

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE
MARIN COUNTY FREE LIBRARY**
Anne T. Kent California Room

Original recording available at the Anne T. Kent California Room

© All materials copyright Marin County Free Library. Transcript made available for research purposes only. All rights are reserved to the Marin County Free Library. Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to the:

Anne T. Kent California Room
Marin County Free Library
3501 Civic Center Dr. #427
San Rafael, California, 94903

INTERVIEW WITH IDA SCOTT
by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent
February 14, 1981

INTERVIEWEE: Ida Scott (IS)
INTERVIEWERS: Carla Ehat (CE) and Anne Kent (AK)
DATE OF INTERVIEW: February 14, 1981
TRANSCRIBER: Marjorie Hoffman

CE: Today is Saturday, February 14, 1981. Continuing our Oral History Program of the Moya Library for the California Room, at the Marin County Library at Civic Center, this is Carla Ehat. Once again we are at the residence of Mrs. Thomas Kent in Kentfield, California. We are going to have the pleasure shortly of talking with Mrs. Wallace Scott, known to her friends as Ida Scott, who lives at 10 Community Road in Belvedere.

Mrs. Scott has given a great deal of her life, certainly the last 40 years, having lived in Marin County, to many community involvements and public service. This year she was honored by Belvedere as "Belvedere Citizen of the Year". Mrs. Kent knows her and some of her contemporaries know her as a very giving woman to the Marin Art and Garden Center, which had its beginnings about 1945. So today we are just going to chat with Mrs. Scott and hopefully have her share some of her reminiscences about her rather productive life.

Now Mrs. Scott, over luncheon you volunteered that your family lived in Berkeley where you were born and your parents' name was Lutgen. L-U-T-G-E-N.

IS: German.

CE: German name. Now, what brought your family to California? Your grandfather, how did he come to California?

IS: Well, he came with a prairie wagon, 18 years old, as a guard.

CE: Where did they settle originally?

IS: Originally in Nevada City and then somehow arrived in Stockton where my father was born and died at the age of 42.

CE: Was your mother's family equally long in California?
IS: No, my mother came of English parentage and she was born in Canada and came to California when she was married.
CE: Where was the family home in Berkeley when you were a child? Roughly what section?
IS: Roughly, well it is now what would be the upper part of Claremont Court
CE: Is that between the California School for the Blind and the - -
IS: Well, it was up above that, near the foothills, I'd say.
CE: Is it near the Claremont Hotel?
IS: No, no. I would say it was in the direction of up near the end of Ashby Avenue, way up there. It was all wilderness at that time. They had a large place and kept horses because it was means of transportation.
CE: Berkeley was a quiet place.
IS: I remember my mother driving down to take my father to the SP train at Adeline and Ashby and going through Chinese vegetable gardens from College Avenue to down below Telegraph Avenue. All that was Chinese vegetable gardens.
CE: Then he commuted to San Francisco?
IS: He commuted to San Francisco.
CE: Did he go to the pier at the foot of University or Oakland?
IS: Went across on the ferry boat. No, no there was no pier in Berkeley in those days.
CE: He went to the Oakland pier
IS: The Oakland pier where the trains all went. That was before Key route trains.
CE: Was the Claremont Hotel built at that time?
IS: No.
CE: Okay. Now, you went to school in Berkeley, Berkeley High School. What was your grammar school called?
IS: Le Conte.
CE: Le Conte and then Berkeley High School and then the University of California.
IS: I did not graduate because my husband - -
CE: You met him?
IS: I met my husband and married him and he went off to the First World War and I was in the university at that time.
CE: Benjamin Wheeler was the president of the University of California then?
IS: Yes.
CE: How would you get to the university, walk? Were you within walking distance?
IS: On the streetcar.
CE: Up what? College?
IS: College or Telegraph, which ever one.
CE: Were there many women, classmates, going to the university in those days?
IS: I think I was the first and only one married at that time. You know, because I was young when I got married and that was rather unusual to have a married woman in college.
CE: What subjects interested you then? Was it general letters and science?
IS: Yes.
CE: All right. So you met Mr. Wallace Scott and he became an Army Captain, World War I engineer. And you were married - -

IS: I was married in Berkeley in 1917. He came from the Hawaiian Islands, he was born there.

CE: Were you married at home?

IS: Yes, married at home.

CE: That was the norm in those days.

IS: Oh, yes, yes.

CE: And all your family and friends were there, classmates?

IS: All the family especially.

CE: You had a sister?

IS: One sister.

CE: And what is her name?

IS: Her name is Constance and she married my husband's half-brother, Captain Gerbin Weight.

CE: And they live in San Francisco?

IS: They live in San Francisco.

CE: Now your husband's professional expertise was in engineering, so then ultimately he went into the engineering business and ultimately the refrigeration aspect of it. Your children were born, two daughters, where?

IS: Yes. One was born on a trip coming up from Southern California, was born in Atascadero.

CE: And who was what?

IS: That was Janet.

CE: Whose name is now?

IS: Janet McLenigan. And the other is Nancy who was born in Oakland.

CE: Was she born in a hospital?

IS: No, she wasn't.

CE: Born at home. Now, about 1944 or 1945 you moved to Belvedere. Why Marin?

IS: Well, my husband was a great bay sailor, and he made many weekend voyages to Marin, to the Yacht Club, and anchored in the bay there. He always wanted to live in Belvedere, I guess - - During the war when there were no places available - Well, we lived in San Francisco during the war because he felt he had to be near business and all his men. Knowing a friend in Belvedere he bought this house sight unseen and oh, I just could hardly bear it because it was old and shingled and it was big and it went down the slopes of - - it was five stories one way, you know.

CE: Was it east end of Belvedere?

IS: It was to the east, and I always called it Early Southern Pacific, because it was that type of a house.

CE: Oh, yes, I've heard that - - So you overlooked Belvedere Cove and Corinthian Island?

IS: Yes.

CE: Did you have a boat landing there?

IS: No, because we were above the water - - we were just below - -

CE: What road was this?

IS: It was Bella Vista. Just below the Harry Allen and Winnie Allen's home. Just below it.

CE: Is that when you made her acquaintanceship, when you moved to Belvedere?

IS: Yes, yes.

CE: We had the pleasure of talking with her; she was quite a remarkable woman.

IS: Oh, wonderful woman. Her mother was alive when we first moved there; darling person and the boys were still in school, college, I presume.

CE: And was it true that her husband and the family developed Belvedere Lagoon, did they not?

IS: Yes but they also developed Seacliff.

CE: Seacliff and Belvedere Island itself. She lived in a beautiful home. I wonder if it is still in the family?

IS: No, it is not.

CE: All right, now, the children were born and you are busy with them. But comes 1945 and your arrival seems to coincide with the creation of the Marin Art and Garden Center. How did that come about? How did you get connected with that?

IS: Well, I knew nothing about it because I had only been here such a short time. But my earliest recollections, which I presume you'd want - -

CE: Yes, I do.

IS: My earliest recollection of my association, I think, must have come through Gladys Smith.

CE: How did you know Gladys, through the Century Club?

IS: No, no. Well, everybody knows Gladys and I met her through friends, perhaps. I think from Mrs. Shelton, really, because she came down from Seattle.

CE: Marie Shelton.

IS: Yes. Anyway, I dimly remember the early days of the Garden Center they had, before any other developments, they had shows by the local nurseries and they put on a garden show done just by them and charged admission and, of course, weren't making too much money. Then I think about the last one they had about that time, I'm sure Gladys Smith approached me to - - they were going to have a show and they were going to have the area that now belongs for the fashion shows for Northgate, they were going to use that for a food area to feed all the people that came to the show. There had been a tiny little building that had been the gardener's cottage that had a sink in it and - - and Mr. Smith was going to be the chairman for the finances that came through. So, I was put in charge, not knowing anybody here, in charge of this area that was going to supply food. Nobody was going to help me except St. John's were going to take an area, a part of it, and cater food and they would get a certain commission out of the sales.

CE: The object being to - -

IS: To raise money for the center. And they, in turn, you see, got a small portion for themselves, St. John's, So, I believe, that's where the money that I raised for various extra things I got. I remember I got somebody who made hush puppies which were quite popular in those days and made a lot of money. I can't remember all the details, anyway, I remember just turning the money in every night to Mr. Smith.

CE: Well, then how did you get, according to the notes or public knowledge, that you really originated the idea of the Northgate Antique Shop also?

IS: Well, that came after - -

CE: Later,

IS: Yes, after the luncheons were formed.

CE: But you were in the original concept of the luncheons?

IS: Yes.

CE: And the fashion show, did it evolve into a fashion show?

IS: Yes, it evolved because we started (I think it will show in the records), it started by, I think, ten or twelve women in pairs, we put on the luncheon, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. - - what was her name before she married? Well, anyway Mrs. Harrington - -

CE: Oh, Mrs. Stratford.

IS: Stratford she was then. They had the first luncheon, I remember, and they went all out, they had to bring all the card tables and set them up beautifully.

CE: Where was the food prepared?

IS: In their homes. This little building had nothing but a sink in it, and they did get somebody - -

CE: That took a great deal of effort.

IS: Brought their own dishes, there was nothing, you see, nothing. So we went through by two's for several luncheons and didn't make terribly much money and Mrs. Shelton and I were the last and, of course, we were used to serving on boards that made money. They never got over the fact, teasing us, because we - - each one cooked in their house and those big electric broilers or whatever they were - - - meatballs and spaghetti, and we made a lot of money and they didn't think that was keeping up the tone of their first luncheon, so they never let us forget that.. So that evolved each year into something bigger and we finally were able to have a - - - Mrs. Harrington and I used to go to the Ross Valley Savings, Mr. - - I've forgotten the name of the man who used to be there, was on the board here too - -

CE: What would he do for you?

IS: Well, he'd advanced us \$1,000 on our husband's name and our husbands never knew anything about it.

CE: To do what?

IS: To borrow some money to buy dishes.

CE: Oh, so now you're thinking you want to have your own dishes and you want to have a kitchen and - -

IS: And I think some old tables were made by Mrs. Harrington's chauffeur who made these awful rickety horrible square tables and we got somebody who was an old timer in catering here to wash dishes for us. This went on for two or three years and finally we conceived the idea it would be fine to have a fashion show and we used the Junior League girls -

CE: And that would be an attraction to come -

IS: And as that went on for a few years and then all these young women were having babies and they couldn't keep this up every week, although it was only about three or four times a year. So, then, that is how they got into the various groups supporting it and so forth and so on.

CE: Well, staying with these luncheons a bit, how did it come about that you created a building which is now the Livermore Room and then Martha's Kitchen?

IS: Well, that came through, we began to make money and then it came about because one time after one of these fashion shows on a very hot day, I was sitting on a bench with Mrs. Harrington talking over the success of the day and I said, what we really need in this place is more activity for people that come. All there is for them to see is the art center, you know, the art center down there, I said, there's nothing else. So I suggested

this antique shop run on a consignment basis. So that we started in a little building, we started in what is now the Moya Library. We really didn't start there but we were there one time. And then we went from there to - -

CE: There was supposed to have been a shed like building that Helen Van Cleave Park brought in.

IS: Yes, she gave us the building and we were able to - - we paid for the moving of it - -

CE: You had to move it from somewhere.

IS: From her home, backyard or something.

CE: Then you outgrew that.

IS: Then we outgrew that and then because of the rain and some leakage or something or for while it was being moved I guess, we went into the Octagon House and stayed there for a year or two and then we were able to build this building which is now the office.

CE: And you outgrew that, too.

IS: Well, we outgrew it but at the time we gave part of it for the office people, at the time we were still using it we gave it to the office - -

CE: The present office of the Marin Art and Garden Center?

IS: Yes. And then we - - - by that time the center had bought these two houses that were on the property, remember?

CE: Yes. Laurel Grove Avenue, that was in 1965.

IS: Yes and we moved into there and we certainly have outgrown that now. I don't know where they're going to go because they are such money producers.

CE: Well, tell us simply how this system works. You take things on consignment, furniture - -

IS: We take things in on consignment. When we first started we called it antiques because in those days there were so many families that were moving and they had lovely old things and we at the time gave 80% to the owner and kept 20% for the center. And we didn't have anybody to help us, we used to practically browbeat our friends to let us have, to take things off their walls to sell, so we would have something to sell, and then gradually it became known and then we had then, eventually, hired a manager.

CE: Who appraised it, just a group of you?

IS: Yes, we learned a lot. We learned a lot, studied the values. Then we hired a manager and then we had to raise the amount taken for the center to 25%.

CE: I see. Is that what it is today?

IS: It's 25%, but they take 1% for taxes and 1% for safety - - Insurance.

CE: Well, you know - -

IS: I forget what the total was for this year, but I know last year it was tremendous.

CE: Well, I was going to mention that whatever your initial receipts were back in the '40's there, a recent budget, the current expenses were something like \$105,000, \$18,000 of it were taxes on the property (the ten acres) and Northgate had contributed something like \$43 or \$45,000.

IS: Yes.

CE: So there's no doubt that your guild has been a mainstay financially of the Art and Garden Center.

IS: It is; it's tremendous.

CE: And, of course, it's been long lived. Now, digressing to another facet of Northgate, the Livermore room and the kitchen - -

IS: We built that, too.

CE: You built that, your guild and was Mrs. Livermore alive during that period?

IS: She was and we named it the Livermore Room. And for a long while we had an oil painting of her there.

CE: Done by Moya del Pino. It's still there. Would you digress a moment and give us your impressions of Caroline Livermore?

IS: Well, I think she was a remarkable woman and somehow had the ability to inspire all of us that are still connected with the center to work hardest. She knew - - she had a dream for that center. She had the ability to appeal to the public, you know, to the supervisors or anywhere she could make money. She was a great conservationist, too. And she gave much of her own money and time.

CE: Well, Mrs. Kent and I had the privilege of interviewing her son George not long ago and he spoke with such admiration and affection for his mother and I asked him, I said, "How did your father look upon this?" and he said, "My mother was fortunate in that my father could support her in the style she wished to give away and of herself and he was amenable as long as making her happy." But, he said, "As a little boy, you know, we lived up the hill on part of the property that my father bought from the Kittle family and as a little boy I was always seated at a card table outside our home and friends would come and they'd have to put a dollar down to go to some meeting and a woman said to me one day, 'Hum, some day I'd like to come to this house without paying a dollar.'" But the thought strikes me - -

IS: Well, but everything was for somebody else.

CE: Somebody else, yes.

IS: Yes, it was. And when I think of all the things she did and how - - and I still maintain her spirit is alive today, that's why there is such devotion there. And because there has been many, many turnover of people, you know, and still they're working for Caroline Livermore. I can't think of a greater tribute to anybody, can you?

CE: No. Well, I'm amazed continually, in this project of ours we - - I've had the pleasure of meeting some extraordinary women and a great many of them are not from Marin. Caroline Livermore was a transplant from Texas, and you are from the East Bay via San Francisco. Mrs. Kent, herself, is from Long Island, the tippy, tippy end you know, the most eastern point you might say of our continent and came west upon her marriage. Even William Kent himself and his father, Albert E. Kent. People from other places who have come to this county and given so much of themselves for it. It's an extraordinary thing.

IS: Well, it was a very small - - I mean, the county area-wise was large, but there weren't many people here and there weren't so many activities, so that all of us participated more or less in the same volunteer services, as you know. So we knew each other well which was a bond between us.

CE: And Mrs. Eugene Lloyd, remember, Mrs. Kent, was talking about the beginnings of the Ross Valley Players and, "It was during the depression and we didn't have any money, we had no culture, we had nothing to do, so we started something in our own backyard."

IS: Isn't the Art and Garden Center, isn't that a Kittle estate too?

CE: Yes. The Kittle's have contributed a great deal to the history of this county.

IS: They certainly have. I think that - - I don't know of any place that still has the inspiration there, at the Art and Garden Center, that Caroline Livermore has given it. Because, when you consider that these groups have gone on and on and each year they produce more money and are happy to do it, many of them who never heard of Caroline Livermore but there is some spirit there.

CE: Yes. Well, I think she and some of her contemporaries, and I have to included Mrs. Kent, who I know so well and you, who I am beginning to know, that it's sort of a rare breed of women, too. You do inspire people with your deeds. They see what you do and it's an intangible something that is catching and there has been a great deal of continuity in all of these efforts without sacrifice of the original dream and goal, and I think that is something.

IS: Isn't that something. I think it's marvelous to think it goes on with the same spirit that it was established for, though the improvements have been made.

CE: Well, I think each succeeding age group feels initially privileged to be included, they have met some of these people and they like to pick up the torch and carry it along. And it's something larger than their own life; it's larger than their own lives indeed.

IS: And you make so many nice friends

CE: And you make wonderful friends.

IS: Yes, you certainly do.

CE: And you can go home at night tired but feeling, well, I've achieved something. Now, continuing with the Marin Art and Garden Center a bit more - - There occur problems in any organization and you've had them over the years when you were intimately involved. Are there any things that you have dreamed about that you would like to see happen in the center that possibly could be goals set for succeeding younger people?

IS: Well, there's so much has had to be done, you know, that have had to be done, like the water mains and to get themselves out of debt, which is always occurring because of something they didn't expect.

CE: And with inflation and everything.

IS: Inflation. And I think that Beau Chamberlain has done more as president than anyone I can think of. He's really created a feeling among all the groups, which work independently, you know, he's made them feel part of the center, which I don't believe they ever had the opportunity to do before. I think that is so commendable.

CE: A family of these guilds.

IS: Yes. It makes you feel that you are really one. Everyone knows they're working for the center, but this makes it more conducive to a - - interest in all the groups, you know.

CE: Well, it's an extraordinary thing, just the short time I've been associated with it - - which is only ten years and Mrs. Kent was responsible for me getting into the Marin Art and Garden Center. We have made such wonderful friends and they've had such interesting things that even the Moya Library, speaking about that group for a moment, have done. They have the First Friday Forenoon Lectures, we have our February film series and dinners and we used to have little art exhibits and art shows and little bus trips. And that little nucleus of Gladys Smith, Anne Kent, Helen Moya started something that is so - - it's so successful.

IS: Well, it's going to grow.

CE: It's going to grow.

IS: It's going to grow, it can't help it. And it's performing a great need, really is.

CE: And I remember Mrs. Kent about 1974 or '5, we had the Good Old Days and they'd have these three-day fairs, you know, after the fair relocated to the Civic Center, and Mrs. Kent was so excited she got some of these, as she called them, "Old Timers" together and we did our initial taping in the Octagon House, and that's when I met Jordan Martinelli, and I was so impressed with his observation, this was later followed by an in-depth interview, to comment on Mrs. Livermore and he said, "Oh, she was one of the finest women I ever knew and she had this dream trying to fulfill it. She went back east and talked to- - - and observed other garden centers and guilds to see how we could do this and all I was asked was to give my legal expertise as I knew it to be sure it would always be intact." And then he said, "We have an escape clause to the extent that if something untoward happens, whatever that might be, that the property would revert to either the University of California or Stanford or some educational institute rather than ever be placed on public sale." So he was very enthusiastic about her achieving her desire and as she - - or her son said, "You know, everybody thinks mother got the \$25,000 and bought the Marin Art and Garden Center," and he said, "it isn't so, you know." But she had the confidence to go ahead. Another name comes up as an early force in the Marin Art and Garden Center and that's Francis Stratford, now Mrs. Fen Harrington. Tell us about her.

IS: Well, she was a tremendous influence there, too, that we mustn't lose track of. She always had a new idea all the time. She and Gladys worked well together and when Gladys was working on a project she was working on another. She is the one that was able to get - - when they were talking of having a wall around the grounds, she got many of the old bricks from a warehouse that was in her family and - - I don't know whether they had to buy new ones or not but she had many, many - - I know tons of bricks came and she was the one that got George Livermore to design the wall.

CE: The wall - - And when we interviewed him he said you may wonder why it is only a brick thick, he said, that's all the bricks we had.

CE: Well, Mrs. Scott let's see, we'll leave the Marin Art and Garden Center for a moment and move on to Sunny Hills which is a project that has involved a lot of women, Mrs. Kent's family amongst them. How did you get involved in Sunny Hills?

IS: Well, I was involved, I imagine it was about '47, I would imagine that's it, I can't think any closer, it was early in my arrival and it was through Edna Halloran who thought I would be a good Board member, I guess. I became a member of the Board of Sunny Hills and I have never taken - - on account of having a family and when I lived in Piedmont I was never active in anything except the Campfire Girls, which was the only activity they had in Piedmont at that time. So it was a great experience with people that I didn't know, it was a board I grew to love and loved serving on. When I first went there we were on the tail end of the nursery time, having a nursery.

CE: Was it an orphanage still when you were there?

IS: It was an orphanage and everybody practically was an orphan. Then we had a hospital on the grounds and we had a farm, it used to be the Sunny Hills Orphanage and Farm, is the way it was incorporated at that time.

CE: Would you tell us your understanding of how the property came into existence?

IS: Yes, Captain Dollar gave - -

CE: Robert Dollar.

IS: Robert Dollar gave the property for the orphanage.

CE: And would you locate the site for us today?

IS: Yes, it is in San Anselmo on the road to Fairfax and it extended from - - well, where the Long's Drug Store is now - -

CE: In the Redhill Shopping Center.

IS: Yes, that's it. It used to go down to the highway there and then back, I forget the acreage. It had buildings that had been built with tile roofs, you know, old buildings and it had a center building which was for the offices and then there was a separate building for the girls and a separate building for the boys.

CE: Well, I wonder how Robert Dollar got involved in it, he was very active in the Presbyterian Church - -

IS: He was, yes he was.

CE: And the Seminary here in San Anselmo, it was his family who gave the bells and - -

IS: Yes, and it really was a great deal of money that came from them and then - - were the Kent's Presbyterian?

AK: No, but they always worked for it.

CE: Is that how the Grape Festival came about?

IS: The Grape Festival started because the Kent property had a lot of grapes growing on it - -

CE: Right here in Kentfield - -

IS: Right here in Kentfield and it was conceived they gather these grapes and sell them any way to make money for the - -

CE: Benefit - -

IS: And they also formed the first guild, I think, with the San Francisco Guild because so many of the board members were San Franciscans

CE: I see, so it was a combined community affair.

IS: Yes.

CE: The place was physically in Marin but was shared by the whole county.

IS: The whole county at the time. And then, I think, the second guild was right here in Kentfield. I remember the ladies used to - - all the board members use to make hemmed dish towels for us to sell at the Grape Festival and the Grape Festival grew and finally it was conceived to have guilds. In those early days it was the only really fund raising group there was and everybody who was anybody belonged to Sunny Hills. When it was time for the Grape Festival the men took as active a part as the women. They manned the - -

CE: Made the booths --

IS: Made the booths and they took care of the traffic and guardians and put the banners across the street. Mr. Murray, Sr., used to send his bank down to Sunny Hills, all his clerks, and they would take care of the money and allot it to each guild, you know, credit each guild.

CE: Did you raise a sizable amount of money?

IS: Yes, every year it got more, and more and more and then the larger the guilds, the more they took part. And it was on the Sunny Hills ground for a long number of years.

Finally it came time when the city was anxious to - - was thinking of trying to take some of our property - -

CE: I misunderstood you, you said it was on the Sunny Hills ground, this Grape Festival?

IS: Yes.

CE: I thought it was at Kent property?

IS: No. Well, it may have started the first year or two, that I'm not sure of.

CE: But then it moved to Sunny Hills.

IS: Then it moved to Sunny Hills, on their own grounds.

CE: And then what happened?

IS: Well, we had a farm, too. It got too expensive to have a farm, they gradually gave it away. We used to raise everything, we had cows and chickens. Well, anyway, then the city was talking about enlarging the road there, making a highway out of it, and considering taking some of our property. So it was during the time I was president and the board thought if we could get some of the property zoned commercial - -

CE: You'd make more money.

IS: So I, who knew nothing about politics at that time, had to go before the Planning Commission, and knew none of the men, you know, to convince them that we should have it zoned commercial. So I imagine what we did was give a little bit of land to - - It's so long ago.

CE: But you did - - the purpose of that was to raise more money, is that correct?

IS: Well, yes - - Well, because they were going to zone it commercial around there somewhere near us, so - -

CE: So it may as well be your property.

IS: Yes. So we asked for the zoning of commercial and how far back which eventually gave us the money to build a new plant. We realized the buildings we had on account of the many earthquakes, we had so many cracks in the buildings and especially the tile roofs were declared unsafe.

CE: Well, that original building dated prior to the turn of the century didn't it?

IS: Yes.

CE: The late 1880's

IS: Yes. So you see, that was one way that gave us money to build new buildings.

CE: Well, the orphanage evolved into something more than what it was?

IS: Then as life changes there were no more orphans. Some families would take the children or something, so there were no more orphans and then we became a home for the emotionally disturbed and now they get most of their cases from the Juvenile Courts.

CE: What other guilds are still active in Sunny Hills? There is the Bargain Box, I know.

IS: Well, the Bargain Box, yes. They raise a lot of money. Lots of money, that's grown and grown and grown.

CE: You involved in that Guild also?

IS: Well, in the beginning, yes, in the beginning, we all were. And we had a little building on the grounds at that time for the Bargain Box and then it got too big.

CE: Any other guilds that - -

IS: Well, there's guilds everywhere, every city has a guild here, every town.

CE: But, I mean, anything as large and specific as the Bargain Box benefiting Sunny Hills?

IS: Oh, no nothing. That's the big money-maker. And that really was - - I think the idea from Mrs. Boothe down in Belvedere, Mrs. William Boothe

CE: William Boothe?

IS: Yes. She is not well now.

CE: All right let's move to another involvement of yours, Marin Conservation League.

IS: Yes, I was on that board thanks to Mrs. Livermore.

CE: Mrs. Livermore was active in that.

IS: Yes, she enjoyed that.

CE: What are some of the things the Marin Conservation League has done that you are proud of?

IS: Well, especially the signs during my time - -

CE: The removal of signs?

IS: Yes. We were always going out and tearing down signs or planting poppies on the hillside, you know, that sort of thing. But that was our great deal, the signs. You remember, don't you, Mrs. Kent?

AK: Oh, certainly.

IS: That was a tremendous thing.

CE: Did you have the pleasure of knowing Helen Baker Reynolds? From San Francisco?

IS: Yes, I did.

CE: We had the pleasure of talking with her and she, in her quiet, ladylike way, she and her associates were responsible for removing billboard signs from the highways. It's always been an amazement to me how you ladies quietly, effectively, achieved your purpose. You just get in there and do it.

IS: In those days, you know, ladies were ladies and were treated as such, and we weren't really questioned if we got over a fence and tore down a sign or something, although it might have been illegal.

CE: How about the Marin Music Chest, that's another activity of yours?

IS: Well, don't ask me how I got to be president of that.

CE: Maude Faye Symington get you involved in that?

IS: I don't believe she did.

CE: Did you know her?

IS: Yes, I did.

CE: Would you describe her to us?

IS: Well, she always wore hats - -

CE: She had that country place on Laurel Grove. What was it called, Top Hat?

IS: Something like that. And she always seemed to have dresses that had flowing sleeves or something, I kind of remember. She was a go-getter, she really was.

CE: She wanted culture, musical culture in Marin.

IS: Yes. She gave that to Marin.

CE: For 25¢, wasn't it, you - -

IS: Yes. We'd go out and sell tickets. And you know when you think about it, many of the artists of today, like Nelson Eddy, almost made their debuts with us, you know, and some others. So we did some good in the county.

CE: Well, her nephew, Marshall Dill, who edited and published her memoirs, came to share his reminiscences of her one day at Mrs. Kent's and he said, "She was something, she was a flamboyant lady and she would make an entrance in a room."

IS: Oh, very much so. She was a large lady, too. Incidentally, we lived in Marshall Dill's home for four years during the war time.

CE: His present home at the foot of - -

IS: Divisadero and Vallejo and Green.

CE: Isn't that interesting? Well, the Marin Music Chest also, it seems to me, Mrs. Kent, didn't Helen Del Mar Clinton contribute much of her time to that?

IS: She did, she did. Also Mrs. Clinton was very active on the board of Sunny Hills as I recall, wasn't she?

CE: I don't know that.

AK: I don't know, I think so though.

IS: Yes - - she was, she was.

CE: I think she had something to do with Planned Parenthood along with Dolly Cushing Jenkins. How did you get to Dominican? You were active in Dominican Citizens Advisory Committee.

IS: Well, I'm on the Citizen Advisory Committee. That was due to some men that knew me. Some members that knew me, some gentlemen that knew me. One was Ken Seymore and I think he suggested to the man who was forming the committee to come and ask if I would go on it, but he said, "I'm sure she'll say no." And I did try to tell him that I wasn't a Catholic but he said they weren't interested, they wanted lay people. Then I said, "Well, I don't think I can." Then by that time I felt sorry because he looked so kind of sad. He said, "I was told you would say no." I said, "Well, tell me who is on this committee so far?" and he mentioned Bill Waste and I said, "He's a great friend of my husband's, they grew up together," I said, "If Bill's going to go on, I'd be glad to." And that is how I became a member.

CE: What is the mission of the Citizen Advisory Committee?

IS: Well, the idea was, you see, the Dominican Convent was here and the college was one of the first schools along with Branson's, you know, and as the county's gotten older, the old timers have gone and the children that went there have gone, you know, someplace else. And so the newcomers coming in knew nothing about the college.

CE: So you were continuity - -

IS: The idea was to promote the idea that this was the only four year college in this county, which it is. So I felt that I really didn't have anything to contribute, so they put me on the membership committee and I got them some fine members.

CE: Good, good. Was that a happy association with you?

IS: Yes. I'm still - - They won't let me off right now, but I hope to this year.

CE: Mrs. Kent and I feel fortunate, we've interviewed several Sisters - -

IS: Oh, Sister Samuels, I hope?

CE: No, not as yet because she is still comparatively young. We did Sister Patrick before her demise and the two twin Sisters, Sister Justin Barry and Sister Martin Barry, and they're great ladies. They have been so generous to us in doing our research and we have a close - -

IS: Well, Sister Samuels is one special pet of mine.

CE: Well, in reading this article in the Ark that came out January 21st, you volunteered yourself that, "Why ask me? I'm not a Catholic," and yet I understand you helped form a new guild for St. Stephen's Church in Belvedere.

IS: That was years ago.

CE: That wasn't your faith, either, you weren't an Episcopalian - - you are Christian Scientist.

IS: Yes. That was years ago.

CE: Years ago. All right, now what is this Hearing and Speech Center associated with Marin General?

IS: Marin General Hospital. Well, it's a group - - It was Dr. Fletcher, it was his dream, you see. He was an ear, nose and throat man. He wanted to be able to give something to children, you know, that are born deaf or have these - -

CE: Impairments -

IS: Yes. It's hard for me to talk about it because I don't know much about the medical field. He asked me, (I guess the board was forming) if I would become a member and I said, yes, I thought I would. You always learn, everything you do. So it was in the founding days, you might say I was of the ones that were in the founding group. And of course, Marion Ibach is the power behind the throne there and it is growing and giving. I went to the annual meeting this last year and I was amazed at the work that is being done.

CE: As Marin is growing, your project grows.

IS: Yes - - and the need, too.

CE: Talking to you again about Marin General Hospital, I want to talk about Marin Charitable Association, and there was an organization that had a different name that worked with the Marin General Hospital.

IS: We call ourselves the Marin Charitable Foundation.

CE: Did it do then what it is doing now, contributing to youth?

IS: Well, we started out it was - - -You know the Marin General Hospital has - - not guilds, what do they call it?

CE: Auxiliaries -

IS: Auxiliaries perhaps. Florence Leppo and Jane Drexler and Maude Lindler came to me and Fen Stratford with the idea that couldn't we form an auxiliary, or whatever it is, for the Marin General Hospital and have a Debutante Ball to raise money? We thought we could.

CE: That was the purpose of it, to raise money for the hospital.

IS: For Marin General Hospital.

CE: And that was around 1961, I understand, according to the brochure?

IS: So, I guess we did and we got it organized, at least it was very hard. I remember getting it well organized and then making a trip to Japan and when I came back the committee said, no they couldn't do it, they couldn't do it. But I couldn't bear to have something fail so we went through with it and had our first ball. But the trouble was we had to get the money first before we could have the ball, you know, because we - -

CE: Yes, expenses.

IS: Every cent we had was going to go. The first year I think we made our money by people that were well known in the county that sponsored it in the beginning that gave us our start. And I believe Russell Smith - - He and I worked on the first budget and we

made \$10,000 that year and that meant we had to rent a place to have it, you know, out at Peacock Gap, and we had to rent canvas, and our expenses were very great. We went on for two years but we weren't - - the administrator and I didn't see too well together about this money business that we'd had to advance and he didn't feel he could advance it without something or other, until we had spent the money, but we couldn't do that. So we retired from that and became incorporated and the idea was to raise money for youth and that it what they're doing now and they changed their name to Association because they are really not a foundation.

CE: And I understand this organization serves the North Bay Counties, not just Marin?

IS: That's right. They apply each year for funds for something that isn't given to them by the Chest, you see, and then for special - -

CE: And how do you raise the money? What do you do?

IS: Well, they have lately, they've been having what they call a Food Fair, which they had you know, that was a great success. And they had a - - - They have many ways, they have little ways to raise money. Then they have, lately in the last few years they've had movies, taking pictures of various people's houses or parts of their houses, kitchens or something, and they give us (the movie people whoever they are, advertisers) give us the money. So we raise money that way and through other foundations. Now that we have men on the board they have procured funds from firms and private donations.

CE: On your brochure it says, "Over \$200,000 has been raised and given to Marin agencies dealing with educational health, recreational, cultural and sociological betterment of youth." Is that since its inception, this \$200,000?

IS: Yes. Isn't that good?

CE: Please keep that if you will.

IS: Is this a late one?

CE: Yes, Mrs. Lindler gave me that. All right, now let's move on to - - Let's get you home for a moment, Belvedere. Somebody told me once you were nominated or appointed Fire Marshal of Belvedere, how in the world did that come about?

IS: Fire Commissioner.

CE: Fire Commissioner! Better yet. Were you away when this happened, did they just do it to you?

IS: No, my husband and I were on a trip to South America and - - You know, they had a council - - Well, I had served four years on the Planning Commission when Jim Michaels was mayor, he was a great yachtsman.

CE: Did he have the *Orient*?

IS: *Baroona* - -

CE: *Baroona*, pardon me. Black beauty, wasn't it?

IS: And I don't know why he did it but he thought there should be a woman, I guess. I think Belvedere must have been more advanced than other cities. And so I knew nothing about Planning Commission but I served four years and they used to have meetings at my home because then I didn't have to go out at night, you see, because you see these were night meetings with business people.

CE: As a member of the Planning Commission you were a part of the City Council.

IS: No, no - - well, it is a part of the City Council, yes it is.

CE: Were you the only woman?

IS: Yes.

CE: How did they relate to that? Did they give you a hard time or were they cooperative

IS: No, no I had sense enough to keep my mouth shut!

CE: Did you learn something by that?

IS: I learned a lot. They used to - - Sundays was when they had time to go out and see who built their fences on the wrong side or too far on the road or something and I'd go trudging along in the mud, you know, old muddy roads when it rained, and I just listened because I wouldn't know whether their fences were wrong or not. But anyway, I used to give them a good dessert at night, coffee, so they were happy with me. Then after that, you see - - - I guess they thought if they were going to have a woman on the council, they'd gone this far, why, maybe they'd sign me up, so when I came back they had an application form (you know that you have to have), which I didn't know anything about. So, I hardly got my bag unpacked when they told me they wanted to take me down to sign this petition and I said, "But I don't know anything about politics," and they said, "Oh, well, that doesn't make any difference," and I said, "Well, if it makes you happy, I'll sign it because I won't win anyway," because there were three men running and only two people to be elected.

CE: And you won!

IS: Well, I and one other man. So I was the most astounded person.

CE: This is when you were elected to city council?

IS: And I was also president of the Century Club at the same time.

CE: Well, let's still keep things over there a moment. How in the world did you handle the Fire Commissioner's job?

IS: Oh, then I didn't know anything about what I was to do on the council, I was just waiting for someone to tell me, there was no meeting or something. So, finally the mayor, who was manager of General Electric Company in San Francisco appointed me Fire Commissioner, and I was terribly upset about that. I thought would these young men, it was a volunteer fire department, what would they do with a woman over them? And especially one that was older than they, because they were very young. But I was shy and I didn't want to ask the mayor why, but I was kind of mad; I thought at least he could put me on a committee that had a little more dignified sound! But then the fire department waited as long as they could and then they asked to have a meeting with me. And I said to my husband, they came down and met on our verandah one Sunday, the chief and some others, and I said to my husband, "What'll I ask them? What'll I talk about?" and he said, "You got yourself into this - you get yourself out of it!" I got out of it, all right!

CE: I understand one of the first questions you asked them was how many fire hydrants you have and they didn't know. And that got them going.

IS: That was all I needed. That got them going. So we were very busy discussing. And I said no wonder you don't know because they're all full of weeds and [inaudible]! And then they discussed how they wanted to paint the tops of the fire hydrants so they'd know - the green tops meant a certain pressure of water. And I said, "Ok, but you can't buy anything unless I ok it!"

CE: Tell me, Mrs. Scott, what's the Belvedere Tiburon Museum Auxiliary? What's that?

IS: Well, it's an auxiliary for the museum in San Francisco that we --

CE: The museum society in the city? The DeYoung and the Legion of Honor?

IS: The DeYoung and the Legion of Honor, yes, in San Francisco.

CE: And how is that tied up with Belvedere?

IS: Well, they formed a little group, they thought it would be nice to have a group because lots of them don't go over to the museum because it's a big ordeal and everything so we have had, until now, the money's been scarce, tours twice a year where they take us over and we go on a bus and

CE: And you have a docent?

IS: Yes, they take us all out on these special exhibits. And in the meantime, they have their little meetings, the board, and try to have something sometimes in some of the members' houses, too, and it's nice, it's nice. And it's an easy one to belong to.

CE: Now, we didn't discuss the Century Club. Are you still a member of the Century Club?

IS: Yes, I'm a past-president. Since 1944!

CE: How many of these, almost a dozen things we've mentioned here, are you still involved with? Are you a member of many of these groups and serve in some capacity, we've discussed?

IS: Of course, with the Century Club you can't say "volunteer," it's just a nice ladies' club, but it was a lot of work at the time to be president of it.

CE: You're still with the Marin Art and Garden Center, a member. You're still with Sunny Hills?

IS: Yes. Well, I'm a lifetime member. Once in awhile I go to a meeting. I don't go to too many anymore. And I've done a lot of things for the city, too, you know.

CE: You mentioned earlier over luncheon that Belvedere should do something like get an historical society, or preservation.

IS: I just think they need to have its own historical background, you know, because it's a unique city and it was found so – it's different from other cities. It's small, and - -

CE: Well, Belvedere's a separate city, and Tiburon is. But there's so many hyphenated things that it embraces: A post office, a fire department. Is that the things you share?

IS: Well, the fire department is – they're working on that now, but the only thing that shares the two names right now is the Belvedere-Tiburon Post Office.

CE: Oh, I see.

IS: But you can mail your mail to Tiburon but it'll still go to the same building and mail your mail to Belvedere and it'll still go to the same post office.

CE: They're quite different towns, aren't they?

IS: Well, Tiburon is a much larger town now, it's building up all over the hills.

CE: Yes. And we've interviewed people who've had railroad connections, and it was a rough town and it was – the main street there had many saloons and it was a different thing, where Belvedere was more of a home, a second home, of some families who really enjoyed the beauty of it.

IS: Yes, yes. Well, you see, people used that as a summer place, yes. My mother, as a child, young woman used to come over with her mother and they used to take an ark for the summer and live on the ark in the cove there.

CE: Beautiful places. And Winifred Bridge Allen told us so many wonderful stories, vignettes, of those days, and the night in Old Venice with the Japanese lanterns.

IS: Yes. And they used to bring the trains over, you know, on a barge, and the train used to go out every night.

CE: Well, you know, before we conclude, I am amazed at really what your achievements have been. And I'd like to just recap briefly, and you certainly got the support from your husband to go ahead –

IS: I certainly did.

CE: - and do what you wished. In your judgment, in all sincerity, what do you do best that you can give an organization? You certainly inspire leadership, but what is this intangible something that you've been able to give these dozen organizations?

IS: Well, they never know what to do with me, so they just make me president!

CE: No, I know, but you mentioned earlier at lunch, you prided yourself that you had almost the mind of a man, you like to organize –

IS: But I wasn't a man, but I like working with men, their thinking is clear and –

CE: But you pride yourself in being a good organizer.

IS: Yes, I do, I think that's one of the, the only quality I have, perhaps, that's good, is organizing! I love to organize. And I love people.

CE: Well, I think that's a tangible thing. And I understand certainly from what you've done that you've enriched many people's lives, Ida, and that your own life's been enriched.

IS: It's been my own life that's been enriched, I should say.

CE: And I want to thank you so much for sharing these reminiscences today, it's been a pleasure.