

SOQUEL MEMORIES
OF THE TWENTIES

JUNE 1985
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FINNERAN

Introduction

I did not realize, until my Mother died, how many things I wanted to know that could be answered by no one, but her. How I wish I had taken the time to write a history of her life while she was still living.

This paper contains a few of the memories she shared with me. I am including some of my own memories about my growing up in Soquel in the twenties. I have tried to include the aspects of life in those days that are different from life today.

I hope my children, grand children, and great grand children will find it interesting.



Merle Lois

- 1921 -



Bobbie

- 1924 -

MY ROOTS

Some of my earliest memories, were the stories told me by my Grandmother, Agnes (Tarleton) Deering. She came to California in 1855 by way of the Isthmus of Panama, riding on a donkey at the age of four years. She often told of riding along the narrow winding path on the nearly verticle mountain side. Once she started to fall, and was saved only by her father quickly grabbing her shoes and pulling her back up. Luckily, she was wearing high button shoes.

The Tarletons, my grandmother's family, settled first in San Francisco, later moved to Santa Cruz, until they found property in Soquel, where they wished to live. In 1871, Thomas Tarleton, Grandma's father, bought the property that bordered on Arroyo de Rodeo (Rodeo Gulch), the Santa Cruz Watsonville highway and the O'Neill property, which is now the Soquel High School property.

Then my grandmother married, her father gave her and her new husband, Elden Deering, a few acres on the east, where Thomas Tarleton and Elden Deering built a home for the Deering residence. My mother, Hazel Deering, grew up there, opposite Hicken Alley, now known as 41st Avenue.



Agnes (Tarleton) Deering

Hazel Deering

Susan Tarleton



Grandpa and Grandma

The Deering residence on the Soquel- Watsonville highway, opposite Chicken
Hay.

My Grandfather had come to Soquel from Maine. Then the people in Soquel wanted volunteers to build their new Congregational Church, Grandpa built the original steeple for it.

He was working as a builder (carpenter) for the Spreckels Sugar factory making 2 dollars a day. When Mr. Spreckels asked Grandpa to help build the new sugar-beet plant in Salinas, the Deerings removed themselves from Soquel and went to Salinas for a year. This was difficult for my Mother, who was in the third grade at that time, leaving her friends and happiness for a year, her only consolation was she would be back. In those days you just locked the door, climbed in the buggy and rode away. When they returned, the house was as they had left it.



-1891-

Mother used to tell about going to San Jose to visit friends. They would leave early in the morning, bringing enough food in the buggy for two days. When they reached the summit, they would find a place to camp and stay over night. They would build a campfire, cook their dinner, and sleep out under the stars. The next morning, before starting down the mountain, my grandfather would put a pole through the rear wheels of the buggy, so it would not roll on to the horses legs. Their trip to San Jose would take four days just for traveling.

Mother also told of visiting friends at Olive Springs. She showed me the turnout spot on the Olive Springs road. Every one going up this road had to turn out there and wait and listen for the sounds of the logging teams bringing logs from the lumber mill. After a while, if they heard nothing, they could continue safely on the one way road.

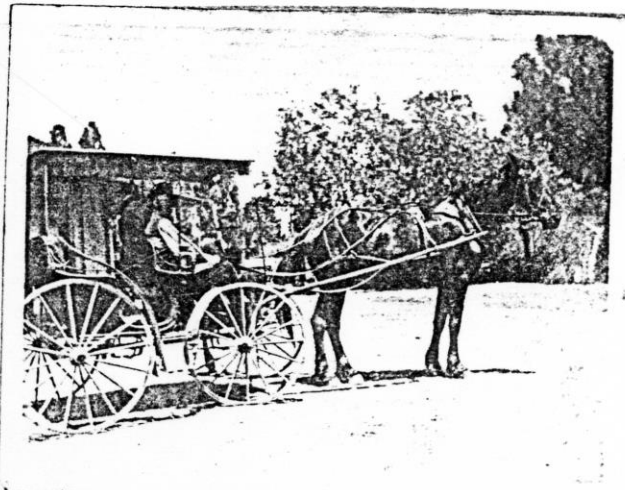


Hazel Deering

nes Deering

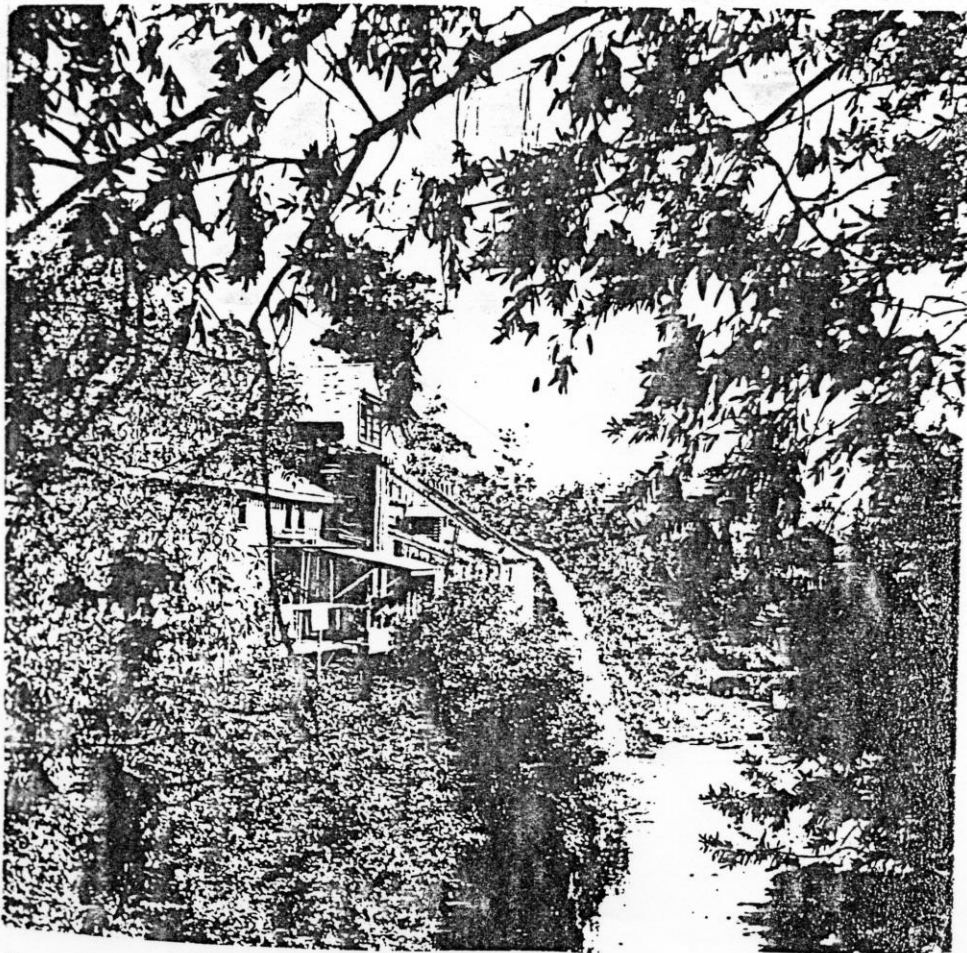
Elden Deering

Mother



getting ready to go

Another story I remember Mother telling was when she and her cousin, Beth Tarleton, knew the "Gipsey", a supply ship, was at the Capitola Landing, they would walk from Soquel to Capitola, often balancing on the paper mill flume, a wooden trough built to carry the waste water to the bay. The children watched as they loaded the paper onto the boat. The wagons, carrying the paper rolls, were unloaded onto a train car on the wharf which rolled down to the end of the wharf where they loaded the rolls on to the ship, then the men pushed the empty train car back for another load.

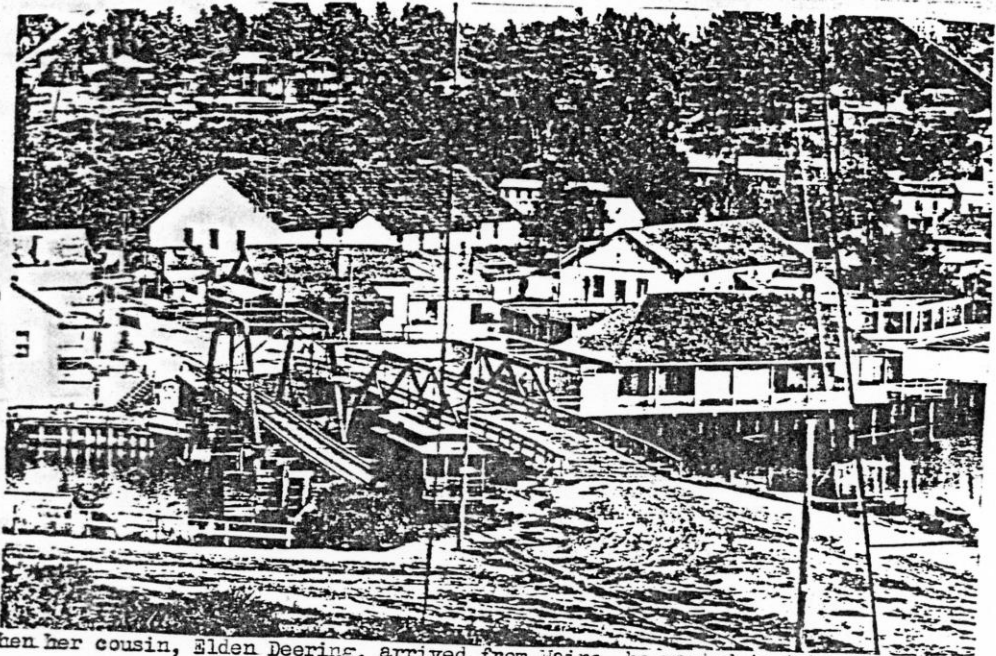


Soquel Paper Mill

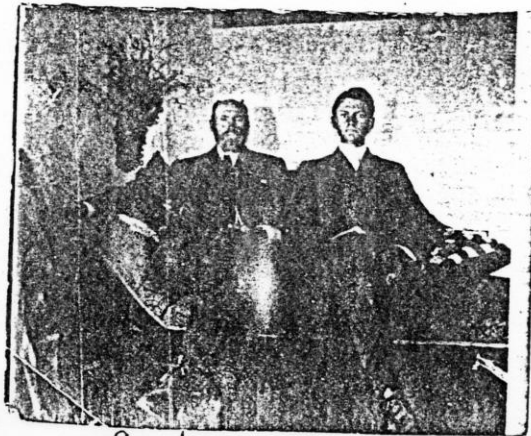
Paper Mill Rd. and Bridge St.

When Mother wanted to visit her friend in Santa Cruz, she had to walk to Capitola to the trolley, where she paid a quarter, rode to Santa Cruz, transferred on Pacific to the Mission Street car, which took her up the hill where her friend lived.

ng
Capitola
↓



When her cousin, Elden Deering, arrived from Maine, he wanted to take the trolley to Capitola, as he had been directed, but when told the trolley cost a quarter, he decided to walk. In Maine he had never heard of a quarter, they called it "two bits" there. He did not know how much a "quarter" was.



Grandpa Elden Deering Grandpa's Nephew Elden Deering (also)

When Mother was 12 years old, a neighbor asked if Hazel could spend the night with her because she wasn't feeling very well. That night her baby was born. Mother at the age of 12 delivered the little boy. The next day when the doctor finally arrived, he said that she had done a wonderful job, but 'next time' to try to tie the cord a little tighter. How I wish I knew who the little boy was.

Well Mother did become a nurse and when she was 16 years old, went to work at the Saratoga Odd Fellows Home.



Mother
and friends



The IOOF Home
Saratoga

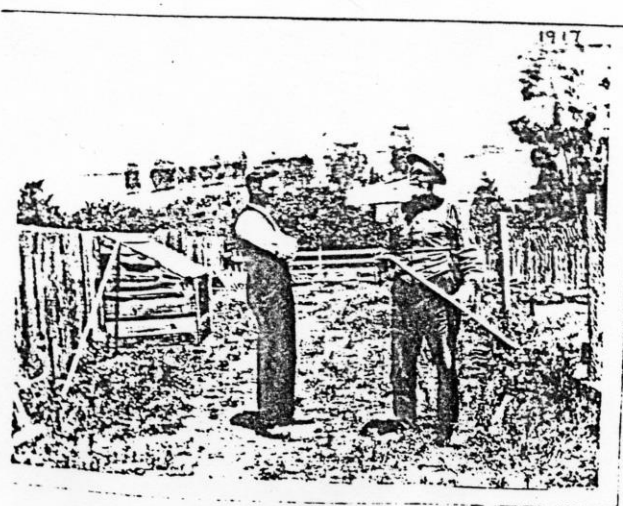


Mother and the gardener

My Father, who had run away from his home in Michigan because he did not want to be a Lutheran minister as his parents insisted, had traveled through Alaska building bridges and trestles. When he came to California, he liked the country so much he wanted to stay. He took a job at the Saratoga Odd Fellows Home managing their ranch, while he looked for another building job. He met my Mother and they were eventually married and moved to Soquel to live next to my Grandparents.



Lewis Bardt Hazel Deering
in Saratoga



My Father and Grandfather in Soquel

Lizette Bardt



Grandma Bardt

Christian Bardt



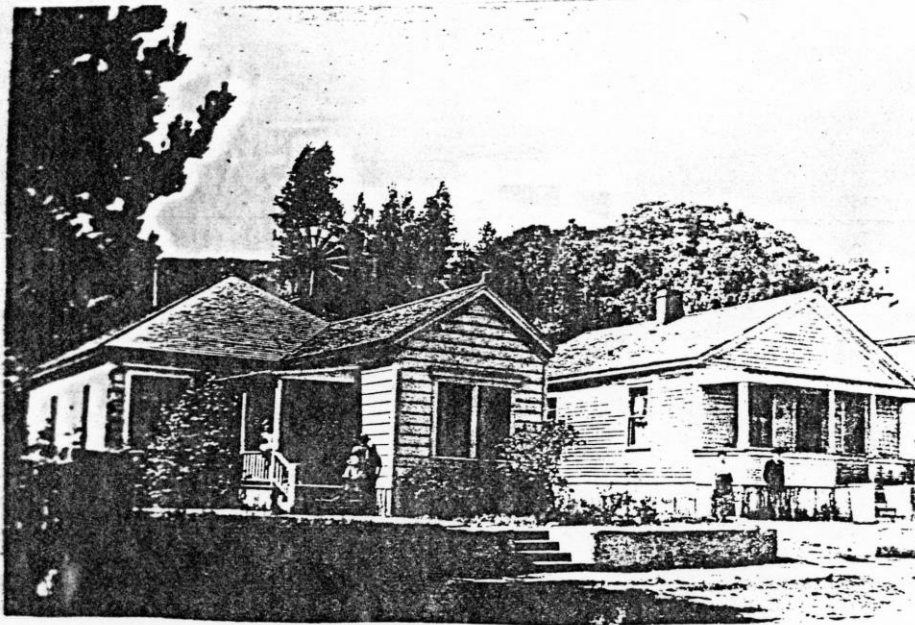
Grand pa Bardt



my Father
1903

Lewis William Bardt

The Deerings sold their farm and built a house across from the Porter Memorial
Library in Soquel. My Father and Grandfather then built a home for the Bardts
on the south of my Grandparents home. This is where I grew up for the first
seven years of my life.

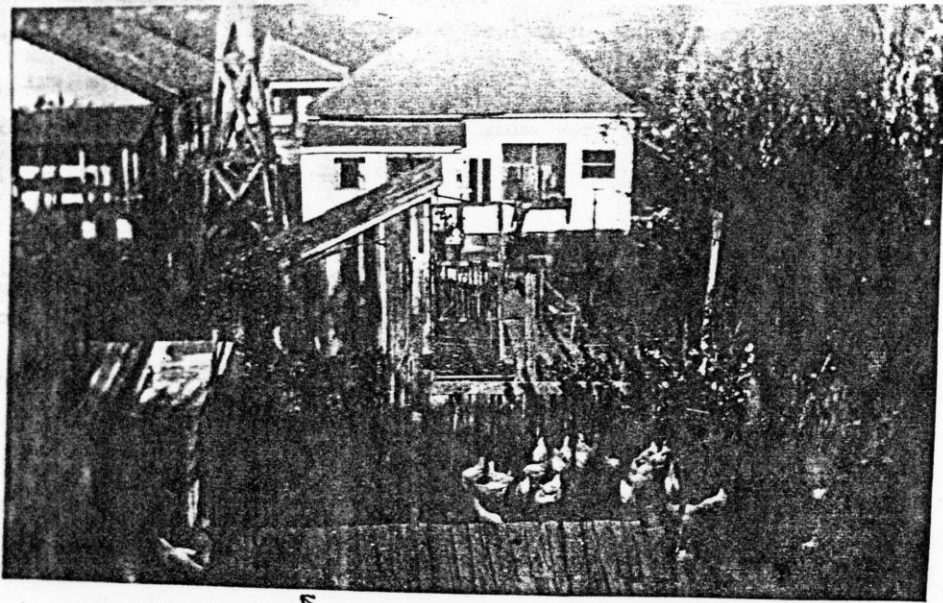


Bardt Residence

Deering Residence

(now Pizza Amore)

Our house in Soquel was quite modern, it even had an inside commode, however
my Father was taking no chances, he built an outdoor privy as well - a three
holer, no less. Mother would gather my sister and me and off we would go to
visit our out-house. While there, Mother would tell us a story^{so} we never minded
going.



↑
ind parents' back yard

Our back yard

Soquel was a bustling community at that time due to the paper mill, dairies, Lumber mills, cherry orchards, etc. The Cunniison Garage for automobiles was on the north east corner of Porter and the Watsonville highway. Steve Cunniison, his wife Winona and his two children, Catherine and Gene lived across the street from our house. Catherine and Gene and my sister, Lois and I were inseperable. "Our territory" (where we could go) ended at the paper mill, the O'Neill ranch and the main street. The Blacksmith Shop, across the street from Cunniison's Garage was within our territory. What a fascinating place- there were horses, men, fire, steam and lots of noise. Gene and I spent many hours watching Mr. Fletcher at work. We were never allowed inside, but could watch through the big open door. His shop was surrounded with old or worn out buggies and wagons. Gene and I took many imaginary trips sitting in an old surry with the fringe still on top or pretending to drive a team of horses from one of the old farm wagons.



Catherine & Eugene
Catherine & Steven Eugene (Gene)
Cunniison

One of our favorite persons was Dr. Davis. He lived in the house on the north side of my Grandparents. His house is still standing and is being remodeled now. He often gave each of us a penny or a peppermint. A penny was a lot of money for a four year old then. With the penny we would run to Joe Buxton's candy store which stood about where the Hairy Chair Barber Shop is now. It would often take us fifteen minutes to one half hour to spend the money. Many of the candies were 5 for a penny, if we wanted quality, we would consider the 3 for a penny candies, such as the butter balls. Once in a while we would invest our entire income on one penny lollipop.

Dr. Davis was my Mother's doctor when my little brother was born. Mother tells about the doctor not wishing Mother to suffer, poured a hand full of chlorophorm into his hand and slapped it on ^{my} Mother where it would do the most good. Mother said the suffering during the birth was nothing compared to the suffering she had with the blisters for the next few weeks.

I was so thrilled to have a little brother, it was like getting a real live doll. I was sure they had him just for me to play with.



Dr. Davis

1926

We had a once a week meat delivery van come to Porter Street. Andy MacFarland would stop his van and honk. The neighbor ladies would come running out and choose their Sunday dinner meat from the iced meat supply in the van. Andy always gave us a piece of ice to suck on, a big treat for us as we seldom had ice in those pre-refrigerator days.

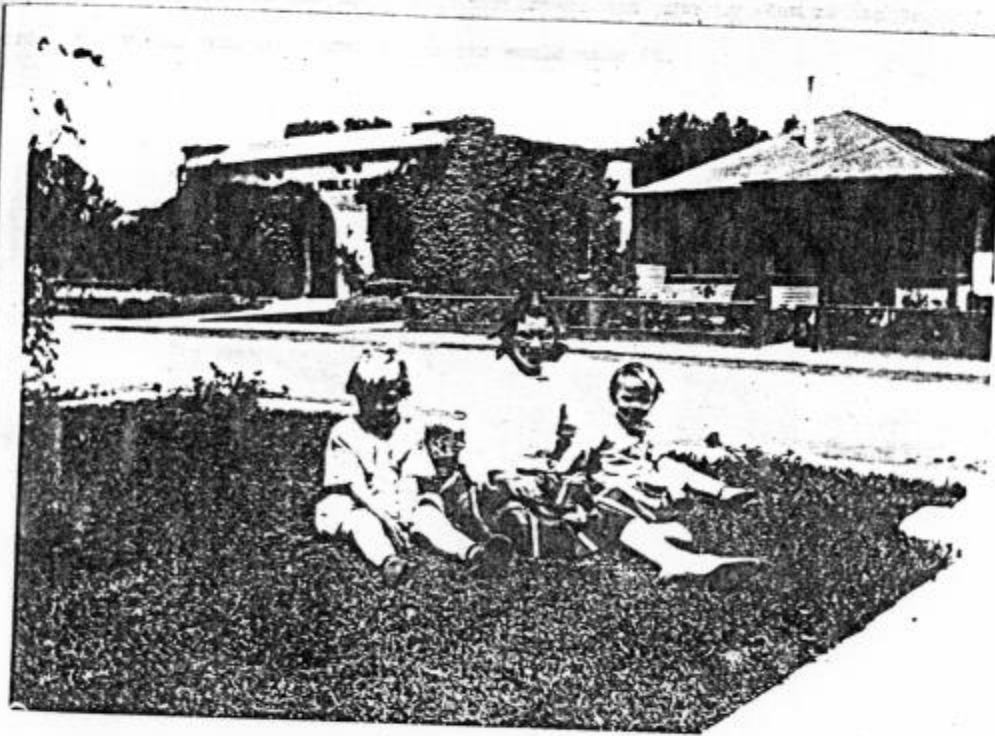
I remember going to the meat market with 15¢ to buy a pound of ground meat for supper. Andy always handed out wieners to all the children that came into his shop, so we loved to go.

Another weekly delivery was Won Kee, a Chinese man with a horse and buggy loaded with beautiful fresh fruit and vegetables. He also carried little bags of Chinese coconut candy, leeches nuts and candied ginger. He would give each of us youngsters a bag on Chinese New Years. We really loved him.

More excitement on Porter Street - tramps used to ride the trains from Watsonville or from Santa Cruz and get off at Capitola then walk to Soquel in search of a hot meal. Mother never turned any of them away without feeding them. She did have a favorite one though one who wouldn't eat a bite before he chopped a pile of wood for her. They were fed on the back steps, but when it was rainy or cold they could come in to the kitchen table to eat.

Porter street in the summer time was five or six inches deep with fine soft dust. Gene and I would walk bare-footed in this dust. Our ecstasy was complete when the sprinkler wagon would come, usually once a day to settle the dust. Then they would let us follow behind walking in the thick soft mud. Mother would say at least it will wash off.

Living across the street from the library, we spent many hours standing in front of the corner display of stuffed birds and animals. We felt we knew each bird, egg, alligator, or squirrel personally. What lovely patient librarians we have always had. I remember Bernice Sloppy, Goldie Van Clief, and Ida Bassett so well. By encouraging us to come in and browse, I am sure they instilled within us a great love for books.



Lois Merle

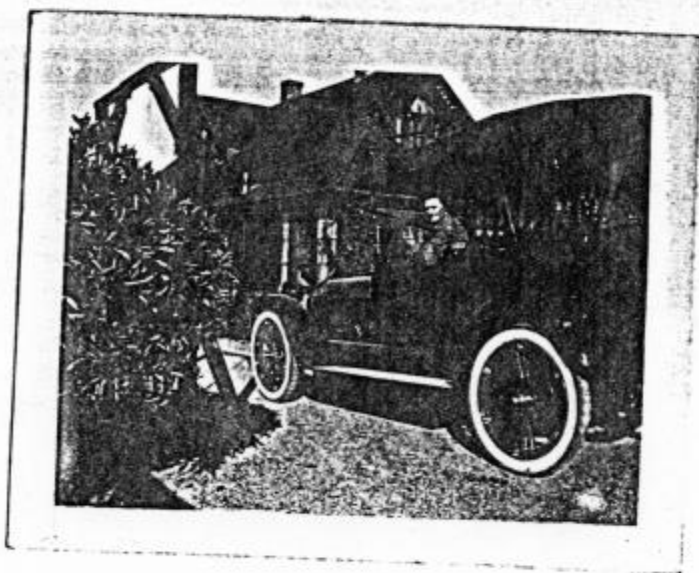
Ida Bassett's house was on the north of Dr. Davises. Mrs Bassett would occasionally invite us in for tea and cookies. (all four of us)



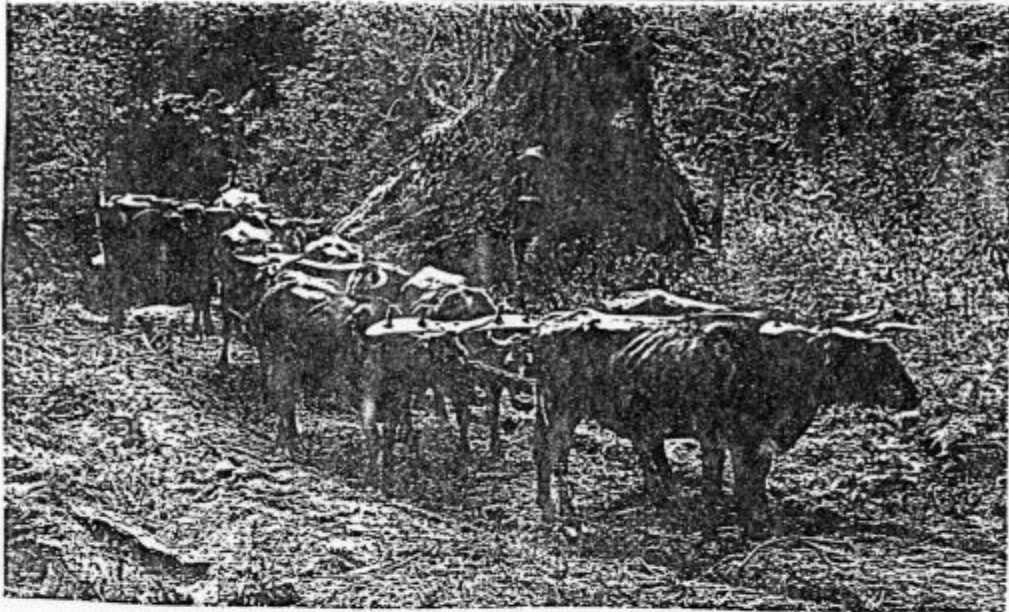
-1980-

Ida and her Mother
Mrs. Bassett

One of our prize possessions was our Chevrolet car. The car had snap on curtains used only when raining. We always took a blanket when we went riding. Lois and I spent a lot of time fighting about who had most of the blanket. Going for a ride was such an exciting occasion, many times we had to get out and help to push old "Lizzie" out of the mud or holding our breath and praying when we had to ford a river and were not sure if the car would make it.



You could hear the noise and shouting of the logging teams long before they came into view on the Old San Jose Road. Mother would always call us in the house, shut the doors and windows, and make us stay in until they passed. I asked my sister if she ^(Mother) thought we did not know enough to get out of their way. "Oh my no", said Lois, "She was afraid we would hear the exotic language the drivers used to shout at the oxen. She considered it entirely inappropriate for young ears."



There was quite a large man living in Soquel, everyone called him "Fatty Arbuckle". If he had another name, I did not know it, I thought that was his real name. He had a steam roller and loved to drive it all around the town. One day I saw everyone running down Porter street toward the paper mill calling "the bridge is down", I ran too. When I got there, I saw the Bridge Street bridge was down and Fattie Arbuckle's steam roller was in the creek. I never saw him again after the accident, I do not know what happened to him.

(I learned later Fattie was not in the steam roller that went down. Jack Haugh's was driving. He was hurt - had back trouble the rest of his life)

Some of my earliest recollections were visiting trips taken with my Grandmother. She had not minded driving a horse but was afraid of tackling a car. How often I have heard her call "whoa, whoa" from the back seat when she thought the car should slow down. After my Grandfather died, her trips were mostly walking ones. She liked to have me walk with her and I loved to go. We would leave right after breakfast, sometimes walking three or four miles to "drop in" on someone and spend the day visiting, eating and sewing. These people would often drop in on Grandma too, so she was always ready for visitors. Those were the days before the eight to five regime, at least for most housewives. In the days before telephones, radio or television visiting was a very important part of our lives.



Grandma
with some of her visiting friends

Mr. Terwilliger lived just north of Bassett's house. He often stopped in to call on Grandma, and was usually smoking a cigar. One day he left a cigar butt in the ash tray. I'll never forget coming home from school and watching my Grandmother trying to light that cigar butt. It seems one of her plants in the parlor had aphids and she had heard that tobacco smoke would kill them. Since Grandma was the kind of person who knew if you smoked, drank, swore, wore lipstick or played cards on Sunday, you were headed straight for that unmentionable place with the devil, I could hardly believe my eyes. Well, here she was blowing on Mr. Terwilliger's cigar butt under her coleus plant. This really made a lasting impression on me.

Another lasting impression was made by one of Grandma's friends, Auntie Lou (Lou Walbach) who told about the invisible hands that would reach out from the saloon and drag you inside. She knew that was true because it had happened to her husband and he could never get away.

I always stepped off the sidewalk into the gutter when passing by the saloon.



Auntie Lou Grandma

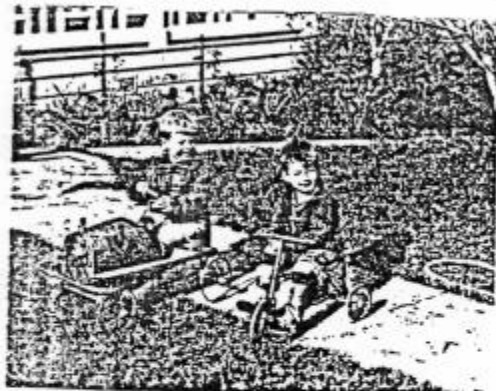
Cunniison's garage was on the north-east corner of Porter and the Santa Cruz Watsonville highway. Every once in a while two of the Cunniison brothers would get in their car and go for a joy ride up and down the streets honking "ahhh-oooo-gah" all the time. I remember my Mother shaking her head and saying, "those two could kill somebody going that fast, I bet they were going 40 miles an hour." (an unbelievable speed at that time)

About that time in 1927, Mother decided Soquel was getting too "citified". It was no longer a safe place to bring up her children. Mother and Daddy had heard of a place on Cherry Vale Avenue that was for sale. This place satisfied Mother's requirements: in the country, not much traffic, by the creek and our closest neighbor was Mother's beloved second grade teacher, Finnie (Wilson) Young. Mrs young's daughter, Frances, became like a sister to Lois and me. Evan David lived across the street, and became a constant companion to my little brother, Bobbie.

dressed for a 'play'



Frances Young
and
Lois Bardt



Bobbie Bardt

Evan (Sonny) David

So we said good-by to down town Soquel, and began a very different life, one mile away on Cherry Vale Avenue, where we spent the rest of our childhood. (see Chapter 2)

Frances and I were roommates when we went to college and after graduation, I started teaching at Soquel Elementary School. Soon after, Frances (now Frances Hobbs) became the secretary of the Soquel School.

Lois, my sister, is now living in Hawaii, a very accomplished and creative artist.

Bobbie, my brother, now known as Bob is a building contractor, now building the new addition for the Stanford Accelerator in Palo Alto.

However, there will always be a soft spot in our hearts for the joy, and trials that we remember when we were growing up in Soquel in the twenties.

Merle (Bardt) Finneran