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**Anne T. Kent California Room**

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**INTERVIEW WITH BEATRICE HOWITT**

by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent  
November 3, 1976

INTERVIEWEE: Beatrice Howitt (BH)

INTERVIEWERS: Carla Ehat (CE) and Anne Kent (AK)

DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 3, 1976

CE: Today is Wednesday, November 3, 1976. Continuing the Oral History Program of the California Room at the Marin County Library at Civic Center, this is Carla Ehat and joining me today is Mrs. Thomas Kent. We are at Mrs. Kent's residence at 131 Goodhill Road, Kentfield and we are going to have the privilege shortly of interviewing Miss Beatrice Howitt who presently resides in Pacific Grove, California. Miss Howitt is an avid conservationist, a well known botanist, nationally known bacteriologist who is renowned for her work in influenza, poliomyelitis, and encephalomyelitis and spotted fever. And last, but not by any means least, she is the daughter of Marin County's famous and beloved doctor, Dr. Henry Orton Howitt, who practiced in Marin for over sixty years. It's a pleasure to welcome you today, Beatrice. Tell us about your father, a little bit about his background, Bea. Where was he born?

BH: Well, he was born in Wells, Ontario, Canada.

CE: What year, do you recall?

BH: In 1863, I think it was. And after he was about eighteen, I think, he left to come to California. His younger brother, Irvin, had come out here first. So, he came to see him and to see how he was getting along and so forth and he went to southern California, around, near Santa Monica, in that area. There were big ranches there at that time belonging to the early Spanish people and I know they knew quite a number of them.

CE: All right Bea. Did he have a vineyard? Did I hear that correct?

BH: Yes, he had a small vineyard of seedless grapes which he sold finally and with the money came up to San Francisco and entered the Cooper College for medicine and started to become a doctor.

CE: Now, Cooper Medical College is the forerunner of Stanford.

BH: That's right. His brother came, too, and they both entered the medical school. He graduated in 1888 and I'm not sure when his brother graduated. It might have been a year later. Then he was married in 1888 to my mother.

CE: And what was your mother's name?

BH: Alice Chase.

CE: And where did Alice come from? Was she a local girl?

BH: No. Well, in a way, yes, I guess she was because she lived with her sister in Oakland. Her mother had died when she was three years old, so her older sister, Mrs. Kellog --

CE: What was her maiden name, your mother's maiden name?

BH: Alice Chase.

CE: I see. And she also was born in 1863?

BH: Yes. Born the same time and near Petaluma. Her father and mother had come across the plains with the other children, one boy and three girls, came across with an Army train and my grandfather was a clergyman, Episcopal Church. He was the Chaplain for the Army train.

CE: Was this a covered wagon train you're speaking of?

BH: Yes, it was more or less. I suppose with an Army train it must have covered wagons or not I'm not sure. But they came and they had a big wagon that they lived in.

CE: Did any of the family keep a journal?

BH: Yes, I have a little journal of my mother's, but it's not very interesting. Largely, "On this day, it's a nice day, a lovely day -- "

CE: Oh, I see.

BH: But part of it -- I think that would be a good idea. I can let you have that if you like, but it isn't very exciting.

CE: All right, thank you. But your mother died. Her mother died when she was very young, I understand.

BH: Yes, that's right, when she was about three years old her mother died and then she was taken care of by the older sister, Faye, who married Mr. Herbert Kellog and they lived in Oakland at that time, I believe, and that's where my father -- I don't know how he happened to meet her.

CE: Well, anyway, they were married in 1888.

BH: In 1888. Then my mother had a little money left her by an aunt and they went to Europe, they went to Germany, and my father studied in Berlin in the different clinics there. It was quite the thing to do at that time, to say that you'd been studying with the German doctors there. Then they came back.

CE: I'm interested, Bea, in what helped him make the decision to practice in San Rafael. Do you know how that came about?

BH: Yes. He was in San Francisco -- I was born in San Francisco, my brother was born there, and it wasn't until 1893, I guess it was, that they came to San Rafael

but it was through the encouragement of Dr. Sherman, I think. I don't remember his first name. And also --

AK: Harry --

BH: Did you know him? And they suggested -- There weren't many doctors over here, you see, there were only three or four, so that he came that way. My grandfather came out through the -- Little church near Petaluma.

CE: You're talking about your maternal grandfather?

BH: Yes, my maternal grandfather. You see my mother was born up there. But the reason why he came there was because Bishop Kipp, who was the first Episcopal Bishop of California, was somewhat related to my grandfather. Some connection, I can't remember exactly how it is now. He suggested this little church in Petaluma would be a good place to go.

CE: I see a note here. Your grandfather's father was Bishop Chase and he founded Kenyon College.

BH: Yes, my grandfather's father was Bishop Chandler Chase.

CE: All right. Let's talk a little bit about your father's career, Bea. Where was your family home when you moved over here to San Rafael?

BH: It was Petaluma Avenue at that time, it is now Lincoln Avenue. First we went to the little house on the corner.

CE: Of what?

BH: Of Petaluma and Mission, I think it was. And then we moved into the house next door that was built by the man who looked after the Lagunitas Lake, you know, the little lake up here, and he only had some money and he built this house and we moved into it and then my father bought the house after. So they lived there all that time until they left and now I believe it's all a service station. It's all been town down and everything is gone.

CE: Well, he also served as a County Health Officer.

BH: Yes, he was County Health Officer. That was later on. At first he had a practice in the county. In fact, really in the county because he'd go way up to Lagunitas and he'd go over to Bolinas and all those places.

CE: Well, first, before the office came, tell us about those years.

BH: Yes. They had a horse and a little open -- I don't know the real name for it.

CE: Was it an open buggy?

BH: Yes. It wasn't a buggy because I think buggies are a little bit different but this was a runabout, I think they call it. So he did all these calls by horse and often he would get up in the middle of the night, he'd get a call to go someplace, and he didn't keep the horse at home but it was down at the stable of, oh --

CE: Well, you might remember it later because it is important. Mrs. Kent especially is interested in those old livery stables.

BH: Yes, well it was a livery stable downtown off of Fourth Street.

CE: How did he get the word?

BH: Well, by telephone. They had telephones then. I remember the first telephone. Then the livery stable man would bring the horse up and then my father would go out. Also when he came back he'd have to call up the man to come and get the horse.

CE: Would he go out at night?

BH: Yes, oh my yes, he would go to all sorts of places.

CE: I understand sometimes he'd get a call to come to Ross and then spend the night and go back the next day if it was inclement weather?

BH: Yes, well that might be true, I don't remember that particularly but I do know that he went off at night very often. And sometimes he would go over to Bolinas and I think he would go -- Let's see, I remember one time he went at night and he was on a bicycle then, I think, instead of a horse, and they had to walk down a big hill, you know that big grade? What do they call it now?

CE: You mean White's Hill?

BH: Well, you had to go over White's Hill but it was -- Oh, they call it the Old Grade.

CE: Summit?

BH: Summit Grade. You know, instead of going around by Olema they'd go over --

AK: It's right over the top, the Alpine Road. It's now the Alpine Road.

BH: I suppose so. I don't know what they call it now. But anyway he'd walk down this hill and he could see these skunks and little animals all dancing around in front of him. He'd have to spend the night over there, when he went there.

CE: I understand he did surgery often under the most adverse conditions, on kitchen tables in farms.

BH: Yes.

CE: Did he ever -- Do you remember any of those stories, Bea?

BH: Well, I think it was out there, there was a -- what became later the old golf course out in, beyond San Rafael was a Portuguese dairy out there and I think it was there that he did some work on a kitchen table, some surgery of some sort. I wish I could remember a lot of the things that he told but I don't remember now.

CE: Would you describe your father for us.

BH: Well, he was about five feet ten, I guess, and rather slight, very dapper and nice looking, very handsome man. He wore a little mustache which he trimmed up much later; at first it was a little bit wandering. A quiet man, he didn't talk very readily but he was interested and I think his patients liked him.

CE: I understand he -- You were telling us earlier of a little incident with Mrs. Kent and your father. Would you repeat that?

BH: Well, I remember his driving down here to the old house and sitting outside and I think maybe she offered me a cookie or something and called me in but didn't she have a parrot or not?

AK: Yes.

BH: Yes, I remember about the parrot.

CE: Well, Mrs. Kent was Dr. Howitt the Kent doctor then?

AK: He was the one I came to.

BH: Yes, he was the Kent doctor and he was for Mrs. Wilken too, the doctor then. And I remember he took the appendix out of Mr. Wilken.

CE: Well, we had the pleasure of interviewing William Walter Brown who was one of the children of the coachman, Daniel Brown. He was born on the Kent property. He was telling us just last month how wonderful Dr. Howitt was to him and to all of his brothers and sisters.

BH: I remember one thing about it, it was the time when grapefruit first came in and Mrs. Kent was diabetic and so he thought, "Ah grapefruit doesn't have much sugar. She can eat grapefruit."

CE: He was pushing that.

BH: He was so delighted he could find something she could eat that didn't have much sugar in it.

CE: Well, now tell us, Bea, he really wanted to have a hospital in Marin County and is it true that he put some extra beds in your home? Did he start it that way?

BH: Not in the home no, a house down on Fourth Street, down the main street, was owned or they lived in it anyway, these -- Oh, dear, what is their name? There was three women there, two of them were nurses and one was a physiotherapist, I think, and so they had his office in that building and then they had two rooms I think they used for patients after they were operated on and so forth, but it wasn't, as far as the hospital part, wasn't in our house but later he built on an office in the house, so we had an office in our house.

CE: Which was normal in those days, wasn't it?

BH: Yes. It was just off the side. But the hospital part of it, these three doctors got together and decided to --

CE: Well, I want us to get that in the record. This was sort of a forerunner of the Cottage Hospital which was founded along with your father, by William Farrington Jones and William J. Wickman, 1905.

BH: Yes.

CE: They got together and founded this Cottage Hospital which later became the San Rafael General.

BH: Yes, that was an old house owned by the Savages, I think. I remember going there to a children's party at one time before it was made a hospital. So they converted it into a hospital, quite a nice one, too, and they found different people to run it for them.

CE: Yes, Mrs. Kent?

AK: Wasn't the hospital on Laurel Grove before that? Do you know anything about that? Here in Kentfield there is Laurel Grove and there was a hospital --

BH: Yes, there was a little hospital down there.

AK: Was it before or after that, I wonder?

BH: I think it was after.

CE: Yes, this Cottage is supposed to be the first.

BH: I think it's the first one, yes, the first one.

AK: This is the one that Edith Foster was so interested in. Do you remember Edith?

BH: Yes, indeed I do, I surely do.

CE: Well, it was an innovative and wonderful thing. It had the first elevator in the county and it -- You were in it, weren't you, Mrs. Kent?

AK: Yes.

CE: It was a fine hospital. Was your father mainly a surgeon or was he a general practitioner?

BH: Well, he was a general practitioner but he was a good surgeon, too.

CE: Any other reminiscences you would like to share with us, Bea, about your family before we move on?

BH: Well, he also helped make the first golf course.  
CE: He did? That was his hobby wasn't it, golf?  
BH: Yes, he liked to play golf. And several -- Mr. Crooks was one of them and I don't remember the other man but they had the, the first golf course was out where the high school is now, I think, San Rafael High School, and then they moved out to where, well, where the Civic Center is, the property out over the hill that --  
CE: Santa Venetia area?  
BH: Yes, in that area. Then they moved it down.  
CE: San Pedro Road?  
BH: San Pedro Road, yes, where the old slough is, and that was a very nice golf course and that was there for a long time. Then they moved finally up here on the hill.  
CE: I understand when he was needed by a patient when he was on the golf course they used a megaphone and called.  
BH: Yes.  
CE: Well, in 1947, I understand, he was honored by his colleagues on the completion of sixty years of service.  
BH: Yes.  
CE: Certainly an extraordinary achievement for any man and received one of the first medals that were given by the California Medical Association for over fifty years of service.  
BH: Well, I didn't know that. I wasn't here then.  
CE: Well, tell me, your father died on June 8, 1953. What happened then? I mean, did he -- He was visiting, was it your sister?  
BH: No. I mean, he and his second wife, Edith, were living up in Everett, Washington where my half-sister lived and he died up there.  
CE: All right. Now, what period in his life was it when you really sort of took hold and helped him? Was that after your mother died?  
BH: Yes.  
CE: Then didn't you assist your father, Bea?  
BH: Well, only in the housework.  
CE: Didn't you kind of help working in the lab, or was that a job that you - went to San Francisco?  
BH: That was separately.  
CE: But you kept house for your father until he remarried?  
BH: Yes, just about.  
CE: How long was that? About six years or so?  
BH: It was -- He married in 1918.  
CE: Now, we want to get into your career because it's a fascinating one. You got a job with this laboratory. Was that part of the Cooper?  
BH: No.  
CE: No, part of the Stanford. Tell us.  
BH: Yes, it was the old -- Well, Cooper College was a part of Stanford then and Dr. Tom Addis -- I don't know. Did you know him?  
AK: Yes, I did.  
BH: A-d-d-i-s was the brother-in-law of a friend of mine, Dorothy Partridge, and she thought she saw me reading big books or something and she decided I should go

and do some work for Tom. Tom was interested in research and also was one of the lecturers, one of the professors, and so he said I could come up and so just for half time I would do things in the laboratory and so forth. Then I worked up all I could learn from him and from the clinical laboratory which was underneath his office and then when the first World War came along. Also I was working with Dr. Dixon who had the bacteriology lab there.

CE: This is in San Francisco?

BH: In San Francisco, yes. I used to commute, I would go over --

CE: You would commute from San Rafael, from that point --

BH: Yes. To out there, Sacramento Street.

CE: Well, now 1914, the men started going off to war and then were you sort of left there?

BH: Yes, I was left in charge of all the laboratories.

CE: Then, of course, we had the influenza epidemic.

BH: Yes, that came along too at the same time; that was in 1918.

CE: Was that when you became interested in taking extension courses and then going to the University of California?

BH: Yes. After the men came back and they took over their old jobs, so I thought I'd better go to the University. See, I learned all this without having been to the University so I had done all this clinical laboratory work and then I had charge of quite a number of people there, you see. There were the people who ran the laboratory for the hospital and then there was the out-patient clinic laboratory and then I had my own work which was largely the Wasserman work, you see, I did that personally, and the bacteriology work which had been under Dr. Dixon. So I was generally in charge of the whole thing for \$125 a month.

CE: How large a staff did you have?

BH: Well, there were quite a number.

CE: Couple of dozen of you?

BH: No, no not that many, five or six.

CE: And all for a hundred and twenty five a month?

BH: That's right; that was a lot of money in those days.

CE: Then you decided in 1920 to go to Berkeley?

BH: Yes, that's right.

CE: And get your degree in bacteriology.

BH: Yes.

CE: I understand you lived with a family for a couple of years which was a nice arrangement for you.

BH: Yes. The Warren Porter's. Then Mr. Porter died and the family, I think, sold the house and then I had a room with this May Stevens who was in the Department of, Public Health Department.

CE: All right, now, for four years, in 1924 you graduated and you got your BA in bacteriology.

BH: Yes. And I stayed on and got a master's degree in -- Well, it was under the zoology department really, under Dr. Kilfoyd; I was doing protozoology.

CE: Well, is that when you got interested? I understand your thesis was on the amoeba of the mouth.

BH: That's right.

CE: Is that when you became so interested in this area? Well, you were interested before, all your formative years.

BH: Yes, that's right.

CE: Courses stiff, terribly stiff then? You must have had a heavy course in German, and chemistry, and good heavens --

BH: Oh yes, I did have a heavy course; I didn't do much else except study when I was in the college.

CE: What did you do first then, you graduated and you had your master's in this field. You couldn't go back to that lab; what did you do?

BH: I got a position as Research Associate or something like that, at the Connart Laboratories in Toronto, Canada.

CE: And you were there for about a year?

BH: Yes, about a year. And I saved out enough money from my small salary to go to Europe. I was living with my aunt there; you see my father's sister lived in Toronto.

CE: So you went to Europe for a year, to study or what?

BH: No, just to have a good time for about two or three months and then I came back. I had an appointment given me by Dr. K. F. Meyer at the Hooper Foundation. He was the Director of the Hooper Foundation.

CE: Now tell us, you know the names are so close, Cooper Medical School, Hooper Foundation. What was the Hooper Foundation? Where was it?

BH: It was out there at the old -- where the University of California is now, the medical school.

CE: Oh, in San Francisco?

BH: Yes. There was a little old building in the back that had been the Veterinarian Building I think, at least it's in -- You see they had the old what they called the Affiliated Colleges out there, those old brick buildings.

CE: Well, who was Hooper? Was he a --

BH: Well, he was somebody that had some money and gave it to the University for work in research in tropical medicine and various things of that sort. But, it developed into all kinds of things; it wasn't just tropical medicine by any means. Dr. George Whipple was the first director and he moved on to Rochester, New York and I think he just died recently. Then Dr. K. F. Meyer became the director and he was a very dynamic individual and so he had gotten funds from all sorts of places and all various other people were working on different subjects in the building.

CE: Was one of his projects this horse disease of encephalitis or --

BH: First thing I did was with this dental group, I continued on with this dental group that did some work on the -- I used to go over to the prison, for one thing, the San Quentin Prison, with Dr. Fleming who later became the Dean of the Dental School. He and I went over there and he scraped some prisoner's teeth and I examined them for bacteriology and so forth and I wrote several papers on the subject for about two years. Then I think the time of inflation, what happened in 1928? Just before the crash, Charles Howard who was the Buick man in San

Francisco, son had died and he wanted to do something in memory so he gave some money to the University for research work. It was to be on poliomyelitis.

CE: Did his son die of that?

BH: No, his son was killed in an accident up at the ranch.

CE: Is this the Charles Howard who owned Seabiscuit?

BH: Yes, that's right. I used to go through their ranch to this friend of mine, Una Boyle. I don't know if you remember the Boyles, Mrs. Kent?

AK: I never knew them

BH: Well, they had a lovely ranch, well, it wasn't a ranch, it was a lake in Mendocino County beyond the Howard place, and I used to go up there every summer as a vacation. Where were we? That was a digression.

CE: That's all right, those are fun. So you continued there in this research?

BH: Yes, I did research on poliomyelitis, let's see, that for several years. Then all of a sudden, I think it was in 1931, this outbreak of encephalomyelitis took place down in the San Joaquin Valley and Dr. Meyer was called in on that. He was a veterinarian, really. He and Dr. Herring from the University of California were called in and they sent up the material and then he asked me if I would work on it with him on that, so I did the laboratory work on it. He went out and cut the heads off the horses and sent up these things.

CE: Well, the western strain was different, wasn't it, than the eastern?

BH: Yes. So it was interesting though that the same -- It was sort of a -- They went on at the same time and unbeknownst to each other. The western strain was in California, while in the east, New Jersey was the eastern strain, was found at the same time and they were serologically different.

CE: Bea, is this disease related to that found in humans?

BH: Well, it is first found in horses but that doesn't mean at all that it didn't come in humans. I really was the first one to find, to isolate the virus from a child in Fresno.

CE: You did that?

BH: Yes.

CE: Extraordinary thing.

BH: It was then found that the humans --

End Side A

CE: What happened in the east, Bea?

BH: Well, it was also found in humans in the east about the same time, too. But there was an outbreak around Fresno in the San Joaquin Valley among the children and then we had the feeling that probably was being transmitted by mosquitoes, but we hadn't the scientific evidence yet but that became later, and it was found out that it was transmitted by mosquitoes and not only to horses and people but into birds.

CE: Into birds?

BH: Yes, they found the virus in the -- certain number of kinds of birds, different birds.

CE: All right, Bea, let's move on. Pretty soon the war is coming, World War II, your career is interrupted again. What did you do? You went to work for the Army, did I understand that?

BH: No. Mr. Howard's money ran out. It was after the -- Well, he didn't have very much money at that time. So Dr. Meyer was at a loss as what to do with me, so he was very delighted, I think, when they telephoned all the way from Leonard Laboratories in New York wanting to know if I would come there and do some virus work for them. So I asked if I could go out there first and see about it, so they sent me out and I talked with them there and looked it over and decided, well, I guess it was the thing to do. So I went to the Leonard Laboratories and was there for about -- 1942 to 1944.

CE: Then you were in the Public Health Service.

BH: Yes, then Dr. Parker needed someone at the Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Laboratory in Hamilton, Montana and Dr. Meyer had recommended me to him so I decided to do that even though I was taking a reduction in my salary, somewhat, not too much, but I thought it was a very nice place to go.

CE: Did you like Montana?

BH: Very much.

CE: Beautiful state.

BH: Hamilton was a very nice place to be in and I had a little house there.

CE: You were there for about six years.

BH: No -- not there. I was altogether in the Public Health Service about six years but not at Hamilton because I left there in 1946.

CE: Is that when you went to the Communicable Disease Center in Montgomery, Alabama?

BH: Yes, Montgomery, Alabama and we started a laboratory there for viruses. It was the old rabies laboratory that had been run by the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Johnson had left there and they had dismantled the whole place but it still could be used, so Dr. Miller who was the public health man in charge of the laboratory work, I guess it was called, found that empty laboratory and that was the place to start this virus place. So we had to begin it from the beginning and equip it and get people in there and everything.

CE: Have you been back to visit there since this extraordinary new building that's been --

BH: Yes, that was in Atlanta though, because this is in Montgomery, in the old place, and everybody moved out of the Montgomery laboratory after I left and went to Atlanta. The man who became head of the virus laboratory there had been down in Montgomery and I knew him very well, now he's gone, he's left, too.

CE: Well, hadn't you gotten a little homesick by this time? You were a long way from and a great many years away from California.

BH: That's right. So I was down in Montgomery until 1951, when I left there, and things had changed a good deal and -- I mean, all the change over and all the personnel and one thing and another and conditions were not as favorable as they were at first, so I decided it was time to go home.

CE: Were you thinking of retiring then? Did you retire?

BH: Well, I left my retirement money in, so I didn't take it out then, because I was a little bit too young, I think.

CE: But is that when you came back to California and went to Pacific Grove, the Monterey Peninsula?

BH: Yes, I went down there and I have these --

CE: We want to get into that part of your life and your interest in conservation and plants and botany. What did you do? Did you --

BH: I had a lot down there which I sold to a friend and then I bought two lots next to that that another friend had had and didn't want and so I built a house with the money I had saved up from all my previous years. I had very little to live on for about a year, I think, and then I suddenly went out to the Hastings Reservation, which is run by the University of California too, and --

CE: Tell us, what is the Hastings Natural History Reservation?

BH: Well, it's a place where people come and study the animals or birds or anything that's going on.

CE: It's deep in the valley?

BH: Yes, it's way up above the Carmel Valley, village, in the mountains there, a very lovely place. It was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hastings at that time. They both now are dead. They thought it would be a good thing for the University to take it over. It was a ranch that their daughter was interested in ranching so they had bought it for her and then she married and went away and they decided they could do this with the place while they still kept a little house for themselves on it. They turned it over, more or less, to the management of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology in Berkeley and it was run by Dr. Linsdale, Gene Linsdale was the director at that time.

CE: Well, tell me, is it during this interval that you became acquainted with John Thomas Howell, Curator of Botany at the California Academy of Sciences?

BH: Yes, it was. It was really Mrs. Linsdale's idea. He used to come down there and collected plants for them and for the museum and so Mrs. Linsdale thought it would be a good idea in my spare time, Sundays and so forth, that I could go out and collect for Tom. It was a very good idea indeed because I --

CE: And I understand you didn't have a car?

BH: No -- But getting out to the place, I had lots of friends and it was sort of a picnic for them, you see, they'd come out and we'd have a picnic and I often went in with -- Somebody on the place would come in or else friends would come out and get me and really, hit or miss the way I went in and out.

CE: Well, Tom Howell will be back for luncheon and I think, Mrs. Kent, we ought to have him join Bea in these reminiscences. But I want to get in here, you did co-author a book with him.

BH: Yes.

CE: What was the name of that book?

BH: *Vascular Plants of Monterey County, California.*

CE: All right, then what did you do?

BH: Well, I --

CE: You were out collecting plants and botanizing like mad. How did you get interested in photography?

BH: I bought a camera and it was a good camera, so I thought, "Well, I'll take pictures of flowers." Every flower that I found, every other new flower, I tried to photograph, you see, so as to have a record for the county.

CE: What would you do this on, slides?

BH: Yes.  
CE: This is a slide collection?  
BH: Yes, slide collection. I have a large slide collection.  
CE: Color?  
BH: In color, yes.  
CE: Have any tricks that you learned particularly about close-up photography you'd like to share?  
BH: Well, no particular tricks. I have some of these rings and things.  
CE: Oh, close-up lenses.  
BH: Yes.  
CE: No matter where you went I imagine you'd say, "Stop the car I want to get out and take pictures."  
BH: Yes, take pictures. The University, I couldn't stay on there because they had an age limit and I got too old for them so I retired then from the active work there.  
CE: Well, is this when you, you finally wrote another book. I mean was it around this time, *Wildflowers of the Monterey Area*, which you not only wrote but included your photographs?  
BH: Yes, that's the little one. It is more or less for tourist trade. It was put out by the Wheelwright Press in Salt Lake City.  
CE: Then as the time goes by you're interested in doing a supplement to your original book with Tom Howell.  
BH: Yes, because there are so many flowers and plants that have been found since the first one that --  
CE: Did you do it? Did you do it, get the supplement out?  
BH: Oh, yes it's out. Then I did another one; I compiled another one, for the Del Monte Forest, Forest Heritage. Have you got that in there?  
CE: Yes, that's in here. You didn't bring a copy of that by any chance, did you?  
BH: No, I'm sorry. I would have, could have.  
CE: All right, so you're at Hastings for about six years and then --  
BH: Yes, then I retired.  
CE: Did you take a trip?  
BH: Yes. I've taken several trips. Well, that was largely due to the fact that I had a cousin who died and left me some money, so I thought it would be a good idea to take a trip.  
CE: Is this when you went to Africa and Australia?  
BH: No, this was the time I went to Europe in 1957. That was before I retired, though. My cousin left me this money and so that was my first trip and then I've been taking trips ever since. Though the time I went to Africa was in 1965, that was after I retired.  
CE: Well, how did it come about, Beatrice, that the California Native Plant Society got a hold of you?  
BH: The Society up here in Berkeley had formed -- Someone -- Oh dear, I can't remember her name -- thought one should be formed in Monterey County, so I decided that was the thing to do.  
CE: So what did you do? Did you establish the branch there in Monterey?

BH: Yes, that's right. By taking a list of anybody that I thought might be interested, the names, you see, and I sent postal cards around to everybody. And then the group from Berkeley came down to help them establish it, I mean, they started it. The first head of it was Dr. Hoyt, he was out at Hastings and he was a good botanist and so forth but he left after about six months and then I became the president, the head of it down there for about a year and a half, I think and then they've been going on ever since.

CE: And also haven't you been involved in the Nature Conservancy program?

BH: Yes.

CE: The Monterey Chapter, too?

BH: I was the Secretary of the chapter there for quite a long time and especially when they tried to acquire this land called Jack's Peak.

CE: Now where is that?

BH: Well, it's up behind -- It's the highest point up above Carmel, I think. It belongs to Monterey City, part of it. Yes, it belongs to Monterey City. I don't know. If you don't know the land --

CE: I know.

BH: Well, it's up on Aquajito Road, you go up that direction.

CE: And it's a park now?

BH: Yes, it's a park. And they later acquired more land that belonged to the Del Monte Properties people and now they have quite a large park up there. It hasn't been opened in the sense of development at all; it was supposed to be undeveloped, left undeveloped. But we did a lot of work to raise the money, we had to.

CE: I can imagine.

BH: Mr. John McDaniel was the one that did the most work on that. He was the head of the Nature Conservancy group there when I was the secretary.

CE: Well, you were secretary of other organizations, too. Weren't you secretary of the Pacific Grove Museum Association?

BH: Yes, up to last year when I broke my leg and I decided I'd better retire.

CE: Well, everybody avoids secretarial jobs, but somebody has to do it and that's one way for young people to get involved and if you're really serious about any program, conservation, ecology or what not, we should be willing to do these jobs.

AK: That's a wonderful museum.

BH: I've also been associated with the Audubon Society. I mean, I was their president for one time, of the group down there. I've forgotten the year it was now.

CE: What is the SFB Morse Botanical Reserve in the Del Monte Forest; you have a hand in that, too, don't you?

BH: Well, I don't know as if I have any more than anyone else.

CE: Well, was that a project of the California Native Plant Society to acquire that reserve?

BH: Well, it was really Dr. Stebbins' idea that this land be called Huckleberry Hill and up there in that area should be set aside and so they tried to prevail among the Del Monte property people to give some land there, you see, and they only gave about 80 acres when they really should have given much more.

CE: Well, we need these open space areas to keep these --

BH: Yes, we certainly do. Well, it was to save the Gowan Cypress, this little area. The Gowan Cypress, the only two places where it grows, one is in the center of the Del Monte Properties and the other place is out above Point Lobos Reserve.

CE: Well, at Point Lobos State Reserve and Los Padres Forest there are some endemic species preserved, thank heavens. Now your home is in Del Monte Park, is that close to --

BH: Well, it's now part of -- It's in Pacific Grove. It was incorporated, taken into the city a few years ago.

CE: I understand you favor the creation of a Monterey Peninsula Park. Where do you envision it?

BH: [tape turned off]

CE: Where is that, Bea?

BH: It's what they call San Jose Creek; it's between the Carmelite Monastery and Point Lobos. There's a lovely canyon going up there, it's a lovely spot because it has so many natural native plants already there, but he was killed in a plane accident and I don't know if his family would ever see it that way.

CE: Well, is it true they have such a place in Santa Barbara?

BH: Yes, a beautiful botanical garden down there and something like that would be splendid to have in Monterey County. But, if someone would give the land it would be a place to have the things planted, you know, because Monterey is the first place where the early botanists came, you see, and so many of our plants were first named from there. David Douglas came there and so many things were named after him and Menzies and people that came in these early expeditions to Monterey County and it would be so nice to have something to commemorate these early findings.

CE: I feel that it will probably take place, don't you, Mrs. Kent?

AK: It would be wonderful.

CE: Well, I understand that along with research biologist, Judson Vandever, you have a permit to collect plants at Point Lobos and other areas?

BH: Yes. We collected plants from the --

CE: And you're updating the herbarium at Point Lobos Reserve?

BH: Oh, yes. Where did you get all this?

CE: This is in the *Monterey Herald*, but I wanted you to tell us, Bea --

AK: She does her homework.

CE: Tell us, Bea, why do you have to re-collect? Was this collection destroyed or what happened?

BH: Yes, it was eaten up, literally, by the bugs. They hadn't preserved it very well.

CE: So you're going to have all this in vermin-proof containers right?

BH: That's right; they've got some better things now to put it in.

CE: And are you doing similarly down the road further, Point Sur and down at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park?

BH: Yes, we are collecting down there and at Bolero Park which is part of the Big Sur Park; we've collected quite a lot there and at Point Lobos. But I haven't been doing anything lately on account of being laid up.

CE: What happened to you, dear?

BH: I broke my leg.  
CE: Last year?  
BH: Last year, so last year was out completely. I didn't do anything.  
AK: How did you do that?  
BH: Well, I fell.  
CE: Fell at home?  
BH: Yes.  
CE: Not even in a plant hunting.  
BH: No, no. It was just in my yard. I fell over a cement walk I have. So that was sad.  
CE: Well, you have led an extraordinary life; you have been involved in so many constructive, worthwhile, continuing things, hasn't she, Mrs. Kent?  
AK: Oh, yes, wonderful.  
BH: Interesting things.  
CE: I guess your greatest dream at the moment is to see a botanic garden of native plants. That would make you very happy, Bea?  
BH: Very happy indeed.  
CE: Well, I think we'll temporarily recess until Mr. Howell comes and then we'll talk further.  
CE: Mr. Howell -- Bea, I know you and Mrs. Kent share the name of Robert Menzies, now you knew him since childhood. How did you know them? Were they members of your church?  
BH: Yes. They belonged to the Episcopal Church and he was the treasurer, I think, or the vestryman and he and his wife sat in front of us in church. I was quite young then, I wasn't so old, I mean, he was much older than I. But I used to know quite a number of them, members of the family.  
CE: Well, he was a distinguished horticulturist and amateur botanist.  
BH: Yes. A lovely garden in his home.  
CE: Well, where was his home? Mrs. Kent, would you pinpoint that for us.  
AK: It's on Mission, right opposite the back of the Presbyterian Church, I guess it is.  
CE: And the San Rafael Library.  
AK: And then the library is across the other corner and the Dollar place is next door and now the poor little house is gone and all his plants have been taken away, maybe some by his children. One of his grandchildren is very interested in wild things, especially the herbs. He's one of those nature lover kind of people and his name is Bob, too. But, people are finding things in San Rafael and very often I think they come from seeds that are on that lot where Bob had these things. He started to make a book at one time, I think, on the native trees of Marin, I think it was to be, and he didn't finish it. Both Tom, Tom Howell, and other people, too, would like to have it as far as he went and we haven't located it yet. Some child in the family must have it.  
BH: They also had a place up at -- on the way to Bear Valley at Olema.  
AK: That's right. It was so lovely and the creek behind it was just lined with ferns and it was so beautiful. Now that's all in the park.  
BH: I used to walk -- Quite often I walked out from Olema to the coast, down that path, and we'd stop in the Menzies' place and say hello.

AK: Every time I ever did it I went with him. We were at his house and we'd walk out to the lakes and then the ocean.

BH: Yes, that's right, there's a little lake back there.

CE: He was supposed to have been especially well versed in the native plants of Northern California.

AK: He was a lovely person.

CE: Did you know, Mrs. Kent, that he accompanied Louise Boyd on one of her arctic expeditions, 1931.

AK: Indeed I do.

CE: And he collected specimens there.

AK: And Louise always collected for Alice Eastwood wherever she went. Wherever she went she would bring back things for the Academy, for Alice.

CE: Well, you've been in love, Bea, with botany almost as long as bacteriology, haven't you? Or is it a more recent --

BH: Well, I've always liked to go out in the woods and places and interested very much but I never did do any collecting nor did I do any serious work of any kind but I've always liked the outdoors.

AK: Did you ever come over to what is our Garden Center now, when it was the Kittle place? Did you ever remember that?

BH: Yes.

AK: It's just exactly, almost exactly, you would say, the same property that the Kittle's had and that George Warren had before the Kittle's.

BH: Yes, that's right. It's a lovely place, it's beautiful. Yes, my father was the doctor for the Kittle's, too.

CE: He was?

BH: Yes, well, to so many of the people all around that area.

AK: Just think what he did.

CE: Dr. Scott Pollard was a good friend of your father's - I understand, he held your father in high esteem.

BH: Well, that's good.

AK: Well, you see, when your father was doing it, he was doing it almost alone, this whole county, night and day.

CE: Yes, there were just three doctors.

BH: Yes, that's at that time, early. Then of course all of a sudden they just started in.

CE: Then after World War II they just mushroomed.

BH: Yes.

AK: There's less chance to get a doctor now than there was when there was one.

CE: Did you have the pleasure of knowing him, Mrs. Kent?

AK: Dr. Howitt? Not very well. You see, he was the doctor that came to Kentfield. I didn't come here until 1920, 1919, you see, so I guess that's when he operated on Mr. Kent, though.

BH: Was it? No, I think it was before that. I think it was when my mother was alive.

AK: Oh. Well, then Albert, I guess, was the one that --

CE: Are there any qualities, in your judgment, Bea, that you acquired from your father? His interest, certainly, in science --

BH: Yes. Interest in medical things at that time and I think I'm a good deal like him in my physique and way of doing --

CE: Did you learn any study habits from your father or anything that followed throughout your life?

BH: I may have, but I think --

CE: I imagine he was thorough and there was no room for anything but the best kind of work, and I imagine you have set high standards for yourself all your life.

BH: Well, I hope so.

AK: Bea, did you ever remember the livery stable men now or the place?

BH: I remember the place. It was on C Street, I think. McPhail --

CE: Oh, McPhail's

AK: Oh, my, tell her about the McPhail brother-in-law, red-cheeked fellow.

CE: Franklin Burns.

AK: Young John McPhail had married a girl whose name was Burns and we found out that her brother is a rancher, so we went to the ranch. It's a dairy ranch. And he is a most extraordinary person, most extraordinary. He runs the whole dairy with --

CE: One other man and himself they milk 300 cows a day and they have the latest milking equipment today but it's the third generation on this property. The young boy came to a reception, we had an art show at the Octagon House one day and he said, "Got to get home, those cows don't wait for anyone." As a hobby he collects California artists and he has beautiful paintings.

BH: Where is the ranch?

CE: Out of Petaluma. Did you ever take any holidays or weekends, your family, out in West Marin when you were growing up, Bea? Did you go out to West Marin at all?

BH: Well, to Bolinas. That was the first place I ever went. When I was six years old I think we went to Bolinas to the old, when the old inn was there, the old Flagstaff Inn.

CE: Oh, you went there?

BH: Oh, yes. We stayed there and then we'd walk out along the beaches. Then the earthquake came, you see, and everything fell in, the old hotel went in and that old studio. Do you remember that?

AK: Yes, that's right. They built it up again.

BH: And part of the hill fell down, too.

CE: How would you get over there?

BH: Oh, by stage. Four horse stage, or a two horse stage.

CE: Do you remember that trip?

BH: Oh, mercy, yes.

CE: Describe it to us, would you, Bea? I mean, you would go over where now it's Alpine Dam and --

BH: Yes, and down through that, it's all flooded now, and --

CE: Would you stop at the top of the hill?

BH: Yes, and have lunch, we'd take our lunch along the way and eat lunch. It would take all day to get there.

CE: Where would you pick up the stage, in San Rafael?

BH: Yes, in San Rafael. I don't remember whether they came to the house or whether we went to them, because I was only six years old then.

AK: You went to the stage. I think Dolly Jenkins told us and some other people that you go down to the livery stable and, according to the number of people who arrived at a given time, that was the size of the stage that we would take.

CE: Well, do you remember stopping at the summit there at that little house?

BH: Yes, somewhere up there. Then on down the hill and it was a very interesting trip. I mean, I enjoyed it.

AK: Have you been over there since the Audubon owns the -- hill?

BH: Yes, I have. That's a beautiful place.

AK: Yes, that's a lovely, lovely spot. And this same Menzies, Mary Menzies owned a great deal of that property, you know. She's the one who really - when it was Tevis, than it was Menzies, I guess, anyway she saved a strip of it that ran along that same road until very recently. Before she sold it she and her husband, Alan Galloway, built a little house for weekends in there in that whole valley next to Audubon, and now they have sold it to the Audubon, the Audubon owns it, but they, in turn, have leased it now to the bird banding people of Point Reyes and that's their main office and it's called the Galloway something.

BH: Isn't that nice? Well, those little old houses there were so interesting. I don't know when they were built but they're very old.

CE: This concludes this portion of our interview because this is the end of the tape and thank you so much for telling us about your life.

BH: Thank you very much for having me come.

CE: Thank you.