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Anne T. Kent California Room

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Anne T. Kent California Room
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INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH BOYD

by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent
July 26, 1976

INTERVIEWEE: Elizabeth Boyd (EB)

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

DATE OF INTERVIEW: July 26, 1976

TRANSCRIBER: Marjorie Hoffman

CE: Today is Monday, July 26, 1976. Continuing the Oral History Program of the California Room at the Marin County Library at Civic Center, this is Carla Ehat. And today we are at the residence of Mrs. Thomas Kent, at 131 Goodhill Road in Kentfield. And shortly we will have the pleasure of interviewing Mrs. Elizabeth Boyd, 77 Brentwood Drive, San Rafael. Now, the interesting thing about Elizabeth is that her family have been in Marin since the 1860s. Is that correct, Betty?

EB: The late 1860's, I guess. My father was born here in 1872 and I think that his father came, as I understand, from Madison, Wisconsin, sometime in the '60s. Was here for a bit and then went back and brought back his bride.

CE: I see. Well, now, what brought your family initially to Marin? Did you ever hear the story? I see you've brought with you today some interesting artifacts. One of them is a fascinating journal written by a twelve year old boy, your grandfather, when he crossed by immigrant train from St. Louis to Placerville in 1852. This is an extraordinary document, Betty, and we'll discuss that as we go along. And you also have with you a scrapbook of your father, a collection of newsprint and some old photographs. Well, tell us what happened. Can you start from the beginning?

EB: Well, I never knew too much about my father's side of the family. My Grandfather Boyd was apparently sort of a carpenter or contractor combination.

CE: Well, the grandfather that came across the plains, his name was –

EB: Verdenal.

CE: John Verdenal.

EB: Right. This is my paternal grandfather. And he built the only building left in San Rafael, St. Paul's Church, which – He was one of the main people who built that. I think that he did the old B Street School, which was torn down, and other buildings. But he dropped dead on Fourth Street when he was about 40 years old. My father had one other brother, William, and three sisters. I think the family was left pretty much on their uppers. My father finished grammar school, then he went to commercial high school for two years, and –

CE: Where was he born?

EB: In San Rafael.

CE: Whereabouts?

EB: I'm not sure. There was a house on Mission Street right across from the McCarthy place. I believe it's torn down now. There's one standing, very similar and I'm not sure whether he was born there or not. Someone once – I think Emma Martinelli told me he had been born in that house, but you know, it's one of those things that you really don't know for sure.

CE: Well, that's almost like an affidavit.

EB: Yes. And so where he grew up, I don't know, but he went to commercial high school and he finished there, and apparently he was offered some kind of a job in an accountant's office and he didn't want it. He hired out as a carpenter, worked as a carpenter for two years, and studied law at night, and when he was 16 he got a job in the County, here, as a court reporter. He passed the bar examinations before he was 21. Well, the bar examinations then weren't what they are today. Then he commenced practice here in the county. From there, he became City Attorney. Then he was District Attorney for a number of years, and he was also President of the Board of Education for sixteen years. And after the present high school in San Rafael was built, he did not run again. There was a great ruckus about that, because it was considered to be so far out of San Rafael, a good many of the people didn't want it. A great many of the people were against my father when he'd run for the Board of Education, because all of his children were in private school. I and my sisters went to Dominican, and Tommy went to the Tamalpais School for Boys. But I think that was mainly because the type of community at that time had so many Portuguese children, Italian children, and I suppose he felt the connections were better, and also he aimed to improve the schools.

CE: That was his aim, to improve the schools.

EB: He didn't have an education; he believed in an education. The whole time he was an attorney, almost up to the time of his death, he took University Extension courses, in various things, Italian.

CE: Describe your father for us.

EB: Well, he was a very warm man, a very generous man, and I know that the community thought a great deal of him because they closed the schools for half a day when he died.

CE: What year did he die?

EB: In 1933, January 1933.

CE: There's a photograph here you've brought, Betty, and it's some occasion.

EB: Well, that was the most important occasion of my life. I was riding in a parade on Fourth Street.

CE: How old could you have been then?

EB: I think about six.

CE: Six maybe.

EB: I think so.

CE: You're all dressed up with a –

EB: White middy skirt.

CE: Middy skirt.

EB: Corded in red.

CE: And a big hair bow.

EB: This was taken on Third Street, and I think it was probably between A and Lindaro, I'm not too sure. I rather remember those funny little houses there. I begged and begged for him to take me in the parade, mainly because I wanted to ride a horse.

CE: Was he an avid horseman?

EB: Yes, he kept a horse at home. This was not his horse. This is his horse in the other picture, a little thoroughbred mare. And I didn't tell any of my friends, and I think the proudest moment of my life was on the corner of Fourth and B when they were all there for the parade, and I waved to them.

CE: That was your moment.

EB: Right. So, my father died in '33, and I know that mother wasn't well, and I was at the funeral parlor, and the doctor said that he had to be there because he was a prominent man, and people would be coming to the house, etc. And I never saw so many people that I'd never met before in my life who were crying. And among his papers we found any number of things where he'd lent a hundred dollars here, and so forth and so on. He died at the age of 60 which was rather young.

CE: District Attorney for how many years?

EB: It was 12 years, I think. I'm not too sure about that. I believe it's in that scrapbook there. I don't remember whether it was 1906 or 1902.

CE: How was he in sharing his time with his children? Did he teach you how to ride?

EB: Oh, yes, yes. And he used to take us every place. I was the eldest, so I took the place of the first son, and that was when I had my first overnight train ride. He had a case in Los Angeles.

CE: And he took you with him? How old were you then?

EB: He took me with him. Let's see, that was probably about 1916 or 1917. I was born in 1903. It was very exciting because we came home by boat.

CE: By boat. You go on the *Yale* or *Harvard*?

EB: No, it was a swamp boat. I forgot the name of it. It was sort of a tug boat. The war had tied up shipping quite a bit. And we were due in San Francisco at six that night, and we got in at nine or ten, and the boat had run out of food, and I think we had some soup, but for me it was very exciting. And while we were in Los Angeles we had dinner at the old Hotel Alexander, which I believe was one of the nice hotels then, and the waiter pointed out Charlie Chaplin to me.

CE: Another thrill.

EB: Another thrill.

CE: Well, he sounds like a wonderful dad.

EB: Well, he was, he truly was. He took my brother camping; bought my brother a horse.

CE: Was he strict?

EB: No. Mother was the one who did all the directing.

CE: She was the disciplinarian.

EB: If one really did something naughty, my father would come and talk to you very quietly. Had much more effect on me than Mother scolding me every time.

CE: Tell us the other members of your family now. You had your brother.

EB: Well, I'm the eldest.

CE: You're the eldest and you have a sister.

EB: I have a sister, Frances, who is married and lives in San Francisco who has –

CE: What is her name now?

EB: MacDonald.

CE: MacDonald.

EB: And her eldest daughter is Dolly MacDonald, who married Ken MacDonald from Albany, New York, who is associated with my brother in his law firm. They have four boys and they live in Greenbrae. Her other child John, lives in Novato and he has two little girls and a little boy.

CE: Then there's your brother.

EB: Then my sister Ruth.

CE: Oh, another sister.

EB: Ruth, who married Frank Nibley and she lives in San Francisco. She has two boys and a daughter. Her daughter lives in Kentfield, has three boys; one has just won the 14-year-old tennis tournament which the *IJ* and the Recreation Department put on, and then two other boys are twins, not identical. And Nan just finished serving on the Grand Jury. Ruth's two boys live in the Islands. One is Vice President for the First; it used to be Bishop Bank, but it's the First Hawaiian now. And the other is with one of Bechtel's insurance companies, and the eldest boy has two boys and Tommy has two little adopted girls. So the family is still very much in evidence.

CE: And you didn't tell us about your brother.

EB: Oh, Tom.

CE: Is he the baby?

EB: Yes, Tom is the baby. Tom is a bachelor, the youngest.

CE: Have you been close?

EB: We live together.

CE: Pretty close. Tell us about Tom.

EB: When Tom was about 11 he had a slight case of rheumatic fever, and the doctor said he was never to engage in competitive sports, so my father got him a horse, and then he got him a small sailboat. Tom went through the seventh grade, and my father intended to send him right through public schools, but Tommy apparently had the teachers all buffaloed because his father was President of the Board of Education. He was getting away with murder. So my father yanked him out and sent him to the Tamalpais School for Boys which was over on Grand Avenue at that time. He hated to go there because it was a "sissy school."

Terrible fight he put up. But he graduated with honors and he went on to the University of California. He was an Alpha Delta Phi there and track manager. I said he couldn't go in for sports and be active on the campus, and then he graduated from Boalt in the top third of his class and had offers from many of the good firms in San Francisco, but he preferred to come over here. And this was 1938-39 when the depression was still on. So Tom started out, and when the war came he even had his Draft Board changed, hoping that they'd miss the slight murmur, because he's always been healthy and a bachelor, but he was not accepted. He did a great deal of work with the Sea Scouts, and I think he was head of them from all the way to Salt Lake City. And he lived at home, and he's always had a boat. The boat is his wife, you know. It's a 46 foot schooner. He's been down to Mexico and around. Mother died in 1960. We both lived there, at home with her at the old house. They're pictures there.

CE: Where is the address of that old house?

EB: 1579 Lincoln Avenue.

CE: Because we like to get these addresses.

EB: Papa built that in 1906.

CE: 1906.

EB: And all the stone wall was from the quarry on our property; part of the stone wall is still there.

CE: How many acres did you have there?

EB: Well, we had 25 originally.

CE: Twenty-five.

EB: It's part of the Coleman Tract, and I think it was sold in parcels such as that. And my father bought there because we had all our own water. We had a spring on the place. And then I think probably not too long after they moved in in 1906 or 1907, whichever it was, part of the acreage was sold off which would be a little bit south of where the Kells are. The property which the Kells are on, we kept. There is over seven acres and there is a beautiful redwood grove, and that's where the spring was up on the hill. And then Mother, I guess it was in the '40s after the war, sold that piece to Kent and Minto. But we still had about an acre and a half on which this house was located.

CE: And you stayed on that until –

EB: Right. And the Kells did not buy the property from us. They bought it from whoever had it at that time.

CE: Yes.

EB: And that's when the other houses went up.

CE: Well, now let's get back to you, Betty. I can see you in this house from 1906 forward, until you sold it in '68, was it?

EB: '68, yes.

CE: Okay. Now your father and mother made the decision that you children were going to get a good education, and you went to Dominican.

EB: That's right.

CE: Grammar school and high school?

EB: Yes.

CE: Were you there when Sister Patrick –

EB: Oh, yes, Sister Patrick was –
CE: Was the President?
EB: No, no.
CE: But she was there?
EB: She was a student in the college part. In those days, we could get a license to drive a car when we were fourteen. And I was allowed to drive a car, so I was very popular with the college girls.
CE: You had your own wheels.
EB: Well, I didn't have my own wheels, but I had the car.
CE: But you had a car.
EB: And I came in very handy taking them down to Mrs. Stapp's, and so forth and so on.
CE: And what was Mrs. Stapp's, for the record? Sounds like a sweet shop.
EB: Oh, Mrs. Stapp's was on Fourth street.
CE: Do you know, Mrs. Kent, what she is talking about?
AK: Yes.
CE: Well, what is it?
AK: A candy store.
EB: It was a candy store, and all the convent girls used to go there, and Mrs. Stapp was a wonderful person. Actually where Le Petite Auberge is –
CE: Yes.
EB: Mrs. Stapp had a very great friend named Claude Barr, who was one of the Supervisors. Part of the Barr family here. And he built this little building, this little brick building, which is now Le Petite Auberge, and –
AK: Do you know?
CE: The French restaurant, yes.
EB: And the day it was opened, Mrs. Hine and a number of other people gave a tea for Mrs. Stapp, because she had been so marvelous to all their children. When they wanted to know where Morgan was, or somebody else, they'd call up Mrs. Stapp. Did you know that, Mrs. Kent?
AK: No, I didn't.
EB: And she had an orchid on her, and it was just marvelous.
EB: And she has since died, and her father has since died. And Mrs. Stapp would occasionally get all dressed up, and she'd have a big fox fur collar on her coat, and Pop would have his Cadillac, and they'd go out for the evening. It was a lovely thing, it really truly was, and everyone loved her very much. I don't mean loved her, but was very fond of her, and had a great deal of respect for her.
CE: You're not old enough to have remembered those baths down there.
EB: Vaguely.
CE: Vaguely. You knew where they were; you didn't go there.
EB: Oh, yes, right. I think I was there a couple of times.
CE: Were you?
EB: And it seems to me that we went there to see some swimming events.
AK: Yes, they were there a long time.
EB: Yes, I think maybe it was until 1920 or so before they burned down.
AK: A little more.

CE: There's some interesting stories that I've heard about you that I wonder if you could share with us. When you were very young you had a compassionate nature then, and I hear that you befriended a young man and fed him. A man who was a most unusual man.

EB: Oh, that story. Well, he was unusual in the sense that he had escaped from San Quentin, and my father was District Attorney.

CE: Well, how did this come about? How did this ever happen?

EB: Well, the house next door on our right was empty.

CE: Right from this house here.

EB: Yes, where the William Murrays lived later on, you know, the bank people. I used to love detective stories, and I think I was quite a romanticist in a way. And I saw this man over there wandering around, and I don't know whether I knew he had escaped. On the far side of the house there was an oriel window that was broken, so –

CE: He didn't have any sort of clothes on that would indicate –

EB: None that I recollect. It was pretty hazy that I can remember, except that I remember going over there, and after school I would take some bread and jelly or an apple and put it on this oriel window, and then I'd look to see if it were gone. Charlotte Brown, who went to the convent with me, I remember, I took over there one day. And I never actually saw him, to speak to that I can remember. But I had some notepaper that somebody had given me, and it was from Shreve's, and it had a red and white candy stripe line, and I guess I wrote him a note to see if he had enough to eat. Well, shortly after that, the man was picked up and taken down to County Jail, and my father was District Attorney at the time. My father came home and he said, "Do you have some note paper with red and white stripes on it?" and I said, "Yes." I don't ever remember his scolding me. I suppose he was so relieved there hadn't been any untoward occurrence.

CE: Yes. Well, that was perceptive of him to even ask. How did he know?

EB: Well, he probably recognized my handwriting.

CE: That's a great story.

EB: Sometimes I tell it because I think it's very funny.

CE: I think it's wonderful. Did you have any pets when you were growing up? You had your horse?

EB: Oh. No, I always wanted a horse. Mother grew up in San Francisco. She wasn't a country girl. She was always rather afraid. My father did get me a horse once, and mother thought it was too frisky, and I was never allowed to keep one. So all I wanted for my birthday were riding tickets from the Youngren Stable.

CE: Where was that?

EB: That was on the corner of Third and Lincoln on the southwest corner.

CE: What's the name of it again?

EB: It was Youngren, Y-o-u-n-g-r-e-n. They were Scandinavian, and they were martinets. They taught English riding. Later on, actually after I was out of college and my marriage had broken up and I was home again, the Youngrens occasionally in the spring would pasture some of their horses on our property in back, and Tom and I had the privilege of riding them.

CE: Great, great.

EB: But I had a very active life. Mother Raymond, from the Convent, once said to me after I was a grown woman, she said, “I think I never knew a child who enjoyed life as much as you did.”

CE: What were some of the things you did?

EB: Well, the Hitchcock boys were wonderful. There were two military academies then when I was growing up, the Hitchcock Military Academy, which was very close to where we lived, and the Tamalpais.

CE: Where was that Hitchcock? Can you –

EB: Yes, it was at Grand Avenue where the Marist Academy was, and where the Marin Tennis Club is now.

CE: Is that where the Hitchcock was?

EB: Yes, it was that whole complex.

CE: Okay, got it.

EB: And dancing school was attended there.

CE: Did you resist any of these things, or did –

EB: Oh, no, no, I loved them. The Hitchcock dances and their football games and track meets were really big events. And, of course, the Hitchcock boys loved to be invited over to play tennis and have ice cream.

CE: Sounds like a beautiful life.

EB: But these dances – We were never unchaperoned. We were never allowed out of the place without a chaperone. Even when the dance itself was chaperoned by the –

CE: You managed to have a good time, didn’t you?

EB: Oh, yes. Mrs. Sharon and her husband owned it then, gave the boys a little room which was called a “cozy room.” For the big dance of the year they were allowed to decorate it, and there would always be one little corner that ferns would be put up. Or they’d get branches of trees, and maybe you might sit behind there for a minute with your beau, and he might hold your hand, and maybe get a quick kiss. It was really a great life.

CE: Was life at Dominican, when you were there, strict?

EB: Well, I was a day scholar.

CE: Day scholar.

EB: And it was strict, there’s no question about that. And I think there was – when I was a distress to the good sisters.

CE: What made you choose to leave that climate and go over to the University of California?

EB: Well, I really didn’t have anything to say about it. In those days, our parents planned things, and I think – And actually, Mother Raymond made it very difficult for me to graduate, because the college part had not been going too long, and she was trying to build up the college, and I’d done very well in school, but I had not passed my geometry. I took it from her and I think I was scared to death of her. And so, she wouldn’t give me a recommendation, so my father went to see her. I guess he persuaded her in some manner. He did all their legal work free, for example, and I know that she thought a great deal of him. So I went to Berkeley and I had to take geometry over again there, and I zipped right through and I

made all my grades, B average, so I wasn't any disgrace to Dominican, you see. And my two sisters went to Berkeley, too.

CE: What were your interests when you were going to the University of California? You were in Letters and Science?

EB: Liberal arts.

CE: Liberal arts.

EB: Letters and Science. I was a history major and English minor. I was, believe it or not, Captain and Manager of the freshman crew. We rowed whaleboats on Lake Merritt. And our big race was against Mills College, and I was the starboard stroke, and the minute the race started, the port stroke broke her oar, so you can imagine where we ended up. And then, I think it isn't still in existence, but I was a founding member of the Crop and Saddle Club. And I was on the Blue and Gold edition for my class; all the regular activities when you belong to a house in which you became involved.

CE: Would you consider that experience one of your rich ones, that U.C. Berkeley?

EB: Oh, yes, except, looking back, I think that I was never meant to live in a sorority house. I think in a sense I'm not a good person that way. But I enjoyed it.

CE: Did you come home weekends?

EB: Oh, yes, and it used to take about two hours then.

CE: Tell us how you did that.

EB: Well, we would ordinarily take the train to Sausalito, and then the ferry boat to San Francisco, and the ferry boat to Oakland, and then the Shattuck Avenue train. You change at Alcatraz, and you get off at College and Durant. Our house was on Durant. And on weekends we'd come home, and we'd bring our laundry, and –

CE: And then you'd reverse the procedure on the weekend.

EB: Yes.

CE: That's right, because the ferry, Berkeley to Richmond –

EB: I think the Richmond Ferry had probably not started yet.

CE: Hadn't started.

EB: We didn't have cars anyway to go on.

CE: No.

EB: Incidentally, getting back to my father's share in the Richmond Ferry, we had passes on the Golden Gate Ferry, and the Richmond Ferry, and the Sears Point toll road, because he did a great deal of work for Speas and Ashby Stewart, legal work, who had controlling interest then, and he was also a director of the Ridgecrest Boulevard –

AK: Do you have those stock certificates?

EB: I know we should have.

CE: You might look through your stuff, if you have some.

EB: I doubt it.

CE: Well, Mrs. Kent saves all these things.

EB: Well, I wish we had.

AK: No, I didn't save them all either. I used to have some of those passes, too.

CE: Well, you have some wonderful things.

EB: One thing I really didn't get into my drawer – I did keep a few old things, but is a wonderful newspaper photograph, a photograph of *Examiner and Chronicle*, of a

Red Cross tea that was given at Mrs. Truxton Beale's during the war. I also forgot to mention about my father, he was Mr. Republican from Sausalito to Eureka.

CE: Mr. Republican.

EB: Yes and he also ran the Liberty Bond drive during World War I, and was head of the Draft Board.

CE: Dedicated man.

EB: Yes.

AK: Working for the new Golden Gate Bridge. They had to make the nine counties all together. He worked for that.

CE: He worked in that effort.

EB: And you asked me about his taking me places. It just came to mind in mentioning this he would take me, and do you remember Margaret Foster?

AK: Oh, yes.

EB: This was for Liberty Bonds. Up to Inverness, to the old Yacht Club for a rally. I can remember being in the fire department here at Larkspur and all over the county.

CE: That's great.

AK: We all seem to be mixed up on the number of different Boyd families there are. Could you explain?

EB: Well, as far as I know there were three Boyd families before the turn of the century in San Rafael. The George Boyd Family. And George Boyd married Margaret Kittle who lived here in Ross. The John Boyd family, he had two boys and a daughter. The two boys died at a very early age, and Boyd Park was given in their memory; Louise Boyd, who was a very famous person in her own right.

CE: Explorer?

EB: Explorer. And my father's family, Thomas Boyd, his father was a contractor. My father became a lawyer. He had a brother, William, who owned the Sausalito News, and he was the Postmaster of Sausalito for many years. None of us were related; were always being confused. One time I was up in Bridgeport at a ranch, the Honeywell Ranch. I was introduced to a Mrs. Dunn from Pasadena. And the first thing she said to me, "Are you one of the Boyd's from San Rafael?" and I said, "Yes, but not the social register Boyds." Another time we were at a yacht club party, and a lady came up to me, and she had had a little too much. Tommy, my brother, was on one side of me, and Mickey Boyd, the grandson of George Boyd, was on the other side, and she was very insistent that she had read all about me, and seen my picture in the paper going to the opera, and my orchids. And I tried to explain to her that we were no relation. She was thinking of Louise Boyd. Mickey Boyd said, "Betty, we're kissing cousins." Tommy couldn't take it any longer, and he said, "If you really want to know, Louise Boyd is our spinster grandmother!"

CE: That's wonderful. Your grandfather was a builder?

EB: Yes.

CE: Did he build one of those older homes on E Street that Ambrose Bierce is supposed to have lived in?

EB: He – I don't know whether he built those or not, but I was born in the house that Ambrose Bierce lived in.

CE: You were?
EB: Yes.
CE: Give us the address of that, Betty.
EB: Oh, I've forgotten. It was 812 or 810 E.
CE: E Street, right?
EB: And we lived there up to the time my father finished the house on Lincoln Avenue.
CE: I see.
EB: Mother came there as a bride, and his two sisters lived a couple of houses up from him. I think my father had bought houses from his mother and the aunts. And the old high school was on E Street, just up the block from us, across the street. I can remember –
CE: Would you locate that old school? Is that almost where the branch of the Bank of Marin now is, on the corner of Fourth and E?
EB: It's on the southwest corner, Fourth and E, southwest corner. And the Redwood Bank is right across the street from it.
CE: I see.
EB: And then, right on that same place across the street, do you remember that darling church, Anne?
AK: Yes.
EB: With the wonderful pine tree there.
AK: Wasn't that the one that was moved, or no?
EB: No. The high school was not on the corner. It was St. Paul's Church that was on the corner there, and that was the one that was moved to its present location.
CE: I see.
EB: And I can remember that very well because my great friend, Kathleen Bradley, her father was a minister there for quite a long time, and I used to go down to her, where they lived on Fourth Street. The old house is still there where the minister lived. I noticed it the other day.
AK: He's the one who afterward became the head of the old Tamalpais Center.
EB: I think so. I first went – Because I was raised a Catholic, I first went to this gymnasium at this old church when I was six years old. There was a gym class on Saturday mornings which Miss Whitchy conducted.
CE: Miss Whitchy?
EB: That's all I – I don't remember how her name was spelled.
CE: That's great.
EB: And maybe it wasn't that. Maybe it was my childish pronunciation, but I remember that was lots of fun.
CE: Well, it seems to me that your parents really planned your activities and your education and your life. It was quite structured. And then you just enjoyed it and worked around it. You didn't appear to be at loose ends.
EB: Oh, no, no.
CE: Come Sunday, Saturday, you had things to do.
EB: Yes. And then, you see, my sister Frances was very, very ill for a long time. She was about 2 ½ when one day she just didn't walk. To make a long story short, my

father had Dr. Wickman, who was a doctor then who said her head was too large for her body. Then Dr. Sherman – You know the Shermans.

AK: Yes.

EB: And he wanted to break her spine in two, which my father wouldn't allow. When we moved, I found all his old medical books, apparently, which he perused, and then my father ran into a Dr. Hunken, a bone man in San Francisco, who brought her around. But she was sick for about four years and not walking. I won't go into all the details now. But anyway, I think that I had my own way a great deal, too, because Mother wouldn't know where I was, and she'd say, "Where have you been?" And I'd just been for a little walk down the –

CE: All the energies were centered and turned towards your sister.

EB: I remember going to the San Rafael hill and picking a spray of poppies and brodiaea. I never minded going off alone like that for some reason or other, and you could in those days.

CE: You weren't too far from that tunnel.

EB: No, no, and there weren't too many houses.

CE: There weren't too many houses.

EB: We were really out of town, so to speak.

CE: Yes.

AK: I'm thinking Tom remembered going to Bolinas on the stage, and Dolly Jenkins remembered –

EB: I can't remember going on the stage, but I've been told I was taken over when I was six weeks old.

CE: Were you?

EB: Over the mountain. And the family stayed with Mrs. Hiram North. And Hiram North was one of the stage drivers, and that's where mother learned to make apple pie. And that old Nott House is still there.

AK: That's still there yet.

EB: And every summer we – When I was growing up, we didn't own a house in Bolinas then, but we rented a cottage, or we stayed at one of the boarding houses: Mrs. Gilfillan's or – I can't think of the other man's name down there who had the Bolinas Villa. And even some summers, if the family didn't go over, I would go over and stay at the Villa and someone would chaperone me there. I loved Bolinas very much. And then later on we owned a house up on top of the little mesa. And curiously enough, the George Boyd Family had a house at the other end of the little mesa.

CE: Was this house that you acquired in Bolinas, at one time occupied by the Wisbys?

EB: Oh, yes. Mr. Wisby owned the house.

CE: Did you know him?

EB: Oh, yes. I think – I recollect Mr. Murray – I think Mr. Wisby was ill, and he needed money, so he really had to sell the house, and Mr. Murray told my father, and they bought the house in the late '20s. I think Mr. Wisby outlived my father by four or five or six years. Anyway, we enjoyed it very much, and the reason Mother sold it in the mid '40s is because we lost out front about 15 to 20 feet of cliff.

CE: Oh, it was right up there.

EB: Yes. We could see the Legion of Honor on a clear day, and it worried her. I'm sure it will be there in my lifetime. But it's right back to the front fence.

CE: The house is still there?

EB: Yes. And the Audubon Canyon Ranch – There's a picture of it, before we bought it, I think, when Wisby first built it, and the title is "Erosion."

AK: You could look down on Dolly's house.

EB: Right. Or the Kent's, or anybody's.

AK: And his sisters had the house right on top of the hill.

EB: Yes. And they bought that from Mr. Williams, who is head of the Tamalpais School for Boys, who had built it after a place he had lived in in China.

CE: You mentioned earlier, Betty, that your mother was a good friend of Dolly Jenkins.

EB: No.

CE: Or was it her mother?

EB: No, I mentioned that her mother, Dolly's mother, was the first one to call on my mother. Actually, Dolly Jenkins, I used to see her in Bolinas. I'd see Jim. And she would have her three children on the beach. And I used to think if I could be like that person when I grow up, and be married to a man who looked like that –

CE: You'd be happy. Well, we just think she is a great person, and you know her now so well –

EB: Yes, I think she is, too.

CE: You used to go over every week, you told me, and take her out.

EB: Well, I did after I retired.

CE: How did that come about, Betty? When she moved to San Francisco?

EB: Well, when Jim had died, and she was alone, and she had periods of depression, and she had always been so very, very kind to me at a time when I needed it, that I always felt very grateful, besides liking her very much. So, I would go over every Wednesday, or every two weeks and we would go on a jaunt. And Dolly was a wonderful person and she had all these weird places she wanted to go. And I saw a great deal of San Francisco which I never would have seen otherwise. We spent two days at Hunters Point, just rambling around.

CE: She's adventurous.

EB: Right. And then after a while she didn't feel so well again. But I saw her last fall and she –

CE: Well, she's come alive again, and she's written her family history for all of her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren, isn't it?

AK: Yes.

CE: And she had photographs and had copies made, and she is into it.

EB: She was very active in Bolinas at the time that I was over there, and actually I was, for a year, "Mayor" of Bolinas. I should put mayor in quotes because anyone who was President of the Bolinas Club they called the unofficial mayor. And there are lots of wonderful stories about those days, too. For example, the comfort station which is in the park: that went up, I think, before I became President and Eddie Pape was the architect. Eddie wanted to put the very best up, and he put the very best fixtures in. The only problem was they had to be replaced

because the Bolinas pressure was not sufficient to operate these fixtures. Things like that engaged our meetings.

CE: Who were some of the families you remember when you were going over there? Were the Dibbles going there then?

EB: Oh, the Dibbles and the Guthries and the Suhrs. S-u-h-r-s. He was a big undertaker in San Francisco.

AK: He came after and took the Newhall House.

EB: Yes. And the Sharps were there before the Newhalls. They built that house. Old Dr. Bradford built that.

AK: Oh, I never knew.

EB: When I was a child, we lived on G Street in San Rafael, and Dr. Sharp was very strict. At 7:30 at night, if his daughters were on the beach, he would blow the whistle and they would have to come. Then we'd go out and play kick the can and come in a little bit later. Then the Newhalls bought that from the Sharps and then it became an inn for a while. And the Sharons, I guess, took it over to the present.

CE: Do you still go over there, Betty?

EB: Not very much. Oh, I remember all the Pepper family, too, and also the Howards, Henry Howard, and the Kents. If I had my album here with all the pictures – And there are many people that came up from San Francisco for the summer. The Merritt girls; their father was an attorney in the city.

CE: Well, how would you get out there? Mostly by car?

EB: Yes. My father, I think, had the third automobile in San Rafael. He bought a car in 1910. And it used to take us maybe three hours over White's Hill to get to Bolinas. It was a journey. When we went over in the summertime, he would usually take us in the car and then he'd come on weekends. And he would ordinarily go up to – take the train from Mill Valley up to West Point and then walk down. And if we weren't too tired he'd walk to the end of the sand spit and whistle or call for someone to come over in a rowboat and bring him across to Bolinas.

CE: That's a good hike.

EB: Other times he would go up to McKennan, who had a motorboat, and McKennan would take him over for ten cents or twenty-five cents or something like that.

CE: Dolly's got a photograph of McKennan's Pier. And there's a stick up there, and she said now that stick is very important. There was a road that went on the east side of the lagoon, and if that stick was covered with water you couldn't get past a certain point; there was a low spot in the road. Do you remember something like that?

EB: No, I don't remember that.

CE: So you'd always watch that stick and the tide.

EB: I remember another time, my father had a launch, I guess they'd call them cruisers today, and he'd come up once in a while to Bolinas in the summer. I had a great party one time, he had me and all my friends. We went over to McKennan's Gulch.

AK: A cute little house and that's all that's left of it.

CE: You had a great outdoor life, didn't you, when you think, between San Rafael and going over to Bolinas.

EB: Yes, it really truly was. And another thing, as a child in Bolinas, I remember for example one night when Mrs. Bradley, she was the Dean's wife, the minister's wife, had a little party for her daughter, Kathleen. And two rowboats were hired, and we piled in the rowboats and went over to the sand spit where there were dunes and beautiful rows of pampas grass. I think it was pampas grass, wasn't it, Anne?

CE: I hope not, but that's what it seems.

EB: And we had a party out there. I don't think we had hot dogs; I guess ice cream or something on that order.

CE: Tell me – We might as well talk about it now. I know you have been very active in the Tamalpais Trail Riders. You have served as Secretary and Treasurer, I believe.

EB: That's right.

CE: Were you in on the beginning of that, Betty?

EB: I was one of the founding members of it. I guess Doris Schmiedell and I are the only ones living today that –

CE: How does that come about, something like that?

EB: Well, there weren't too many riders then. The Tamalpais Conservation Club was a very active organization. It maintained the trails on the mountain. And as I understand it, there were hikers who objected to horseback riders breaking down the trails. So, I think it was really through the efforts of Mrs. Harry Moore and Doris that this small group was gotten together. And the aim was to maintain trails and to work with the Marin Municipal Water District to build new trails. And that we did. We built a number of new trails up there.

CE: Did you form articles of incorporation and were you chartered by the state and all that?

EB: Yes we did. Harry Scott, who was President of General Steamship Company, was one of our early Presidents. Mr. Harry Moore –

CE: Is that the same Harry Scott who was the first Mayor of Ross?

EB: Yes.

CE: And Ross was incorporated in 1907.

EB: Right. He was a mayor in Ross, I know. If he was the first one, I don't know. And Mrs. Harry Moore, and Doris, and myself, and a gentleman by the name of Tommy Beckett came in. It was a small group to start with. I think the largest number when I was active was about 125 people. People from San Francisco – We really had some great times. We'd ask the Water District each time we wanted to have a breakfast ride on the property, or any activity of that sort, and we observed all their rules and asked anyone else to, such as no smoking on the trails or cutting brush and so forth. One of our best treks was a three-day overnight ride, which the Kent family was quite active in.

AK: You know where it was? Tom and I helped cook that meal and it must be where the Kent Lake is now.

EB: Well, it's not quite, but it's up at the end there.

AK: I'd never been there before, nor since.

EB: It was the old Deer Club. We rode to Bolinas from the Meadow Club, and we stayed at Lumley's Tavern. Dolly Jenkins had a cocktail party for us that night

and there were twenty-one on the trip, and they were all ages. Our youngest were eighteen and nineteen. Nancy Caruthers and Mary Keekler and Betty Barnes up to Russ Smith and I think Russ was probably about the eldest. Ernest Stratten was along. And the wives were invited who didn't ride, to join us at dinnertime and spend the night. Gladys Smith came the first night, and I think maybe she saw that it was a very decent crowd. She didn't come the second night. The next day we rode along from Bolinas up to the Tevis Ranch to Olema, and we put our horses up in the big red barn that's on at the Point Reyes National Seashore. Some Trail Rider friends of ours were leasing the property and they met us. And we arranged for the horses there, and we stayed at Nelson's Tavern overnight.

CE: Now that's the crossroads of Sir Francis Drake and Highway 1.

EB: Right.

CE: Right in Olema

EB: Right in Olema. And then the next day we rode up past the cemetery on top of the ridge, and dropped down into the area which is now Kent Lake and then up the creek to – I've forgotten the name of that Deer Club. The Water District closed it about four or five years ago. And Mr. and Mrs. Kent had come in with lunch for us there. And their daughters had drawn us up for the darlingest little program for the weekend.

CE: How nice.

EB: It was really quite an outstanding event. I think it might be interesting to mention that outside of any money that was spent in a bar; all it cost any individual was \$6.50: hay for the horses, two nights' lodging.

CE: What a time and a wholesome –

EB: They brought their own lunches.

AK: Was Dr. Stanley there then, too?

EB: No. Dr. Stanley was not on that ride. I think he wasn't here then, or he was still in Sausalito.

AK: Ernest Stratton, who I think just died this month, had been sick.

EB: He had been very sick.

AK: And his wife was with us. She helped us on the cooking. And she was worried all the time because it was the hardest thing he had done since he'd been sick, and he came in just blossoming. He just loved it.

EB: This was Decoration Day, May, 1941. Just before World War II.

AK: Something like that. I couldn't remember.

CE: Are you still active in this organization, Betty?

EB: No, I maintain membership just as a matter of sentiment, but I hardly know anyone anymore.

CE: Do you still ride?

EB: No, I rode up until about ten years ago, I guess, and then I didn't have a horse and I actually didn't want one when I retired. But I was offered horses quite frequently.

AK: I think your horse was the only one that was tethered at that stand, or whatever you call it. It belonged to Mrs. Kent before. We had no horse, and you came with your horse.

EB: Oh, yes. During the war I didn't have a car and I would ride my horse around.

CE: You did?
EB: And I came out for lunch one day.
CE: Did you?
EB: With Mr. Bill Kent.
CE: Of course, you were still living in the big house then.
EB: Yes, oh yes.
CE: As long as you could keep a horse there, it was wonderful.
EB: We had plenty of room. Actually, I kept my horse usually in the summertime at the Marin Stables, and then I would keep them home in the wintertime. But we had the barn there from when we had horses, and we had a loft and we had plenty of room.
CE: Betty, we haven't touched on your vocation. You've mentioned a couple of times, after you retired – I understood – Is this correct? You were in the trading business, stocks.
EB: Yes.
CE: Isn't that a rather extraordinary thing for a gal?
EB: I was married right after I got out of college, and I was married for four years and then it broke up. And I went to business school because it was the only way to get a job. I think I went to business school three months. Then a friend of mine who was there knew a young man who was working for a man named Walter Duesenberg. I think this young man thought that he could get his girl a job. She didn't want it, so I went over there. Mr. Duesenberg –
CE: What year are we talking about?
EB: This was 1932, I guess. And Mr. Duesenberg had a tremendous firm. Duesenberg, Whitman, they were New York, Honolulu, etc. and he sold it out to Dean Witter just before the crash.
CE: I never knew that.
EB: And he had this little office, a dear man, at San Francisco, an over-the-counter trading operation. He was very interested in his gold mines. And I walked into this office and he said, "Now, you're a college graduate so you can sit down there and learn as much as you can about this." And I wasn't an expert secretary. I'd never hired out as a secretary, and just three months of business school. So he sat me down at this board and I didn't know the difference between a bid and an ask. And the other man who was working there was reputed to be one of the smartest men on Montgomery Street, but he apparently had bad habits with the bottle. He disappeared and we never saw him again. And I was there for a year and Mr. Duesenberg decided to concentrate on his gold mines, and his shop was closed. I'd made some contacts on the street and I was hired by Wheatman Company. Then Roosevelt came into office, and Mr. Wheatman told me I might as well take a vacation, go to Europe, which meant I was no longer hired. And about that time, it was a short time before my father died, and I was living in town and had just gotten another job when he died, and this was January '33. I came home. March came and the banks folded, and so forth. So I stayed home for about a year and a half and cleaned up, with the attorney that took over my father's legal work and helped him in the office. Then I had a chance to go to work for a Los Angeles

firm called William R. Stotts Company which had a branch office in San Francisco. And I was there for ten years.

CE: Was this a brokerage house?

EB: William R. Stotts Company were members of the San Francisco and Los Angeles Exchanges. And I really learned the business here, because after I'd been there three months there was another man who had trouble with the bottle, and he was fired, and I was put in charge of the office for four or five months. And they, besides being members of the local exchanges, dealt in government bonds, municipal securities, and over-the-counter stocks, so I had a general education. I was with them for ten years. I was classified as an assistant trader and outside of myself there was only one other person on the street, an older person by the name of Elizabeth Baychard, who later was a partner in Ellsworth Company, and has since died.

CE: You mean there were just you two women?

EB: Who were recognized.

CE: Who were recognized.

EB: We were invited very often to the bond traders' parties, and other parties which were purely masculine. So ten years later, for various reasons, I decided to leave the firm, and I stayed home for about three months and then got tired of that and went to work for Lee Kaiser who was a member of the New York Stock Exchange and who also has a similar operation. And Lee had a very fine office and I was there for a year. Times were not good. This was right after the war. He closed his Seattle office. Personnel came from there, relatives, etc., and so I no longer had a job. And I decided to get out of the business altogether. So I went to work for the Community Chest as administrative assistant to the campaign manager. And it was really very bad because I thought that my 14 year-old nephew could be doing what I was doing, and I felt that I had to stick it out for a year, but I was relieved because Mr. Peterson, who became Chairman of the Community Chest that year, sent over some of his experts to check the Chest over, and they expected to be there three weeks and they were there three months. Probably saw as much waste and duplication as I did. So their recommendation was that there be no more titles outside of someone who might be head of a certain division, to allot monies etc. and that no one be fired, but everyone be put into a stenographic pool. So I had the opportunity of resigning gracefully, and so I took another three or four months vacation and then I took a job with a man by the name of Phil Fisher, who had a very small operation. He was a very fine gentleman. And the Harris Bank of Chicago had decided to open an office after the war, and Mack Lewis was in charge, and I'd known him when he worked for C. J. Devine and Company. So Mack wanted me very much to come to work for him, because it was a one-man operation and I knew people on the street, and I knew the business locally and I didn't feel as though I could leave Mr. Fisher unless quite a bit more money were offered, which it was. So I worked for the Harris Bank of Chicago for eighteen years, and –

CE: Well, all those years, Betty, you were living in San Francisco?

EB: In San Rafael.

CE: In San Rafael.

EB: Except for a couple of winters when I was making the market opening, and then I lived in San Francisco just for the winter months because otherwise it meant getting the 5:25 milk train out of here and not getting home until five or six at night the way the trains and ferries ran.

CE: So you did it all right in San Rafael?

EB: No, I was employed in San Francisco, but I lived at home in San Rafael. The Harris Bank could deal in nothing but tax-free bonds because they were a bank, and government securities. And we ran quite an operation; we had the whole west coast and a direct line to Chicago and New York.

CE: An extraordinary thing.

EB: And for two people, our biggest year was 97 million, sales of securities. So when people ask me what I did there and I say, "Well, I did everything." I was licensed by the state; I had a license to buy and sell. Mack would go away and I'd have charge of the office.

CE: To counter young people today who are so with it with women's liberation, etc., did you, as a lone woman then, with this other gal who was considered on the street, have any feelings that you were not being treated fairly, or –

EB: Well, I think I didn't have them so much, but everybody else did because I wasn't paid an equal sum.

CE: That didn't bother you?

EB: Well, no, it never really did, because I always felt I was being paid money. It was my duty to do a job and to do the best I could. Actually, I felt that I received benefits in other ways which people didn't in those days.

CE: For example?

EB: Well, Pete Russell was President of the Harris Bank. He was in our office. He said to Mack Lewis, with whom I worked, he said, "Mack, I think if Betty is going to be with us, she'd better come back and visit the bank in Chicago." And so this was arranged. I was the first woman who had ever been brought in from outside. There was a small office in St. Louis and one in New York. And I was put up at the Palmer House. I traveled first-class and the first night I was there the President and Vice President took me out and arranged for dinner and theater tickets, and so every so often I was brought back to Chicago and I was treated just as though I were a high-salaried person.

CE: Without having to push for it and demand it, which seems to be the trend.

EB: And when I retired, they had me back for my graduation, so to speak, and the Chairman of the Board had a luncheon party for me in the Director's Room and a dinner that night at one of the country clubs. And I valued all of these associations very, very much. And I'd like to put in a plug about the Harris Bank, too, because they were the first bank – well, I mean the first people in the country – I think, just a little ahead of Sears, Roebuck who in 1916 put in a profit sharing plan for their employees. Then in 1941 or '42 they felt as if some of their employees might not have enough out of the profit sharing, so they put in a pension plan, out of which not one cent of an employee's salary ever went.

CE: They were certainly ahead of their time, weren't they?

EB: They certainly were.

CE: Now, did you stay with them until you totally retired?

EB: Yes, and I had to – women had to retire at an earlier age than they do now. And so I retired 10 years ago.

AK: Is it still running?

EB: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Actually, before the banking act went in, the Harris Bank had offices in Paris, London, all over, and the First of Boston Corporation is an outgrowth of their bond business. There was also Chase, Harris, Forbes which was also very well-known firm in those days. And it was a family bank, and you were treated as one of the family. I'm very proud of this association.

CE: I can see that, and understandably.

EB: Anyway, when I retired, they sent someone out to take my picture because I was written up in the paper, and they asked me what I was going to do with my retirement. And I said, "Well, I love the great out-of-doors," and I was just as happy in a pair of blue jeans as I was in an evening dress or going to the opera or something like that, which is true. So most of the time since I've been retired I've been floating around in something better than a pair of blue jeans and doing a great deal for Marin Audubon and Audubon Canyon Ranch keeping house for my brother, and that's about it.

CE: Tell us, Betty, I know that your brother is interested in boating. Do you share this interest?

EB: I love the water but I only go along as a passenger. He's a male chauvinist.

CE: Regarding boats.

EB: But before he trained the boys and went out with them, why, I used to be handy in the galley and I still am handy to a certain extent. When he goes on a cruise I make them an Apache stew or something like that, which they take along.

CE: But short little trips.

EB: Oh, I go out on Sundays.

CE: On Sundays and out the Delta.

EB: Well, not overnight because actually I wouldn't care much about going. Tom's boat is a 46-foot schooner. It takes a crew, and the quarters are such with the head and the bunks, it's really not a place for a woman overnight. It's not like one of the nice cruisers that –

CE: Well, now, your brother is, what, about 10 years younger?

EB: Ten years younger than I.

EB: Right. And he's senior partner, and it's Nelson, Boyd, MacDonald and Tarrant. Dave Menary was one of the partners. He's is now a judge. And Tom Nelson died a couple of years ago, so Tom's really the senior partner.

CE: As you grew up in San Rafael, did you know the Martinellis?

EB: Very well. And my father, I think, was a rival of Jordan Martinelli's father in the early days running for certain things. When you grew up in San Rafael you knew practically everybody in those days, Carla. You remember, Anne, you could walk up Fourth Street and I'd know the shoe black man; you'd go to Albert's which was a big department store, and you'd know everybody in there, and whoever ran the movie house. A great life.

CE: Well, everybody we've met during this project we're involved in shows that same warmth as you do. Certainly the Freitas family does, the Martinellis.

EB: Of course, there were many other things like the old Marin Golf and Country Club, which was part of my life growing up.

CE: Tell us about that. Where was that located?

EB: Well, that's out in east San Rafael, called the Country Club area now. It has a nine-hole golf course and a swimming pool and dances.

CE: There was much more social life within the community.

EB: Well, people didn't have as much to do. We'd ride our bikes out there, or ride our horses over, or even hike over. And it was really a great life. Weren't afraid to walk.

AK: The young man who talked about the Pony Express, took it over and owned it –

EB: Yes.

CE: How did that come about? What do you mean "owned it the Pony Express"?

EB: Well, actually the Marin Golf and Country Club – There were certain members who wanted an 18-hole golf course, and there was a split, and that was the origin, how the Meadow Club started. And the war years came along, and the Marin Golf and Country Club had quite a hard time and I've forgotten whether it went into bankruptcy or what. But then this Smith – Wasn't that his name, Anne?

AK: Yes. I forget his first name; kind of a funny fellow.

EB: And he was a – You probably know more about this –

AK: Well, I don't know too much.

CE: Did he buy the property and the clubhouse?

AK: He bought the whole thing and has made it a little museum of the Pony Express. A little house in back still is –

CE: You mean he's a history buff interested in –

AK: So far as that's concerned. Now, he was very interested in – He told many things about the Pony Express that people thought were not exactly so. But anyway, it was the big thing in his life. He talked Pony Express – He just thought there was no other interest in life for him. Now he's dead and the place is still a museum and I don't think anybody had taken the things away. It's still there.

EB: Oh, incidentally, speaking of Marin Golf and Country Club, the Marin Yacht Club is really an outgrowth of that because there's a little land down there. I've forgotten, think it was Summers Peterson.

AK: Yeah.

EB: I used to go there when we could swim in the canal. Just a few people had boats and we used to –

AK: Mr. Hind must have had a great deal to do with it.

EB: I don't remember Mr. Hind. I'll tell you who else. There was Captain Cook. Lucy Cook is still alive, his sister. That is now the private Yacht Club in here in the county.

CE: Were any of the McNear family –

EB: And Tom is the oldest living charter member of that now.

AK: Oh.

CE: Your brother is?

EB: Yes, he started as a junior member.

CE: Is that where Russell keeps his boat?

EB: Yes, Russ keeps his boat there.

CE: Did you play with any of the McNear children, or know them?
EB: Oh, yes, I knew them all. Actually, I live in Glenwood now and Miller McNear, before he died, was at the house a few years ago. And I said, "Miller, where was it where we used to ride out of your back yard, and over to past China Camp?" And he said, "Well, you know Knight Drive, there?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, the creek's right in back and we used to ride right up hill over the gap." I used to ride with him a great deal, particularly after Kate McNear, I mean Kate Bradley. Dee Bradley's daughter married Miller McNear and that's really about the time I came to go.

CE: Did you ever ride over to China Camp?
EB: Oh, yes.
CE: Do you have any memories of that?
EB: We'd go out to China Camp and for 25 cents we'd buy a big bag of shrimp and a bottle of beer and eat the shrimp and drink the beer and tie up our horses.
CE: At one time there were supposed to have been close to 3,000 Chinese there.
EB: Well, I don't remember that. I just –
AK: That would have been very, very early.
CE: Oh, before your time, I realize that, but now there are none left, are there?
AK: Well, yes. I don't know.
CE: Well, the shrimp disappeared, too, didn't they?
EB: They're coming back.
CE: They are?
EB: Yes.
AK: It must be where Stanley goes.
EB: Well, that Kent Grace, she died, I think, but it's still going but whether it's a relative or not, I do not know.

CE: Betty, now, we've concentrated on your father a little bit but we've neglected your mother. You said she was a San Francisco gal?
EB: Mother was a San Francisco girl. She had an older sister named Cora.
CE: What was her maiden name again?
EB: Verdenal.
CE: And her first name?
EB: Grace.
CE: Grace Verdenal.
EB: And Mother had a brother who was the youngest, John Verdenal. He died when he was about 21 of, as it was called in those days, consumption. He had been sent to Arizona. He was a protégé of Mr. Pillsbury of Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro and would have had quite a future, I guess. Mother went to Girl's High in Miss Denman's School in San Francisco. She met my father through her brother who had a job of sorts with the *Call Bulletin*, and had met my father when he came over here to interview him for something, and they were married in January, 1903. Mother's father graduated from Harvard Law School and was a practicing attorney in San Francisco when one day he was on Market Street and a runaway team of horses came along and kicked him fifteen feet in the air. He was unconscious for weeks and never really quite strong enough to go back to his law practice. And he would do newspaper articles for various papers around here, and

lived a rather quiet type of life. He and my grandmother – Incidentally, Grandpa was 16 years older than Grandmother and was 32 or 33 when he married. He and his family, mother, father, and younger brother, Dominic, came to California in 1852 on a wagon train from St. Louis, or rather from St. Joseph, Missouri, to landing in Placerville in October, 1852.

CE: That was a long trip. How come?

EB: Well, according to a journal which the two boys wrote and which we have, and incidentally which the Bancroft Library made a copy of –

CE: Well, that's good to put in the record. This is a fascinating document and you are going to seriously consider having it published.

EB: Yes. Arlen Philpott would like to do a special edition on it and I think he will.

CE: And how did they get to Placerville?

EB: They came by wagon train and apparently the trip was supposed to be of much shorter duration than six months, but Mr. Ellsworth who ran the wagon train was not as honest a man as he might have been, and there was a great deal of dissention and dissatisfaction. Anyway, they arrived in Placerville in October 12, 1852. I think that they did not come seeking gold. They were there for about three weeks, and then they came to San Francisco, and these two boys were then sent back to the University of St. Louis for education, and then on to Harvard Law School.

CE: Well, their parents –

EB: Their parents remained here. The Wells Fargo Bank Exhibit has an address for my great-grandfather on Dupont Street in San Francisco.

CE: Famous, infamous Dupont.

EB: Right.

CE: Later became Grant Avenue.

EB: Right. And also in their list of telephone – First hundred telephone subscribers, my Uncle Dominic has two telephones.

CE: Two!

EB: And this was because he was Secretary, Treasurer of the Mining Exchange in the days of the Comstock Lode days.

CE: Isn't that fascinating?

EB: And he had a telephone in his home and one at the Exchange.

CE: Do you have any family pictures of those homes, by any chance?

EB: No. No the only thing I have –

CE: How far back do you go?

EB: I have an oil of my great-grandmother, my father's mother, and one of my grandfather.

CE: Grandfather John?

EB: John. And we also have my great-grandmother's passport from Nantes, France in 1937, I think it is. Her maiden name was Rezy, R-e-z-y.

CE: Now this is – You're talking about John's wife?

EB: John's mother.

CE: Mother. John Verdenal's mother.

EB: Yes, my great-grandmother.

CE: Your great grandmother, and she's French.

- EB: She's French. My grandfather and his brother were born in upper-state New York. They apparently had relatives on his mother's side in Ohio. I haven't been able to trace this too much in Medina County. Anyway, to get back to Grandpa, after mother was married, he and my grandmother came to live in San Rafael. Their eldest daughter, Cora, did not marry. She taught school and her first school was in Fresno County where she boarded out. And then for a number of years she was in Tucson, Arizona, and she died in a flu epidemic in 1918 or '19, whichever it was. And then my little grandmother came to live with us, and Grandmother's stories were marvelous. I wish I had written them down or remembered them. For example, she told us that during the rush days when everyone was very excited about the mines, how the husbands, when they made a killing, would buy jewels and then if they lost, they had the jewels to cash in and have ready money at hand.
- CE: Well, she was living – I'm trying to think of the year she would be living there.
- EB: Well, Jane Verdenal was born in 1856 in the east and she came with her family across the Isthmus by rail, and then to California by boat. Her maiden name was Lawlor. It's not the common Lawler spelling, I always forget whether it's "o-r" or "e-r." And her father, I think, was kind of a rascal because sometimes he'd be a judge and sometimes he would be in the jug for drinking too much, up in Vallejo, or Benicia. You're really getting a case of back history here, Carla, about which I'm a little vague; it's all hearsay as a child.
- CE: Well, part of it, little pieces will fit in, won't they?
- EB: And one of her brothers – she was from quite a large family, as I recollect – was vice president of Sutton Christianson Lumber Company in San Francisco.
- CE: Tell Anne who we're talking about.
- EB: I'm talking about Grandmother Verdenal.
- CE: Did she speak French in the home?
- EB: No, no, but I can remember her mother, little Grannie, they came – No, it was her mother, I guess, who came from Philadelphia. But Grannie was quite a person. She went to New York by herself on the train at the age of 72 to visit her cousin who was 96 or 97. And Grannie told how they were in Washington Square and Grannie was always very hard of hearing. They couldn't do anything for her, her inner ear drum. But she said, "I and my aunt, she had one of those hearing aids, and we'd take turns, and soon all little children in the park were looking at us thinking we were not quite right in the head going like this."
- CE: Now, I want to get back to that wonderful journal that your grandfather and his brother, Grandfather John and his brother, Dominic Verdenal, wrote as young boys, age about 12, when they accompanied their parents on the trek across the United States coming to California. Now, you have this remarkable journal in your hands. Would you read the introduction, a little bit, or the beginnings of the journal?
- EB: Yes, this is headed *The Journal of John and Dominic Verdenal from St. Louis, Missouri to Placerville, California by Land*. "We started from St. Louis, Missouri on Monday, April 26, 1852 in the train of P. H. Ellsworth for California. The train was called 'The El Dorado Train.' It consisted of thirteen wagons, each wagon was numbered, ours was number four, and about 75 persons, about 200 head of cattle and 15 horses. Our provisions served as follows: bacon in

quantity, about 12 hams, dried apples, beans, and flour – but enough till Salt Lake City, cornmeal, plenty of pilot bread, coffee, tea, sugar, salt, rice and pepper. P. H. Ellsworth, the owner and operator of the train, was an American and had been to California once before across the plains. He had a tyrannical disposition as the sequel will show. He advertised in the press three months before departing that the train was in readiness at any time. The price for passage fixed by him was \$100 per person through to California. He received this money from 75 persons about six weeks before starting, and then he hastily collected his train and thus established himself without capital. But to proceed, there were eight families in the train. There were about 75 persons as stated, out of which there were about ten ladies, five boys and girls, and the rest were men. Wagons were of a rather small size and were each covered with an awning. Monday, April 26th, we departed from St. Louis, Missouri at about eleven o'clock. All had gone on very well until we had gained about four miles when the tongue of the wagon, number seven, broke, which obliged us to lay by at the 'Star Tavern' in Bellview until next morning. The cattle went along at a fine rate at about five miles per hour. Fires were kindled, coffee made, and we fished for the first time and had a real taste of life on the plains. Just about eight o'clock as we had tumbled in bed it commenced to rain and continued till after ten a.m. – came about four miles. Tuesday we had a hard time catching and yoking up the cattle, they being rather wild. We finally got ready and started from camp at eight and a half o'clock. Nothing of interest occurred today. Camped at five o'clock, came sixteen miles."

CE: Isn't this – And it goes on and on.

EB: This as a day by day journal until arrival.

CE: From April until, when was that, October?

EB: October 12th at Hangtown, California, now known as Placerville.

AK: Can you go back and find where they finally crossed the mountains?

EB: Well, here it does mention Placerville. They were at Genoa here, apparently, so they must come across the mountain soon, because they came over the Kit Carson Pass.

CE: Well, do you want to read that part that you marked there?

EB: This is on Sunday, September 5th. "Started at eight in the morning. Met many returning Californians, mostly packers. They gave us a California newspaper and gave us some news of California. They thought we could not go over the mountains, the Sierra Nevada, this season, and believed we would be forced to spend the winter in Carson's Valley. Camped by the side of a trading post where several of the cattle were exchanged for fresh ones. Came 19 miles."

CE: Do you think they could have been at Genoa?

EB: I wouldn't be surprised because there was a trading post there.

AK: Yes, I think so.

CE: There was that Mormon trading post there when it was the Utah Territory.

EB: Because when I was there a couple of years ago, I spent about three or four hours there, which is a lot.

CE: Isn't that a fascinating place?

EB: I went all through the museum.

AK: I haven't been there yet. Mention, too, how beautifully it is written.

CE: Oh, it is, beautifully – And the penmanship is wonderful, and it's in a neat, even hand and so legible.

EB: Everything is excellent, except they don't seem to punctuate.

CE: No, and here we're talking about something 125 years after it was written. But it's interesting, now that we're talking about the money for a moment, the \$100 to cross the plains to come to California, and there were four of them!

EB: Four of them, right.

CE: Now, it still was cheaper than going around the Horn, which took \$200, I've been told, to go by sailing ship from out of New York, say, and it took much longer. Of course, this was extended because of the team master.

EB: Another thing, they were in Ohio, you see, and they apparently decided to take this. At least that's what we assume. We assume that maybe the boys were sent back to the University of St. Louis because it would be near Medina County, in Ohio, where there were relatives on his mother's side. That's just an assumption.

CE: We've been doing some research on this lately and I think it's fascinating when you think of the American frontier for 200 years from the time of the beginnings of our country, the settlers pushed westward. It took them 200 years to get as far as the Mississippi, then within two decades, within 20 years, they pushed all the way, 2,000 miles, to the Pacific. It's fascinating.

EB: It is. Well, to me it's simply fascinating the way people left home to come to this country originally, leaving everything they knew. Of course, in a sense it was better because they didn't have press and they didn't know all these other things now.

CE: Well, it was a great big question mark. You know when those first immigrant trains set out with Bartelson in 1841 they didn't have any reports back from those trains so people assumed they got through all right.

EB: And often I think of Father Junipero Serra.

CE: But don't you think there is something innate in the American character that is a frontier person? They've always been interested in going on the move.

EB: That's true.

CE: And if adversity would strike – There was a period around the 1840s when malaria was prevalent in the central valleys there and they'd just move on then.

EB: I've been rather interested that more people haven't moved on to Alaska.

CE: Well, that's a treasure to have in your family.

EB: I remember my grandfather, for a young person, fairly well, because as I say I was the eldest and he used to bring me books to read all the time from the Sausalito Library. When my Uncle Will owned the paper down there I think Grandpa used to do little news articles sometimes.

CE: What was your Uncle Will – What was his name?

EB: He was my father's brother, William Boyd.

CE: He had the paper down there?

EB: He owned the newspaper there, the *Sausalito News*, and he was also the Postmaster. See, I guess my father really had it sewed up politically with a brother owning a newspaper.

CE: Yes. We interviewed a woman down in Sausalito. What was her name? Wosser, Mabel Wosser. Did you know that name?

EB: I know that name.

CE: Wosser sisters, there were six of them.

AK: It had to do with – Always an engineer on something on the –

EB: Oh the ferry, yes.

CE: He was the engineer on the *Princess*.

AK: And all his boys followed either on the trains or ferry.

EB: Well, I have a young friend who – One summer she was going to Davis, had a job with whatever the newspaper in Sausalito now – this was about eight or ten years ago – if there still is one. Well, Sally apparently became fascinated looking at files, and she was quoting all these things to me. I drove her up to Tinsley one time when we were going up for the weekend. What she read –

CE: Well, the early paper in Sausalito had a reporter for each part of the area of Marin. There would be a column on Ross Valley, a column, as I understand it, on San Rafael, and you'd get the news.

EB: And, of course, another thing I can remember as a child, too, but occasionally going to lunch at the old Reed place there.

CE: Well, now tell us what you mean by the old Reed place. I see you have a photograph of your father. Is this a descendent of the owner of the rancho?

EB: Yes, this was John Paul Reed who was the last male heir there. Actually, he was my brother's godfather, and when he died, he left Tom 70 acres of – all where that Koch Luggage Company is, all along there, that road. But there was never any right-of-way on account of the railroad track, and Tommy, I think, sold it in the '40s. His sister was my sister, Frances', godmother and Lucretia Little will tell you that they never found her will, and she'll give you all the dirt about that because it was a great thing, you know, for godchildren, they were always remembered; not that it makes any difference to us. But we used to be at the Reed place quite a bit, old Mrs. Reed.

CE: Now where was that property, Betty?

EB: It's kind of hard to describe now, but – Because you can see the old palm trees of the place. It would be before you got very far on the Tiburon Boulevard.

CE: Okay, now we've got the map, Betty.

EB: Well, after you start on Tiburon Boulevard, you go past the Sierra Bank on your left, then you go down a little hill and, if I remember rightly, it would be where that first stop light is, that you might turn in left there.

CE: Oh, you turn left and go up to the left?

EB: Yes, and that's where the house was, up in that area. I think that I discovered it one day because I was just browsing around. I'd often wondered where it was and Frank Howard Allen had a new sub-division area going in, and I rather wandered and saw some of the palm trees and remnants. I can't tell you the name of the street, but I could take you there.

CE: But that's always a good landmark around Marin. You see palm trees and some evidence of a little wall or something, you've got an old estate.

EB: And as I remember, we entered further up when we used to go to their house and the railroad track ran along side the driveway. I'm just pulling this from memory now as I talk. And there were palm trees all along the driveway; that would have all been torn down a long time ago. The house was on a little knoll and I can

remember there were chickens running around outside, but it was a very nice Victorian type of house as you walked in. And I suppose in a Spanish way it was rather – It was rather well-to-do for that period. And I remember particularly Sunday meals, because we'd have chicken and then we'd have some beans and I loved them and I begged Mother to do them that way, but she wouldn't because she said they weren't digestible; they were fried in lard..

CE: Interesting.

EB: And Mrs. Reed, Carlotta, the mother of John Paul Reed, Clotilde Reed, stayed up one night until two o'clock in the morning before Christmas to finish petticoats for us, all hand-inset lace which she had made. And my sister, I believe, still has some of those petticoats which she kept as a matter of sentiment.

CE: Well, at that time what were they doing with the land? Was there any stock left on it?

EB: I truly don't remember.

CE: I guess not, Mrs. Kent.

EB: I was a very small child when this occurred, and I think John Reed died in 1919. I think his sister died not too long afterwards.

CE: Well, this photograph you have is marked "1910 or '12, Portola Parade, San Francisco. John Reed with Thomas P. Boyd."

EB: Lucretia Little borrowed that for her files and we couldn't remember the name of the Portola Parade, and she put this on, whether it was 1910 or '12, this big celebration took place in San Francisco. And Papa and John Reed took their horses over on the ferry boat and this was taken somewhere in San Francisco.

CE: That looks like downtown San Francisco.

EB: So that was quite a trip, I guess.

CE: Mrs. Kent, how about reminiscing a little with Betty here. We have this scrapbook that your father kept, a wonderful thing.

EB: Well, this is really around the turn-of-the-century, before he was District Attorney, and then I think ends probably right around the time he becomes District Attorney.

CE: I saw a photograph the other day, Mrs. Kent, and I want to get a copy for Dolly Jenkins. It shows the Eldridge House, where Macy's is today.

EB: I remember that house.

CE: Do you, dear?

EB: Do you remember in the war, Anne, when they used it for Red Cross, World War II.

AK: Yes, we used it for many different things, and then it was the Extension of the county.

CE: Next door to it, I believe if I'm correct, was her Uncle Lee, Lee family, then the Evans family, then the Dufficy.

EB: The Evans family lived up, I think, on – Well, maybe when Dolly was young they lived down there. Later they lived on Mission.

AK: Yes, later, that's right.

CE: Well, that's an unusual photograph. And she has one of the family home, people on the porch including Bridgette the maid and the coachman by name. And she's remarkable in identifying her photographs.

EB: She's wonderful.

CE: She has a photograph of the whole student body at San Rafael High School in 1907. There are 84 people in the picture and she knows the names of all of them.

AK: Well, there was no Audubon going on in those days, but I was thinking of the Audubon when you were talking about the Reed house and everything because the Audubon House was part of that original estate out there, wasn't it?

EB: Well, I understand that John Paul Reed – Mrs. Verrall was his lady love before she married.

AK: Oh, I didn't know that.

EB: And he gave her part of this property and then she married a Verrall and lived on there.

AK: Became the goat lady.

EB: Yes. Actually, the Reeds had this big grant that took in all that area, took in Paradise Cove and Belvedere.

AK: Tremendous, yes.

EB: Dr. Lyford married Hilarita Reed.

AK: That's right.

EB: So, the Lyford House was moved by barge from Strawberry over to its present location there, and –

CE: What is its use now? It belongs to the Audubon Society.

EB: Well, the Marin Conservation League, Mrs. Livermore and Mrs. Kent and many others, as I understand it, secured this property, saved it, and then, correct me if I'm wrong, Anne, because they couldn't really have the money to keep it up. Mr. Baker, John Baker, who was President – You know more about this than I do, Anne.

AK: I wasn't in on this. Caroline, I don't know how much money she put in, but I know she went and asked about the house and the people said, "Yes, you could have the house but you ought to take it away." Then she went to the right people, contractors, I guess, told them her tale, and they said they would move it. We all thought it couldn't be done. And then she some way got the people to get the foundation all ready, properly made on that place, knowing all the while that it would come by barge and – You realize this, Carla, it had to be taken down hill from where it was, put on a big barge, taken a distance on the water, and then be brought up a good, steep, crooked hill. And they did it all and they did the whole thing. Then Mrs. Dickey said that she would furnish it in memory of her husband who was a great "bird man" and wrote wonderful bird books. And Mrs. Verrall, the goat lady, agreed to most of these things if she could have her own living quarters there, and they fixed it up, a little outside one it was. And I think she was very difficult to live with. They paid her by the month. They gave her a big price, too, and I think that was all Audubon money. I'm not sure. Maybe Caroline put some in. Then she got to be quite a nuisance, too, to the young people or the young whatever they were, the people who were hired by the Audubon, because she would come in every night. She would come in and stay in their house until she got ready to go to bed out in her little shanty and it got to be quite a lot of trouble to put up with her. And I guess she got more and more difficult. Then they fixed her quarters up better, thinking that she'd be more satisfied to live over

- there, and I don't know how it ever worked out in the end, but now she's gone and it's newly-decorated and it's a – Oh, not only that. How did they go about getting the Whittell money? I never will understand that, do you know?
- EB: Well, Anne, I don't know exactly because I remember reading the paper four or five years ago when Mr. Whittell died, and there was great controversy over his will, and to whom the money should go. As I recollect, the Humane Society was involved to some extent, and then the next thing I knew was the National Audubon had gotten a great big chunk of it. And we have so much money to spend here in Marin County of that Whittell money. The National Audubon gave a certain amount of the funds to build this education center there and also besides that we were allotted, Marin Audubon was allotted, I believe it was \$75,000. We've so far used \$25,000 of that to buy the marsh outside of Mill Valley there. \$15,000 has gone towards the Heerdt Marsh, and \$10,000 towards the Triangular Marsh. That money has not been used yet but it's in escrow to do so; and then also \$25,000 was allotted to Strawberry Point and that has not been used yet but it's held in abeyance for that.
- CE: When did you get involved in the Audubon Society, Betty?
- EB: Well, as I said, when I retired, I liked the out-of-doors. And I've been a member of Marin Audubon – never thinking about birds or anything – since 1959 or '60 when they saved that Utah Construction Company from getting in down there where – I guess from building all along Richardson Bay where Zaro's is. I liked what they were doing that way, so I joined them. And I'd get their bulletins, and I read about Elizabeth Terwilliger and her trips, and I like to ride horseback and I like to bicycle ride and I like to do a great many other things. So, really I became involved with Terwilliger who really got me going and I still see a great deal of her. We've been spending every Thursday together and my brother always says, "Where are you going?" and I tell him I'm going out with "Twig," as I call her or refer to her, and I say, "Tommy, I don't know until I get home and then I'll tell you."
- CE: Mrs. Kent and I think we ought to interview her sometime. Do you think she would agree to it?
- EB: Oh, I'm sure Elizabeth would love to.
- CE: Well, tell her about it, tell her what Mrs. Kent's project is and maybe you could arrange it, Betty.
- EB: Because hers would be a little later period, but she covers so much, and she, to me, has done ever so much for Marin County.
- AK: She surely has.
- EB: She's done a great deal for young people and for people my age and many other people, too. I just think that she's a terrific, and she's a dedicated person.
- AK: Indeed she is.
- EB: I took her for two or three years. I didn't take her, I drove her, down to Pescadero, to the Outdoor Conservation Education School of Marin County. That's 150 miles round trip; we'd spend the day there. My car would be full of her frozen birds and they would be all right going down, but they weren't so good coming home sometimes. But she would not take a cent of money for that. She's truly dedicated.

AK: That's great. Now those classes of children – That's where I saw you not too terribly long ago. Oh, I guess it was wrong because Mr. Baker was still living. That's the last time we ever had him.

EB: Yes.

AK: And John Baker, he was one of the most wonderful people in the world, I think. He came out here and he came to the convention down south and he said that he would come and stop here if he could, and he did. He came to see us and that was when we were trying so hard to save the island in Bolinas Bay, and he – We'll never know how much he had to do with that and we'll never know how much he had to do with a great many other things in Marin. But he came here. He wasn't too terribly well, and I thought that he would have a little luncheon and he would have to rest. "Oh no," he said. He didn't have any time to rest. He wanted to go to Bolinas, Stinson, whatever it was. So, my daughter, Marty, took us and we went over and he hadn't been here with us for years and years and we started out to go to Stinson Beach and we went through Fairfax and as we went through Fairfax we were going toward Olema and he said, "Oh I think when Tom took us last time we turned somewhere right here." He remembered they went over the Alpine Road and, oh, he didn't miss a trick. We went all the way over and the way back. He let us know that he had a dinner engagement in San Francisco that night with Kate Maillard and he didn't want to miss a thing. We went to the Audubon House and he told us about the property next to the entrance which he afterward was able to save, and then he came back here and on to San Francisco and we got him in to the date on time. He was quite an elderly man. He was head of the whole National Audubon. Oh, a wonderful, wonderful person.

CE: Are you involved in the Canyon Ranch project?

EB: Oh, yes. I've been on their board now for about five years. It came about because I was appointed from Marin Audubon. In other words, Audubon Canyon Ranch is not owned by National.

CE: I see.

EB: It's sponsored by the three local chapters of National: the Marin, the Golden Gate which is San Francisco, and the East Bay and Sequoia which is the Peninsula. And there are six members from each society. They're appointed for a three-year term, then you're sometimes re-appointed. And I've been fairly active on that in various ways and it's really great because all the people with whom you come in contact are such fine people and you're interested in the same thing and yet your paths may not cross otherwise. And I'm particularly interested in the Tomales Bay end now because every Tuesday I go to Cypress Grove, a little speck north of Marshall, which belongs to Clifford Conly who has willed it to Audubon Canyon Ranch. And there's a small research group out there. Our main function the first year was on land use and studying the native habitat. So it's really been about the ten of the best years of my life.

AK: That's really wonderful.

CE: Well, I know when we went out to visit Boyd Stewart many times, and –

EB: I've known Boyd and Josepha for a long time.

CE: They're just great. He was telling us on his first tape, I think, about the problem of the Point Reyes becoming a National Seashore and naturally, he had been in

ranching all his life. He didn't want to give up his property either, but he thought it was the better thing to do than have all this growth out there. How do you feel in retrospect now, ten years later, about the Point Reyes National Seashore?

EB: Well, Carla, for one thing, I worked very hard on that in '69 with Peter Behr, and that's when I really first came to know Peter in any way, and then I ran all his campaign scheduling for his campaign in 1970 and the last time.

CE: He did much. He was our spokesman.

EB: Right. And I had, of course, ridden horseback out there, been in that country. And I think I'm in favor of anything that would keep this county from being changed into a bunch of ticky-tacks. And one reason I love West Marin so is that, to me, having grown up here, is more like Marin was when I was growing up than anything else today.

CE: Yes. You can go out there and still – going home.

EB: You can breath fresh air and –

CE: Now they've added all that Golden Gate National Recreational Area.

EB: I know. I said to Peter Behr once, I said, "Peter," who was out sailing with us, "I think that Marin County should be declared a National Trust County." I said, "You know, as in England they have the National Trust that sets these things aside." And Peter gets zany ideas, but he looked at me rather startled. He said, "Betty, I think it might be easier to do it if it were just for the birds." You know, I don't know what's going to happen as there is a transportation problem, there always has been, and I do think – I would hate to see it cut up into macadam. I think it should be kept as much a wilderness as possible. Yet I think there should be something like – I'm not very ambulatory anymore. I have this degenerative arthritis in my feet and I can't walk the way I used to. What if they had little elephant trains or something where people could be taken? I know they're all working, a good many great people, but I just don't think – There's still some who, because they want it to be made into a park, think, "It belongs to me and no one else can get in there." And I don't –

CE: No, that's wrong.

AK: That's wrong.

EB: But don't you think there are, Anne?

AK: Yes, I do think so, I do.

CE: Well, now we were discussing at luncheon – We might as well discuss part of it now. There are some problems in Marin that are critical that have to be resolved, and we were discussing the water problem. Do you have any opinions as to the best way to settle that? What do you envision down the road?

EB: Well, what I envision is that I pray that there won't be another year like this one of drought, and I think something has to be done. The population is increased greatly. When we owned our house in San Rafael, as I mentioned earlier, we had our own spring water. We were always piped in for city water. I remember only one year in which city water was used.

CE: In all the years you lived there?

EB: Yes. And then it was used because it was a dry year.

CE: This is really a historic drought.

EB: Yes. It was a dry year and we used that on the garden, but we still used the spring water for the house. I think something has to be done, but I think people can't be ostriches and try to save this county from any more development because there's bound to be some, and I think it's better to face it and to go about it.

CE: How do you envision this being handled? What kind of regulatory group – Or do you think –

EB: I think we have a regulatory group already, Carla, in the Planning Commission.

CE: In the Planning Commission.

EB: And I think it is not the function of the Water District to do the planning. They should be serving the people and providing water. Now, I understand this ballot is going out for the Soulajule Dam and the – More water is needed. I also understand that voters are not going to be asked about the intertide at Atherton Avenue for Sonoma water. I'm questioning that judgment for the simple fact is that there still is water in Sonoma, and why put all your eggs in one basket? Also, why not give the people an opportunity to select both systems or which system? Now, legally it might be impossible to do that on the ballot. I don't know, but I think it should be explored.

CE: Well, of course, some of the problems are immediate: Stinson Beach where Mrs. Kent has her –

EB: Well, they're not in the Marin Municipal Water District.

CE: No, but they have a serious water problem.

EB: For instance, at Point Reyes they have been getting water from north Marin, which is the Novato area.

CE: Point Reyes has?

EB: Some of the Point Reyes people have been getting water from there. And Inverness has its own water. Bolinas, they're running dry, too. But Marin Municipal Water District does not serve them at the present time. Audubon Canyon Ranch so far has its own water and has been very fortunate but that's commencing to dry up a little bit.

AK: Is it one big spring, or is it many for them?

EB: Well, you see, I'm speaking of Audubon Canyon Ranch and I'm speaking of the Main Canyon, Anne, and Volunteer Canyon which are two separate canyons. And we're by way of putting, digging wells and putting in tanks; that's been approved and it's going to go ahead right away.

AK: Because there is a spring on the very, very top edge of their line; there's a great big spring up there, I know.

EB: So that is being done, and eventually they want to put in a gravity system, but it's sort of beyond our financial means to do it at the moment, whereas we can handle the well digging and the tanks.

CE: Well, you've lived close to three quarters of a century right in this area and just think what you've seen.

EB: You know, I always hate to mention my chronological years for the simple reason that I become depressed. I feel that they're becoming limited and my physical limitations are growing and I don't want them to.

CE: Well, I think you have a very objective outlook about Marin. You don't want to close the doors and keep people out.

EB: Well, Carla, I'm not the only – I mean, there are all kinds of people and all kinds of people that make a living in this world and I think there has to be a good compromise. I believe in compromise. Except I also think that unless the people who are very dedicated, keep pushing that maybe we'd never get to a point of having a compromise unless they were around.

CE: Do you have any dreams you'd like to see take place in Marin?

EB: Well, I haven't any particular dream here as things stand now, but I have a dream that I'd like to see this world a better place for people to live in. I'd like to see some respect coming back for authority and I'd like to see those in authority being people whom younger people look up to, and –

CE: Can admire their actions.

EB: Yes, and I think our culture had just deteriorated so terribly. It makes me almost cry some nights because it's really a beautiful world in which we live. It truly is.

CE: The schools?

EB: We don't vote for school bonds any more. My brother, Tom, was President of the Board in San Rafael for eight years and Tom said that when they used to put a bond issue on it was for a new gymnasium, a new library, a new floor, the money was pin-pointed; it's carte blanche these days. He won't vote for school bonds, and I go along with him on that. We see children coming out who can't spell, who can't write, and who are not even taught history anymore.

CE: There's a whole recent issue of the Saturday Review of Literature discussing that very subject.

EB: And our life is history. We have to go back to Rome and Greece.

CE: A high school student was asked to do a profile. They were studying American history on Hoover and they were discussing the Presidents, and he comes with his paper on J. Edgar Hoover, head of the F.B.I., he didn't even know that we had a President Hoover.

EB: That was one thing that I felt was good about the Centennial. I think that many young people have questions now about our history. They haven't been taught in schools or haven't thought about it.

CE: Young people need to identify with tradition.

EB: I learned something from that, too. We have about 46 states.

AK: We have what?

EB: 46 states.

CE: What do you mean?

EB: Well, there's the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Delaware and then Rhode Island has a little bit more to its name.

CE: Oh, isn't that interesting?

EB: I learned that on Cronkite's program!

CE: Did you watch the Tall Ships?

EB: No, I just saw smatterings of it, but speaking of the ships –

CE: Well, that's a wonderful way to teach character to young people.

EB: My brother was out for the weekend on his boat, and he had planned to go out in the ocean, but it was rather foggy so he spent the night at the Oakland Estuary and Sunday morning he started out early and he was under the bridge and the fog was so bad. He came up out, and the next thing he knew when the fog lifted enough,

he was leading the parade across the marina. He was in front of the fire boats. Of course, his two 15 year old boys were thrilled to death, that were with him.

CE: Well, we have really gone back and enjoyed your reminiscing. I do want to mention, Betty, you've brought these lovely things of particular interest. Just perusing this scrapbook of your father, which starts in 1899 –

EB: Would you like to look at it a little bit? I wouldn't mind leaving that with you.

CE: 1899, and then I think it runs up to 1907. This is probably just one of his, but it's so interesting to me, been very interested too, Mrs. Kent, particularly on the history of the Ross Valley.

EB: Well, that is interesting about Makin.

CE: And here's an action – sues for estate of Marin pioneer Robert Ross Makin in November of 1901. He brings charges against his aunt, Annie S. Moore for the estate of his grandmother, Annie Ross. And this goes on for quite a bit.

EB: And Papa finally won that case for young Ross Makin.

CE: What plans have you about this journal? Are you going to leave that to the Historical Society, perhaps your father's scrapbook?

EB: Well, I haven't even thought about it.

CE: Well, you might give that some thought, because this is good archival material.

EB: Yes. I'm happy for the suggestion.

CE: Yes, and that lovely journal, I know you're going to do something with that.

EB: Well, of course, the whole family – They'd probably like to keep it in the family.

CE: Certainly, certainly. Well, Betty, we can't thank you enough for coming and sharing your most interesting life with us.

EB: Well, I thank you very much for being such good listeners, and for the nice lunch, Anne. I didn't expect that.

AK: And we've enjoyed it and we've learned so much.

CE: There's a lot of very good information on this, and I hope some historian in the future will enjoy it as much as we have. Thank you for coming.

EB: Thank you.