

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE
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INTERVIEW WITH FLOYD LONGLEY

by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent
July 19, 1979

INTERVIEWEE: Floyd Longley (FL)

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

DATE OF INTERVIEW: July 19, 1979

CE: Today is Thursday, July 19, 1979. Continuing the Oral History project of the California Room, Mrs. Kent and I today have the pleasure of being at the residence of Mr. Floyd Longley and Mrs. Longley at 1945 Fifth Avenue in San Rafael. We're going to talk with Mr. Longley today about his family and he himself was born on the Randall Ranch in 1909, out on the road between Olema and Bolinas. His father before him was born in Lagunitas in 1876 and he has a grandfather who worked for the Taylor Saw Mill back in the early days and it promises to be an interesting story. Good afternoon Floyd.

FL: How are you, Carla?

CE: Fine. Why don't we just start in the beginning? Tell me, if you don't mind recapping, a little bit of your line of descent. Now your primarily English descent and your great-grandfather did I understand you, came here initially to Marin?

FL: Yes, on my dad's side, my great-grandfather migrated from the east coast to Marin and I believe he originally migrated from England.

CE: I see you have genealogical charts you are working on, so you will probably fill in many of these gaps, in your research.

FL: I hope so, to fill them all in. I have all the last three generations but the fourth generation back is one I haven't been able to get. Fortunately, I have a family Bible that has most of this information recorded in it.

CE: Did you remember your father? Or did you know your Grandfather George W.?

FL: Yes.

CE: Did he tell you anything of his experiences working for the Taylor Saw Mill?

FL: No -- Only that I did hear my dad and grandpa talking about the hard times that they had and the long hours that they worked. Apparently they worked from daylight till dark, literally worked from daylight till dark.

CE: Well, you refer to it as a sawmill, Floyd, many of us think of it as a paper mill, is that a mistake?

FL: No, it was a paper mill but there was a sawmill in conjunction with the paper mill. They got the timber out and then they had a mill where they cut the timber up before they worked it into paper. My folks worked in the woods and I understand my grandfather did work for a while at the mill itself, which was a paper mill.

CE: You mentioned earlier about a cemetery up in that area.

FL: Yes. My great-grandfather was buried in a private cemetery on the old Randall Ranch and the place has almost lost its identification. The only reason that I know that my great-grandfather was there was that my dad took me there in the early 1920s to show me the graveyard and at that time it was pretty dilapidated and run down.

CE: Could you locate that site for us, just generally where it might be?

FL: As you come down the road, I say down, as your traveling south on the road

CE: This is the Olema-Bolinas Road.

FL: Right. You pass by Brooks and then you go up on sort of a little plateau area before you come down to the Randall ranch. Well, right in that area there's a high knoll and there's a gum tree and a cypress tree and I think a couple of pine trees.

CE: Is this far off the road? A half a mile?

FL: No -- It's only 300 yards, 250 yards, maybe.

CE: And you mentioned earlier, might have been a dirt road that led up to the Kent Lake, is that correct?

FL: No, no. I was referring to the place my dad was born when I was talking about the road that went up to Kent Lake. The early road use to go down in a little valley along Olema Creek and it must have been in the '20s. I think that was the occasion for my dad taking me up to the graveyard because we went over the new road that had been built about 1920, which went up over this knoll, it took us up near the site of the graveyard.

CE: Well, your father then was born generally in that area, that same area we are talking about was he not?

FL: He was born in Lagunitas, which is almost due east from the area we are talking about.

CE: What did your father do? Did he work in the mill also as a boy?

FL: Yes, he worked as a boy, as a young man, and I understood him to say that he helped his father getting timber out for the mill. I think they used quite a

bit of scrap material in the manufacture of paper, so I think it was a matter of getting small trees along with, as well as, getting larger trees.

CE: Well, though he was born in Lagunitas, he -- I gather he settled on the Randall ranch where you were born, is that right Floyd?

FL: Yes.

CE: How did that come about?

FL: Well, his father, my dad's father and his grandfather, rented the place for dairying purposes. My grandfather had a big family. There were ten children in the family and there were eight sons and at the time they started the ranch he didn't have any trouble getting ranch help, he had them right at home, all he had to do was feed them.

CE: So it was primarily a dairy ranch?

FL: Right. And I understand they made butter back in those days. My dad and my Uncle Walter and a couple of younger brothers were interested in ranching and my dad's second -- third brother was Oliver Longley and he was not interested in ranching he went to work as a blacksmiths helper.

CE: Over in Bolinas?

FL: No, he went to work here in San Rafael over at McNear's Brickyard.

CE: Oh, initially that's where he was.

FL: That's where he learned his trade, out at McNear's Brickyard. And then after there, after he got a pretty good grounding, he bought a shop that had already been established in Bolinas and spent the rest of his life there.

CE: What did he call his shop?

FL: The Bolinas Blacksmith Shop.

CE: And where was it located, on Brighten?

FL: Where Brighten and Wharf Road converge.

CE: On the north side of the road?

FL: South side of the road actually. He later renamed the Blacksmith Shop, Longley's Garage, when automobiles came in.

CE: So he made the transition from horseless carriages to automobiles.

FL: That's right. Incidentally, he was exceptionally good artisan. He made all sorts of fancy iron work, like fireplace irons and gates and doors and this type of thing, and I think some of the better homes in Marin County today still have some of that iron work around.

CE: Maybe some of the fencing right there on Brighten and some of those homes possibly?

FL: Possibly, yes.

CE: All right, let's get back to you.

FL: Do you want to get back to my dad?

CE: All right, let's get back to your dad. Tell us a little bit more about your dad.

FL: After I was born and my sister came along a couple years later, they had opened up a lot of property in San Joaquin Valley because of the advent of getting water in from the Hetch Hetchy Dam. So he and my Uncle Walter each took up a parcel of land and developed into melon farming. They had watermelons, cantaloupes, and alfalfa hay. About 1917 or '18 they decided to move back to Marin County so they had in the meantime bought a parcel

of land in Bolinas which was known as the Grinter place and the Grinter brothers were a couple of the original inhabitants of the community up there.

CE: How do you spell that?

FL: Grinter. I don't know whether it's I-N or U-N, but I think it's I-N.

CE: Where is that site approximately today?

FL: That site is part of the County preserve and it's directly across the bay from Kent Island.

CE: It would be a little north of town then?

FL: Yes. It was known in recent years as the Francisco Ranch. Our family ran the ranch until 1924 or 1925.

CE: Was it again a dairy ranch?

FL: It was a dairy ranch.

CE: What kind of cows did you have? Jerseys, Holsteins?

FL: They were mixed; they had some Jersey's and some Holsteins. They had a few horses.

CE: How big a spread was it?

FL: Not too big.

CE: Ten acres?

FL: No it was larger than that. We had approximately forty milk cows. Then he rented other property. He rented my grandmothers, on my mother's side, property where he raised hay to feed the cattle. About 1925 he sold the ranch and they bought the old Lawrence Hotel in downtown Bolinas.

CE: Where was that in relationship to the old Flagstaff Hotel that went into the bay in 1906.

FL: The Flagstaff Hotel was about a half a block east; it was right on the water, the Lawrence Hotel was between the garage and the Post Office.

CE: Oh, on the main street.

FL: Right on the main street.

CE: What did they call the hotel?

FL: Well, when my folks had it they called it Bolinas Beach Tavern, it had been known in previous times as the Lawrence Hotel. A man by the name of Lawrence Pomatto originally started it, before that it had been the home of part of the Gibson family.

CE: That name keeps coming up all the time in Bolinas.

FL: Well, in my time the only one left was Dr. Gibson, Dr. Richard Gibson, Dick Gibson they called him. But they had been rather a large family and there interrelated to our family on my mother's side by marriage. I have quite a bit of information about my Mothers side of the family which

CE: What was her maiden name?

FL: Her maiden name was Clark, she was Helena Clark. She is a direct descendent of the Briones family, the Briones family are descendants of the people that --

CE: Had the Rancho Bolinas?

FL: Yes. Originally inherited the property from the Spanish Government under Spanish grant.

CE: Did you know Rose Briones?

FL: Yes.

CE: We've had the pleasure of talking with her; she's a wonderful gal.

FL: I knew three of her brothers. She's a little woman and her brothers were about six foot tall and very well-built, fine looking men. They were slightly dark but they were very good looking, good looking people.

CE: Well, you came back from the San Joaquin and were there about 1917; you were a small boy.

FL: I think I was in the second or third grade.

CE: Where was the school then, on that flat area?

FL: Yes, right where it is today.

CE: Is that what they call Gospel Flat, that area?

FL: Yes.

CE: Why do they call it that?

FL: Because of the fact that in years past all the churches were congregated around there.

CE: Good enough reason.

FL: In the old days there was a Methodist Church across from the existing Catholic Church and -- Kind of funny in my mother's family, my grandfather Sam Clark, was a very active Methodist and my grandmother Frances Clark was a very devout Catholic. They had twelve children and they raised -- Only five of them grew to be adults but six of them attended each church.

CE: They split it up. Well, it's the same story, wasn't it Mrs. Kent, with Helen Wilkins yesterday?

AK: Yes.

CE: She was Catholic and her husband was Protestant.

FL: That was true I guess of a lot of the old families.

CE: They were practicing the Ecumenical spirit before they ever made that word popular.

FL: Yes. My dad's family were all Episcopal.

CE: Well, what had brought the Clark family to that area, were they also dairy ranchers?

FL: Well, they originally came there with the Spanish grant and as the family developed I think most of the women were Spanish and most of the men were seafaring men who came in there.

CE: Is that your mother's heritage, seafaring men?

FL: Well, my grandfather came in by sea. He was not actually a seafaring man only just to the extent of getting out here. He was born in Pennsylvania and he was going to be a minister and he flunked out for some reason and he got on a ship and came out to the west coast and settled in Bolinas, met my grandmother and married her. I believe that was also true of her mother.

CE: Well, I'm getting the generations just a little mixed up. Like when your grandfather came, it must have been your great-grandfather and grandmother were here at the time of the gold rush in the 1850's. That would be about the time sequence wouldn't it?

FL: My father's side or my mother's side? My mother's side they were always here, from 1830 or '40. The old Briones family, Pablo Briones, was the kingpin of the family here and he was here in the 1830's and 40's. His wife -- They actually came up from Mexico, although they were Spanish, and when the Mexican Revolution uprising took place in the 1830's where they were at, they came to California. Some of them came even before that and go the Spanish grants. So as these -- Let me see if I can define generations. In my parents generation my Mothers name was Clark and her father was Sam Clark, who was my grandfather. Sam Clark migrated from Pennsylvania and married Frances Nott who was my grandmother.

CE: Nott.

FL: Knot. No, I guess there was no "K." I guess it was Nott.

CE: According to Dolly Cushing Jenkins it was Nott.

FL: Nott, that's right.

CE: She's got a photograph of Ed Nott as a baby sitting in a bar of some watering place over there.

FL: Ed Nott's father and my mother were sister and brother, my grandmothers sister and brother. Then their generation, Nott had migrated, he was an Englishman. My grandfather was English and German, so called Pennsylvania Dutch. And the generation behind that that is behind Nott was actually the Briones generation and I don't remember which one of the Briones girls married Nott.

CE: Was there intermarriage there to your knowledge? You don't know?

FL: Well, Nott married the Briones girl.

CE: Oh, he did!

FL: Right. So actually my family has actually been in California five generations. I'm almost a native. But my family all, going back, the husbands were all primarily English and my family is all fair complexed. Now I had a second or third cousin at one time that married into Spanish Mexican families and they're quite dark.

CE: Well, then at one time there were a considerable number of Longley's and Clarks in the Bolinas area? Several dozen perhaps.

FL: Right. My mother's family; there were five of them that lived to be adults and my dad's family there were eight of them who lived to be adults. But my dad's family lived in Olema and what is the trailer park up there now was actually my grandfather's home after they got off the ranch, after he retired from the ranch.

CE: Is that Randall's Ranch?

FL: Randall's Ranch. I remember when I came back from the valley, I guess I was nine or ten years old something like that, going up and visiting my grandparents at a little ranch in Olema.

CE: Tell me, Floyd, in your family collection, or your fathers, are there any photographs or letters or journals that have come down through the family to you?

FL: I've got the family Bible, which has --

CE: Important dates of course.

FL: Some family history in it and from that I've transcribed this chart that I've made up.

CE: How about early photographs? When did photography become within the usage of the average person in the 1870's, any family photographs from that era?

FL: Well, I've got one that must be around 18--

CE: Floyd has shown us a charming tintype of his parents taking in the nineties and he has a stack of old photographs he's pouring through now. He brought over Monroe Fraser's *1880 History of Main County*, which is a classic, and for the record on page 419 is a profile of his maternal grandfather, Samuel Clark. We won't read that into the record but we'll Xerox that and make it available. Well, in pouring through this book I mentioned the name Peter Bourne and you volunteered that you are connected with him also and how is that again, Floyd?

FL: Well, Peter Bourne --

CE: That would be the son?

FL: Referred to in the book there was the old man and his son, Peter Bourne --

CE: Also Peter --

FL: Was married to my dad's older sister Mary Bourne. And here's a picture of that family and the children.

CEL: That's wonderful.

FL: Incidentally while pouring through these pictures, they're only a portion of the pictures my Mother left, I gave most of them to my sister, and the only reason I didn't give her these I missed this box.

CE: Well, she's preserving them I hope?

FL: Yes, she is. Mrs. Kent, you must remember Joe Petar over in Bolinas?

AK: Oh, yes.

FL: Here's a picture of when he was married.

CE: Now is that the man who ran the store or is that the *Owl*?

FL: No he ran the store. And when I was a schoolboy I worked piling groceries on the shelves over there after school and on Saturday and Sundays.

CE: Well, where was his store in relation to your father's blacksmith and then Longley's Garage?

CL: The hotel where we lived was between the store and the garage.

CE: I see. Now I have a photograph here of Bolinas and it says "Central Market, J.C. Longley," is it?

FL: Right.

CE: Now when did this come about, this store? Is this a regular grocery store?

FL: No. It was just a meat market. Butcher shop and meat market.

CE: In the days when leg of lamb was 75 cents?

FL: When a whole lamb was 75 cents.

CE: I'm not going back far enough.

FL: Am I'm not kidding; a whole lamb was only worth about two and a half in those days. And if you go back further than that butcher shop, I have another little gem here. This is part of the same operation. You notice this says E.E. Clark on here?

CE: Yes.

FL: That was my Uncle Ed and my Uncle Ed and my dad and one of his brothers were in the meat business together about 1900, 1898 or somewhere along in there, and this is an early picture of the original shop that they had.

CE: With a horse and cart under the tree?

FL: That was my dad's horse and cart and that little old shed under the tree was the butcher shop that my Uncle Ed had. My grandfather had the slaughterhouse up on my grandfather's property, the one up next to the schoolhouse, known now as the Clark Estate. I guess it's known now as Wagner's place.

CE: Your grandfather butchered the meat?

FL: Butchered the meat up there and then my dad had this -- Well, prior to that shop at the time that this other shop shown here with my Uncle Ed's name on it, my Uncle Ed ran the shop and my dad had a horse and buggy and went around to the ranches peddling meat off the horse and buggy. Another picture there, after my Uncle Ed went out of business --

CE: The one showing your Fathers butcher shop 1900?

FL: Yes, my dad took over. About 1900, about 1901 or '02, somewhere along in there he rented that place, he set his butcher shop up in there.

CE: Now what would be right across the street from your fathers butcher shop, there's a charming picket fence. Is this a residence across the street?

FL: Yes, that's where Joe Petar lived. If I remember right that was the Bonaiti house. Bonaiti owned this store.

CE: This store?

FL: No, the store, that one there.

CE: Right next to your father's butcher shop is an imposing building. What kind of a store was that?

FL: That was a general merchandise store.

CE: There's still one of those in Bolinas isn't there?

FL: Same one still standing there. Over the years it got to be quite an important fixture in Bolinas. It was a general merchandise store and along with it they had a lumberyard and a mill. They at one time when the boat was running, remember the schooner that use to run to San Francisco to Bolinas?

CE: Which one do you mean: the *Owl* or the *Jenny Griffin*?

FL: The *Owl*. The *Jenny Griffin* didn't carry much freight, it was too small.

CE: Are you old enough to remember the *Jenny Griffin*?

FL: Yes.

CE: Did you ever take any trips on her?

FL: No, but I worked on the *Owl*.

CE: You worked on the *Owl*?

FL: Yes, I worked as a deckhand on the *Owl* taking a group of Stanford students out to the Farallon Islands one time. Then, as I said, I worked in the store after school and on Saturdays and Sundays and when I got big enough, I must have been 17 or 18, well, then, I worked on the boat and I was short so I was able to work in the hold of the boat, unloading the hold in the boat.

CE: Well, what cargo would they carry?

FL: Well, going from Bolinas to San Francisco they carried calves and pigs --
CE: For market?
FL: For market. And cream, cream for butter. And I remember they used to carry live pigs, they sort of put a corral up on the deck and put pigs in there. There was all this screaming and squealing and what have you.
CE: And didn't they have passengers also?
FL: They carried passengers, yes, and they also carried three or four --
CE: What would the tariff be to take someone to San Francisco?
FL: I don't remember but it seems to me it went up to \$1.25 one time and there was a real pow-wow about how they were robbing the people for \$1.25 to go to -- And they used to take four to six hours to go down by boat.
CE: Tell me this: Do you remember where that boat, the *Owl*, berthed in San Francisco? We haven't been able to find that out.
FL: Yes. Pier 23. It was berthed closer to the Ferry Building for quite a while and then it moved up to Pier 23 and during my time that I was familiar with it, it was always tied up at Pier 23. But it was berthed down closer, seven or nine, something like that at one time.
CE: And then would somebody come down with horse and wagon and take this?
FL: They were just starting to use trucks when I remember. There were still dray wagons and horses but they were mostly using trucks.
CE: And the *Jenny Griffin*, prior to your time, did a similar operation? It was a schooner wasn't it?
FL: Yes, the *Jenny Griffin* ran about the same time, both boats were running at the same time. The *Jenny Griffin* was a sailboat with auxiliary engines and it only held, I think, about thirty-five tons as I remember and the *Owl* carried 65 tons, so they finally phased the Jenny out and used the *Owl*. I think the *Owl* ran until into the '20's sometime.
CE: As a young boy do you remember was the water deep enough to berth the *Owl* right there at the wharf or did they have to take lighter out?
FL: Oh, no, no, no, the *Owl* tied up at the wharf.
CE: Went over the bar?
FL: Went over the bar. The only trouble we had coming in with a full load, 60 or 65 tons

(End of Side A)

FL: In my time, the *Owl* always tied up at the wharf. The only trouble we had about deep water was when we were coming in from San Francisco with a full load we had to be sure and come at high tide and be sure we were in the channel. The funny part of it was that with the flowing of the tide it would change the channel and I remember many times we crossed the bar and have the boat bumped on the bar as it came over and I can remember a few times when it stuck when it bumped on the bar and they had to wait then for another tide to get it off.
CE: You mean you'd have to wait for six hours for --
FL: For another tide, maybe have to wait a full cycle for a -- to get a high tide to get it off.

CE: Would you avoid the Potato Patch coming in to San Francisco?
FL: Yes, we'd come up into the North Channel.
CE: Did you have any close calls?
FL: I never did.
CE: Did the *Owl* to your knowledge have some?
FL: I think they had some pretty rough trips at times.
CE: Rain or shine, did they have a regular schedule?
FL: Yes, they had a regular schedule. What they tried to do was every weekend they tried to leave San Francisco sometime on Saturday, to get up to Bolinas on Saturday, and then they'd go back Sunday afternoon so people could come up and spend the weekend in Bolinas. That was a normal thing for people.

CE: All right, go back a moment, you told us what you would take over from Bolinas when you went to San Francisco, what would you bring back on those routine trips, groceries, supplies?
FL: Right, all kinds of groceries and supplies and all kinds of building materials. We'd have cement in the hold. I remember working unloading the hold, they'd have maybe 30 or 35 tons of cement. In those days cement was in hundred pound bags and they were cloth bags and working down in that hot hold with cement dust it was almost unbelievable the misery you'd go through to unload thirty tons of cement. Then they'd put lumber on the deck. And they'd bring fresh meat, vegetables, and all sorts of food on the boat.

CE: What was the skipper Petar like?
FL: Louis Petar, he was a great guy, he was a real fine gentleman. And Arthur Bourne was the engineer.
CE: Part of the same Bourne ranch?
FL: He was the younger brother of Pete Bourne and he was quite a guy, too. It was real fun sailing on the old *Owl* in those days. Arthur Bourne had a son my age and we chummed around together and that's how I got to work on the boat. I say work on the boat, there wasn't any salary involved, it was just work. Although when they unloaded the boat we got paid 50 cents an hour for unloading the boat. But making trips like going out to the Farallons as a deckhand and that sort of thing, it was just done for the fun and experience.

CE: When you mentioned earlier about taking a group of Stanford students there, was that to study the bird life?
FL: Yes, to see the bird life. At that time there were I think 13 families living on the island out there and they ran the lighthouse and they had some boats and I think they were equipped to do a limited amount of life saving. In those days they called it Life Saving Services instead of Coast Guard.
CE: We had the delight of interviewing two women who had lived out there. One woman had lived twenty years on the light; her dad was the keeper of the light, and fascinating stories.
FL: Well, they had a school out there and they had gardens and their problem was water.

CE: Did you go on the island? And up to the lighthouse?

FL: Oh, yes, we went up and all over the lighthouse and all over the livable part of the island. Even at that time I don't remember if the east part or the north part of the island was a bird preserve, you couldn't go out on there. But their difficulty was water and they had to catch every drop of water that they had in cisterns and store it. They had big area that was concreted and big tanks that they would run the water into to catch it.

CE: One of these women, I forget who, talked about a mule they had there and every time -- In her early days the supply boat came once every three months, remember, Mrs. Kent? And they'd hoot, you know, and that mule would hear that and start running away because that meant he had to go to work, you know to carry the supplies from the dock.

FL: Yeah, I remember they had like a little railroad and they had some push cars that they pushed along the top.

CE: Well, now it's all controlled by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory people --

FL: There's no one living there now.

CE: No. But they go out and stay, these naturalists, for a spell and look at the birds. At one time I understand Bolinas was quite a thriving boat building community, of course that was before your day.

FL: Yes, much before my day.

CE: Had you heard any of those stories down near McKennan's Landing? Lots of boats were built down there.

FL: I believe they were all small boats and mostly lighters, I don't believe they were ocean-going boats built there. But you know originally, some of the original timber that went into San Francisco was cut up in that area and they brought it down to what is now known as the Wilkins ranch by ox carts and then they transferred it to lighters. Lighters were nothing but narrow small draft barges and then they'd float it down to the channel and then they'd load it on sailing boats and take it on in to San Francisco.

CE: A lot of the piers for the San Francisco Embarcadero were made from that timber, I understand.

FL: A lot of the lumber that originally went down there was cut up there, too. That whole area at one time had a lot of prime redwood on it. And you can find evidence up in those hills of stumps that are 15, 20 feet in diameter where they were redwood stumps. When we were kids we use to go up -- Well, one of the things that we use to do from school was to go up into the Mine Gulch for an annual school picnic.

CE: Was this the residue of the copper mine you're talking about that was on the Wilkins Ranch?

FL: Yes. And they had a shaft up in there and they had a little railroad that they hauled the ore out on and it was, best of my knowledge, it was last worked in World War I. Because I remember they used to haul the ore downtown in wagons and then they transferred it onto the *Owl* and ship it on to the city. And if you read in that history, I think it's in that history, it will tell about my grandfather being president of the mining company up there one time. They started up in --

CE: This is Sam Clark?
FL: Yes. Like a lot of the other things he got involved with it fizzled out. I think it's in that history.
CE: Well, I know the Wilkins were talking a little bit about it yesterday. They evidently gave lease rights, like mineral rights, to the companies who did it.
FL: A bunch of the natives, a bunch of the old natives in Bolinas, got together and formed a company and -- Oh, the name Cottingham comes to mind. He was one of the old timers around there and my grandfather -- Apparently there were two or three of them like that that had some college education and had the ability to set up and organize a company. My grandfather was elected president of it I know, it was a big deal as long as it lasted.
CE: Did you know both of your grandfathers? Did you know Sam Clark as well as George W. Longley?
FL: No, no. My Grandfather Clark died in 1902 and I was born in nine. But I knew my Grandfather Longley for three or four years. Incidentally they moved to San Rafael and he died here in San Rafael.
CE: Well, now getting back to you as a young boy, did you have a horse?
FL: At one time I had a horse yes. Saddle horse. It was trained to herd cattle.
CE: Did you get involved in all facets of dairy ranching yourself?
FL: Well, I got into -- No, I never --
CE: Did you milk cows?
FL: Oh, yes, I did everything that involved work on a ranch. Such as, milking, herding cattle, cleaning barns and feeding cattle and that sort of thing. I was 15 when they got off the ranch and I swore then that I'd never set foot on another ranch and I never did.
CE: Well, this butcher shop of your dad's, you worked in it after school you said?
FL: No, no, I worked in the general merchandise store.
CE: Did you ever work in your dad's?
FL: Oh, no, that -- He owned the shop about 1900 and I didn't work in the store until about 1921, '22, somewhere along in there. See, because I was born in 1909 and I was still in grammar school when I worked there.
CE: Tell me a little bit about that butcher business. Did he run any accounts or was everything cash and carry?
FL: They ran accounts.
CE: Did he ever get stuck?
FL: Oh, yes, this was normal.
CE: Particularly 1929, '30 --
FL: No, he wasn't involved in the business then. My dad by that time had the ranch -- No, it was the Francisco Ranch and as I say he sold that in 1925 and moved to town but at that time I worked in the general merchandise store and yes they had charge accounts and a lot of them went flat. That was a bad time for everybody and anybody that had credit accounts suffered something terrible. I was going to tell you about my dad, talking about having this butcher cart. This was about 1900, '02, '03, '04, and he would go out to the farms and the women would come out with a big dishpan and

they'd buy -- give me a piece of this, a piece of that, piece of this, piece of that, and then they'd ask for free soup bones and then when they got the free soup meat then they'd want vegetables to make the soup with, all free. He said that he'd fill a large size dishpan with good cuts of meat plus the soup for the soup and everything for 50 to 75 five cents.

CE: That's when the dollar was worth a dollar though.

FL: Yeah, it was worth more than a dollar in those days. That's when people couldn't get hold of a dollar.

CE: What was it like during the depression for you as a young man? Did it change what you were going to do in your life?

FL: I hadn't planned what I was going to do at that point in time. I was just out of high school.

CE: Where did you go to high school?

FL: Tamalpais.

CE: How would you get there every day?

FL: We went by bus from Bolinas. I hadn't planned what I wanted to do and in those days if you had a high school diploma you were better than the average kid, so I worked in the store. In fact I got to be Assistant Manager of the store.

CE: This is the general store?

FL: Yes. Before I left there in 1936.

CE: And who owned it again?

FL: Joe Petar. He was the brother of Louie Petar who had the boat. In fact they owned the boat together I understand.

CE: What ever happened to that old boat? Did he sell it?

FL: They finally sold it. It was a good sturdy boat but it was too slow.

CE: What powered it? Was it gas?

FL: It had two -- It was twin screw, it had two gasoline engines, but it was too costly to run. The boat was a cargo boat, it would have been fine for short hauls where it didn't have to waste too much gas and energy to push the thing along because it was just like, almost like, pushing a barge. It was so wide -- It had a real wide beam, it was about 65-feet long and it must have had about a 25-foot, 30-foot, beam maybe. It was just like a bathtub.

CE: I have a photograph of that loaded with a lot of passengers. Remember John Beales gave it to us Mrs. Kent? He calls it the Immigrants, they're all dressed up with their little suitcases, they look like there all going over to Ellis Island. I guess they were going to the city for a weekend in town.

FL: I saw Johnny not too long ago.

CE: Did you?

FL: Yes. You know he worked for the telephone company, too.

CE: Floyd has just shown us a lovely old photograph that looks like it's in the 1890's and it's in the Eucalyptus Grove and it looks like a family picnic. Tell us about that.

FL: Well, my grandfather having been raised in the east and been around quite a bit, he was quite a horseman and he had, amongst other things, a stable where he raised blooded horses.

CE: Now are we talking about Sam Clark?

FL: Yes. Then he had this big grove of eucalyptus trees out in the back part of the ranch where he set up a picnic area and all during the summer the various local organizations and the local people and one thing or another, went there for picnics. And it is interesting that the grove had grown up big enough to use at that time because at the time he was Supervisor he was instrumental in importing eucalyptus trees in from Australia to plant in Marin County. They planted them all along the county roads and various places.

CE: What, for windbreaks?

FL: For windbreaks and then for along the roads they used them to reinforce the banks so that during the wet weather the banks wouldn't wash out.

CE: I heard yesterday from Helen Wilkins, too, that they imported a lot of Monterey Cypress from Pacific Grove to add a little color. Downtown Bolinas was pretty bare. Do you agree with that?

FL: Yes, they did import them, but the eucalyptus trees was for lumber and for supporting the road beds. And then I don't know how my grandfather got a hold of so many trees but he planted a whole grove in there primarily for a windbreak and then they used them later for a picnic area.

CE: Did you ever hear of the Strain Brothers, the Strain family?

FL: Yes, I knew them quite well.

CE: Helen Wilkins said that the young boys got ten cents a piece for planting a lot of those eucalyptus. What was there connection with your ranch, where was their place?

FL: Well, the original family that I can remember lived up towards the Randall Ranch; they were one ranch or so from the Randall Ranch. Actually there were two Strain families; I think they were second cousins or something. Then there was another Strain family that lived downtown that we knew quite well and they were kin some way related to the Lauffs and then the Lauffs were related to us through the Briones and this goes back to what I said, at one time everyone in Bolinas was related. If they were Spanish or English people they were related.

CE: Well, wasn't Bolinas at one time the most thriving community in Marin?

FL: Yes it was bigger than San Rafael at one time.

CE: By the lumbering, the shipping?

FL: Yes. I think the original development was for lumber for building San Francisco. Of course it was kind of isolated from San Rafael. San Rafael grew faster and they had a horse stage, old stagecoaches that ran from Bolinas to San Rafael. One time during my dad's early days he worked as a driver on the stage.

CE: How long a ride would that be? Several hours wouldn't it?

FL: I think they used to make it in a day. Half way over -- What is Alpine Dam now? There was a big ranch down in the bottom of the dam known as the Liberty Ranch and my aunt ran a hotel there at one time. Mostly a restaurant.

CE: Was it called Liberty?

FL: Liberty Ranch. They ran the stage from Bolinas.
CE: What was your aunt's name?
CL: Her name was Marsha Clark. She married an Italian fellow, that's how I got into the Italians. He was an excellent cook and they had this old ranch house that they developed into a restaurant and the stage used to come over there, in either direction, from San Rafael to Bolinas and Bolinas to San Rafael and they'd stop over and eat at the old Liberty Ranch and then they'd go on with their trip.
CE: Now that ranch would be the bottom of Alpine Lake today?
FL: The bottom of Alpine Lake today.
CE: Any photographs extant of that place, to your knowledge?
FL: I have a photograph but I don't know where it is.
CE: All right, but do you think you might find it? Because we've heard of Liberty's haven't we Mrs. Kent?
AK: Yes, it's on the map.
CE: Looking at old photographs and Floyd has found one of his Grandmother Clark's house. Tell us where that is again when your going south on the road into Bolinas it's on the left side near the water.
FL: No – It's on the right hand side of the road going into Bolinas between the Bolinas Creek and the Bolinas School. And the old house was moved up to that location which was the old Crane property, Crane Brothers that are down here in the bank are the descendants of that family, and it was about 1860 or thereabouts that the house was moved.
CE: From where?
FL: It was moved from the Grinter Ranch and the Grinter Ranch is the location of the current discussion about finding Drake's fort. I can remember when I was a kid that the -- What I think that they are considering was Drake's fort was a fishpond.
CE: What do you mean fishpond?
FL: Well, the Grinter brothers raised trout and they had a flume that they ran from the present Bolinas Creek all the way across that property and they had two ponds.
CE: Were they cemented?
FL: No, they were wood, they had wooden casings around them and then they were filled with mud and with salt water around the outside of them. They had the water ran into the first pond and then it ran into the second pond and then it picked up another flume for about 200 yards down to two more fish ponds that were down to where the houses were, the old houses, and the houses were on the shore right opposite Kent Lake. The old --
CE: Kent Lake? Do you mean Kent Island?
FL: Kent Island. What's the difference between an island and a lake, one sticks up and one sticks down.
CE: I was just trying to get located, Floyd. Oh, I see, so we're going south again along that bay side there.
FL: We're right on the shore north of that little hill before you go into Bolinas. And that old house was constructed of native redwood and how they moved

it, I don't know, but apparently what they did was to lay planking and then use rollers and use horses to pull the house on rollers and they moved it for fully a half a mile. Two stories. The house was so well constructed it stood it very well.

CE: Why did they move it, somebody bought it and they didn't want it where it is that it?

FL: Somebody wanted it in this new location. Now I don't know whether it was the Crane family that moved this or whether it was part of the old Briones family or who it was that moved it.

CE: But you think that Dr. Aubrey Neesham who is doing this archeological dig there might be digging around the old fishpond?

FL: Well, I haven't seen the spot he's digging in but from the description I've heard, from what some of the natives up there tell me, I would guess he's digging in the old fishpond. Now there could have been something there before there were fishponds but --

CE: Well, its very interesting sidelight to that whole story.

FL: I've got a lot of pictures here but they're mostly of people and their families.

CE: But that one on the Liberty is a rare thing. Do you have a micro lens? We ought to take a copy of that. Now we've got to get you out of high school, Floyd, and get you on the road or Mrs. Kent will be upset with me.

FL: It was quite a job to get me out of high school.

CE: We've got to get you into the telephone company. You graduated from Tam High, then what did you do?

FL: I worked in the grocery store until the depression came and Radio Corporation had a big Trans-Pacific receiving station out there and not knowing what I wanted to do and knowing that I didn't want to be a grocery clerk all my life, I got some construction work out RCA. Over a period of years I guess I worked about five years off and on and I decided I kind of liked --

CE: Communications?

FL: Communications work. So I came to San Rafael to the telephone company and applied for a job and got to work for the telephone company in 1929 and you heard what happened in 1930 and '31, so I went back to Bolinas, back home, and I worked in the grocery store and worked at the radio station until 1936. In 1936 the Telephone Company called and said they'd like to take me back again but all they had to offer me was a janitor job and I said well that's alright, I said, I'm not too proud. They said we can't really promise you anything but it could develop into a better job because we think that the country is on the upsurge and so forth. So I worked as a janitor for four or five months and things picked up and they transferred me over to San Francisco in an installation crew and they were just preparing market office for dial telephones, so I worked on the dial conversion crew. Then from that outside job I moved inside to central office work and I worked in central office until the time that the war started and by the time the war started I had completed the Central Office School, the Switching School. I got real interested in signal corps in the army and you know the old story with the

country boy and the flag waving, so I fell in behind the flag and went and joined the army. By that time I had been married a couple of years

CE: Tell us your wife's name.

FL: I married a very lovely girl who outranked me by the fact that she was a schoolteacher and she had started teaching in Marin County out in Point Reyes area and then moved into San Rafael. Taught here in West End in San Rafael.

CE: And what is her name?

FL: Her maiden name was Eva Rhodes. I enlisted as a private in the army and went through all the throes of becoming a regular soldier and within a year I had a chance to go to Officers Candidate School and get my commission. After I was commissioned and since I had quite a background in the telephone company and RCA and communications generally and I was a little bit older than the average soldier. Incidentally, it's interesting when I went to OCS I had a pretty rough time having a limited high school education. I got thrown in a class of college graduates that hadn't had their last summer camp. Half of them were from MIT and the other half from Texas A& M.

CE: You burned a lot of midnight oil.

FL: There were five of us that were in the group that were not either Texas A & M or MIT, so we burned a lot of midnight oil, finally got the commission. My first assignment was up to Fort J in New York, Governor's Island, and I was only there a short time when the Signal Officer went off on an emergency leave for one reason or another and I had two weeks more commission service than the other officer who was there, so I became acting Signal Officer in Fort J which was quite a little job for comparatively new officer. I had only been an officer for three or four months. So I lived through that. Then a call came and we went overseas --

CE: Where?

FL: Went to England. I landed in Barrydocks in Wales and at that time they were forming a Service Battalion, the first time this has been done, to serve the build up for D Day. So I went into that Service Battalion as a Signal Officer and I took over the Signal Office at Tidwiff Garrison in Southern England, which was in the British Southern Command with headquarters at Salisbury. So from there I went up to Northern England after the war had progressed and became Port Signal Officer in ? , Kinston, which was quite an experience, and from there I went over to Paris and I became the Post Signal Officer for the American headquarters in Paris which was an interesting assignment.

CE: Did you ever see Eisenhower?

FL: No, he was already gone by that time. I was in Com Z and he was in Shafe. So he was over in Germany by then. Matter of fact I went to France about a week after VJ Day. I didn't want to go up too soon because they were shooting over there you know and I didn't like to get too near that.

CE: Talk with you today, times running out, but we certainly thank you for contributing more to the history of the Bolinas area and I know since your

retirement you're busy with your photography and your Shrine efforts and it has indeed been a pleasure to meet with you today.

FL: Thank you very much, Carla.