

Interview with

Dolores Riddle

October 21, 2004

by Nancy Gottfredson

for the

Highway 101 Association

Interview with Dolores Riddle, October 29, 2004

Interview of Dolores B. Riddle, of 445 Marview Drive, Solana Beach, California, on October 29, 2004. Interviewer: Nancy Gottfredson. Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne

Nancy: My name is Nancy Gottfredson. I am a member of the Solana Beach Civic and Historical Society in Solana Beach, and I will be interviewing Dolores Riddle today, and it is October 29, 2004. Dolores, can you please state your full name and current address?

Dolores: Dolores B. Riddle. My address is 445 Marview Drive, Solana Beach.

Nancy: When and where you born?

Dolores: I was born on June 26, 1924 in the city of Wilmington, in the state of Delaware.

Nancy: What were your parents' names?

Dolores: My parents were Alma and Edward Blithe.

Nancy: How did you or your family come to Southern California?

Dolores: I came to Southern California with my husband and two children. My husband was employed here.

Nancy: What period of time did you live on or near the 101?

Dolores: I have been at Marview Drive since 1958. We bought our home from Capt. Rhinehart, located on the Plaza. His sister was Frances Cornwall who was also a realtor and past president of the Women's Civic Club from 1964-1968.

Nancy: Can you tell me what outstanding event occurred that was meaningful to you related to US Highway 101?

Dolores: That's so difficult because it's been so many years, but, I would suppose perhaps the planting and keeping it nice and green, all the trees that the original Women's Civic Club put it in. Plus, the removal of all the ugly billboards along Hwy 101.

Nancy: Do you know what time frame that was?

Dolores: Well, of course, I came in 1958 and it seems they were always doing something along that highway.

Nancy: And probably still are.

Dolores: Probably.

Nancy: How old were you when you first rode the 101 and where were you going?

Interview with Dolores Riddle, October 29, 2004

Dolores: I was about, at that time, 33 years of age, I think, and I was on my way to San Francisco.

Nancy: Do you remember your first trip on the 101 driving yourself?

Dolores: I remember that I drove myself from here over to La Jolla to do some shopping. It was probably late 1958 or early 1959.

Nancy: Can you recall some of the other buildings or business, such as restaurants?

Dolores: There's been so many that have come and go, but of course, the old Hi Lo Café with Beulah Baines and her wonderful husband. Then we had Barbara Brass' Better Mousetrap for a while. Prior to that we had, I think there was an Italian place, but I'm not sure about that. Then, of course, down south of the plaza we had the Mon Ami steakhouse where we had two dollar dinners every Tuesday night. The best chef. Usually steak, very good. Who can forget the Mon Ami, they segregated smokers. It was the beginning of non-smoking Solana Beach. Of course, Bank of America was just brand new at that point. Marge's kitchen was next to that--marvelous biscuits and great honey buns.

Nancy: What landmarks or unusual structures come to mind when you think of the 101?

Dolores: I suppose when you say unusual structures, when I first came we had so many, many advertising boards along the 101, it was kind of cluttered. The biggest landmark was at 5 Points when we went up the Torrey Pines grade, because that was something to manipulate with all the traffic.

Nancy: Was there a particular person associated with that stretch of the road?

Dolores: I don't know of that particular stretch, I would never think of the 101 that I wouldn't think of Dr. Brass, because he lived on my street and was going up many times of the day, down the 101 and on his way to Scripps Hospital. I think if there was anyone ever associated with the 101 it would be Dr. Charles Brass.

Nancy: Do you have a favorite memory, a favorite trip or favorite destination?

Dolores: Are you referring just to the 101?

Nancy: Yes, something close by to 101, basically on the highway.

Dolores: I guess the steakhouse. We loved going there whether it was Tuesday night or not. We knew the McKenny's, of course, who ran it. Their daughter and our daughter were friends. And of course, we always went to the beach. Going to the beach every weekend, when we could. So I guess the beach and the restaurants would be our favorite destinations.

Nancy: Do you remember any bad accidents on the 101?

Interview with Dolores Riddle, October 29, 2004

Dolores: Well, I guess it wasn't "blood alley" for nothing. There were bad accidents on 101 every Saturday and Sunday. It was a nightmare, because we didn't have the freeway.

Nancy: Is there any one in particular that you remember?

Dolores: Not on the 101, that I remember. I remember a couple of bad ones, on my way to college because I was going to San Diego State University, but they were not out in our area. It was rainy mornings, and I remember, too, when I almost got clipped and decided that maybe college wasn't exactly my forte at that time.

Nancy: How about stories of patrol officers or traffic cops, do you remember their names?

Dolores: I never had to have a policeman stop or talk to me. I've never had a ticket in my life. So I don't have anything pertinent for myself, but of course, here again comes Dr. Brass because he sped on highways, he was a terrible speeder. He would get stopped on so many occasions. And usually his remark was to the police officer, "Don't you know going that fast you can get hurt?"

Nancy: Do you remember the speed limit through town?

Dolores: No, I sure don't. I would suspect it was about 25, maybe that is being too conservative, I don't know.

Nancy: Was there ever a celebrity in a parade route such as a US president?

Dolores: Well, not to my knowledge. There was a potential governor, but it wasn't a parade. Mr. Ronald Reagan arrived one evening in Solana Beach with some celebrities of Hollywood. They stopped at the Steak House and gave interviews, of course. The next morning our San Diego Union paper said, "Mr. Reagan stopped by a site in Solana Beach, the sea port town of Rancho Santa Fe", which was rather chagrining.

Nancy: Do you remember the first traffic light installed on the 101?

Dolores: No, I sure don't. I think traffic lights were here when I came. I don't ever remember, but I think there was one down here by the old lumberyard at 101.

Nancy: That would be Lomas Santa Fe?

Dolores: I beg your pardon?

Nancy: That would be Lomas Santa Fe.

Dolores: Well, it was Skyline when I came. And, Via de LaValle was Border Ave.

Nancy: Okay, that's interesting.

Interview with Dolores Riddle, October 29, 2004

Dolores: It was Skyline Drive then. Service stations, we had plenty of. We started with one Union 76 right down here on the choice property, that's now being argued and fought about.

Nancy: The Magellan?

Dolores: I suspect. But I can't remember their names, they were darling people. Their child, Larry Hickox went to school with my children. The lady later came to work for Bank of America after I had gone. But that was the very first station as you came into town. There were two, I believe, one on the corner at the plaza and 101, I know that. Of course, there were garages, there were all kinds of repair garages. But I guess with the gasoline stations, those are the two that I remember in Solana. Of course, they went on into Del Mar.

Nancy: Well that concludes our interview.

Dolores: Is that all?

Nancy: You were speaking of the house at Dvorak.

Dolores: Yes, that was kind of a little general store. They had everything from shoe laces, sneakers, little clothes for the kids, it was just kind of an all around general store. Emile Devorak was his name and her name was Carol and they lived in the community. But if anyone really wanted to buy things, you went to La Jolla. There weren't any stores out here like there are today. And the same went for groceries. I used to go to La Jolla to the A&P because there just wasn't good grocery stores in 1958. But of course, that has improved. Joe Beed was there with his hardware store and there was a barber shop. So there was kind of a little shopping area, I think it was called the Arcade. Jim Harper would probably remember better than I. There was just so many things along there, our library, and liquor stores, and, of course, right down by the Bank of America, one of our beautiful landmarks that is gone, were the dahlia fields. They were something to behold. We had gorgeous, gorgeous dahlias.

Nancy: What was that man's name?

Dolores: I have forgotten. I have truly forgotten. They were there for a great many years. And they had every kind of dahlias. Of course, I worked at Bank of America at that time and to come out of there every night and look across those fields, it was just beautiful. Just gorgeous. We, in this town, had Clarice Austin and Waddell. Waddell had been a real estate man. But her first husband Austin Carlton, had the great big orchid business. Clarice and Austin were very generous. She would come to the Bank of America with stalks of twenty or thirty Cymbidiums and our place was decorated when they were in season. It was just beautiful. In fact, my own husband and I got in to the flower business, kind of knowing them and some other people we knew in this area. We had our own greenhouses here and we had greenhouses in Encinitas. My husband's health deteriorated so that all went. I don't know if there's anything else I can tell you or not, Nancy.

Nancy: You were an early member of the Women's Club, and they did a lot.

Interview with Dolores Riddle, October 29, 2004

Dolores: I wasn't so early. I joined in 1976. Marjorie Reese became the president and I became her secretary, corresponding, I don't think recording. I met Marge, interestingly enough, in a craft class in Encinitas and she said to me one day, "It's a shame you don't live in Solana Beach, I'd put you up for membership." I said, "I do live in Solana Beach." So then she took me in and that was my beginning of my association with the civic club and that I've been with them ever since.

Nancy: That's been a long time and that's probably over thirty years.

Dolores: Probably, yes, because I was the president for two years, 1980-1982. Of course, all of the officers we've had, I don't know where they are right now. It's been quite awhile ago, I'll guarantee you that, somewhere in the 80's.

Nancy: Well, thank you Dolores!

Dolores: You're more than welcome.