the bedroom by the window. My husband came home early for some reason, and he walked in and he flew into a rage because here was this child with wet diapers, not happy, and here am I in the living room with my friend with papers spread all over the room and everything, trying to do this crazy thing.

Well, we had one of our few fights. He said, "This is dumb. You are neglecting your duties as a wife and mother, and I do not want this to ever happen again. You've neglected your child," and blah, blah, blah. And I found myself going into noblesse oblige and this kind of thing: "We must do our part for the community," et cetera.

Lawrence: Anyway, that finally passed. I got them to hire somebody to take over this Blue Cross thing. That went on, and then it no longer was feasible; Blue Cross was not making enough money out of it because we were taking too many probably high-risk people.

This is an anecdote that's kind of funny. Mrs. Milton Esberg, who was a friend of my father's--he and she had been co-founders of the Community Chest--lived in Ross and she had a large household of servants. She had been born a Lilienthal; she was Samuel Lilienthal and John Lilienthal's sister. A great patron of the arts and really a wonderful woman. Her name was Carolyn. She called me and made an appointment to come and see me because she wanted to get this Blue Cross insurance for her household help.

So I said, "Well, that's fine. I'm awfully sorry, I have a baby, would you mind coming to my apartment?" And she said, "Not at all." And we made an appointment for her to come at nine o'clock on a certain morning. She was a marvelous woman, very tall and very stately. She had driven herself over, and she had to climb three flights of stairs to get to this little place at 51 Arguello Boulevard. So she rang the bell, and I answered it, and she walked in and she walked down the hall and she turned around and looked at me and she said, "Polly, does your father know you live here?" And I said, "Yes, but housing is very difficult to find these days. Please come in, Mrs. Esberg, and we will attend to your business." Which we did. I told my father that, and he said, "Well, that sounds like Carolyn." She was a very outspoken lady, and I think she was a little bit shocked.

So we struggled along in that dump for quite a long time. I might add that I believe the rent was forty-one dollars per month, with garage. This is 1946 and '47.

So in '47, we moved to a flat on Jackson Street, which was 72 steps from the street. It was a third-floor flat. It was a big flat with old-fashioned high ceilings and lots of bedrooms.

At that point I was expecting another little Lawrence to come along, so the move was rather timely. This child also was somewhat late, and so we went through this thing again of the child being quite a bit overdue. Finally, on April 15, 1948, Sidney Smith Lawrence III was born. It was interesting because his father's birth date was April 8, so we had two Aries with us, and one Gemini, which is my daughter, and I'm a Libra.

Lawrence: I had to curtail some of my volunteer work because I would have to go up and down the stairs taking these two children out because we had no garden.

I told you earlier about Marie Schreiber who had been my nurse when I was a child. She now was living in San Francisco, and she would come to me once a week and take care of my children and do housework, for very little money, which was nice of her. So on those days I could fulfill my obligation to the community! And so I continued my volunteer work because Marie was nice enough to come and stay with the children.

Teiser: What kind of work did you do especially?

Lawrence: Well, the Junior League was what I was involved with. When I finished being the editor of the Spectator, I became the assistant chairman of what they called the Next-to-New Shop, which is still in existence on Fillmore Street. It's at a different location now. We started it as a fund-raiser for community projects, and I was the personnel chairman, which means I had to staff the place. There were two shifts of people. I had to supply volunteers, members of the Junior League, to go and be sales ladies. It wasn't a bad job because I'd do a great deal of it on the telephone from home.

Then I was made the recording secretary of the Junior League of San Francisco. By this time we had bought a house on Washington Street near Presidio Avenue, which was a very nice house. It had been built by Dr. Lovell Langstroh, who was a well-known physician here. I think he was married twelve times or something. He remodeled the house in about 1930. His wife at that time was a Russian lady. They hired Mr. Warren C. Perry, who was a well-known architect, to redesign the house, and he did a magnificent job. They pushed the living room out and made a big bay window, and the house was very livable. It had been an old Victorian, which they made into just a charming, graceful, lovely house, and we were simply thrilled about this.

However, as recording secretary of the Junior League of San Francisco, I was chosen with three other women to go to a national Junior League convention in Sun Valley, Idaho, and, unfortunately, our moving day fell during the time I was supposed to be in Sun Valley. My husband said, "Don't worry. Go." We did everything we possibly could ahead of time, and so we were really all set, half the stuff was already in, and he was the one who had to get the movers to move us. So I came home to a new house, halfway moved into, which was quite thrilling.

Lawrence: I was, of course, full of my experiences in Sun Valley. I'd been to a national Pi Beta Phi convention once years ago in Pasadena, but I'd never been to a national thing like this, and, my goodness, it opens your eyes on how different people think differently. The ladies from the Junior Leagues in the southern states were very ladylike and very sort of laid-back and they didn't talk loud or do anything. And the ones from the big cities, like New York and Los Angeles and Chicago and Cleveland and San Francisco and Seattle, were all more or less alike and kind of thought alike and had the same problems in our Leagues that some of the other big Leagues did. We almost couldn't converse with some of the southern ladies, which I don't mean in a derogatory sense at all, because I'm sure they did very good work, too; it's just a different outlook. I guess we're getting up to 1949 or so.

Let's see now, I was recording secretary of the Junior League. I also was the paid manager for the Next-to-New Shop while the manager went on vacation. So I did that for a month one summer, which was interesting because you had to keep the books straight and total up the receipts at the end of the day and see that people didn't shoplift. I once had to send a volunteer home because she'd had a little cocktail or something in the morning and was extremely embarrassing and she wasn't performing her task in the proper manner.

Also, one summer the executive secretary of the Junior League went on vacation and she wanted to stay longer, so she telephoned me and said, "Do you think you could take over my job for two weeks?" And I said, "Well, yes, but the president of the League isn't here, and I don't think she'll like it." And she said, "Well, go ahead and do it and see what happens." So I did. The president came back and said, "What are you doing here?" And I said, "Well, I'm taking Kay Thomas's place. She can't get back." And the president said, "Well, that's all right, but don't make any terrible mistakes." So I didn't. My typing has deteriorated greatly since then, but I was all right at that time.

I guess it was some time in there that I was asked to be the president of the Junior League. I had to think that over kind of carefully because I was not as free as I might have been. I had a very nice colored lady who came once a week who did housework and took care of the children. But the children were both in school. So I talked it over with my husband, and he said, "Oh well, go ahead and do it. You might as well; you're young and you won't get the opportunity probably again. Say yes." So I did. And it was a very memorable experience, and I learned a lot. It was fun, and I made a lot of good friends.

Teiser: Was it for just a year?

Lawrence: It had been a two-year term. I had been on the board for quite a long time, and a friend of mine who was the president while it was a two-year term said to me, "If you can ever use your influence on the board, cut it down to one year because by the end of the second year you're so tired and you're so stale." A year later the one-year term went into effect.

The incoming president was a very good friend of mine. This girl, Susan Stimmel Metcalf, who was younger than I but an old friend of mine--she went to Miss Kennedy's school with me also--became the president. So I was her vice president, which was a wonderful experience for me and I think a help to her, too. She served a year, and then I became president and served a year. So it all followed along.

They always do sort of a skit for the outgoing president. I don't know if you remember the television program called "This Is Your Life," a perfectly terrible program. I didn't know anything about this, but at the end of my year they had been planning to do this for me. It was a kick because my husband was in on it. They planned this thing for months, my Lord!

So the day of the annual meeting, I walked into the room, and there was the couch sort of sitting up by the podium where the board sat. I said, "What is that doing here? Get that thing out of here; it looks perfectly terrible." A friend, the education chairman, said, "Yes, all right, there, there." Well, they didn't get it out, and I was enraged. It turned out, of course, they were going to put on the skit at the end of the meeting. So I gave my annual report, which was very boring and lengthy, and this thing was at my side, and I was just so mad!

Anyway, the meeting is over, and up from the audience stands another friend, Elizabeth Hogan. She took the part of master of ceremonies. She said, "Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence, this is your life!"

So with that, they had my mother, who got up and had to make a little speech. So she came and sat beside me on this couch. And both my children came and sat beside me on this couch. Betty "Beau" Griffith, the woman who had put me up for the Junior League of San Francisco, had to make a little speech. And Miss Barbara Burke, who was the principal of the school to which I had gone, made an appearance! And my husband, of course,

Lawrence: made an appearance. The whole thing was a complete surprise to me. I was completely taken back, dumbfounded. The planning had been going on for a long time.

My husband had gone to Kay Thomas's house one afternoon to plan this thing, and a friend of hers was there, a friend of mine too, and my husband walked in with a suitcase in his hand, and Kay Thomas said to my husband, "Did you hide the car?" And this friend looked absolutely appalled and she left. So ever after that I often wondered why she looked at me sort of pityingly sometimes, until this fool skit came off. Then, of course, it was all known what was going on. He had some artifacts for something in his suitcase. Isn't that marvelous? They were so afraid I was going to drive by and see his car in front of her house. I completed my year with a bang. It was really very, very funny.

Service Organization Boards

Lawrence: So, let's see, we're up to 1953 about now. So I continued. I went on quite a number of boards. I was a member of the board of directors of the California Council of Social Work, which was extremely interesting. I think there were about thirty people on that board, and it was around election time I recall. I guess that was '52. And I found that of the thirty people on the board there were two Republicans. One was Mrs. Walter Gordon, whose husband was a football coach over at the University of California, and the other one was I! We were very much outnumbered.

But it was a very interesting board to be on because they were mostly professional social workers, and a few volunteers, such as myself. And they were very knowledgeable people. And social work is certainly a way of life and a part of our lives, and I think it probably always will be now, no matter how they cut the funds. It's always with us.

I then was asked to go on the board of the then-called Community Chest. It was a chance to work with different people and business leaders, both men and women. I met an awful lot of interesting people. I was on that board from about 1954 to '61.

A friend of mine, Walter Haas Jr., was also on the board. He was the campaign chairman one year. He once called me and he said, "I'm coming to call on you. I have something I want

Lawrence: to discuss with you." And I thought, "Oh-oh, he's going to ask me to do something!" So he came--he's a wonderful man; I'm very fond of him--and he said, "Well, I'm running the campaign this year and I've got a new idea. I'm going to have what we're going to call a Women's Division which will be only women and they will do Advanced Gift and Special Projects and certain categories of giving, and I want you to be the head of it. We can guarantee you so many volunteers, et cetera, et cetera, and you will have to make a monthly report at the campaign meetings and everything."

And I said, "Well, let me think. I think I might be able to do that." So I talked it over with my husband and my father, who had been, of course, terribly active in the Chest, and he said, "Well, I don't think there's any question; you have to do that." So I did. And it, too, was a fascinating experience.

I had long thought that the Junior League of San Francisco had really not been involved in the Community Chest of San Francisco enough. I had to appear before the board and ask if they would be willing to undertake the Special Projects segment of this Women's Division. The president, who was my successor, was a dear friend. So I made my presentation in front of the board, and then I had to leave the room while they made their decision. Luckily the decision was yes, but somebody made a snide remark, something like, "Well, you're adding to your own glory, aren't you?" And that made me a little bit mad! But anyway, the Junior League has done it ever since and do a very fine job of soliciting this special segment.

That was a busy year because I was doing that and having to go to what they call the cabinet meeting, where the chair-people of all the different divisions meet. Maybe we met once a week and then we had report luncheons once a month.

Shortly thereafter, Florette Pomeroy became the executive director of the then-called United Fund. I was privileged to have been on the board when she became the executive director because she was a very fine woman. She succeeded Harold Winey, who was a very good executive. Florette walked in at the time when we were expanding it. It was becoming UBAC, the United Bay Area Crusade. I resigned in 1961 because I went into business with some friends. It was a real privilege to have worked with Florette.

Then I also was on the board of the Heart Association, which was interesting because there were doctors serving on that and they were very interesting people. I was the public relations chairperson for that organization, which was not too

Lawrence: hard a job except we wanted to get some artists to design Christmas cards for us so that we could sell Christmas cards as a fund raising, and that was one of the most terrible experiences I've ever had. I had to go over to the art school on Russian Hill and interview these artists and pass on their works. Well, I couldn't understand any of their works! A volunteer, a man who was in the advertising business, went with me, and he didn't understand them either!

Well, we got our Christmas cards from another source, and we did start to sell them that year and it proved to be a successful venture. I believe they're still doing it now.

Children's Theater

Lawrence: During this period I also joined the Children's Theater Association of San Francisco, which was founded by the Junior League in the twenties and then it became a self-standing organization to bring "live" theater to children of school age. Of course, it was slightly redundant by then because television had come into being.

However, it is still in existence and it's still going strong. The members of the Children's Theater participate by either designing sets or making costumes or writing plays or being performers or directors of these performances. That was lots of fun. The husbands participated in that too, moving sets and things like that.

Then we used to troop the shows up to a theater in Sonoma which was called the Sebastiani Theater, strangely enough. It was a movie house, but they'd adapted it for our performances. We gave three performances. We went up for a weekend and stayed with various friends of ours who had second houses or lived in Sonoma. That was kind of a highlight of our season. That was the end of the season, in May, when we gave those performances.

I once had an experience--it was a horrible play, but we did it anyway--I was playing a king in something called King Diddledown, or something. I was the king, and the story was that the king was mad for gold and wanted gold all the time, so it went on and on and on. And after the performance this child came backstage to me and had a round gold seal from a package of Ghirardelli Chocolate Flicks in her hand, and she said, "I'd like to give this to you, King, so you will have

Lawrence: some gold," which I thought was absolutely so amazing! I thanked her profusely. My character, of course, is the king, with a beard and all the rest of the stuff. So it was kind of a highlight, and the rest of the cast thought that was pretty amazing, too.

Ideas Incorporated

Lawrence: During this time I also worked part-time for a man by the name of Charles Ackerman who had a shop over in Laurel Village. He was a decorator. I went there three times a week. Well, I felt I wanted to do something. I was a little bit tired of spinning my wheels. I wanted to get paid for something once in a while.

Teiser: This was about when?

Lawrence: This was, say, '55 and '56, '57. I think I did that for about three years, and then I finally thought, "Well, this is sort of silly; I'm not getting anywhere particularly," I think I also got pneumonia, and my mother said, "I think you're crazy; don't go do this any more." So I didn't after that.

So I continued with my activities with all these boards.

Then we were once at a house party with two other couples. One were Jean and Carl Livingston and the other were "Apple," Elena Walker and her husband Jim--and Sidney and myself. We three women had some volunteer job and had to be home by Monday morning, and the men said, "You're crazy. Why don't you work and get money for it so you don't have to cut the weekend short to go do some dumb volunteer thing."

So that sort of planted a seed in our darling, fertile minds. About a year later--we talked about it for a long time--we decided to do it. So we incorporated ourselves. Apple Walker's father was Marshall Madison of Pillsbury, Madison and Sutro. So he was in quite a nice position to be able to turn us over to a gentleman in his law office who could turn us into a corporation, which is what we did. We were called Ideas Incorporated. He said that was much better than a partnership because in a partnership, as you probably know, you're legally responsible for what the other two partners do or any accidents they have or anything.

Lawrence: So we opened our office in the attic of the Livingstons' house. They lived over on Euclid Avenue at that time. We had a telephone put in. We held a press conference for the ladies of the press and the cityside people in what was then Blum's fountain in the Palace Hotel down on Market Street because we felt that was near where all the newspapers were. In those days there were four newspapers. This is 1961. So we had the press conference and they all came, and they took our pictures and everything. The next day it was over the society section, but we also got some cityside coverage, too.

I was the person who was going to man the office that day to answer the telephone. So I did. And I got lots of congratulatory calls--you know, our friends saying, "This is wonderful"--and a few inquiries about jobs and things. One gentleman called who was in a complete rage. I said, "Who is this?" And he said, "I am the director of the FBI for the San Francisco area, and I read in the paper this morning that one of your business participants stated that she had worked for the FBI during the war." We each had a resume of what we had done heretofore. And I said, "Well, I don't recall exactly what she said, but all I know is that she was a secretary for the FBI during the war." And he said, "Well, that is not what the paper said, and I'm going to have to investigate this thoroughly, and I would advise you to get some legal advice." Well, here I am all by myself. And he hung up.

So I did call this attorney with P, M and S, as they call the law firm, and I said, "What'll we do?" And he said, "Pay no attention. I will telephone them and say the paper misinterpreted what Mrs. Walker said, and don't worry about it." And I gave him the name of the man again. So it all blew over. But it was quite a nerve-wracking experience for a while.

So that was how we launched ourselves in this business endeavor which we did from 1961 until 1969. We had some marvelous experiences. After we went out of business Jean Livingston and I tried to write a book one summer together. We wrote about thirty typewritten pages, and I took it home and showed it to my son--he was home at the time--and he said, "No, Mother; it isn't funny." We were trying to be funny, and we didn't do it very well, and I'm kind of sorry because the things that happened were funny, but it's much easier to be funny, ha, ha, when you're talking.

Teiser: What did your business do?

Lawrence: We were public relations, benefit fund raising, handling of special events. We had mostly philanthropic accounts. We worked for the San Francisco Symphony Association, we worked for the San Francisco Symphony Foundation, we worked for all three of the San Francisco Art Museums, the Opera Guild.

Then we had some commercial accounts. We had the Nob Hill Apartments, which is 1177 Sacramento Street, which was being built at the time. That was our account, to promote that building while it was under construction. It was going to be a community apartment complex, and it turned out to be a beautiful building. To kick that off, we gave a party on the site of the building, under a tent. We had an orchestra. It was very successful. We had matches printed saying, "The Nob Hill Apartments." We had a florist called the Nob Hill Florist. Then, when the building finally was built, we had a series of open houses and asked the neighbors to come to tea. I think we really did quite a fair job on that.

The other commercial account we had was Seadrift development, which is over in Stinson Beach. William Kent Jr. was the developer. We did promote that, we got him some kind of promotional coverage. Herb Caen's sister happened to live over there, and he wrote a very nice piece about it once. I had a house there also at the time, and I met him on the beach. I said, "I hope you write something, one of your fanciful articles about this place because it is a very special place." And he did, which was very nice of him. Then we had open houses over there and the newspapers sent photographers. In those days the media, the newspapers and television and radio, were very cooperative about things like that.

Then we had two beauty shops that were our commercial accounts, where you had to take fashion shots of models and say, "Hair Done by So-and-So," and that type of thing. They were kind of difficult to do.

However, we got along quite nicely. We really did enjoy it. We worked it so that each member of the firm had one day a week free, absolutely free. However, we had a great deal of night things.

We also had a restaurant down on Powell Street. The restaurant failed and its name disappeared. It was going to be international cuisine, and we had to do that opening and have photographers there and cover that and get as much mileage out of it as we could. And then all the museums always had night openings, and we had to go to all of those. My husband

Lawrence: thoroughly enjoyed that. The other two didn't enjoy it so much, but my husband was quite gregarious and he enjoyed that type of thing.

There were times when it was kind of confining. You know, you had to give up everything else. You couldn't play bridge every day or go to a movie or have lunch with your friends.

We founded the debutante ball down the peninsula called The Peninsula Ball. A group of women got together who were on the board of the Children's Health Council of the Deep Peninsula and decided to start a debutante fund raising, a debutante party.

They came to us because we really did sort of know what we were doing. So we met with them and we told them who to put on the committee and who to get and we had the kick-off party at the Burlingame Country Club. We had Phyllis Tucker as the honorary chairman because she is the founder of the Cotillion here. So they got off to a very good start. I can remember going to their first party. They had something like forty young women who came out at that first party. It was at the Los Altos Country Club. It was a nice party, and they were very nice people involved in it, and the Children's Health Council of the Deep Peninsula indeed made a nice stipend, and they still have that going. We did tell them the right people-- who lived in Woodside or Atherton and were community-minded-- to put on their board in order to attract people to the legitimacy of the project.

Around 1967 there was a newspaper strike which was very disrupting to us, and it was especially disrupting to the Lawrence family because my husband by that time worked for the Newspaper Printing Company, which the Chronicle and the Examiner had formed. And he belonged to the union so he had to be on strike, which was a terrible experience. It also kind of ruined our business, too, because there was no media except radio or television, and they were swamped by everybody who wanted to get something publicized.

Then the strike was settled, and everything was all right. We spent our time during the strike redoing our mailing list. We also sold mailing lists to people who wanted mailing lists for invitations. By that time we had a little office down on Union Street behind a real estate company. We would sit in this little tiny room, the three of us, going over and over these lists and trying to update them and type them out and make them right and everything.

Lawrence: Well, then we began to think, "This is a changing world. That is, it's never ever going to really be quite the same again." So we sort of eased our way out. We decided we'd go out of business in 1969, as I said before. So we started kind of easing out of it.

My mother died in 1961, which was the year we went into business. But she was alive when all this publicity came out about our business firm and she was so pleased and thrilled. I was glad she was because she was of the generation that probably felt you didn't get your name in the paper except when you were born, and married, and died. But she was very proud. She thought it was wonderful that we were in the business and that we were going to compete with really grown-up people and do a job.

Then also in the middle of our career, Time magazine called us one day and asked for a story of how we went into business and what we did. We gave an interview over the telephone. Two years went by, and we thought, "Well, that's that." Well, my Lord, one week Time magazine came out and under the title "Restless Ladies"* was our story, among others, with our names. It was in the mid-sixties, and it was when women--we were restless ladies, and we wanted to get into the business world. It said between us we had something like fourteen children.

That was a cause for great celebration, so we went out and had a marvelous dinner, the six of us, that night!

We found, when we did go out of business, that because we were a California corporation for profit, we had been paying as employees into unemployment insurance, and also as employers into unemployment insurance. It took so long for us to get out of business you wouldn't believe it. We had to go through the State Bureau of Corporations, and they had to look at our books. We kept our own books with the help of a very nice man who was an accountant out on Clement Street. He would do our taxes, but we did the books month by month, which was quite hard for some of us.

We also decided that since we had paid in both ways, we would collect unemployment insurance, which we did. You had to go down and be interviewed. We were told in advance that

*Time, November 22, 1963.

Lawrence: you should say that you're a public relations consultant and that you charge by the hour. They interviewed us separately. And they said, "Put a high price on your services."

So I was being interviewed by this woman, and she said, "And what do you charge per hour?" I think I said twenty-five dollars, which was unheard of in those days, and she said, with a perfectly straight face, "Yes, I understand," and wrote it all down. Of course, nobody would pay that much for this person! And the other girls did the same thing. The place was on Ninth and Howard. It's now called the Department of Human Resources, but then it was the just plain Unemployment Bureau. You had to stand in line and wait, and you were paid in cash, which I always thought was sort of nuts.

The other girls didn't last very long. I went I guess for about three months. I decided I was going to get part of my money back anyway. And I did, and I don't feel guilty about it at all because we put in all those years, and we also paid into Social Security.

Volunteer Work, Continued

Children's Hospital

Lawrence: Some time along in there someone called me and said, "Would you ever be interested in going on the board of Children's Hospital?" And I said, "Well, let me think about it," because I'd just come from a rather strenuous career. So it ended up I finally went on the board in 1969 and have been on it ever since. But they now have limited board tenure, thank heavens, which they didn't in '69.

This board was founded in 1875 by women and women physicians who founded the hospital. It was an all-women's board and it will be until next month [December 1984] when a whole new corporate structure is going to be put into place, when we have men and doctors on the board. But it's been very interesting to me to be on this board because it's a very hard-working board and there are some very intelligent women on it. We now have businesswomen. We have people who are vice presidents of banks, women. We have several women lawyers. We are going to expand ourselves and have really a community board, because we're dealing with so many different facets. The

Lawrence: health care situation in 1984 is so confusing and so difficult and so restrictive, and of course health prices have gone out of sight and we're aware of that. We're doing everything we can to keep it down. The government regulation is in three layers, municipal, state, and federal, and they're all at odds with each other and it's very hard to sort it all out.

But I'm happy to say the Children's Hospital does have a new building. I was the development chairman in 1975, which was our hundredth anniversary, and I said, "Now is the time to go on a capital fund drive." And the older women on the board said, "No, we can't do that; we're having a recession."

We waited until about 1980, and then we decided we had to replace old buildings. But we had to go through the city planning department and the Health Services of the Bay Area, and get all these permits, and it took a long time. But finally, in June of 1984, we opened the new building out on California Street and Cherry, which will serve the needs of Children's patients for many productive years.

Our capital campaign was a success, but we also had to float a bond issue with the state of California to complete it because the building costs increased about 200 percent from the time we started the building. We thought it was going to cost us about \$18 million, and it cost many times that.

Teiser: Better to build in a recession.

Lawrence: That's right. Frankly, I say this as an ex-professional fund raiser, it doesn't seem to matter if there is a recession. If you are out for a well-organized capital fund drive, you're going to get your money somehow.

So that almost brings us up to date. I'm still a member of the Children's Theater Association. I've held several chairmanships on the board of Children's Hospital, and have never had the presidency, thank you very much! And I've enjoyed it.

Sidney Lawrence Junior, Continued

Volunteer Work with the Guardsmen

Lawrence: My husband also had his volunteer work. He was not a founding member, but one of the very early members of the Guardsmen, which was an organization of young men whose chore it was to

Lawrence: raise money to send needy children to camp every summer. They worked with the probation department, they worked with the police department, they worked with the juvenile authority, and they raised money in various ways. They had raffle tickets, which they sold, and then every Christmas they used to sell Christmas trees. That was a joint voluntary effort in which the wives took part. Our family and friends would go out to the Christmas tree lot, which was at one time over on Laurel Street and California, and is now the site of the Firemen's Fund complex. We sold Christmas trees during the day or during the night. You learned how to cut off trees and how to put a stand on a Christmas tree and how to measure them and everything like that, and it was really kind of fun because you're all with friends together. One year I was put in charge of staffing that during the day, which was an interesting procedure, but we did it. It was fun, and our children could participate in that, too.

My husband used to play the part of Santa Claus at the opening of the Guardsmen lot, and this was really quite thrilling because they rented him a costume and he had kind of a round jolly face. He was working for the chocolate company, so he would get large supplies of chocolate bars. They had a parade which went from, say, Van Ness Avenue out to the Christmas tree lot at Laurel and California, up California street. He would ride on the hook and ladder on the back of the fire department's truck. And this parade would go by with bands and Santa Claus sitting up there throwing these candy bars to children.

But the most thrilling part of the whole thing was before the parade ever started. A police car would come to pick Santa Claus up at our house at 3221 Washington Street, and he was all in costume and ready to go. And I got to drive behind the police car, which had a siren going. So I put my children in the car, and we drove through stop signs, red lights, everything, ninety miles an hour behind this police car to where the parade started. It was the most exciting experience any of us had ever had. Then we watched the parade and greeted Santa Claus when he got to the lot.

One year that was filmed by the Richfield Oil Company, which had a television program called "Success Story" about different enterprises by various organizations. This Christmas tree lot was a financial success, and the program was the story of that. So, of course, we had to wait for the show to come out, and it was quite amusing. He looked quite funny in his costume walking along! But those were interesting and very memorable days that we had together, and it was really lots of fun.

Lawrence: The lot once was where the Jack Tar Hotel is now on Van Ness Avenue. That wasn't quite as much fun as it was when it was right in the neighborhood, but we enjoyed that, too.

Sidney Lawrence III

Teiser: Your children have grown up now.

Lawrence: Sidney III, who I call Larry, is now in Washington, D.C. He is thirty-six years old and he is the public information officer of the Hirshhorn Museum, which is part of the Smithsonian Institution. (I'm taking the youngest first. He was born in 1948.)

He went to Grant School in San Francisco, which is a public school to which my husband also went. Then I discovered that he had had seven different teachers in three months, so it didn't sound too good to me! So we scraped together some funds and put him in a private school called Town School, where he went in the fourth grade, and he graduated from in the eighth grade.

Then he and his father went East to look at prep schools because we made the decision that it would be a good experience for him to have an Eastern prep school, high school education, and then come back here to college. So he and my husband, I think it was the Thanksgiving weekend, went East. My daughter and I went to the airport to see them off, and my husband said, "Let's stop and have a cup of coffee." Then we were sitting there and I said, "Don't you think you ought to go and get into line at the gate of the plane?" and my husband said, "I hate nervous travelers. Don't be ridiculous."

Well, of course, you know what's going to happen. They missed the plane. So we had to run from the United gate over to TWA or something like that, and their luggage was well on its way to Boston. So ever after that "I hate nervous travelers" has been a little watchword in our family.

They rented a car and they looked at all the various schools. They looked at Andover and they looked at Choate, Groton, and all of them. Taft. Including one called Brooks, in North Andover, Massachusetts, which was rather small. Anyway, he came home and finished his schooling and decided to go to Brooks. He became an expert at riding the red-eye special; that's the airplane that travels at night between San Francisco

Lawrence: and Boston. They got a spring vacation that was about four weeks long, and he would come out every spring. And then, of course, Christmas vacation. It was kind of a tough thing to do because you really miss them. Our daughter was home. She was still going to high school.

So anyway he graduated from Brooks. My husband and I had been in Europe and we came home by way of Boston so we could go to his graduation. Our daughter was in the University of Denver, and she flew to Boston and met us.

He graduated with perfectly decent marks and he had been accepted at the University of California at Berkeley. My husband had wanted him to go to Stanford because my husband went to Stanford and his mother went to Stanford. But Stanford that year, in their wisdom, had some sort of a quota system where they took every single girl who graduated from Santa Catalina School. They were concentrating on girls, so they did not take Sidney Lawrence III, much to his father's chagrin. Apparently he had flunked history (not oral). Of course, I was delighted because that meant he was the fourth (great-grandfather, grandfather, mother, Sidney Lawrence III) generation in my family to go to the University of California.

So he went, and he joined the Chi Pi fraternity in his junior year. He decided to major in art history. Eventually he moved out of the fraternity house because he found he couldn't study. He and some other boys took a one-story house behind an old Berkeley house on Etna Street that was really quite attractive, and he found he could do his studying much better. And he graduated.

One of his professors had been Dr. Joseph Baird, who taught at the art history department at the University of California at Davis. On his advice our son decided to go to the University of California at Davis to get his Master's degree. While he was at graduate school and before, he was a great friend of Wanda Corn, who is an art history person. She was an acting professor at Berkeley. Where they met was on the faculty at Mills College. She liked him, and they became very friendly, and that continued on through his Davis career. She was the curator of a light and shadow show at the Legion of Honor.* While still an undergraduate he helped her put that

*The Color of Mood; American Tonalism--1880-1910, 1972, paintings and photography.

Lawrence: show together and he also helped her put the catalogue together and he got credit in the catalogue, which was very good for his dossier.

Then he had an internship at the Oakland Museum doing assistant-to-the-curator kind of work. And they had a show called "Mathews: Masterpieces of the California Decorative Style" in 1972. Mr. [Arthur F.] Mathews was a painter and also made furniture. They had a gorgeous show. This was great experience for him.

Then one summer he was invited back to be an intern at the National Collection of Fine Arts, which was very nice and a great honor. So he went to Washington and found himself a dump to live in off of Dupont Circle. And the man to whom he was going to be the assistant became ill, and so he had to take the man's job, which was the public information officer, which he did. And he was there for three months and he did such a good job that they paid him. They didn't pay him the man's salary, but they paid him a salary because he had taken over and taken hold so well, which was another feather in his dossier.

So he came back and he finished at Davis and was working on his thesis, but he hadn't really finished his thesis yet, when he was called by the Hirshhorn Museum and asked if he would like to be the public information officer at the Hirshhorn Museum, then just opening in October of 1974, after he had applied for the job.

Lawrence: He was married and divorced, and is not remarried and has a new apartment on California Street in Washington.

He has many accomplishments. He is a published author on art history. They published his thesis in Art in America, in its entirety, in February of 1984. He also has had one one-man show of his own artwork.

Teiser: What kind of artwork?

Lawrence: Well, I can't describe it to you! See this picture behind you? [gesturing] Right there. That is the patio of our house at Seadrift. His father asked him to paint everything in the patio and put everything that was there in, which he did. When he does human figures they're almost caricatures.

Teiser: This is oil.

Lawrence: Yes.

Well, he does all kinds of things. He makes his own frames out of very strange materials and paints them. He does sculpture work. He made a cat. One side was a cat sculpture and the other side was a man, and he was called "Kathmandu." The legs were made out of old chair legs that he found in the basement of his apartment building. And he has a thing called "The Family Portrait" which is a picture of my husband and daughter and himself and me, which is in oil and is life-size practically. There's a strong resemblance to everybody. But, as I say, I cannot describe to you what kind of art it is. He's had two shows and he's sold, I would say, twenty or thirty paintings, which is nice.

So he is a very artistic type of person and loves that kind of work. He loves working in a museum and I think will probably stay there for a while. He's very happy. He likes Washington, D.C., and he's very well-known there. He's had several mentions in newspaper articles.

The Hirshhorn had its tenth anniversary on October third of 1984, and I went back for it because they had a huge opening. The show was called "Content," and it was ten years of contemporary American and European art. It was very different and very bizarre, and a lot of people didn't like it, but it was a beautiful show. He got more coverage for that in the media than any event of anything I've ever seen except possibly a national election! It was in all the papers.

Clarisse Lawrence Watson

Teiser: What about your daughter, Clarisse?

Lawrence: Well, she's something else again! She is really a wonderful woman, even if I do say so myself. She was born in '45. Her name is Clarisse, but we call her Pinky. She too went to Grant School until the seventh grade, when I decided that she should go to perhaps a private school. So she went to Miss Burke's school, which was then called Katherine Delmar Burke's School, in the seventh grade. At that time the lower school was out on Thirty-second Avenue, which was what we called Playfield's. (The lower school was K through 7. Upper school was on Jackson Street, grades 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.) So she went out there and she had to go in a uniform.

Lawrence: In the eighth grade, she moved to their building on Jackson Street, and she seemed to get herself acclimatized. She enjoyed it and did really quite well.

During the middle of her high school career, Barbara Burke, the principal, asked me if I would be the campaign coordinator for a capital campaign to build a new laboratory, classrooms, and an auditorium that is down on Washington Street now. Barbara Burke said, "I can either pay you a salary or I will give your daughter tuition through high school." So I said, "Well, I think tax-wise I should take probably the latter and do it that way." So Barbara Burke said, "All right."

So I did undertake this thing, and I had a paid assistant. It took a couple of years, and we finally did raise the funds to build an auditorium and a new laboratory and new classrooms because Barbara Burke had bought all the old buildings behind Main School, fronting on Washington Street. My office was in one of those old buildings.

Then it came time for this child to think about a college. By that time, Barbara Burke had retired and Olive Balcolm was the principal of the school, and I went to talk to Olive. She said, "Well, her grades are mediocre. Naturally, her potential is higher than what it looks. I just want to warn you: don't send her to some little, inferior school because she will meet inferior people," which is the way she put it.

So the child did get into Berkeley, but we thought maybe that might be too hard for her. She also was accepted at the University of Denver, so that's where she went. One of her classmates also went there. So it worked out very well. She joined a sorority called Pi Beta Phi, to which her grandmother, Julia Moore Lawrence [died February 22, 1985], had belonged and also her mother had belonged at the University of California. Julia had gone to Stanford. So that was a darling, lovely family tradition fulfilled. My husband and I went to a couple of parents' weekends, and then when she graduated four years later we did go on the train up to Denver, which was very much fun.

And after she graduated she decided she wanted to seek her fortune in New York. She stayed home for the summer, and we had a lovely summer together, and then she went back East in the fall with our blessings. Through his business my husband knew a wonderful man named Larn Ferguson. He was a newspaper representative, the head of a firm which is called a newspaper representative firm, and he knew many people in New York.

Lawrence: So she went to see him, and he liked her and he did find her a job. I think she worked for Blue Cross or something like that. She stayed at the Barbizon where she met two other young women, and they became acquainted and liked each other and so they got an apartment together.

So she would come home for Christmas and everything, and she had her career going for her. She also had a "steady beau," as they used to say, who lived in Livingston, New Jersey. I'm sure that is really one reason why she went back to New York, but we never admitted that to each other. They saw each other quite a bit. But in the interim she met another young man.

Then she went to work for the Irving Trust Company, which is a bank. She was in the international division as a secretary. Her boss was a man by the name of William S. Watson. So she came home one time on vacation and was talking to me and another friend--we were out at lunch together--about this man she had met who was her boss. He really was quite nice, but she just didn't know what to do about him. He seemed really quite interested in her, but she wasn't sure if she was really ready to settle down. She liked his mother. Well anyway, of course, you could see right through this whole thing!

So finally she went back. Then one night we were over at our place at the beach and the phone rang and it was Pinky saying that she and this Bill Watson, they were at a party, were indeed engaged. So we said, "Okay, that's great."

Then he was going to come out to stay with us and meet us, and we would give a party to announce her engagement. He is a very nice man. We liked him immediately. He's got red hair and he's sort of short and he's of Scottish descent and has a wonderful sense of humor and is one of the nicest people I've ever known.

So they stayed here about a week, and we announced the engagement, and then they went back. We planned the wedding for the following April. So they both went back to their jobs, and he to his apartment and she to hers.

Then my husband and I went with some friends on a trip to Mexico, in February of 1969, and we had a nice time. We went to Mazatlán, to the Balboa Club, and the other man in the party had a fungus that he'd gotten in the South Pacific during the war. For some reason the climate there made it flare up so that his hands were swollen, and we had to take him to the hospital. Finally, they had to leave. We were going on to Puerto Vallarta and Guadalajara, so we decided to go on.

Lawrence: We get to Puerto Vallarta and we're there in the Oceanic Hotel with a lovely room with a view, and all of a sudden my husband becomes quite ill. I had a friend there, so I said, "What do you think is the matter?" And he said, "I hate to tell you, but he's got hepatitis, and we better get out of here." We made it back to San Francisco and called the doctor, who said "Come immediately to the hospital." The front door opens, and there's my daughter, Pinky, who knows nothing about this thing. "I'm here for the wedding." And I said, "There, there, dear. We're taking Daddy to Children's Hospital. He has hepatitis." Of course, her face fell.

He did recover, and we sent the invitations out even though he was still in the hospital. Everything turned out just fine. He was well enough to give the bride away. He'd lost a great deal of weight, and he was extremely handsome at the wedding. And Bill's sister and mother and the sister's husband all came, and they stayed with Mrs. Lawrence Sr. I had a couple of the bridesmaids staying with me, and Jean Livingston took another one of them. Anyway, we put them all up because they were from all over the country. And the wedding went off very nicely.

Then they went to the Balboa Club on their honeymoon, as part of it. And we had left a picture of ourselves to be put in their room, so when they walked in there would be a picture of Mother and Father. I don't think I have a copy of it here, but it was crazy. We are bouncing on some balloons or something. So that sort of set the tone for the whole thing.

Then they went back and lived in New York and he stayed with the Irving Trust. She got a part-time job in a dress shop. They lived in Peter Cooper Village, which is way down on Third Street, or Third Avenue.

Pinky and Bill lived there for a while, and pretty soon they bought a little house in a place called Ridgewood, New Jersey. Then my daughter came out here to visit, and she said she thought she might be pregnant, so I sent her to my doctor and, of course, indeed she was. The baby was supposed to come in February. So they were living in Ridgewood, and my husband and I decided we'd go back for the birth of the child. The child was born six weeks after the due date. My husband had to return to his business and I remained until March 31, 1971 when John Lawrence Watson was born, happy and healthy and the parents survived nicely.

Then, when John was eighteen months old, they were transferred by Irving Trust to Melbourne, Australia.

Lawrence: The following Christmas Sid and I went, the Christmas of '71. Pinky was then pregnant with another child by that time. We stayed about six weeks, and we had a marvelous time with them and all their friends. Australia is a wonderful place and the people are lovely.

We had made an error and we were a day early coming home, and my son was giving a huge party the night before he thought we were coming home. So we had to call him and say we were coming home a day early, and he said, "Oh, my God!" So we got in about eight o'clock at night, and the place was just rocking! So we went in and we took our bags into the bedroom and we said to each other, "Well, what the hell, we might just as well go out and enjoy the party. We'll never be able to go to sleep anyway." So we did. And we had a very nice time. We sort of got our second wind.

By that time our son had dropped the nickname Larry and was calling himself Sidney. At the party the doorbell rang and I answered it and a very nice-looking gentleman walked in, older than the rest of the guests, and he said, "Are you Sidney's mother?" And I said, "Of course I'm not his mother; I am his wife," thinking he meant my husband. It was Hershel B. Chipp, one of Sidney III's professors from Berkeley. He had been calling himself Sidney ever since, but I didn't know it at that time, and so I made a real faux pas!

Pretty soon the Watson family was sent to Manila because the Irving Trust Company had bought into a national Chinese bank owned by the government of Taiwan. So Bill Watson was sent as their representative to go be their vice president and find out what was going on.

The second child had been born, in Australia, in Melbourne, and her name is Victoria Ghirardelli Watson because she was born in the state of Victoria. So she has dual citizenship until the age of twenty-one, if she wants to. Bill Watson called us June 1, 1971 to say that Victoria had been born on June 2, 1971.

Anyway, they were in Manila, and Pinky was just thrilled because here was this beautiful house and they had servants and had friends there, and it was just all going to be wonderful.

Well, about six weeks pass, and Bill finds very strange things going on about the bank. A great deal of graft and a great deal of corruption, and there's kind of a Chinese mafia there. The man who was the chairman of the board is a very nice, very elderly Chinese gentleman from Taiwan who is somewhat senile, and he does not know what is happening here.

Lawrence: He and Pinky went to Hong Kong, which is not very far away, for a weekend of pleasure, leaving the children. While they were gone, there was a kidnapping threat made against the children. So the help and a friend of Pinky's called them and said, "You better come right home."

So Bill called his bank and told them what has happened. I think he waited a day or something. And they said, "Well, then you better get out of there. You get your wife and children out and send them to San Francisco, and you go to Hong Kong and await further orders."

Well, it was a Sunday night back here in San Francisco, and my husband and his cousin, Brit Gordon, who was from Michigan, and I had gone out for dinner. The phone rings and Sidney answers it and it's Pinky. She was coming at eight o'clock the next night. She said, "That is all I can tell you. I cannot say anything on the telephone." We went out to the airport the next night and we met her.

So they stayed here in this apartment for six months. It was not good. Bill was going back and forth to New York trying to get this thing organized and settled. Finally they decided that Bill would be headquartered in New York, so they went back to New York and lived in a place called Ramsey, New Jersey. So that was the end of that chapter in their life.

He stayed with Irving Trust, and then he went to work for the State Street Bank of Boston as head of the New York office, and then finally he was transferred to the head office of the State Street Bank of Boston. So they moved from Ramsey, New Jersey, to Wellesley, Massachusetts. Then he went to the First Bank of Boston which has now sent him back to Melbourne, Australia as the head of their office in Melbourne. So they're back kind of where they started from.

The children are now thirteen and eleven, and going to school there. Australia, as you know, is a socialistic country, but you can't send your children to public schools because they're so terrible, so they're in private schools over there.

V GHIRARDELLI SQUARE YESTERDAY AND TODAY

[Interview 6: January 18, 1985]

Teiser: We are sitting in Ghirardelli Square next to the fountain that was created by Ruth Asawa. We are sitting on a bench looking toward the building to the south more or less--the square is not set quite true to the compass.

Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence is going to tell what was here, as she remembers it, when it was still a working chocolate and mustard factory.

Lawrence: I certainly do remember it, and may I say that what they have done with this is perfectly magnificent.

We used to bring our little daughter down here to play on a Sunday afternoon when the factory was closed because this entire area was all a very Italian garden, beautifully planted with hedges and olive trees and various Italianate things. I don't believe they had much statuary. They did have places to sit just as we are sitting now.

As we are sitting we are looking at the Tower Building as they call it now, which is the clock tower, which used to be the office of the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company, and underneath that was the garage where the executives parked their cars. There were also about five great big horse-drawn wagons. Every once in a while if there was a civic event or a parade or something like that they would rent some horses and get some teamsters, and those wagons would go out in the parade loaded with chocolate goods of various kinds, bars, ground chocolate, Flicks.

Teiser: What was done with the goods?

Lawrence: They were sometimes passed out to bystanders if it seemed appropriate. Otherwise, they were put back in stock in the shipping department. (The eventual head of the shipping department was Johnny Luchini, who my father called "that kid Johnny Luchini" until his untimely death at age 54.)

I can remember that going on for years, actually until this site was sold to William Matson Roth and his mother, Lurline Matson Roth, who had the foresight and the vision and the courage to develop this complex into this really beautiful thing that it is today. When the building was sold to them, the wagons were still in the garage here. I believe they were sold to an amusement park in Sacramento.

Over here on our left now is Modesto Lanzone's restaurant. That used to be an employee housing facility. Two families lived in this snug little building, which had two very nice apartments in it. One was the family of Italo Vasconi, who I mentioned before. He was the chief engineer. And the power house is to our right, on the corner of Polk Street and Beach Street. He had to be in residence in case anything went wrong with the machinery, which was run by steam, and I suppose mainly electricity--different sources of power--so he had to be on the scene. The other family that lived in there, I don't remember his name. He was a driver. We had motorized trucks by the time I was born, and he was a teamster, and he lived there with his family.

Straight ahead of us is the Mustard Building, which is right next to the office building. From the time the company moved here in 1898 there was a mustard factory in this building because August Schilling and Domingo Ghirardelli Jr., one German and one Italian, became dear friends. Mr. Schilling was in the spice and coffee business, and he contracted with the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company to manufacture Schilling's mustard, which they did up until the time the business was sold. It was dry mustard and the paste form of Schilling's mustard, and it bore Schilling's label. After Schilling's was sold to McCormick [and Company at the end of 1946] they still contracted to have the mustard made here.

The next building to the right under the big GHIRARDELLI sign (which isn't lit now; it is at night) is what they call the Cocoa Building, which is presumably where cocoa was manufactured. Now, I have to say that to my recollection I don't believe it was as clear-cut as to what was located where. I'm quite sure the mustard was manufactured in the Mustard Building. The cocoa and chocolate were processed separately in the Cocoa Building. The shipping department was on the first floor on

Lawrence: a level with North Point Street and had a big entrance where trucks could back up to be loaded or unloaded. That occupied most of the first floor. On the upper floors manufacturing processes went on with great big grinding mills. The manufacture of chocolate was a very interesting thing.*

On the far side, on the corner of Polk Street and North Point, is what they call the Chocolate Building. It is my recollection that all the manufacturing processes were done not in a separate way. Everything flowed from one building to the next and, for example, the packaging was probably on the first floor of the Chocolate Building. Here was where the ground chocolate came down in tubes and went into cans which were on a machine which was on a rotary system. They would be filled and vacuum-packed, and then they would be packed in their shipping cases by women who wore smocks and caps to keep their hair sanitary and out of the product, and we have somewhere some pictures of these ladies at work.

Teiser: Did you call them "factory girls"?

Lawrence: Yes, one did call them "factory girls," and many of them were in their sixties but they were still "factory girls." Among them were the late Mayor George Moscone's grandmother, who worked for the chocolate company for many years. He once gave a speech here at a ceremony: the lights here at Christmas time were lit by a descendant of Domingo Ghirardelli, who would pull a switch and the lights would go on, and a representative of the mayor would come. Mr. Moscone was then the president of the Board of Supervisors, and he opened his remarks by saying that he felt as though he were a member of the family because his grandmother had worked here for many, many years, and she always brought home a great deal of Ghirardelli chocolate which, of course, enabled him to become a very successful politician. I thought that was rather amusing.

Directly behind us toward the north is what they call the Wurster Building, which is where Trader Vic's Signor Pico was and is now Maxwell's Plum restaurant. That building is entirely new. That site was occupied by what they called the box factory, which was a wooden building where they put together wooden packing crates and even corrugated cardboard boxes to put the product in. It was isolated because of the fire hazard, which was tremendous--working with wood and cardboard and chemicals. In those days there were not many things around it, and it just sat down close to Beach Street on the corner of Larkin.

*See pages 138-139.

Lawrence: The power house is directly to the west of that. It fronts on Polk Street, and that was kind of the center of activity for the factory because from there came all the power that ran all the machinery, and it was very mechanized. My great grandfather, of course, invented the system of making ground chocolate, at first called "broma."

Now the Woolen Mill, which is up Polk Street from the power house, is the oldest building in the complex. It is due east and west; it is the only thing that is true [to the compass] on this whole square block, which is bounded by Larkin, Beach, Polk, and North Point streets. There are many different sorts of shops and restaurants in there. This is a new building here, at our right, the Ghirardelli Book Shop.

Teiser: The glass building?

Lawrence: The glass building. Suzanne Bocqueraz Carpenter Lemon is the person who founded that, and she was very polite because she asked every member of the family if it was all right to use the name for her book shop. What could one say when the whole square has our name also? So we were very happy with that, and I believe she is still in the business and still owns this shop.

I think I have already mentioned in our earlier interviews about the times the family would come here on Columbus Day to watch the landing of "Columbus" down at what is now Aquatic Park, and we would sit on the roof here of what they call the Cocoa Building. It has a slanted roof. We were directly under the big sign, and we would bring chairs and stuff and put them all up there. I think we had to climb up a ladder to get there. That stopped quite a long time ago when the fourth generation grew up.

I used to love to come down here and go through the factory and watch my father make his rounds. He would have to go around and see that everything was working mechanically. He was at that time the vice president and, having been educated as a mechanical engineer, he was very much concerned with the manufacturing process. And so I would come along with him. I was, as I believe I said before, the only child and unfortunately not a male, so I really was taught quite a good deal about the business. There were many processes that went on, among them refrigeration, which was extremely difficult.

In the '50s over here against the Cocoa Building my father designed a loading pier for trucks that would come in. There was a railroad spur that runs down Beach Street behind us, and

Lawrence: before that the railroad cars used to come directly from the Embarcadero and unload the sugar, the cocoa beans, all the things--especially the cocoa beans, which were always imported either from the Gold Coast of Africa, which was the best quality cocoa in the world at that time, or from South America, depending on the cocoa futures, which is the way it is still sold. It's like coffee; you buy ahead counting on that you're making the right guess on the price at that time.

That would be unloaded here directly from the railroad track. They discontinued having the railroad come all the way into this area, and so my father designed and executed and oversaw the building of this thing--which was absolutely hideous, I might add, but it was structurally very sound and made a great deal of sense because by that time sugar was refined and it was loaded into tank trucks. There was a big driveway which came in off Larkin Street, and the garden was all around it, but the driveway came in and went down to this loading platform where the sugar was pumped out into storage tanks where it could be used in the manufacture of the product. This was a great innovation, and it worked beautifully until the people came along who designed Ghirardelli Square, and they felt that was an eyesore which had to go, and it did, and they have created this lovely thing, as I said before.

That was the way the company did keep up with the times, and they were trying to be innovative, and what happened was, I think, that the times just got a little bit ahead of them, and also by that time my father was retired and he had nothing to do with the running of the company. So naturally I feel that he was forward-looking and would have kept pace with things. But anyway, I think the family is extremely proud of what has happened to this, because it is the best thing that could have happened. Mr. Roth is a very forward-looking person, and the people whom he hired to design this were wonderful and have done a marvelous job.

If we walk around we might come across more things of interest. But first let me try to bring this back to my mind, the manufacturing process which went into making both ground chocolate, cocoa, and chocolate bars. The first stage was the cocoa beans were unloaded (the beans arrived sacked), and stored in the cocoa building where there were huge, huge roasters, maybe ten to a wall. The roasting door was a round thing that was about six feet in diameter. The cocoa beans were then loaded into these roasters, simultaneously, and they were fired up and the beans were turned around just like a washing machine, agitated, really more like a tumble dry process. They were tumbled around for a certain length of time. Then after they

Lawrence: were roasted they were taken out and moved to what they called the milling room, and in there they were put into these heated mills which were great big, stone again, circular things with circular granite wheels which were serrated. And the beans were dumped into that and it went round and round and round and ground them into a liquid. Then the next process is when the liquid sugar was added for the ground chocolate process.*

The candy bars and the confectioners' chocolate went a separate way, in a liquid form, and they were put through a chilling refrigeration process where they were put into molds and then chilled and then taken out of the molds and wrapped by machinery in a chocolate bar or as a ten-pound piece of confectioners' chocolate, which is the way that was sold to candy makers such as Blum's and Mars candy bars and Baby Ruth and many of the candy manufacturers in this area. Then there were the Flicks which are still manufactured by the company, which is now headquartered in San Leandro. This again involved an innovation that my father discovered in order to make Flicks. They used to be hand dripped if you can imagine. What he developed was a thing that was sort of like a pastry gun that chefs use to decorate the tops of things. Except this was timed so that it would spit these drops of chocolate out onto a moving belt. Then they, too, would go through a refrigeration thing and then they would be funneled into the circular tubes in which Flicks are still sold. (They are not to be compared in any way with Hershey Kisses; they're better [laughing].)

Now let's walk around.

Straight ahead of us is the Mandarin Restaurant, which is built in the Woolen Mill, which says 1864 on it. The company did not move to this location until 1895, and this was the only building standing at the time and, as I say, it is the only building here that is due east and west. It has Edelweiss [a restaurant] downstairs and the Mandarin Restaurant is upstairs.

This is a very varied shopping center, if you want to call it that. There are all kinds of different stores, and they are all of pretty good quality, I would say.

Teiser: They must have screened them carefully.

Lawrence: Yes, I believe they did. When it was first completed, a man by the name of Rose and his wife were brought here by Mr. Roth. They had run, I think it was called, Village Fair in Sausalito,

*See also the description of the manufacturing process in the interview with Ben W. Reed, pages 154-161.

Lawrence: and they were expert in this type of thing, because this really was a kind of a pioneer in a large size complex, and they were very careful about the quality of the commercial aspects of this building. And then after that, a man by the name of Warren Lemon became the person who had that function, the rental agent I guess you would call him, and he did a wonderful job for many years. He, incidentally, was married to Suzanne Bocqueraz, who owns the book shop.

Now let's go to the Power House.

Teiser: Now what is it we are looking at?

Lawrence: Well, Beach Street is to our right and straight ahead is what is called the Power House. It abuts the Woolen Mill, and as I said earlier this was the heart of this place when it was a chocolate factory. This is where the power was generated. Part of it is now the Ghirardelli Cinema, and I guess you can come into it from Beach Street. I can remember going in there with my father, who was an engineer, and of course I didn't understand any of it, and I still don't, but it was a very efficient-running, well-oiled, rather noiseless operation. This is where they had the old factory whistle which is now in the executive offices. The Ghirardelli Square people had found it in the basement, and they got a brass worker to restore it (it was all rusted out), and it is a thing of beauty. That used to go off at seven a.m., at twelve noon, which was an hour for lunch, and at five o'clock, which was closing time. And also sometimes my mother and father would be leaving on a trip on a cruise ship, and they would sail from whatever pier it was on the Embarcadero side, and as they would pass between here and Alcatraz, which is right opposite, this whistle would go off in a great salute, and the ship's whistle would salute back. It was rather thrilling for a young child. I was ten the first time it happened; we were going down to Panama.

We are also now looking at the Maritime Museum and the San Francisco Senior Center in the building across Beach Street at the foot of Polk Street. This was built by the WPA in the 1930s during Mr. Roosevelt's presidency.

My father, as I think I mentioned earlier, was part of the NRA before it was declared unconstitutional, and he was chairman of the confectioners and candy makers part of the NRA, and he was appalled at what everybody else was paying. Their tradition was always to keep your employees happy by paying them enough, and you're not buying their loyalty but you have their loyalty. So that was their philosophy.

Teiser: Now we are looking at the gate on the Larkin Street side of the square.

Lawrence: The gate behind the Tower Building, behind the offices. We are standing in front of what was the garage. This is where the teams of horses and wagons used to come in and later on the motorized trucks, and after that the liquified sugar in tank trucks. Straight ahead of us is Larkin Street, and there is the original old cast iron arch saying "Ghirardelli" on it, and the original iron gate.

As the family's fifth generation becomes aware of its interesting heritage, it is heartwarming to know that the traditions and historical significance of our forebears' efforts will be preserved in Ghirardelli Square and that "the factory" will remain part of the life of the community.

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Ghirardelli Family Series

Margery Menefee Tingley

DOMINGO GHIRARDELLI JUNIOR AND HIS DESCENDANTS

An Interview Conducted by
Ruth Teiser
in 1984

DOMINGO GHIRARDELLI JUNIOR AND HIS DESCENDANTS

[Date of Interview: October 23, 1984]

[By prearrangement Mrs. Tingley was interviewed in her home
by telephone]

Teiser: I wanted to ask you to give biographical information about yourself and your grandparents. Could I start by asking you your maiden name, Margery--

Tingley: Menefee.

Teiser: And what was your birth date?

Tingley: September 12, 1920.

Teiser: And your parents' names?

Tingley: My mother's name was Ruth Ghirardelli Menefee, and my father was just known as P.L. Menefee.

Teiser: And your grandparents?

Tingley: Domingo and Addie Ghirardelli.

Teiser: That's Domingo Jr.?

Tingley: Right. They were my mother's parents. My mother was the youngest of eight children.

Domingo Ghirardelli Junior

Teiser: Let me ask you about your grandfather, Domingo Jr. Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence said that you spent time with him when you were a child.

Tingley: Yes. My grandfather died in 1932, so I was twelve years old. Before that I used to go down almost every weekend in Hillsborough. He used to pick me up at school on Friday afternoons, and I used to spend almost every weekend with them, which I loved.

Then we would come up to the city, to San Francisco, on Saturdays quite often. It was one of the highlights of my life. We would go shopping in North Beach and end up at the chocolate factory.

He, literally I would say, taught me how to cook, which I love to do. We would get all the produce and the meats and go to all the Italian delicatessens and so forth and get all this food that we would bring back to Hillsborough. Then he would go in the kitchen, and I would help him or watch him cook, and that was one of the fun experiences of my life. I really just loved it. Then he would always end up at the factory, as I say, and have treats of chocolate, which I thought was such a treat in those days.

Teiser: What was it like at the factory when you went there with him?

Tingley: Well, it was wonderful because it was such a family-oriented place. It was nothing but family that worked there--that was in the office--and then the people that worked in the actual factory were all Italian. At the time I didn't speak Italian--and I don't speak that well now--but we used to go in there, and my grandfather would talk to them all in Italian, and I just thought it was fun and, you know, as a child you thought that was funny to hear them talking Italian.

I realize that Ghirardelli Square is a wonderful place, but it was just, I think, very sad when Golden Grain Macaroni Company bought them out, and they tore the factory down. Except in the front of the factory they have the mosaic with the Ghirardelli emblem and the eagle that is on some of the cans. It's kind of a trademark, and that's in mosaic still today. I mean that's the only thing that is actually left. It's right as you walk in the main building there at North Point.

Teiser: I can remember the eagle on packages.

Tingley: They had a beautiful garden where the square is now, and my mother used to go down there and pick flowers whenever she was having a party. Just a gorgeous garden and they had an Italian gardener. It was just a beautiful place, it truly was.

I remember going into I guess you'd call it the warehouse or the garage, and they had these carriages that they used to use in the old days to deliver the chocolate, and I used to have fun climbing around on those. Then they would pack all the boxes of the chocolate to distribute and so forth; that was in the regular factory part, I guess.

Then, upstairs it was fun to watch them actually making the chocolate, but it was a really sickening smell if you were around it for too long! People that would drive by, and even at the high school across the street, could smell it. And when you were right in there it was really overpowering.

Teiser: Were they still making mustard there?

Tingley: Yes, they did still make mustard there.

My grandfather had a desk there that I can remember, and he always had some little candy. Because he had been the president, but was retired. My uncle was the president at that time.

Teiser: What kind of desk did your grandfather have?

Tingley: As I remember it was just a regular old, you know, wooden-type desk. I don't think there was anything special about it.

Teiser: Did he ever seem critical of anything there?

Tingley: No, because it was his son, my uncle Lyle, who ran it. Then, when he died Mrs. Lawrence's father was the president. You see, her grandfather and my grandfather were brothers, so she and I would be really second cousins.

D. Lyle Ghirardelli

Teiser: What was Lyle like?

Tingley: He was a wonderful man. He lived on Jackson Street in the city. He had kind of a hard life, I think, because his wife was ill most of the time. In fact, she was bedridden, as I remember, which was hard for him.

But he used to hike a lot, and he had a cabin over here in Marin, in Mill Valley, that he used to come to on weekends I can remember.

Teiser: Was he a good president of the company, do you think?

Tingley: I think he was, I do, I really do. But nobody could work there unless they were in the family and unless they could speak Italian.

Teiser: If somebody in the family married somebody, then would they take him into the business?

Tingley: Yes, like Mrs. Lawrence's husband worked there. I think he was a salesman of some type. Yes, they would.

Teiser: Your other uncle was Edwin, wasn't he?

Tingley: Yes, and I never knew him. He died before I was born.

Teiser: And the others in the family, then, were girls?

Tingley: Right, my mother, and she had five sisters. There were eight children, five girls and three boys.

Teiser: Who were Lyle's children?

Tingley: Kent and Ynez. Ynez is the one who's dead, and Kent is about two years older than I am and he lives in Hawaii. He doesn't want any part of the family. I mean he's friendly and all that, but he didn't like to have people know his name was Ghirardelli, so he changed his name. He just took off the e-l-l-i and he's known as Kent Ghirard.

Alida Ghirardelli

Teiser: Is there anything especially notable about any of your aunts?

Tingley: Well, Alida. I didn't know her either, but she was one of the older ones and she died when my mother was a young girl--but she was quite a well-known artist. She wasn't married, and she was a very pretty woman. I have pictures of her. She studied in Paris for several years. Some of her paintings are in the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park, and some in the Italian museum in North Beach,* and some in the Oakland Museum, I believe.

*The Museo Italo-Americano. It later moved to Fort Mason.

Tingley: But she had a very tragic death. She died in Carmel, in the ocean. She was swimming. And they never found her body. She was in her thirties and kind of at the height of her career.

She was very pretty. See, there's Spanish and Italian in my grandfather's mother's family. In fact, she was born in Lima, Peru, and they have some Inca Indian blood. So between the Spanish and the Italian, my mother and her sisters were quite pretty.

Esperance Ghirardelli Alvord

Tingley: Another aunt that I remember that died when I was a child was Esperance. She was a very fun-loving person and she didn't have any children for some reason; she couldn't have them. She loved children, and she was very active in the Junior League. She was the president at one time. When she died my grandmother donated a room or something at the Junior League Home for Children in her memory.

Corona Ghirardelli Hyde

Tingley: Then, the last of my mother's sisters to go, who just died about three or four years ago, was Corona. She also didn't have any children. She was married to an interior decorator who did the interiors of lots of the missions in California.

Teiser: What was his name?

Tingley: His name was George Hyde. He's dead, too. So after he died-- she lived in San Francisco when she was married to him--then she went to Santa Barbara to live by herself, and she died down there.*

Ruth Ghirardelli Menefee

Tingley: My mother died about twenty-three years ago, I guess it was.** They all had kind of tragic deaths. I mean, one drowned, and

*In 1979.

**In 1961.

Tingley: Edwin shot himself, and my mother died in a fire in her home in Tiburon. Well, she actually didn't die in the fire, but she died as a result of the fire, which was a terrible way to go.

Addie Cook Ghirardelli

Tingley: My grandmother was a wonderful, wonderful lady. She had a beautiful philosophy of life. They were just a devoted couple. I can remember they had, at their home in Hillsborough, in their bedroom, they had this very tall bed, old-fashioned bed that came from Italy. It was a canopy-type bed, and I can remember as a child loving to get into bed with them! I would think it was like a tent, you know, because of this canopy thing. My grandfather was born in that bed, and he died in that bed, and all their children were born in that bed. I think the bed belongs in a museum, and I don't know really what happened to the bed.

It was just an iron bed and it had like the same "DG that you'd see on the can of chocolate at the head of the bed. It was painted white, but it was a metal headboard. But it was so high you had to have kind of a little step to get up onto the bed. It's funny the things you remember.

Teiser: What about your grandmother? Can you characterize her?

Tingley: Well, she was just a wonderful person. Polly thinks that she was quite religious. I don't know that she was really. My grandfather was actually Catholic, but he didn't like the Catholic religion, so he just was kind of a nothing, I think. And she was Episcopal and she'd go to church every Sunday and she got a lot out of her religion, because there were lots of tragedies in her life. But she had a beautiful outlook on life. I mean if you just spent an hour with her you felt like a better person somehow. It's hard for me to describe how she made you feel that way.

She loved flowers and she was interested in everything. She was very kind and patient. Any problems you had you'd go to her and you'd feel much better after talking with her.

Teiser: That's a wonderful heritage for a child to have.

Tingley: It really was. And, as I say, I spent so much time with them,

I think one reason why I was so close to my grandfather was that I was an only child. My mother and father were divorced when I was young, so I was just raised actually by my mother, and she remarried when I got older. So I think my

Tingley: grandfather, in looking back on it, was more like a father figure to me, you know, but a grandfather actually. I mean he would help me with my homework and all those kinds of things!

Teiser: How fortunate you were.

Tingley: I really was. I mean I really am very proud of my heritage.

Teiser: This is awfully interesting, and it certainly adds to our knowledge of your grandfather.

Tingley: Well, I think he was a wonderful man, especially when you consider that when he came to California he couldn't speak a word of English, and actually I think he was the one who built up the company once they got the factory going in San Francisco.

Teiser: Did he speak with an accent?

Tingley: No, he didn't, he didn't.

My grandmother used to tell me--I never actually heard him--that he loved to eat all the Italian food, which is, as you know, very rich, and if he would eat too much and I guess have maybe too much wine, he would have nightmares and he would swear in Italian at the workmen in the factory.

Of course, it was terrible after my grandfather died. He died in August, and I remember the following Christmas--as I say, I was only twelve years old. Every year at Christmas time the whole family would go down to their house, and my grandfather would sit under the tree. My cousin Kent, and I guess Ynez, too, would be there. He would call out the names on the packages, and we would distribute them. It was such a ritual that the first year after he died, I guess my grandmother couldn't stand the thought of being there without him, so she took me up to Yosemite, to the Ahwahnee, in the snow, for Christmas, and I hated to be away from my family.

She took me on several trips after he died, which I love now. But, you know, I thought they were sort of boring because I'd have to go to all the cathedrals and all the art galleries and all the museums, but I'm so happy to have done it now. She took me through the Panama Canal. I was thirteen years old at the time. I really have nothing but fond memories of both of them.

Domingo Ghirardelli Junior, Continued

Tingley: My grandfather was just kind of a devil. I mean he thought he was sneaking things, like my grandmother didn't particularly care for alcohol, but that was all right if he drank wine. But when we were shopping in North Beach I couldn't imagine where he was, and he was back in the back room drinking wine with the proprietors of the store. And then I was told when I got home not to tell my grandmother.

Teiser: Oh, that's delightful.

Tingley: But he just always had a twinkle in his eye and a wonderful, wonderful sense of humor.

I can remember also in those days they had this radio that you wore the speakers over your ears. I can remember being down there--I think it was 1927--when Lindbergh made his flight across the Atlantic. I can remember listening with my grandfather, and I can remember him crying and I couldn't imagine why he was crying. But he was terribly emotional, and we all are. I guess that's the Italian in us or something; you know, we cry at the happy things!

Teiser: Was your mother like her mother? Did she take after her or her father?

Tingley: I think she was more like my grandfather because she was very fun-loving. My grandmother was kind of very straitlaced and proper. I mean you had to do everything just by the book as far as she was concerned, and yet she wasn't real strict about it. But she was firm, whereas my grandfather was just fun-loving. I mean, she loved fun too, and she would laugh along with everybody, but she just didn't have the same personality. She was very, very kind of straitlaced.

I mean you didn't smoke in her house except she let my grandfather smoke a cigar, and what could be worse than that? But that was okay; anything he did was fine, but nobody else was allowed to ever smoke in her house. And you had to have the most perfect table manners. I remember if your elbow was on the table you'd be poked in the elbow with a fork. Everybody was a little bit in awe of her, I think. My mother, on the other hand, was just a very fun-loving, you know, full-of-life personality person. A marvelous person.

Teiser: I think Polly said your mother was very amusing.

Tingley: She was. She had a wonderful, wonderful sense of humor. My grandfather did too, and I guess maybe she gets it from him. I mean she would do just crazy things, you know, that were fun.

Golden Gate Park Shelter

Teiser: I think Polly said that when your grandfather died his wife gave a game shelter in Golden Gate Park.

Tingley: Inside Golden Gate Park. In fact, we're in the process of trying to get it moved. At that time it was a good location. My grandfather was friends with John McLaren, who built the park. He and all his cronies, they used to, after my grandfather retired, go to Golden Gate Park and they would play dominoes and cards and stuff in the park. Because he loved that so much, my grandmother, after he died, wanted to do something in his memory, so she built this shelter. In fact, I unveiled it. I remember I thought it was so marvelous because I got to get out of school to go there to the park to unveil this thing.

It's on the Stanyan Street entrance of the park. That must have been put there in 1933. It's been vandalized now. It looked almost like a greenhouse. It's all glass, except the back of it is brick. Then, all the columns holding up the building were metal--they were bronze actually--and the base of each one is a figurehead of the chessmen, the king or the queen. And then in the center there was a bronze plaque with my grandfather's picture and a little poem. My grandmother was great on quoting Longfellow and Wordsworth and all that kind of stuff, and there's a little poem by Longfellow and this picture of my grandfather, embossed, and it's just a flat plaque with the dates and so forth. And then in front of it is a drinking fountain--or was--that is also like one of the chessmen.

But it was at Haight and Ashbury when all those flower children were there and all that. It is so vandalized now that it is an absolute disgrace.

She used to go every year; we would take a wreath and garlands at Christmas time and put them there. There were all these stationary card tables there. Some of them had checkerboards built into them. They weren't loose, and the tables were chained to the ground and all that. Well, little by little and year by year, the Haight-Ashbury just demolished it, practically. All the glass is broken. It is very unprotected, which it wasn't when she put it up. The tables have been cut up. And now the bums and the street people seem to sleep there. They have written graffiti all over the thing. It just kills me to see it.

Tingley: So my son John Skov and I--he knows how upset I get over it--we are in the process of talking to the people at the park, trying to get them to move it some other place, because it's a disgrace. They have put red paint over the plaque. I mean it really is inexcusable. And they broke off the drinking fountain. You see dirty old men in sleeping bags, and the walls are all burnt, charred, because they build fires with the tables and stuff to keep warm and to cook.

First we thought maybe we should move the plaque to Ghirardelli Square, but I think that's defeating the purpose. My grandmother wanted it in the park and she wanted it with card tables, so that's what we're trying to do.

But it just takes so long, you can't believe it. I mean, I would think what we want to do was to the park's benefit. You can't imagine the red tape you have to go through. You have to go through so many channels. My son lives in the city fairly near the park and so he handles the whole thing. We've even gone through the park and we've picked out where we think would be appropriate. It's just a matter of removing the plaque and putting the shelter someplace else. There's one rhododendron garden now that has a few tables there already and it's in a much better location. We're working on that spot now.

The Following Generations

Teiser: Would you tell about your children?

Tingley: I have three children, all of whom are married, and I have seven grandchildren.

Teiser: Well, you're fortunate in both directions.

Tingley: Right. I just love them. The oldest granddaughter is going to be married in January. She will be twenty-three. I always know how long my mother's been gone, because she was born the month after my mother died, which was just too bad because my mother, of course, knew that she was on the way.

Teiser: Who are your children, then?

Tingley: My children's names are John Skov, and he has three children and lives in San Francisco. Then I have Jeff Skov, and he lives over here in Greenbrae and he has two children. And my daughter's name is Judy Sanchez, and she lives in San Anselmo and has two

Tingley: children. They're a fun group. We have good, good times together. We all went to Hawaii about four years ago and it was really lots of fun.

Teiser: Quite a large group.

Tingley: There's fourteen of us when we're all together, but it's fun. But it's hard now because, you know, as I say, one's getting married and the youngest one now is fifteen and three of them are in college at the moment. The older they get they don't want to be around that much any more. But they're more like my friends now, you know. I have lots of good times with my granddaughter, helping her plan her wedding.

Teiser: I do thank you very much for all this information.

Tingley: Well, you're very welcome.

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Ghirardelli Family Series

Ben W. Reed

THE GIRARDELLI CHOCOLATE COMPANY

An Interview Conducted by
Ruth Teiser
in 1984

1992

THE GHIRARDELLI CHOCOLATE COMPANY

[Date of Interview: December 18, 1984].

[Interview with Ben W. Reed at his home in Alamo, California]

Reed: My grandmother was the original Domingo Ghirardelli's daughter. There were two Domingos, which is confusing, the father and then their first son. A lot of people get those mixed up, because Domingo Jr. was the president [of the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company] for a long time.

Teiser: When were you born?

Reed: May 20, 1916.

Teiser: What were your first recollections of the company as a youngster?

Reed: As a youngster, of course, what fascinated me was the horse teams. They had the barns right there by the bay, out in back of the building on the beach.

Teiser: For the dray horses?

Reed: Yes, for the dray horses.

Cocoa Beans: Delivery, Sources, and Treatment

Teiser: What kind of wagons did they use?

Reed: Very low wagons to haul the cocoa beans off the dock. They were just dray wagons, with very low beds so they could pile the beans on them instead of going up into a truck.

Teiser: What did these beans arrive in, sacks?

Reed: Yeah, still do, on the dock. Around a hundred and fifty pounds. They're all what they call catch weights still today. They might be a hundred and fifty or they might be a hundred and seventy; you have to weigh each bag.

Teiser: What's the sacking made of, burlap?

Reed: Burlap. Still the same. You can still see them on the dock at San Francisco.

Teiser: How many horses to a team?

Reed: Just two.

Teiser: Where did the wagons go to be unloaded?

Reed: Right there, in the back of the plant there.

Teiser: Was there a dock nearby?

Reed: No, there wasn't a dock there. They had to go down to the docks, way down Bay Street to the docks. The public docks were quite a ways from where we were. Of course, the army had its docks over at Fort Mason. But the public docks were just where they are now. They had a few right there at Fisherman's Wharf.

Teiser: But your cocoa beans didn't come in at any one pier?

Reed: No, different piers, because they were grown all over the place. The beans are grown at twenty degrees each side of the equator, so to get a good blend you might buy Samoan beans, you might buy Javas, you might buy Africans, South American beans, Central American beans. The tropical areas grow beans with different flavors and colors, so you blend the same way you do coffee as far as getting the right blend. Like for milk chocolate, you use a light bean to make it the right color, and the flavors are a lot different.

Teiser: Who tastes?

Reed: Oh, I guess everybody tastes. You get used to knowing which countries you have to have to blend for.

Teiser: So after you establish the blend, you don't have to keep tasting every batch?

Reed: No.

Teiser: Who ordered the beans?

Reed: We always ordered through brokers. The cocoa exchange was in New York. We used to go buy through two or three brokers, or maybe more than than. They'd call us every morning and tell us what prices were and what was available. And they would sell actual beans to us.

Teiser: You knew exactly what you were getting?

Reed: Yes. And these people had their men in the countries. Their contacts were all over the world. Some brokers were strong in African areas, Ivory Coast. (There are so many new countries now with the changes.)

Teiser: Did any of you ever go to those countries?

Reed: Well, I've been to South America, as a young man, but not for the company.

Teiser: Were you interested then in where the cocoa beans grew?

Reed: Well, yes.

Teiser: But the company bought just through the brokers?

Reed: Through the brokers. Like in British Samoa they grew some good beans for color, and they were always obtained through a British broker in San Francisco. The ships would come from Samoa and bring them right here.

Teiser: How many sources do you think you had?

Reed: Well, let's just name the countries. Of course, you had South America, Africa. Some come from Ceylon, Samoa, Sumatra, Java, and then Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Bahia, which is in South America. Mexico has some good beans, but they use most of their own. Once in a while we'd get some. So it was quite interesting. A lot of people don't realize that.

Teiser: How complex it is!

Reed: Yes, and how different chocolate is, say, from the coffee business. And the complexity of manufacturing it.

Chocolate is probably the most sophisticated food product that is manufactured today. And the cost of machinery is staggering, to make a good product.

Teiser: You have the selection, then the blending. Is there a factor of freshness of the bean?

Reed: No. One of the worst factors is, they all come in sacks and a lot of these countries just don't have docks. They come out on lighters on ships and are dumped on the beach, and you get all kinds of bugs. So the big thing we used to do was fumigate right on the dock. We'd have our stacks of beans on the dock and they'd fumigate them all.

Teiser: What kind of fumigant would they use?

Reed: I don't know. The FDA has changed it so many times. I don't know what they're using now. Then we'd fumigate them in our plant, after they got there, too.

Teiser: A second time?

Reed: Yes, a second time.

Teiser: How did you get the bugs out, just shake them?

Reed: No, they go through a cleaner before you roast them. In these sacks you know there's probably a lot of stones, sticks, and once we found a wallet with money in it, about three pesos.

Teiser: They're brought in; then are the sacks dumped on a conveyer for the beans to be cleaned?

Reed: Yes.

Teiser: What kind of a cleaner is it?

Reed: It's mostly a blower. It blows all the dust and the dirt and things in the screens. The fine screens take out a lot of stuff.

Teiser: Is there hand inspection, too?

Reed: Yes, we'd just look it over as they go through a flat belt.

Teiser: How many people did you have inspecting on that belt?

Reed: In the old plant, about two I guess.

Manufacturing Chocolate

Teiser: Then the beans go directly from the cleaning process into the roasters?

Reed: Yes.

Teiser: Are they roasted differently for different products?

Reed: Yes. They have high roasts and normal roasts, and then there's batch roasting too. We have the continuous roasters that they go through and then come out.

Teiser: And a more intense roast would just be a slower trip through the roaster?

Reed: Yes, and for the color in dark roasts.

Teiser: You used batch roasters, too?

Reed: Oh yes, batch roasters and continuous roasters.

Teiser: How high was the temperature at the top?

Reed: I would say more than 150.

Teiser: Then, after the roasters, where did they go?

Reed: Well, after you roast them, you crack them. They go through a cracker. On the bean itself is a little fine shell, similar maybe to an almond shell; you know, an almond has a little fine shell on the outside of it? And the cracker cracks it and it's blown off. This is what they call the cocoa shell, which is sacked and nobody really knows what to do with it. We used to sell it to hog people who used it for hog beds, for bedding. And a lot of people took it home to mulch their garden with, which turned out pretty good mulch. But it took a long time to break down, that's the only trouble with it. And we used to, in the old plant, burn it as fuel in the boilers. You see, we had boilers in those days that ran everything. All our power was steam power.

Teiser: Then what happened to the part of the bean you kept?

Reed: Now, that's called the nib. That's the nib and that's what you work on. You take that and you grind it under either steel grinders or stone grinders. In three stages it grinds this bean, and under heat on the grinding--the bean is fifty percent butter, cocoa butter--it turns to a liquid. After grinding it on three

Reed: layers--it's a very hard substance--it comes out fairly fine. And then that is called chocolate liquor. It's bitter, full of butter. And you transport that to a heated holding tank. Electric power keeps stirring it. We would store different types of liquors all over the factory.

Teiser: I see.

Reed: Now, you can roast two different beans together to make your blend. Then you grind that and it goes through the cracker, takes the shells off, and then it's ground and made into a liquor. Now, you say that is "A" liquor, which is a light-colored liquor, or a dark-colored liquor or a different blend for this or that.

Teiser: Then you have various tanks of various kinds of liquors?

Reed: Yes.

Teiser: And they are used differently in different products?

Reed: Yes, that's just the start.

Teiser: Liquors are the first product?

Reed: Yes, that's the bean partially manufactured.

Teiser: Then where do you go with that?

Reed: Now, if you want to get a cocoa butter out of the liquor, you put it in a large hydraulic press under heat. You pour the liquor in the press and it presses it down and presses the butter out of the liquor. When the butter comes out it's a kind of a gold color. You can press it down to about ten percent, press that liquor and take about forty percent of the butter out. Now, what you've got left is a hard-pressed cake and the gold butter. If you take that cake and grind it up, like you would in a flour mill, grind it up as fine as you can possibly get, that's what you call cocoa powder, which you make hot cocoa out of or cakes, all that sort of stuff. Now, the greater the amount of butter that you press out of there, the cheaper the grade. In what they call a breakfast cocoa, you leave about twelve to fourteen percent butter in it, which makes the flavor much better. The color doesn't change, but the flavor changes. Cocoa butter is a flavor carrier.

Teiser: I see.

Reed: Then you have all kinds of cocoas. You can make a dark cocoa, light cocoa. For, say, your dark cakes, you would use a dark cocoa. A cup of chocolate's kind of light, and that's the difference. There are many cocoas you can make.

Reed: All right, now you have cocoa powder, you have cocoa butter, and you still have liquor. Now, if you want to make a milk chocolate, you use a light liquor, you use extra cocoa butter, extra, and sugar and whole milk, powdered. You have tanks and bins and everything else. It's all put into a big mixer to make what they call a chocolate coating, which is maybe a chocolate bar or a big chocolate piece for coating chocolates. We sell them to other confectioners.

This mixture is ground up and then sent on belts. It goes in warm and is ground up cold, so it's kind of a crumb. Then it is sent on belts and dumped into steel refiners that are five rollers of steel very close together so it refines it. It refines it as much as you possibly can in these steel roll refiners. After it goes through these refiners, it's dumped onto another belt that takes it into huge holding tanks, oh, fifteen-thousand-gallon tanks, thirty-thousand-gallon tanks, six-thousand-gallon tanks. The tank is jacketed with hot water, and it's agitated. And the chocolate turns to a liquid, a very heavy liquid. Then this liquid, say you want a very fine coating, you would pump it out of the tank and put it in what they call a conge, which aerates this product. It goes around. It's a warm machine that sweeps this product around and back and forth.

Teiser: So that it circulates?

Reed: It circulates it, but nobody knows what happens. It aerates it and does something; it changes the taste. It makes it really different. Nobody seems to know what it is. Like most of these machines, the conge is a very old piece of equipment. They make a lot of different kinds, some with stone rollers on stone. Hershey has very large ones; they fill up a whole room. Then the chocolate is pumped out of there and back into holding tanks again and kept agitated and warm.

Then we're ready to finalize what we're going to do with it. Well, it's pumped into a tempering unit that's in front of a molding machine. From the tempering unit it's pumped into molds that go through a big cooling tunnel, oh, about a hundred feet long. These stainless steel molds are tipped over as they come out and drop the chocolate pieces on a belt and they are packaged, whether they're a little tiny bar or a ten-pound bar.

Most candy companies don't make chocolate; they buy it. Because it costs so much to manufacture and it's a different thing altogether, making candy. It's just a different product.

Teiser: I see.

Reed: There's not too many manufacturers in the United States; there used to be twenty-two. I don't know if there are still twenty-two.

Teiser: I can see why you needed so much space there, with all that equipment.

Reed: Yes. Most of the equipment is made in Europe. Some of it's made in Canada. But most, even your good packaging equipment, is made in Europe.

Teiser: Did you have to keep replacing it?

Reed: Well, we actually should have, but it will last forever. It's really very, very well made.

Teiser: Did you have a regular maintenance staff to keep it up?

Reed: Oh yes. Full shop. Because nobody knows how to fix this equipment and nobody knows how to take care of it. We had three mechanics busy all the time. It's a very sophisticated thing to move this product all over a plant. It's either piped or on belts. And when you're piping it, you have to have the right temperature because if it ever jams up and gets cold, you have one heck of a time getting it out of there.

It's a very, very tough product to manufacture.

Company Structure, 1939-1962

Teiser: Let me ask you about the structure of the company. What year did you first go to work?

Reed: 1939. Start of the World's Fair [Golden Gate International Exposition].

Teiser: You were familiar, I suppose, with the plant?

Reed: No, not really. I got out of college in '37, got married, and looked for a job opening.

Teiser: You looked for a job? They didn't come after you?

Reed: Oh, no.

Teiser: Polly Ghirardelli Lawrence said something about your being kind of destined by the family for a job in the company.

Reed: Well, Alfred wanted me, and of course Lyle had a son. But it was kind of tricky there. Harvey Ghirardelli was there, and his son.

Teiser: Who was president in '39?

Reed: Lyle was.

Teiser: Was he a strong president? Did he call the shots?

Reed: Well, I think really the three of them worked together--Lyle, Alfred, and Harvey.

Teiser: And they agreed?

Reed: Yes, it was very well discussed. There were three brothers and then their cousin, Lyle. Alfred and Harvey were brothers, and Louis was the sales manager at the time. Alfred, Harvey, and Louis were all brothers.

Teiser: Did Louis have much to say?

Reed: No, he was sales manager.

Teiser: I see. Did you consider the company well managed?

Reed: I would say so, yes. There were factions in the years later.

Teiser: Lyle left in 1958 and was succeeded by Alfred and then Harvey.

Reed: Lyle resigned. He was getting older. I think he was seventy when he resigned. And then Alfred became president.

Teiser: And then Harvey. Was there continuity in the principles of operation?

Reed: Yes, I would say so.

Decline of the Company, 1950s

Teiser: Different presidents didn't change the company particularly?

Reed: No. The policy remained the same. Later they simply weren't making any money.

Teiser: When did it start to decline?

Reed: Well, I would say in the fifties.

Teiser: Why do you think it did?

Reed: Well, I think it did because of the policy of not buying new equipment and modernizing the plant. You had to keep up with the times. There was too much labor.

Teiser: Then the tendency would be in the company for the younger people to want to revise and for the older people to say it's okay the way it is? Is that what happened?

Reed: Well, I don't know. There weren't too many younger people in the company. Myself and Bob Ghirardelli and Sid Lawrence. And the salesmen.

Teiser: Those were the three of you in this generation?

Reed: And then George Baker also.

Teiser: Four of you in that generation. Did you have any say about anything?

Reed: Not particularly. Later I did and Bob did. I think like most businesses, it fit the old saying of overalls to overalls in four generations, or something like that. We got so there were forty stockholders, outside stockholders.

Teiser: Outside of the family?

Reed: Not outside of the family, but outside of the business. And three people with stock running the business. So when you had a stockholders meeting it was quite a hassle sometimes. A lot of them wanted money, dividends, and didn't want to put money back into the business.

Teiser: I suppose by the time you have that large a family and that widely dispersed stock you have older women who are afraid to venture anything.

Reed: Yes, and their husbands are doing something else.

Teiser: I know of one company that was sold not long ago because there were simply too many people who had to be supported by it.

Reed: Well, I think a lot of them, like Hills Coffee for example, Fuller Paints--you can name many of them that we used to know--these family corporations. Like Schmidt Lithograph--they were the same time as we were, not quite. In fact they put a clock tower up to make the old man [Domingo Ghirardelli Jr.] unhappy. They were friendly enemies.

Teiser: Your clock tower was first?

Reed: And then Schmidt copied it. That was an old joke. But they were great friends. That was Domingo and Max Schmidt. Well, Schilling was another case where there were a lot of stockholders and, well, you can name many of them.

Teiser: With some more forward-looking people and if some more capital had come in, could you have renovated and kept going?

Reed: Well, of course, the buildings weren't really suited for a modern plant. That plant grew like Topsy. There was the original building, and four other buildings of different sizes and shapes. We made our own cans; we made our own boxes; we made everything we used right there in the place. All we bought was paper goods.

Teiser: Did Schmidt supply the labels?

Reed: Yes.

Teiser: And the wrappers and all that?

Reed: Yes. See, in the old days everything was shipped in shook, which is wood, wooden boxes. We had a whole box plant. We had a can plant, made some of our own cans.

Teiser: In that building?

Reed: Yes. When I was there American Can was making most of our cans. We were making some cans, like some old cocoa cans and things like that, big tins.

Mustard Manufacturing

Reed: Of course, we had the mustard plant there, too, until we stopped manufacturing it. That was canceled right after World War II. When I first came there, mustard was selling pretty good.

Teiser: It declined?

Reed: What happened was, Schilling was our big customer. We were the only manufacturers of mustard west of the Mississippi. And Schilling did not manufacture mustard. They bought ours in barrels and put it in little cans. Years ago we used to sell

Reed: mustard to the grocery stores, in small cans. Then we used to sell to mayonnaise companies--all mayonnaise has a little mustard in it, good mayonnaise. A lot of places we used to sell to.

Teiser: How long did you continue?

Reed: When Schilling was bought out by McCormick, which was a Chicago company, and they made mustard there, they weren't going to buy another mustard. So we lost that account, so we just gave up on the whole thing.

Teiser: I see. The process of making mustard was just buying the seeds and grinding it?

Reed: Grinding it, and taking the oil out and making flour. It's kind of a complicated thing. You press the oil out like you do on the cocoa beans, but you don't roast it or anything. Then, you made a flour out of it. You had blends, too, for color. The color yellows, and the flavor was a lot better. Some of it was grown in China, some was grown down here near Lompoc. And eastern Washington had good mustard. It's grown on very poor, lousy land. It will grow in terrible soil. It was a very cheap product, a funny product.

Ben Reed's Career

Teiser: Were you a member of the board of the company?

Reed: Yes. I was secretary-treasurer.

Teiser: What year did you become secretary-treasurer?

Reed: I think I was secretary-treasurer about six years at least, from about 1962.

Teiser: About six years? You sold the property in '68. What had you been before that? What was your function in the company?

Reed: Well, I did about everything. A lot of buying. I was the credit manager for a while. Then accounting. I started in bookkeeping and that sort of thing.

Teiser: And then you became secretary-treasurer. Did you do that in addition to managing the plant?

Reed: That was mostly purchasing. After Alfred got sick and retired and Harvey took over, we were getting thin on people as far as who was going to run what, so I did most of the purchasing except cocoa beans.

Teiser: Who purchased the cocoa beans?

Reed: Harvey did. Then later I went over to San Leandro and stayed with them [the new owners] for seven years, helped them put up a plant and ran the plant, because they didn't know anything about the chocolate business.

Sale of the Property to the Roths, 1962

Teiser: Just before the time of the sale, when things were going down, I think there was something about splitting the stock into preferred and common.

Reed: Yes. There were some upset people and they wanted dividends so we offered them to turn in their stock and receive preferred stock that would give a dividend. The common stockholders could not have dividends until first the preferred would get their dividends. And there were quite a few that took that. And naturally, when we liquidated, we paid them off, at par.

Teiser: Did the people who had common stock come out better?

Reed: Yes, they came out better.

Teiser: Did you divide whatever you got out of it?

Reed: Yes, we got the money out of it and divided it equally to pay off the preferred shareholders and then divided the other shares. They paid very well. Everybody did very well.

Teiser: I understand there were a number of different points of view about the sale. Was there anyone in the family who wasn't for selling?

Reed: No, not that I know of. We were just very fortunate that the Roths came along, through another company, and offered to buy the land and buildings. We didn't know it was William Roth and his mother until later.

Teiser: Before that you'd had some offers though?

Reed: Not really. We had some feelers. We had some real sharpies come out; you know how they are. They said so-and-so is interested in your business and I represent him. And then they'd snoop around and nothing happened. They just want their ten percents, that's what they're doing.

Teiser: As agents. Somebody I believe just wanted to buy it for development, to tear everything down?

Reed: Yes. That was a real sharp real estate operator. Young man that was successful, but then he went really broke on another big job. I don't know what ever happened to him. He was the fair-haired boy on one big project. Those were the only real ones. Guittard Chocolate was interested in buying some of our products at one time and also some machinery maybe, but it wasn't anything.

Teiser: They were going to take it away from those premises? They weren't going to keep any land?

Reed: Oh, no.

Teiser: Is that the only other chocolate company in the area?

Reed: Nestlé's in Salinas. And Hershey has a plant south of Modesto. And Blommer Chocolate Company.

Teiser: How do you think the Roth group knew you were willing to sell?

Reed: Oh, word gets around, I'm sure. It really got around quick. All the realtors were running around.

Teiser: Had you actually put it up for sale?

Reed: No, you just can't work it that way.

Teiser: I see. You just let the word get out.

Reed: The word gets out. It's not like selling a house because what you have to do, unless somebody buys the business and the land altogether--it wouldn't work that way because most people knew that the plant wasn't particularly suitable to run a business economically. It took too much labor. It really did.

Teiser: So, how did the negotiations go then with this organization for the Roths? How did they approach you?

Reed: Through an agent of theirs. I don't know exactly how it worked, but all of a sudden there was an offer for the land. Then we had a meeting and said, What will we do? We will accept the offer

Reed: and we will liquidate the company, which is the only right thing to do because then you get rid of your business and everything else. You sell the machinery, your accounts receivable, your inventory. And we put it up for bid, and we had three bidders. And they had to do certain things. They had to take all the machinery and vacate the property in a certain length of time because Roth wanted to get going in the building. So Guittard bid on it, and his bid wasn't acceptable because he didn't want to take all the machinery. And then we had a machinery junk man, but he just wanted the machinery and his bid was nothing really.

Sale of the Business to Golden Grain, 1963

Reed: Then Golden Grain bid on the business.

Teiser: How in the world did they happen to?

Reed: I don't know. Seriously, when our company got the bid I think they turned white. They didn't know what the hell to do with it. Because they had to make a decision in a certain time. They gave us a year or a year and a half to get out. Afterwards I worked for Golden Grain. We had to get out, but the Roths let us stay there and use only half the block. Half the block was where all the machinery was anyway. All we did was move the office into the warehouse. But it was a mad scramble.

Then Golden Grain built a building in San Leandro next to their macaroni plant. A hundred and sixty thousand square feet.

Teiser: Did they build the kind of plant that you should have had?

Reed: Yes. It was very modern. And they're doing a hell of a job. I stayed with them seven years. They're very, very capable people, really good people. But it was another Italian family I wasn't a member of. But I got along fine with them.

Teiser: So you moved your equipment, set it up over there?

Reed: Not much. We auctioned off most of it.

Teiser: Who bought it?

Reed: The trouble is the forty thieves get in there on a bid you know. They bid on a piece of equipment and they're supposed to take it out. So they bid on it, pay their money--we had an auctioneer

Reed: sell it—and what they do is take all the copper and the brass and run away. And here's a two-thousand-pound piece of equipment we have to get rid of. Oh, what a mess that was.

Teiser: Scrap dealers?

Reed: Yes, that's what they were. They bid on all the wiring and they left all the conduits in the walls, pulled all their copper wire out and ran away.

Teiser: So you had the big expense then of getting rid of everything?

Reed: We were close to the deadline to get out of the building.

Teiser: How did you do it?

Reed: We just had a junk dealer come in with a crane and lift the stuff out and put it in things to take it out to the dumps.

Teiser: Did you have to pay for that?

Reed: Yes.

Teiser: There was a several year gap between the time you sold the property and the time that everything got set up in San Leandro?

Reed: Yes. We were trying to work both plants. Because we had customers and we had contracts. And we had to produce the merchandise. This was the tough thing, to get that thing running over there.

The United States Chocolate Industry

Teiser: I imagine you are one of a small band of people who really know about chocolate manufacturing. Is there a national association?

Reed: Oh yes, there's a national association. Blommer and Nestlé and Hershey, of course, are out here, but the big companies are back East. There was a Washington chocolate company in Seattle that closed up. Then Blommer bought one in Chicago. I don't know how many are left. Walter Baker's still in business.

Teiser: Is Guittard still in business?

Reed: Oh, yes. They do well. See, they don't put any products out on the counters except, I think, some chocolate chips.

Teiser: Is it still family owned?

Reed: Oh, yes.

Teiser: It was smaller than Ghirardelli?

Reed: It's pretty good size now. It was smaller in the old days.

The DeDomenico Family

Teiser: The company that's carrying on the name is doing well?

Reed: Oh, yes. I was down there the other day and saw them and got some chocolate for Christmas. They're quite a family there, the DeDomenicos. They've got a lot of young people working there.

Teiser: In the family?

Reed: They're a pretty big family. Four brothers started it. Well, there's a mother and father who started in an alley in San Francisco.

Teiser: Really?

Reed: I think it was Annie Street, I'm not sure. See, anybody can get in the macaroni business. Put cellophane on it and sell it. That's why every major town has a macaroni factory. Sometimes you have two or three of them. Because the product's cheap, all they do is take semolina wheat and flour and add some water to it and get it in the press and dry it. You can make it at home if you want to. Then you put it in a cellophane bag. You can have little egg noodles for the ladies, but what is it? You change the dial to anything, noodles, macaroni, spaghettinis, all these names.

But they started Rice-a-Roni and that took off. All over the United States. They've got a plant in Washington, one in Chicago. They're big.

Teiser: That was an invention of theirs wasn't it? A new product?

Reed: Absolutely. It just took off. It's on every shelf in the United States.

Teiser: How'd they ever think of that?

Reed: I don't know. And it really is a good product. Did you ever have it?

Teiser: I think I have.

Reed: They make it in all kinds of flavors. Then they've got the noddle-ronis and all that sort of thing. They've got lots of things. They have a great kitchen for new products.

Teiser: I see. But the chocolate products they are just handling traditionally?

Reed: Yes. Of course, they put the soda fountain in Ghirardelli Square. And that is big business. I'd hate to tell you how much they've sold. I helped them set it up. We got some of the old machinery and got it going around. Of course, they get a good price for their products, and it's real quality, their sodas and their hot fudge sundaes. But they have to. The rent is sky high. They do a big business.

Flicks and Chocolate Chips

Teiser: When the company business was declining, did anyone ever suggest branching out into various other consumer products?

Reed: No. Well, we had a lot of products.

Teiser: Hershey I know has something with Rice Krispies or something in it.

Reed: Well, we had a crisp bar, we had an almond bar, we had a raisin bar, and we had mint bars, and Flicks. Ground chocolate was still on the shelf.

Teiser: Was Flicks a Ghirardelli invention?

Reed: Yes.

Teiser: What is the story of that?

Reed: I don't know. That's an old, old product. Making chocolate chips and Flicks is the same thing. It's the coating in the tanks that was pumped over to these machines. There's a big steel belt, about a hundred feet long. It's a revolving steel belt and it goes through a cooling tunnel. And these heads come down and drop all these little drops, and the belt keeps moving and moving

Reed: and moving and in the end it has a little knife that chips them off and puts them in the bins. You change the size of them. You can make Flicks or you can make little bits for your chocolate chip cookies.

Teiser: That must be a complex piece of equipment.

Reed: Oh, that is very expensive. Imagine the stainless steel belt a hundred feet long. We had three of them at the plant for Flicks and chocolate chips.

Teiser: Do they have them over at San Leandro?

Reed: Oh, they have big ones in there now.

Teiser: Is their plant now bigger than yours was?

Reed: Oh, yes. It's not bigger in size, but it's bigger in production because of the modern equipment.

Teiser: And they still make products for candy makers and bakers and so forth, as well as consumer products?

Reed: Oh, yes.

Teiser: Well, I thank you very much. You've given a good description of the workings of the plant.

Transcriber: Catherine Taylor

Final Typist: Catherine Winter

APPENDICES

Maria Chart

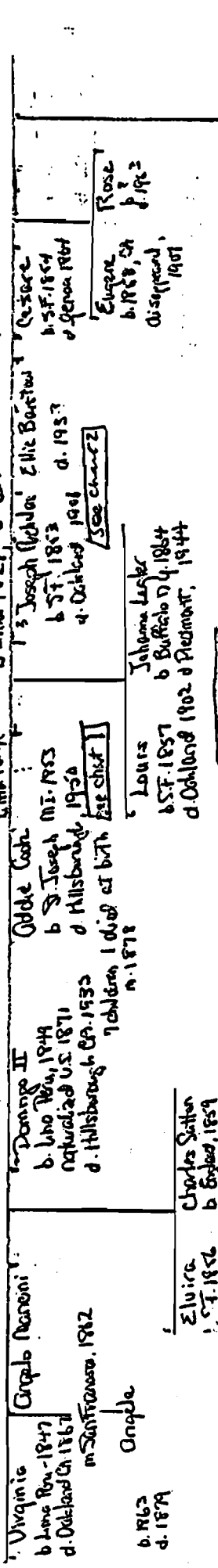
Giuseppe Churcchelli - Magdalena Ferrete

Domenico (changed to Domingo) - Bettina
 b. Lima Peru, 1840 d. Lima Peru 1846
 b. Rapallo Italy 1817 d. 1895

m. Rapallo 1827

Carman Allvarozza (widow M. Martin, daughter, Daniela)
 b. Lima 1829, d. Oakland 1889

ibid de marriage



1981 →

Domingo Ghirardelli II
m. Oakland 1878

Aida
b. Oakland 1878
d. Carmel 1961

D. Lyle m.
b. Oakland 1891
d. S.F. 1958

Edwin
b. Oakland 1894
d. Seattle 1912

Corona - George Hyde
b. 1889
d. Santa Barbara 1979

Vernon Alvord

Esperanza
b. 1892
d. 1927

Ruth Reg. Menefee
b. 1898
d. 1961

Vent (Ghirard)
b. S.F. 1919

Margery Menefee
b. 1920
3rd Marriage

John Grobb
b. 1920
d. 1942
Robert Skow

John Skow Susan Smith
b. 1938

Tiffany Skow Paula Daly
b. 1943

Michael
b. 1968

Matthew
b. 1970

Judy Skow
1944

Lisa

b. 1964

Jennifer
b. 1966

Carlene Christopher Morgan
b. 1961

Alexander Bourgeois
b. 1963

Andy
b. 1915

3rd marriage - Rachael Timmsley
b. 1918
d. 1965

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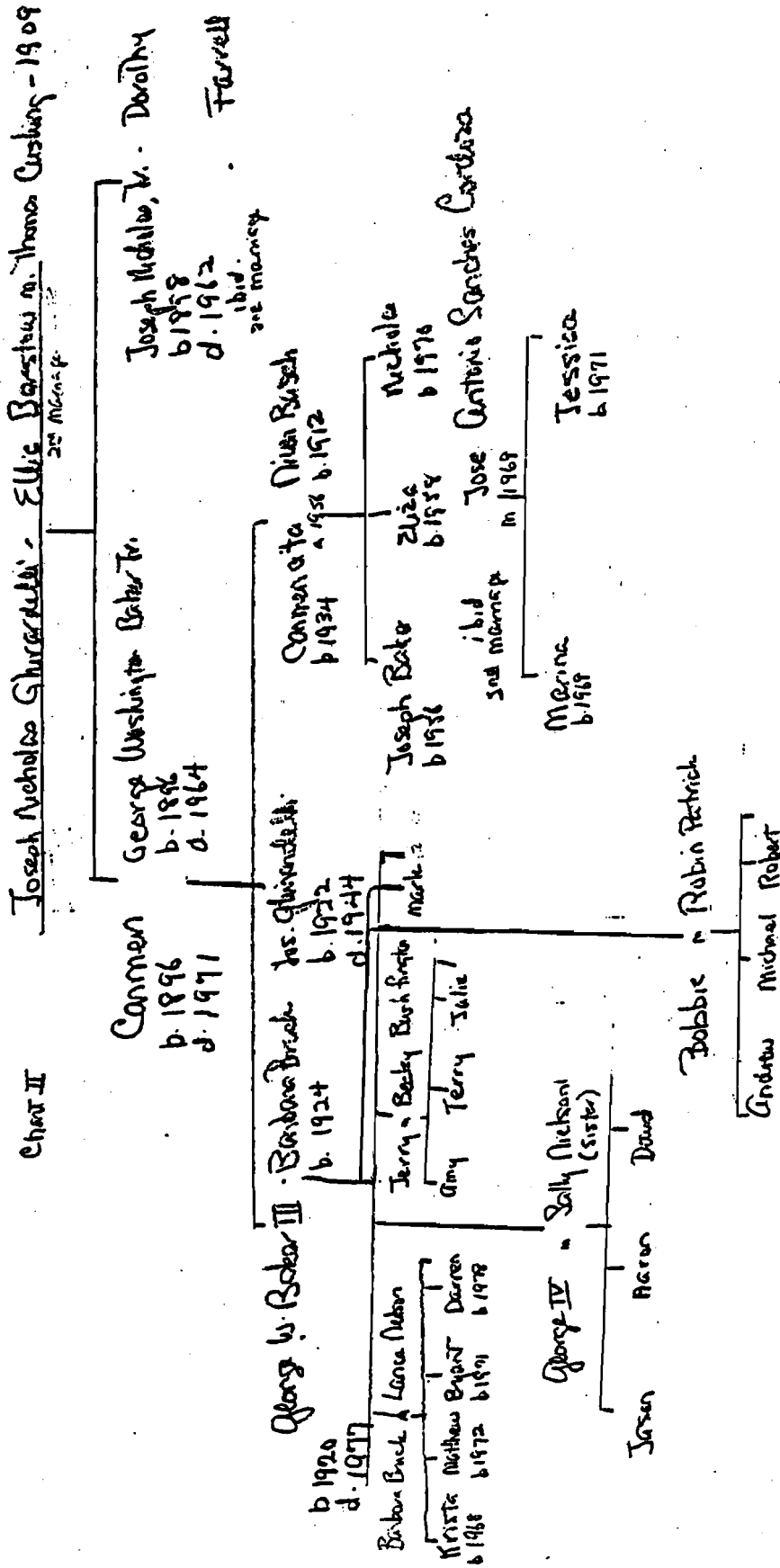


Chart III

Eivira Ghirardelli m. Charles Sutton

Carmen Benjamin Reed

b. Oakland 1884 b. Oakland 1880
d. Piedmont 1934 d. Piedmont 1937

Eiva (Benj) Joseph Hendrich

b. Oakland 1913 b. 1916
d. " 1974

Benjamin (Pechy) ♂ Susan Henstraun

b. 1919

m. 1938

Carmen (Candy) Peter Bergulli Joseph (Joey) ♂ d

b. 1941 m. 1962

Judie b. 1954

Todd b. 1969

Michael b. 1971

Jennifer b. 1971

Stephanie b. 1972

2nd marriage

1st marriage

Robin - Donald Prandy b. 1939

Eric b. 1968

Patrick b. 1971

Bambi John Norris

Daphne - Richard Prier

John, Jr.

Maryse

Chart IV

Louis Girardelli - Johanna Lesley

Clifford m Clarisse Lahee
 b Oakland 1884 b Oakland 1884
 d San Francisco 1956 d San Francisco 1961

Louis Lesley m Marion Rudolph
 b Oakland 1886 b - 1889
 d San Francisco 1956 d San Francisco 1961

Clarisse (Polly) m Sidney Smith Lawrence, Jr.
 b 1921 S.F. b San Francisco 1920
 d " " 1982 d " " 1982

Harvey Theodore m Glady's Ostrander
 b 1911 d 1987
 Robert Ostrander
 b 1912 d 1975

Clarisse (Pinkie) m William Jackson
 b 1945 m 1969
 Sidney Smith Lawrence III
 b 1948

Juan Peter Wells
 b 1924 b 1924

John Lawrence Victoria Girardelli
 b July 1971 b Melbourne Australia 1913

Hedi m Donald Wilson Peter Randolph
 b 1948 b 1952
 Jennifer Lesley

Elva Welby Dinsmore
 b 1894 b 1949
 d 1967 d 1969

Artacke Robert O'Brien
 b 1926 m 1944
 d 1938

Welby Ann Charles Wroughton, Jr.
 b 1960 m 1978
 Robert, Jr. Carla Orena
 b m 1982
 Dominique
 b 1983

Harry H. Magee
 b 1892 d 1961

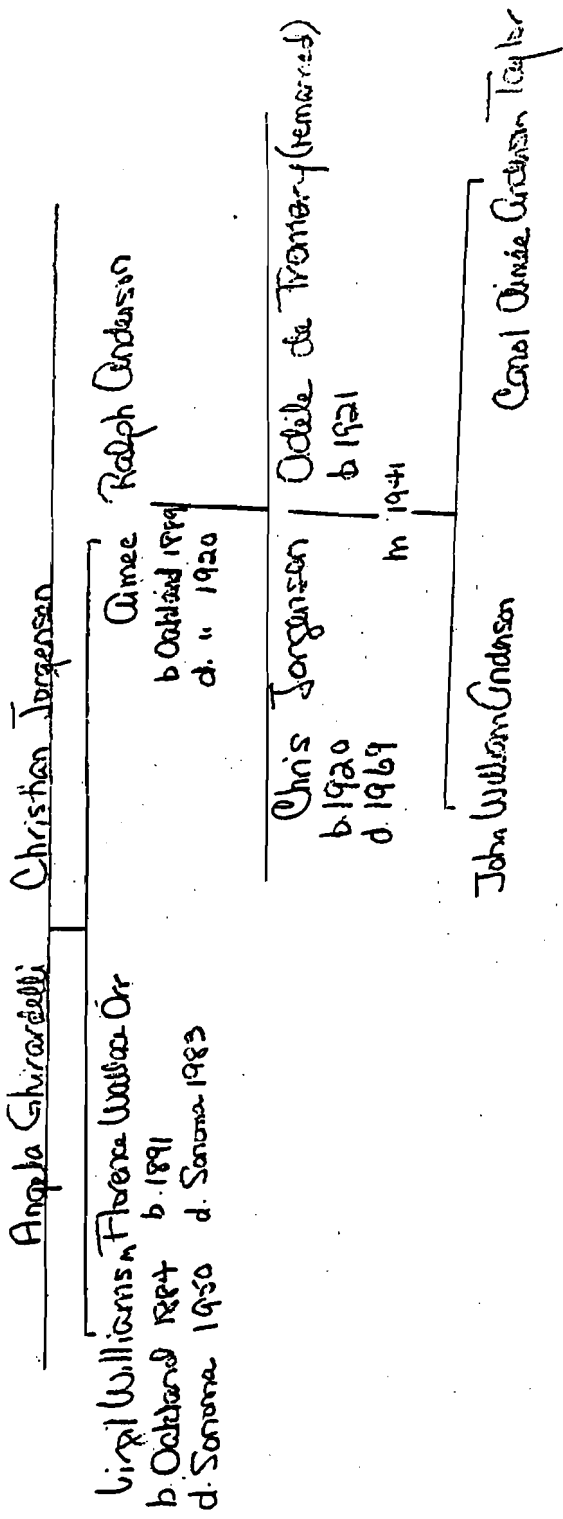
Juanita
 b 1896 m 1921
 d 1961

Harry H. Magee, Jr. Ruth Julien Jerome Barbara Hansen
 b 1932 b 1937 b 1928
 d 1985 m 1953 m 1949

Susan William Brentt Jerome, Jr. Kara Mostak
 b 1957 m 1977 b 1982 m 1978
 David W. Thomas Adam Benjamin John
 b 1983 b 1983 b 1984

Orine John Uhart
 b 1916 m 1944

Chart II

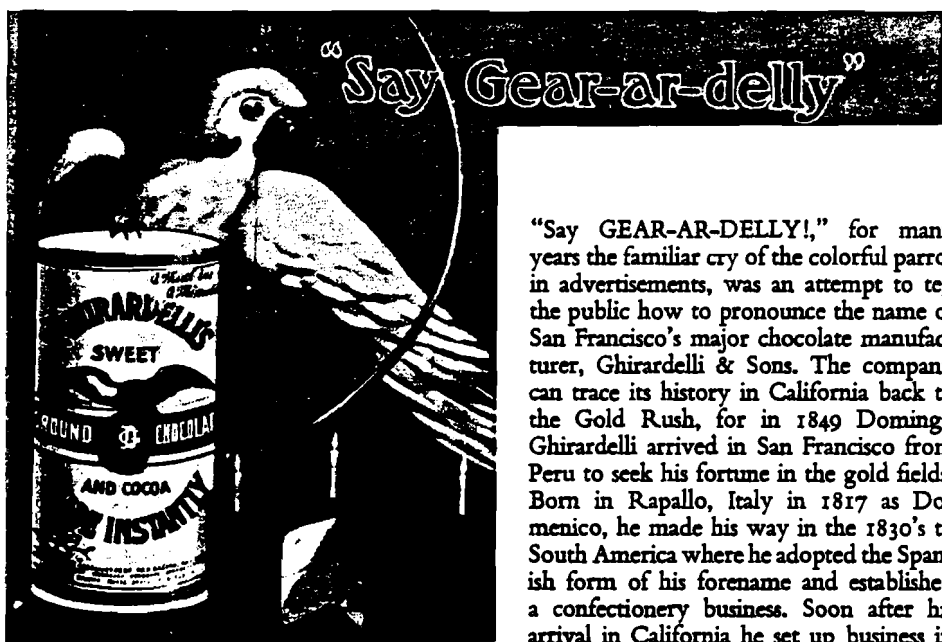


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No. 81

August 1982



"Say GEAR-AR-DELLY!," for many years the familiar cry of the colorful parrot in advertisements, was an attempt to tell the public how to pronounce the name of San Francisco's major chocolate manufacturer, Ghirardelli & Sons. The company can trace its history in California back to the Gold Rush, for in 1849 Domingo Ghirardelli arrived in San Francisco from Peru to seek his fortune in the gold fields. Born in Rapallo, Italy in 1817 as Domenico, he made his way in the 1830's to South America where he adopted the Spanish form of his forename and established a confectionery business. Soon after his arrival in California he set up business in Stockton and San Francisco, and by 1856

his firm was known as Ghirardelli's California Chocolate Manufactory.

Although the sharp fluctuation in the California economy sometimes harmed Ghirardelli's business, the company eventually prospered and by 1885 was importing four hundred fifty thousand pounds of cocoa beans a year. Indeed, although the firm also ground spices and sold coffee, spirits, and wine, chocolate was far and away its major line over the years. In 1892, Domingo retired, leaving the business in the hands of his sons. The following year, to gain more space, the company purchased the historic Pioneer Woolen Mill building, and the block on which it stood, an area of two-and-one-half acres bounded by Beach, Polk, Larkin and North Point streets.

The company continued to flourish in the twentieth century, limiting its products to chocolate and mustard. As business expanded, Ghirardelli & Sons added new buildings, all designed by William Mooser, Jr., son of the architect of the original mill building, constructed in 1862. These included the Cocoa Building in 1900, the Chocolate and Mustard Buildings in 1911, the Power House in 1915, and, finally, the Clock Tower and the Apartment Building, both in 1916. These structures, of red brick with white detailing, had a style of sufficient uniformity to identify them as part of an integrated architectural complex. The Clock Tower was patterned after Chateau de Blois in France and the overall appearance of the buildings was decidedly European.

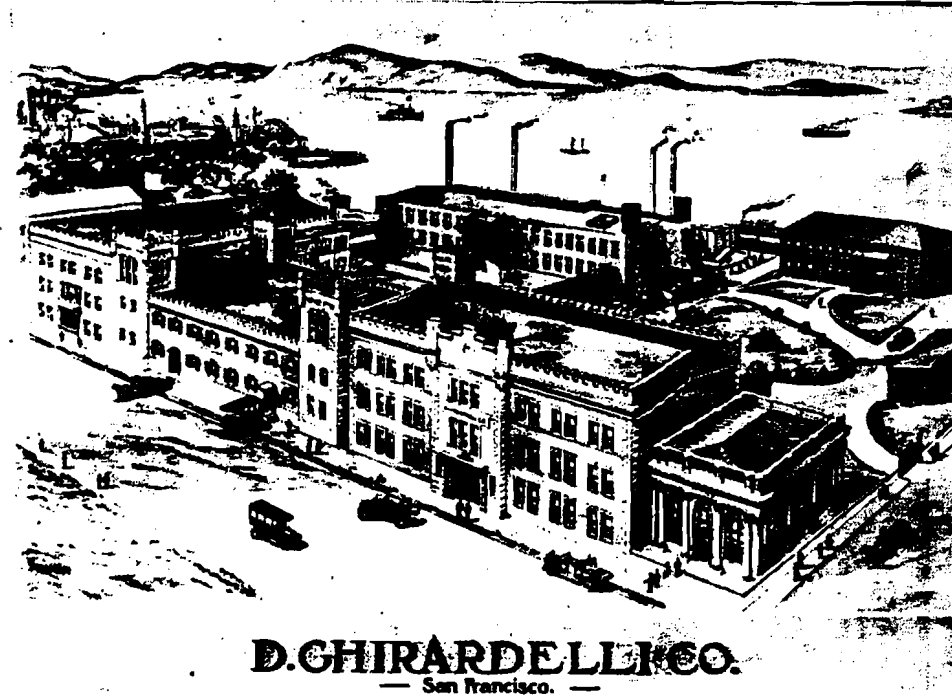
By the 1950's the Ghirardelli family had begun to consider offering the property for sale. In 1962 Mrs. William P. Roth (whose oral history memoir is discussed elsewhere in this issue) and her son William Matson Roth purchased the block to develop it into an elaborate complex for shops, restaurants, and an entertainment center. They formed the Ghirardelli Center Development Company and solicited design concepts from many of the prominent architects of the Bay Area. William W. Wurster, former Dean of Berkeley's School of Architecture, was retained as the master designer and by mid-1963 the property, now named Ghirardelli Square, was undergoing major renovation, new construction, and landscaping. Ghirardelli & Sons occupied a portion of the block until the company was bought by the Golden Grain Company in 1967 and moved to new quarters in San Leandro.

The brilliance of William Matson Roth's vision in developing Ghirardelli Square is hard to overestimate. From the beginning he recognized the unique architectural distinction and character of the block and intended to preserve the original old brick buildings as

part of an urban center which would be graced by open landscaping to provide a festive mood. So unusual was the Roths' intention that strikingly different approaches were offered by the various architects who submitted proposals.

Last year, when Mr. Roth sold Ghirardelli Square to a new group of investors, he presented the files of photographs, memoranda, drawings, publicity releases, promotional brochures, newspaper clippings, sketches and drawings of the project to The Bancroft Library. The collection includes numerous scrapbooks in addition to manuscript records, and provides an opportunity for research into the development of a major urban commercial center which itself started a major trend in preservation and renewal: Quincy Market in Boston, Harbor Square in Vancouver, and Covent Garden in London, to name only three followers. The rich connections with California history and the significance of Ghirardelli Square in modern California life assure that this collection will attract scholarly use.

P.E.H.



A 1915 view of the Ghirardelli factory, with a portion of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in left background.

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