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Anne T. Kent California Room

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INTERVIEW WITH GENEVA HENSILL REINHARDT

by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent
January 9, 1977

INTERVIEWEE: Geneva Hensill Reinhardt (GR)
INTERVIEWERS: Carla Ehat (CE) and Anne Kent (AK)
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CE: Today is Sunday, January 9th, 1977. Continuing the Oral History program of the California Room at the Marin County Library at Civic Center, this is Carla Ehat. Today we are at the beautiful beach residence of Mrs. Thomas Kent, located at 212 Seadrift Road in Stinson Beach. We are seated in her living room facing the beautiful Pacific and we have the privilege today of having a woman join us who is going to share hopefully some of her reminiscences about her family. The name of our interviewee today is Genevieve Hensill Reinhardt. She is the granddaughter of Amos Stinson. Now, Amos Stinson and his brother, Nathan Stinson, have been in what is known as Stinson Beach since the 1870s, and the community is named for her family. We thought it might be interesting to chat with her today about her family. It's a pleasure to have you here today. Good afternoon, Geneva.

GR: Good afternoon.

CE: Now, is it true, about roughly, the dates that -- Was it your grandfather's brother, Nathan Stinson, who came out in the '70s and located here?

GR: Both the Stinson brothers came out in the '70s. They did not locate in Stinson Beach; they went to Point Reyes.

CE: What did they do there?

GE: They were dairymen on the Shafter estate which apparently was divided into many sections, and various people leased or bought sections and went into the dairy business, and that's what my grandfather did. Nathan Stinson never was involved in the Point Reyes area, to the best of my knowledge.

CE: All right. The dairy farm -- About 1870, I thought -- It's written that Nathan bought 1,720 acres east of the Bolinas Lagoon with a man named James Wallace Upton. Does that seem accurate to you?

GR: No, that's not really accurate. My memory is that he bought 1,624 -- I'm not too sure -- acres, which, of course, included the beach and the present town site and clear up to the top of Mount Tamalpais.

CE: Can you show us roughly on the map here? We have a map of Marin County.

GR: I don't know that I can.

CE: Roughly, here we are.

GR: Here, up to Ridge Crest. He owned all of this here.

CE: That's the Morse Gulch. And this is the road to Fairfax.

GR: No, he did not own that far, no.

CE: But all this, and then possibly down to Willow Camp?

GR: Willow Camp was included. As I say, the present park and the beach in front of it and the town site and the hillsides were included in the 1,600 acres. And he did not live here.

CE: Where did he live? Out of the state, you mean?

GR: Well, he did various things. He went to Nevada for a while and farmed. I'm not very clear about that. Then he went to Mexico and did some mining, and kind of went various places. I don't think he ever lived anywhere in California permanently. I could be wrong.

CE: Well, your grandfather's brother, Nathan, is reported to have married Mr. Upton's widow, Rose. Is that --

GR: Nathan Stinson had two marriages. His first marriage was to a widow who had a daughter by her first marriage and his second marriage was to a widow who had a son by her first marriage, and that's where the name Upton comes in. When Nathan died, he left half the property to his brother, Amos, and a fourth to the daughter of his first marriage and a part to the daughter of the second marriage and that's where Judge Upton -- His second wife's name apparently was Upton because her son's name was Upton. I'm a little hazy; it's kind of involved.

CE: Well, your grandfather, Amos -- What is your earliest recollection of his involvement in the property? Did he develop any of the area or take advantage of the site for recreational purposes?

GR: Well, he was quite an old man in that he lived to be 82 or 84. He was really too old and not particularly involved but he did set up a water system and he mapped the town.

CE: He did?

GR: I believe so. And because of his age, was not actively involved and it was my Aunt Eve who married a man named Mr. Newman Leif Fitzhenry who came in 1913. He was the one who was very active and tried to develop a first-class resort, which there was very little here at that time.

CE: But there was a great desire, I think, throughout the United States, then, of this therapy of being by the sea and the sea air and they were hopeful of having a lovely spot here, were they not?

GR: Yes, actually, Willow Camp which is now the State Park, up until my Uncle Fitzhenry took over, was filled with weekenders from San Francisco, every kind of

undesirable people, of lower Market people. And he wanted to establish a family thing and so he became very unpopular, of course, trying to get the undesirables out and build a name for the place for families. So, he is the only person who tried to do anything with Stinson Beach up to his death which was in 1938.

CE: Thirty-eight he died?

GR: Thirty-eight or '39. I think '38.

CE: Did you have the pleasure of knowing your Grandfather Amos?

GR: Yes, I knew him but --

CE: Would you describe him for us, as far as temperament or physical --

GR: Well, all of the obituaries say he was a highly honest and nice person.

CE: As a youngster, you wouldn't be able to observe that, of course.

GR: No, I couldn't observe that. I'm just quoting from the obituary. He had a mustache. He was very quiet and apparently all three of his daughters adored him. I saw too little of him and I was too young to be very impressed and I don't think he was very impressed with me.

CE: Well, tell us about your mother. She was the eldest of his three daughters. Is that correct?

GR: Right.

CE: We'll get to the other two, but tell us a bit about your mother.

GR: Well, she was born in Michigan and that's where Amos hailed from. Well, originally New Jersey; they came as brothers from New Jersey. My mother was born in Michigan and at two years of age they came out to Point Reyes and that's where they established the dairy farm. And I can recall my mother talking about going on horseback to school and they had to take by rowboat all their dairy products over to Olema: their butter and cream and all that. The things that they did on the farm, they're not too clear about that.

CE: You mean they crossed Tomales Bay and went down to Olema?

GR: Yes, by rowboat to take their produce.

CE: Where did she go to school? I wonder. Did she go to the little school out in the Point Reyes peninsula?

GR: I truly don't know; it was some distance, but exactly what school it was I don't know. I wish I had asked many questions but it's too late now.

CE: That's why we're doing late as it is, Geneva. Did your mother keep any kind of a journal or any of your family to your knowledge?

GR: No. When the three sisters were old enough to get a better education the -- my grandfather moved to San Jose and that's where they all attended school.

CE: Your mother married your father in San Jose?

GR: In San Jose in 1895. My father was an architect.

CE: He was?

GR: Yes, which didn't apply all his life because during the time of the First World War there was just no demand for architects, so he did other things after that.

CE: Yusta David was his name, but they called him Y.D.

GR: Y.D.

CE: Your mother's other sister, Maude, has an interesting story according to these papers. She never married and lived many years in --

GR: Maude went to Stanford and graduated from Stanford in their first graduating class along with Herbert Hoover and one of Maude's best friends, Lou Hoover, Herbert's wife.

CE: They were sorority sisters, I understand?

GR: Sorority sisters, yes. Then she went to the University of Oregon and taught English for a while, became interested in photography, and established her first studio in Eugene, Oregon. I'm not quite sure why she came down to Berkeley but she did, and she was Berkeley's leading portrait photographer for something like fifty years and worked until she was in her eighties.

CE: Did she go by the name Maude Stinson?

GR: Maude Stinson; she never married.

CE: Well, isn't that interesting?

GR: And Eve, Eve's real name was Eva. She hated that, so she always wanted to be called Eve, so everybody called her Eve.

CE: And Eva had a voice, a lovely voice, I understand.

GR: She did. She was head of the Music Department at the University of Oregon for some time.

CE: And it was she who married Newman Fitzhenry?

GR: Well, she went to New York to study music. She had a brief marriage which no one ever talks about. I know nothing about that. But while she was in New York she married Newman Leif Fitzhenry who was a lumberman, actually. Then they came to Stinson Beach in, I think, 1913, and they have lived here ever since.

CE: Well, now, I understand they bought the house that Captain Easkoot built. Where is that house? Is it still standing?

GR: Oh, yes, it is still standing. It had a fire, a very horrible fire, about a year ago.

CE: Where is it located? Point it out to us, or tell us verbally where it is.

GR: It's on -- I have pictures of it. But, no I couldn't tell from here the area.

AK: Is it in the big grove?

GR: It's on the main highway to the right as you leave town. It's so covered with growth in front that you don't -- You have to stop.

CE: Is it a frame house similar to the one, the Bourne house in the Audubon Canyon Ranch?

GR: Yes, yes. It was built, I think, in the 18 -- 1870s, possibly. The first house is in this area, anyway. Of course, the old sea captain who built it died there for some years. He was, I'm sure, one of the first surveyors of Marin County, I think.

CE: Yes. Easkoot? Is that how you pronounce it? I'm getting my information from other literature that's been printed but when Fitzhenry bought the property in 1914 or '15 it was valued at \$12,000.

GR: Yes, that's right.

CE: And in 1971 they valued it at \$90,000. Well, we all know that story, don't we?

GR: Well, it went up to a \$145,000 and now it's down to \$110,000.

CE: It is? What happened?

GR: Well, after the fire it was --

CE: Oh, badly damaged.

GR: I don't know if the house is worth saving but there's three and a half beautiful acres of property around it and some day somebody will --

CE: Is the school that the Stinson family gave to the community near there?
GR: The school is down the road a ways, maybe a mile.
CE: Down towards --
GR: Towards Bolinas.
CE: Up then.
GR: Yeah, and the original school was burned and they now are using the property for two shacks. They have a name, two temporary buildings.
CE: But according to the bequest by your family it was stipulated -- Is it true that the land was to be used only for school purposes or revert to the original owner?
GR: That's true.
CE: Now your grandfather and your grandmother -- Was her name Margaret?
GR: Yes.
CE: Where did they live in Stinson? Do you recall?
GR: Margaret Stinson, my Grandmother Stinson, never did live in Stinson Beach. She lived in Berkeley, not with, but close to Maude, and died while she was visiting Maude. Amos, my grandfather, who spent his last few years with my Aunt Eve until he died, but he was an old sick man, really, so --
CE: Do you want to tell us anything more about Willow Camp, that you know of, that you would like to share with us? Was that --
GR: Well, Willow Camp became -- Well, let's see, after my Uncle Fitzhenry died in 1938, my aunt didn't want the responsibility of continuing to taking charge of the area, so she sold it to the county, probably around 1940.
CE: What are we talking about? Probably ten acres maybe or --
GR: Oh, more than ten acres, because I ended up with some tidelands and there were seven acres in the tidelands. Anyway --
CE: Well, that's all public record then.
GR: Yes. And the county sold it to the state but I'm not sure of the year, and tore down everything that was in it. There were a lot of little cabins to be rented over the weekends and summer rentals and that sort of thing. And tore down lots of the trees and made huge parking areas. And then Mr. Kent came along and tore down our darling little lake and made another huge parking lot that's known as the southern parking lot. There are three large parking lots.
CE: There was a lake there in the Willows?
GR: There was a darling little lake, yes. I've pictures which I didn't bring, my pictures.
CE: Well, I remember the late '40s, early '50s, coming over and spending weekends down there. There were some cabins that stretched down towards the south.
GR: Those belonged to Sea Downs.
CE: What, that Sea Downs?
GR: Yes. I think Sea Downs. Kent was the builder of Sea Downs, I think, but they have all been taken down. I think they were there until the state took over, so everything was just --
CE: How do you feel now that this property is owned by the state and controlled? Has it been a benefit, in your judgment?
GR: Well, in some ways, they keep it clean.
CE: There was a period of a couple of decades that it was unhappy for you residents, wasn't it?

GR: It was not very clean. Well, I've personally been very unhappy about the state taking over because I lived in a big two-story house on the hillside overlooking the state or county park and they made a new entrance to the park right in front of my home, so it meant terrific traffic and noise and everything. I was very unhappy about it and four or five years ago I sold that house and bought another one higher on the hill to get me away from all this traffic noise.

CE: Well, I know it's hard for those who love an area to see any changes. It must be terribly difficult, but considering other areas in Marin County, don't you think Stinson Beach has been somewhat fortunate?

GR: We've been fortunate, yes. Of course, the people who are in business, such as the service station and the food store and real estate people, of course they love lots of people. That's how they make their money; but just casual owners in particular were kind of filled with senior citizen age.

CE: Oh, are you?

GR: Well, yes, there are quite a lot of us, including myself. We are the ones, of course, who don't want progress, you know, to be quiet and just the way it was, and --

CE: Well, you should be happy, then, over some of the legislation. For example, we've talked to ranchers out in West Marin, Boyd Stewart for one, and he told us his fight and his terror within himself having to give up his ranch to make the Point Reyes National Seashore, but he weighed the lesser of two evils. It was either that or development, bulldozing and sub-divisions. How do you feel about the Golden Gate National Recreational Area coming up this week? Don't you feel it's the lesser of many evils?

GR: I feel very good about it. I think we should all be very happy about it because we know now that there can't be sub-divided, the present little community is it; we have no room to --

CE: This is enacted by law and it cannot be changed by administration or anything.

GR: Very true.

CE: There is a wild beauty here and much history. The art history alone in Marin County is certainly worthy of deep research. We have interviewed a couple of artists, but when you think of Thad Welch and some of the people who have lived close by you here -- Where was it, Mrs. Kent, at Steep Ravine?

AK: That's what I understood. Maybe you know a cabin somewhere over the Steep Ravine way.

GR: No, I know only the little, oh, Steep Ravine.

AK: It must have been up the canyon.

GE: No, I don't know any of the people who lived in that area.

CE: Just think of the California artists, the turn-of-the-century artists particularly, who have done so well using this beautiful area for their work and they preserved it.

GR: Very true.

CE: I should think you really should be very thrilled about living here. Well, you are, obviously.

GR: I am, but actually as you get older it isn't a very correct place to live, especially if you are alone such as I am.

CE: Are you widowed?

GR: Yes, I live alone and I have for many years. There have been, since I have lived here, many people as they get to be my age, some older and some younger, have moved

away just because it is inconvenient to live here so far away from doctors and hospitals and that kind of thing.

CE: I see. You are not frightened. I mean, things don't happen.

GR: Oh, I'm not frightened, no. I'm not frightened at all. But in recent years, very recent years, we have an excellent ambulance service and we have very good trained first-aiders.

CE: Paramedics?

GR: Yes.

CE: Well, what is it? It's forty minutes over the hill, isn't it?

GR: Well, it is thirty minutes to Mill Valley but there is nothing in Mill Valley. You have to go to Terra Linda or San Francisco.

CE: To Marin General, you're talking about 45 minutes, anyway.

GR: That's true. Forty-five minutes the closest hospital, which isn't --

CE: It might be closer to go to Letterman across to San Francisco or the Harbor Emergency.

GR: There are, of course, many hospitals in San Francisco.

CE: Now you have this terrific water problem that your grandfather and his brother had the foresight to put in, and those pipes are still there, I understand.

GR: Yes.

CE: That he laid out a hundred years ago.

GR: Well, not really a hundred.

CE: Well, 1870.

GR: But they are in awfully bad shape, awfully bad shape. And that, of course, is one of the reasons we're in such a financial straits right now in regard to the water system.

CE: Is there any way you can envision restricting this great influx of users of the parks?

GR: I can't see any way. State parks are primarily meant for people and I -- Well, we have a horrible traffic problem in the summer and, of course, there's been much discussion about making another entrance to the park and that would alleviate a lot of the problem in the main town because everyone has to come through town now to get into the park.

CE: Oh, I see. So they could maybe work out another approach.

GR: Another entrance south, south of the park, which they have been talking about for years, the supervisors and --

CE: Do you feel, historically, we have been spoiled compare to the east? You talk to any easterner who's lived in New York or Fire Island or Long Island or had entree to Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, they say, "You don't know what it's like. Just wait. Just wait till your place becomes popular. You'll have the summer influx."

GR: Well, I know nothing about this truthfully. I've done a lot of traveling but I'm not familiar with the east.

CE: Don't you feel, though, that the natives have been somewhat successful, Geneva, in killing the main road, that big highway that they wanted here?

GR: Oh, that's very true

CE: That has been a successful achievement.

GR: But in summer, in good weekends, the cars are bumper to bumper. I can look out my window and see the traffic completely stopped on the coast road as far as you can see.

They're just stopped. Because the people coming in from Panoramic meet at that junction and there is no control so they have to inch their way down into town. It really is very --

CE: There are actually four ways you can get into Stinson, isn't there? There is the coastal road, the Panoramic; you've got the Alpine Fairfax Road and the Olema Road.

GR: Well, you're right, if you include the Alpine Road.

CE: Well, three ways to get in.

GR: And that isn't always open. I don't know. Sometimes it's closed I don't know why.

AK: It's open today.

CE: Yes, we were surprised.

GR: Were you down there?

CE: No, but when we came in, you can see the gate.

GR: Yes, if you count that, there are four ways.

AK: Well, you know they used to come, some people used to come, in the horse and buggy days. They came over and that must have been an awful trip.

CE: Now, you're not old enough to remember the Owl that used to come, but you've heard of it?

GR: Yes. But I remember Fitzhenry began driving the stage in its first inception. I do remember stage days.

CE: You do?

GR: Yes, not that I lived here, but I was here enough to remember.

CE: You were born in Oregon. Were you raised there or in San Jose?

GR: I came to San Jose when I was seven or eight years old and from San Jose to Berkeley.

CE: You were a Berkeley lady, then, most of your younger life?

GR: Yes, most of my married life.

CE: Your name intrigues me. Are you related to the Reinhardts of Mills?

GR: No, no, my husband's family are from Ohio. There are lots of Reinhardts in the world apparently, when you get that name you realize how many there are.

AK: Any sisters or brothers?

GR: My mother had two other girl children who died when they were quite young.

CE: How would you like to bring out some photographs and share them with us, Geneva?

GR: Well, I'm afraid you'll want to keep them.

CE: Oh, no. Would you repeat the question, Geneva?

GR: I believe what is now Seadrift was owned by my grandfather. Amos Stinson, thought he owned it, and Mr. Kent thought he owned it and there was litigation about it and Mr. Kent had more money than Mr. Stinson, so Mr. Kent acquired Seadrift. That is what I think. I've only heard it. I haven't read it, so I don't know how true.

AK: I hope you are wrong.

GR: Well, it doesn't matter.

AK: Well, it would matter. I hope you are wrong, but anyway we have to look into it further.

GR: Look at the front.

CE: Unfortunately this paper isn't dated. I looked everywhere. August '61, excuse me. There's an article here about sisters who shaped West Marin, the Cunningham Sisters from Windsor, Maine. It says, "Two Cunningham sisters were among West Marin early

pioneers and much of what West Marin is today can be credited to the pioneering women and their descendants.” All right, one of them married James Upton. Rose Cunningham Palmer married James Upton.

GR: I don't remember Judge Upton's wife, but --

CE They arrived in Marin the day before Thanksgiving, 1868. Two years after the Upton's arrived in Point Reyes, James and fellow rancher Nathan Stinson together purchased 1,720 acres of land east of Bolinas Lagoon.

AK: Gee, that goes way back.

GR: I don't think -- Who does it say besides Amos purchased the land? Nathan purchased the land, too.

CE: James Upton.

GR: No, James Upton was an undesirable character. He was an alcoholic.

CE: Who was?

GR: Judge Upton. Judge Upton was an alcoholic. He didn't ever keep a promise. He never -- He knew nothing about business. He knew nothing about money. He lost what he owned to my uncle, who bought him out, to put an end to this story.

CE: Well, would you agree with this statement, Geneva, that both men agreed that the land would be used as income property rather than for themselves to set up housekeeping? That substantiates what you said about --

GR: You mean both Upton --

CE: Upton and your Grandfather Amos. They didn't buy the land to settle down on it, particularly.

GR: Well, I guess that's more or less true. Of course, Amos wasn't involved with Upton. It was Fitzhenry really that was involved with Upton.

CE: Well, I heard somewhere that shortly after your grandfather --

End, Side A

CE: Geneva, shortly after your Grandfather Amos's brother, Nathan married Rosa, they decided to unload their real estate holdings and they ultimately found a buyer who wanted to convert the oceanfront property into a fashionable spa and health resort and spa. Now who that man's name was, I don't know, but before the transactions were completed the potential buyer died. Have you ever heard that?

GR: No.

CE: And Stinson and Rose took their cue and made plans to convert the site into a resort and within three years Willow Camp was a favorite vacation spot of the wealthy.

GR: Well, I think that's exaggerating along the --

AK: Because, you know, every hiker -- The first ones I ever met, long before people had all these fancy things, packs and all the rest of it, they all came to Willow Camp. Willow Camp was a favorite of little people who could come and camp. They brought their babies; they brought their -- The first ones I ever knew -- In fact, when I first came here, and that was after the First World War -- I was in the Ferry Building. I was new. I had never been in California before, and suddenly the doors opened and in came hordes, men and women, boys and girls, with their children and without their children, with packs of every kind, and there was no such a thing in those days as regular hiking clothes. They seem to have on everything they didn't care too much about because they were going on rough trails and things. And we all went on the ferryboat and they had been

doing it; you could see they were perfectly at home. They had been doing it for years I guess. They were all heading for Willow Camp.

GR: Well, it was free. There was no cost. They had to hike.

AK: They came across the ferry, got on the train, got off the train, I suppose, and walked. You know, they loved that place or they wouldn't have gone to all that trouble.

GR: It was much more attractive than it is now. It was very rugged; it was very natural. Now you have signs. You can't take your dog. You can't drive here. You can't do this and you can't do that. I'm very unhappy about that' you can't walk your dog in the park anymore.

CE: Do you enjoy walking, Geneva?

GR: I have to walk, my doctor says, and my dog has to walk or he'll go crazy and I can't walk in the park anymore and I'm very unhappy about that.

AK: Why?

GR: Well, because it's an easy place to walk

AK: Well, I mean why can't you?

GR: All the restrictions: no dogs, no dogs, no dogs, not even on leash.

CE: Can't you cut over some way to the beach and walk along the beach?

GR: Yes, but sometimes the beach is very -- sometimes very windy and hard to walk, and the park is sheltered and it's easy walking and I can't walk though too much soft sand these days.

CE: Did you bring your dog with you today?

GR: No.

CE: What breed do you have?

GR: It's a big, 33-pound Dachshund and he's full of hell and we're not well-mated; he should have more exercise than I can give him physically. But I take him out every day.

CE: Well, you have seen an influx of a lot of people, artistic people, some good and some bad. You've suffered through the terrible decade of the '60s. How would you judge Stinson Beach today from the standpoint of non-residence? Do you have a little better type?

GR: Well, of course, I don't remember the people who came before the county took over; those early days I don't remember. A better type, yes, I suppose so, yes. They charge a dollar to get in the park, to park in the summer time. That's one reason our little town all the streets are jammed with people who don't want to pay the dollar. It just adds to our traffic problem

CE: So they can park just anywhere and just go in the park and use the facilities?

GR: Yes, walk in. And it is kept clean; there are restrooms.

CE: Do they have park rangers there?

GR: Oh, yes.

CE: Do they tell what they can of the history of this area? Are they trying to inform?

GR: I don't think they're the slightest bit involved in the history. I doubt if they even know it. Their one job is to control the hordes to --

CE: Well, so many young people today, I find refreshing, they're interested in the history of the places they come to and this to us is encouraging. They really want to know. I wonder who provides them with that information in Stinson.

GR: I don't think there is a soul unless they know someone.

CE: Well, they might sell Jack Mason's books, and he has chapters that cover a little bit.

GR: We have a book store in town and they pride themselves on handling all sorts of books telling about the history.

AK: A good book store, really good book store.

GR: Yes, a charming little book store.

CE: I've been in there with you and that has a little potbellied stove in the back.

GR: Yes.

AK: Flower girls; you forgot to tell about the flower girls.

CE: What are the flower girls? Tell us what you mean.

GR: Well, there were a group of young women in town, not just necessarily too young; I think three originally who were vitally interested in wild flowers. That was their one hobby in life and vital interest. So each May they would tour the surrounding countryside and gather wildflowers and bring them back to our community center and arrange them all nicely and name them all botanically and we had a flower show exhibit for two days on a weekend in May. So that became very well-known and very well-liked and there were hordes and hordes of people who came just because they were attracted to it. But I think they had more than ten flower shows and now they all consider themselves too old to continue so we haven't had one for two years. We'll never have any more, actually, at least with this original group.

AK: Well, I think the original group is now doing almost the same thing over at the big Oakland show, so they do have --

GR: I don't know much about that. Do you mean Bobbie Schockee and Ann Leary and Menzies?

AK: Barbara Menzies.

GR: I don't know much about --

AK: I haven't gone, but I know they do a beautiful job and it is too bad. I think we all felt so badly but I guess it just grew too big.

GR: Well, probably true, and too tough physically. They would go almost to the Oregon border; they would roam that far away and to Nevada and south quite a way. It was a very trying task, and then when they got back here they were exhausted but they had to form arrangements of each flower and put also the technical name of it.

CE: How many residents live here all year round? Have you any idea? Four hundred, maybe?

GR: Well, the sign coming into town says something like 400. What does it say? 484 or something? I don't think that's too accurate.

AK: No, not now, I bet

GR: I don't know, truthfully. You must know Ruth Miller, don't you, Mrs. Kent?

AK: I don't think so.

GR: Hattie Green?

AK: Is she on the water board? I mean the office --

GR: Well, Hattie is secretary of the water.

AK: Then I know her, yes.

GR: And Ruth is in the real estate with Bob in the Sea Shell, a real estate office, anyway. Ruth is a realtor.

CE: Where is the water supply for Stinson located?

GR: Well, it comes down the hill from about five or seven different creeks. And that's where we've had our problem. There was so little rain last year that the creeks did not have much water.

CE: And you have some cylinder tanks to hold it?

GR: We have tanks, yes, and pumps. Well, they drilled a well in the park last year.

CE: Did they find water?

GR: They found water, yes. In fact, there are four wells, one in Leonard's property where --I would think you must know but I don't think you would be familiar with it.

AK: Is it just across, right opposite here?

GR: Yes. Part of the old Stinson Ranch anyway. There are two houses in there. One of them isn't used and it's behind the trees there. There is a pump, I'm told.

AK: Wouldn't you think it was a wonderful water system until all those hordes began to come in?

GR: Very true. We are very unhappy about them, the summer weekend people, using our water. We are so very restricted. We were very restricted last summer. We still are.

CE: You and Bolinas share the same problem and it's very acute.

GR: Very true.

CE: Well, the whole county is, of course, but yours is extremely --

GR: The whole county. They have been hauling water for cows and what not, up in the Point Reyes area. So it could be worse next year unless we get more rain.

AK: That's what they don't believe.

CE: I bet there were rain dances on the beach a couple of weeks ago.

GR: Yes, everybody was thrilled. It didn't last too long.

AK: Yes, that really was wonderful.

CE: What have been some of your interest in your life, Geneva? I know you were married, but did you have any vocation you followed or avocation that you'd like to share with us?

GR: Well, I worked with my aunt who was the photographer in Berkeley.

CE: You did? You had that pleasure.

GR: Not constantly; until I came over here.

CE: Do you have any of her work in your residence or were they mostly commissioned portraits for other people?

GR: They were portraits. I have hundreds; a suitcase full of portraits of my family that she did, my mother and father, myself and my sisters.

CE: Did you follow that interest? I mean, do you like to take photographs?

GR: Not truthfully. I was not vitally interested. In fact, no. In 1949, I believe, I became interested in Guide Dogs which is in San Rafael.

CE: I know what Guide Dogs is. I certainly do.

GR: I'm sure you do.

CE: Mrs. Heller has been a life-giving force. Wasn't she?

GR: Oh, yes, yes. Sixteen years I went over once a week and trained puppies.

CE: Oh, is that what you did?

GR: Yes, I was a puppy trainer.

CE: Well, good for you. My neighbor, Helen Britt, did that for a while.

GR: What was her name?

CE: Helen Britt. Did you ever know Helen?

GR: I don't remember, no. It became kind of too much physically for me and so six years ago I resigned, technically.

CE: Do you do any other volunteer work in the community since --

GR: I used to. I was involved in every little thing in the community but I kind of have gotten out of it. I still am involved in the rummage sale and the Christmas bazaar, which is about all the activity I am involved in at the moment. No, I have -- I used to be quite a knitter. I knit every day for 40 years and I'm now I've quit that. I'm doing crewel work. Looking after my dog and my home and my yard and my crewel, that's about all I have.

AK: That's a lot.

CE: That's a lovely sweater you have on. That looks like it came from Scandinavia.

GR: Thank you.

CE: Did you make it?

GR: No, I made this.

CE: Did you really? It's a knockout.

GR: It's a little large, but I can't seem to do much about it.

AK: Aren't there some people in Stinson who do craft kind of things now? Is it pretty good or not?

GR: Well, there used to be a lot more, let's put it that way. There are a few who paint like Gleena Boland. You may know her.

CE: You have some good artists here don't you? Aren't there a few good artists?

GR: Yes, Kenny Shockey paints. I don't think either of them are too exciting, but there is a couple who does pottery -- I don't know their name -- and a woman who does very unique things with plastics and stained glass and I don't know the technical name of that. We have had in the past many more of that type of person that we have right now.

CE: All right, now I want to ask you to think about this for a minute. You've lived here 30 years and you have a traditional heritage, more, perhaps, than anyone around here, from your Grandfather Amos. What, realistically, can you think could be done to keep Stinson Beach the lovely charming place it is and yet exist in the 20th, almost 21st, Century? What can be done in your judgment, within the framework of reality? Taking into consideration the normal expansionist feeling that's going on in California, taking into consideration the American idea of growth always -- We must grow and we must settle. What can we do? If we could solve the water problem, it would be one thing, of course, but can you envision anything else from your vantage point?

GR: Well, we also have a sewage problem.

CE: You do?

GR: Oh, a desperate one. And that is going to be attacked and done something about soon, probably.

CE: Well, of course that would be a county effort, won't it, and probably partly paid for by each taxpayer, I presume, in the community?

GR: I have a board. The same board that looks after the water company is involved in the sewage thing, and they have been trying for years and years and fighting the people over the hill who want to put in a \$600 million plant of some sort. And I can't possibly tell you all the ins and outs of that, but it has been going on for years and there are lot of older houses who have had septic tank and cesspools that need attention desperately.

Most of them are out in what's known as the old part of town and that's where I live.

However --

CE: On the hill up there is called "old town"?

GR: Yes, that's what it's called. That's where the first houses were built. But that hasn't come to a climax yet and I don't know what's going to happen. I think we are trying very desperately to set up some sort of a committee who will attack only the people who need to be helped.

CE: Oh, take it on an individual basis.

GR: On a personal basis rather than make a huge plant for the whole community, which would be very expensive. And we don't seem to have room to do this, anyway.

CE: May I ask you what is the attitude of the owners of property? For example, on the spit here, who are weekend visitors, but who are often people of some prominence in San Francisco and other places? What is their attitude generally regarding the problems of Stinson? Are they co-operative?

GR: Well, as far as I know, and I hate to be definite about this, they couldn't care less about our small problems. Now, that may not be a very fair statement, but it's what a lot of people think and it's what I have heard. And, of course, people who are paying a fair amount of money for water and come over for weekends are not at all conscious of being very saving and that irks all the other of us who live here.

CE: Well, we're not all as conservation-minded as dear Anne Kent. You should see how she conserves! If we go on a drive and there is a trickle of water coming down the road she wants to stop the car.

AK: We are all in the same boat. It's just too bad. In our area there's some that will and some won't.

GR: But some people feel that Seadrifters are not trying very hard to help, but that may be a false statement. I don't know.

AK: I hope it's false. They seem to be --

GR: Of course people come here. There are dozens, hundreds, and they are entertaining all weekend. There could be a house with ten children and six adults or some such thing and people with big families use a lot of water which they could control if they really tried, but they --

AK: It's not there to be used.

GR: Very true. And, of course, all these homes in Seadrift are newer homes and they don't have any septic tank problems, as far as I know, and of course they don't feel that they should be involved in a \$600 million system. There has to be something done, but as I say --

CE: Well, they really must get involved though because they are -- This is their property, too. Can you envision any other improvements or down the path that should be attended to in your judgment?

GR: Well, I certainly think that the traffic problem should be helped greatly.

CE: What can they do about that, would you say?

GR: Well, with only one other entrance into the park would make a great deal of difference to the main, little --

CE: I see.

AK: She's not talking about the park; she's talking about the whole Golden Gate Park all the way down.

CE: No, no, she's talking about the Stinson State Park.

CE: You see, you have to go through the main street in town to get to the park.

AK: Well, that same problem comes up with the entire thing then, too, doesn't it? Because if some of the people -- If thousands of the people who were going to the park at Point Reyes would go the other way, which they would do just as well, and not come streaming through here, that would help.

CE: Have you ever envisioned one-way streets? You know, I was wondering if you could envision one-way streets.

GR: Well, we have a one-way street in town now.

CE: No, I mean one-way highway. Suppose they permitted incoming traffic into Stinson to take the Shoreline road or the Olema Road. Do you follow me? And then you could exit over the mountain.

GR: As far as I know, that has never been discussed, and I don't know if it could be done. Do you know, Mrs. Kent, where the Lawrence's live?

AK: Here in this --

GR: In town.

AK: Oh, yes, just at the end.

GR: On the left as you come in?

AK: Yes, I know.

GR: The new entrance that everyone wants is there by their home. And you see, that would make many people coming over the hill either way going into the park there.

CE: They'd just bypass the town. Now is that the home --

AK: Wouldn't that take you down practically to Sea Downs?

GR: Yes, it would take you right into the park, yes.

CE: Is the home you're speaking of a Spanish home, rather substantial looking on the sea side?

GR: The home I'm speaking of?

AK: Yes, the Lawrence's, yes.

CE: Spanish house.

GR: Yes, a big classic, gray I think.

AK: Almost opposite the road to Mill Valley.

CE: That seems like a very good suggestion.

GR: Well, the supervisors have approved it and that was at least two years ago and why nothing has been done, I don't really know.

CE: Well, is it a fair question to ask you? Does anyone from Stinson Beach attend the supervisory meetings ever?

GR: Yes, yes.

CE: I see. That's good. So you do have representation.

GR: We have quite a lot of people in town who are vitally interested and go to the meetings, even to Sacramento, but I haven't been to any of them, truthfully. And another thing we want -- I don't quite know how we'd put it -- recondition the causeway. You see there was --

CE: Yes, what happened to that? I remember that causeway.

GR: Well, I think Mr. Leonard is responsible for that.

AK: He made a mistake.

GR: He did something wrong. He had a fight with some supervisor or somebody. I can't tell you the story. And as a result it hasn't been usable for years and years and years.

AK: As I understand it now, he didn't ask for any permission or anything. He just thought that he was going to make a better bridge and a better entrance. I think this is what -- He never asked any permission. He went right ahead and ripped the whole thing up and then was stopped in the middle of it by the county people and that's a dreadful thing.

GR: Well, I'm not even sure that he owned both sides. He had any right to do that but I don't want to be quoted. I don't --

CE: Well, that would in your judgment then bring people who live in Seadrift directly in?

GR: True.

CE: To their property and also out --

GR: Yes. But they'd still have to go through town if they wanted to take the coast highway or the Panoramic, either one.

CE: I suppose the weekend visitor or the summer visitor who pours in from San Francisco come that way but don't you think the Marin residents utilize the Olema Road?

GR: No, I truthfully don't think so. I think practically no one I know at least utilizes that road. It is an easier -- Well, I know these neighbors who live in Sacramento and they hate this road and so they come by Olema but they are the only people I know of that use that road.

CE: Well, we always come out this way.

AK: Yes, we do it all the time.

GR: Well, that's interesting; I guess it's an easier road. The other two roads scare many people to death. Personally, I love the roads. I don't like the coast road and the coast road I think is used more than Panoramic.

CE: It is?

GR: In summer, I think.

CE: Well, young people probably love that, too.

GR: Well, I think people from San Francisco find it easier, I don't know, or from the Bay Area. But I have learned to drive on the Panoramic Highway so I think it's a wonderful road.

AK: It is a lovely road. They're all beautiful.

CE: I want to go back up just a moment. When the school burned, where was it relocated? The same site, or did you re-locate?

GR: No, it was not used; it was left in its burned condition for quite a few years.

CE: Where did the children go to school?

GR: The children were bussed to Bolinas, and bussed over the hill to high school. Of course, this was not an high school; it was a primary school. So only in the last few months have put a temporary -- Of course, Bolinas is bursting at the seams, too many children. They don't have the room, as most schools seem to have the same problem, so only recently they put two temporary places on the old school site.

CE: Tell me, Geneva, have you noticed with this dry winter and this beautiful weather that we have had this winter an influx of weekend visitors almost comparable to the summer? Hasn't there been a continuous --

GR: Yes, yes. There has been a lot more people in town and in the park than normal for this time of year, a lot more. Of course, I haven't been in the park since they have prohibited dogs so I don't know, but I see them.

CE: I think they would give you a waiver if they knew who you were.

GR: Oh, I don't think there's any chance that they would make one exception. I used to own, I think, seven acres of tidelands and I sold those and went to Africa with the money, maybe six years ago, and had I not sold them, they -- I certainly didn't get much for them. I still I think would have to access my tidelands. I would have to go through the park to get to my property but I can no longer claim that. Had I known what was happening I would -- It would have been well worth it to me to keep the tidelands.

AK: You didn't tell anything about tripping off to Africa.

CE: All right, we have a few minutes left.

GR: It didn't have anything to do with the picture.

CE: Do you like to travel, I presume.?

GR: I've done quite a lot.

CE: Good for you.

GR: Africa was too much; I haven't done anymore for five years.

CE: Well, I tell you Geneva, it has been very interesting talking with you today and I want to thank you for sharing what you have with us.

GR: Well, I only hope I haven't given you the wrong data.

CE: No. Do you have a final question, Mrs. Kent?

AK: No, I don't think so, but I'm very glad to have been in on this interview. I've learned things.

CE: We'll have to do a little research about this Kent story, and the spit.

AK: I have to do some more things and we never did get to all of these things; there might have been something we want to copy.

CE: Do you mean the newsprint?

AK: No, there is some pictures.

CE: Where are some pictures other than the newspapers? Most of them she gave --

GR: I think I've shown you all the pictures.

CE: She gave most of the photographs which are really exquisite and that's a wonderful thing to do.

GR: So many people have approached me in the last few years wanting this and wanting that and twice I have loaned things and twice I haven't got them back.

CE: I think in your judgment what you have done with those photographs, to put them in the archives of the California Room, was a wise decision and we certainly thank you for that. Because they will be under lock and key, they will only be available to serious historians, researchers and scholars.

GR: But in my humble opinion so little of what I gave away is of any value, but as I say, they seem to think different.

CE: Well, they do think differently and they have hopes to make the California Room the Bancroft Library of Marin County and we have to start somewhere, Geneva. Thank you very much for talking with us this afternoon.

GR: Well, I've enjoyed it.

CE: Thank you.