

**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 WILLIAM GLENN COURTRIGHT

by Carla Ehat & Anne Kent
June 7, 1981

INTERVIEWEE: William Glenn Courtright (WC)
INTERVIEWERS: Carla Ehat (C.E.) and Anne Kent (A.K.)
DATE OF INTERVIEW: June 7, 1981
TRANSCRIBER: Marjorie Hoffman

CE: Today is Sunday, June 7, 1981. Continuing the Oral History project for the California Room, Mrs. Kent and I today find ourselves at the lovely residence of Mr. And Mrs. William Glenn Courtright at number 115 Ensenada Drive in Novato. Mrs. Kent has been a long friend of the Courtright family and it was Glenn Courtright's mother, Mary, that you had a particularly close association with, wasn't it Anne?

AK: It was indeed.

CE: Well let's get to you, Glenn. Good afternoon, by the way. What brought your family to California? I know that you have on your maternal side Healdsburg and Columbia. Tell us a little bit about that.

WC: My family came to Healdsburg from Virginia in 1854. They were friends of Healds and came directly there to settle as farmers. My great grandfather settled on a quarter section in Healdsburg from the Plaza north and remained there for eleven years. He wouldn't pay a registration fee of a dollar and a quarter an acre and finally the United States Marshall came up and chased him off the land.

CE: Spirited man.

WC: He had other property two and a half miles out of Healdsburg and settled there.

CE: Well, what is the Columbia connection?

WC: Columbia is my father's side.

CE: All right. Your grandfather, Charles M. Courtright?

WC: Charles M. was born in Columbia in 1858.

CE: And what had brought his parents to Columbia, to have been born there?

WC: His father was a freighter, teamster.

CE: And what does that mean?

WC: Hauling freight up into the mines. In those days Columbia was bigger than San Francisco.

CE: I was interested in reading that sometimes there would be a continuous flow of freight wagons going over the Sierra, one after the other.

WC: That's the only way they had to move goods in and out, machinery or people.

CE: Glenn, your grandfather was born and raised in Columbia, stayed there most of his time?

WC: No. He apprenticed in a blacksmith shop and became a mine blacksmith. Later on he went down to Summersville, that's the coal mines on Mount Diablo, and spend some time up in Virginia City where one of my uncles was born. He just traveled around from bonanza to bonanza.

CE: Wherever there was a need for his services.

WC: Yes, as a mine blacksmith. He met my grandmother in Summersville.

CE: What was her name?

WC: Annie Dribble

CE: And that's the coal mine - - - I understand they're trying to make that sort of a landmark over there in Mount Diablo. Have you heard that Ann? That coal area?

AK: Yes.

CE: I know your grandfather went wherever there was a need for services but - - as your father was born in Modesto, is that where they ultimately settled and your father and his four brothers were born there?

WC: Father was born there and some of my uncles. One was born up in Virginia City while they were on a project up there. They lived in Modesto most of their life.

CE: And what got them, your father, did he live in Healdsburg eventually?

WC: No. My father - - - went to San Francisco and worked for the Custom Service for a while and the earthquake came along and by that time he had married my mother-

CE: And her name again?

WC: Mary Lamb Kelly.

CE: Did they leave San Francisco?

WC: They left San Francisco in September, 1903 with me, a little child, to move to Kentfield.

CE: So you moved over before the fire and earthquake?

WC: Yes.

CE: That's 1903. Were you the first born?

WC: I was the oldest of five.

CE: Oh, you were the oldest of five. Where did you live in Kentfield?

WC: We lived - - we moved over to Stetson Avenue, I was told, and then we lived up on Cypress Avenue and were there - - - at the time of the earthquake.

CE: But you were born in San Francisco?

WC: I was born in San Francisco.

CE: What is your birthdate?

WC: January 9th.

CE: January 9th, 1903.

WC: And my sister was born in Kentfield. And then in 1907 we moved to San Rafael.

CE: 1907 you moved to San Rafael, uh-huh?

WC: And by that time my Dad started in the real estate business and started to develop the - - -

CE: A section, did he develop a certain section?

WC: Yes - - What they call Laurel Dell, it's above Picnic Valley.

CE: Where is that? Do you know Mrs. Kent?

AK: It's above the high school.

CE: Above the high school in San Rafael.

WC: Above Mount Davidson School. Picnic Valley is Woodland Avenue. And there's Picnic Avenue, there.

CE: Is that over on the other side of town then? Is that near old Scheutzen_Park?

AK: No, it's over the hill from Kentfield.

CE: Over the hill from Kentfield.

AK: Go over the bridge.

CE: The other side of Bret Harte.

WC: Well, Bret Harte is a continuation and this includes Southern Heights and those old narrow roads up there were built in the horse and buggy days and - - -

CE: Where did you live then when your father was doing this, in that part of town?

WC: We lived there until - - in various places, we moved around a lot as houses were built.

CE: But right in that area more or less?

WC: Yes.

CE: Where did you go to school then?

WC: I started school, a little Short Primary School, in San Rafael.

CE: Well, when you were a boy it was pretty open space, wasn't it?

WC: Yes, long walks. We had a horse and buggy and some of the time automobiles and a chauffeur to run the cars.

CE: Things were looking pretty good huh?

WC: Things were looking good and sometimes they would be a little bad in the family. And then in 1911 we moved to Baltimore Park, which is part of Larkspur. He was the sales agent for the Coleman-Forbes estate.

CE: Well the Coleman-Forbes estate was in San Rafael.

WC: Well they had the Baltimore Park and the Coleman tract in San Rafael and the Forbes was West San Rafael.

CE: Well what's that got to do with Baltimore Park in Larkspur? I'm confused.

AK: He owned both.

CE: He owned them both!

WC: Coleman ran them both - - and my father was a real estate agent selling land. An office in San Francisco and on Tamalpais Avenue in San Rafael.

CE: Did you like living there? Up the canyon?

WC: No we were out - - -

CE: Where were you?

WC: We lived out on what was Palm Hill. We had the second house on that approach.

CE: That beautiful stone bridge, was that built around the time you were there?

WC: The concrete?

CE: Uh-huh, yes.

WC: That was a wooden bridge - -

CE: Oh, when you were there it was a wooden bridge?

WC: Yes. It was a wooden bridge and then finally they replaced it with a concrete bridge.

CE: Where did you go to school then, at Corte Madera School?

WC: Yes

CE: That combined school there?

WC: The school across the bridge. And went to Tamalpais High.

CE: How did you get there, on the train?

WC: On the train.

CE: Tell us your impressions of the train.

WC: The train was a quick means of transportation to San Francisco. Being a real estate man, my dad had signs all over the place, "forty five minutes from Market Street."

CE: True - - And you can't beat it today.

WC: You can't beat it today. It took us - - on the commute times forty-five minutes to get from Baltimore Park to the Ferry Building and - - -

CE: In comfort.

WC: In comfort and conversation on the ferry boats, it's a half hour ride on the ferry boat, very pleasant all the time.

CE: Well then your father I gather, William, was in - - William Courtright was in real estate most of his life?

WC: He - - - 1917 came along, World War I, and he went overseas and didn't return.

CE: - - - rise to the occasion Glenn, Mary Lamb Kelly Courtright, what did she do?

WC: Well, she was very active in the real estate business, too - -

CE: So she had some business knowledge and business sense, and experience.

WC: Yes. And in 1917 the Postmaster in Larkspur passed away and she promoted that job through congressmen and remained Postmaster for eleven years. Then the administration change came and she was out and she became City Clerk in Larkspur and was re-elected every four years for - - served twenty-eight years.

CE: Twenty-eight years as City Clerk. When was the year she finished that job? Do you know? Because I think I met your mother in the fifties. When did your mother die?

WC: 1958.

CE: Mrs. Kent, you knew her all these years then in her political capacity or as a - - -

AK: Oh, as a botanist, as a civic leader and everything, everything.

WC: That's where I can't get into the - - -

CE: You're too shy.

AK: I remember William Kent said, "She was the best man on my team," that's what he said about her, William Kent, my father-in-law.

WC: My father was, and mother, both were friends of William Kent and they - - Where is Parsons?

AK: Elizabeth Parsons became Mrs. Hawver and she was her very great friend.

WC: No relation?

AK: Yes, she was Mr. Kent's first cousin. She lived just like a sister, just like a sister in the Kent family.

WC: She was involved in wildflowers.

AK: She wrote the Wildflower Book of California and your mother was her very close friend.

WC: Yeah. She knew where to send us up the canyon to get wildflowers.

AK: Your mother was a born student, she was always learning. I don't know whether she was a born teacher or not, I'm not sure about that part of it, but she certainly was out to learn anything that there was to learn. She was right there.

WC: About the flowers, the birds and the bees.

AK: Everything.

CE: You went to the local elementary school and then you went on to Tamalpais High. What did you do about finding your own life? Did you go off to the big city?

WC: Yes I went off to the big city.

CE: What did you do?

WC: I went to the Standard Oil Company and got pigeon-holed in a job, up in a corner, so I got myself another job where I could get out and around and I guess floundered through from job to job until - - - Went to sea for six months - -

CE: Went to sea?

WC: Yeah.

CE: As an able-bodied seaman?

WC: No, as a waiter or steward. Friend of mine got me a job - - -

CE: Good - that was an adventure.

WC: Went to Australia, went back to the Islands a couple of times. Then in the interim I met Eloisa and - - -

CE: And where did you meet Eloisa?

WC: At a Halloween party.

CE: Where? San Francisco?

WC: In her home.

CE: San Francisco?

WC: Yes.

CE: Trick or treat - - - and you got the prize. But you had no interest in following your father's interest in real estate. That didn't seem to appeal to you, didn't want to go in that business?

WC: I did but I never could make any money.

CE: You wanted to make money.

WC: No, I had to live.

CE: Well, did you stay with Standard Oil quite a while?

WC: Oh, year and a half or so. I got a pigeon - - it's up on the mezzanine floor, a pigeon hole desk and - - -

CE: That wasn't for you. What have you done most of your life?

WC: Then I went to work for the State of California and State Compensation Insurance Fund.

CE: Where was that headquartered, in San Francisco?

WC: San Francisco. And was a traveling auditor for them.

CE: Good. Well you must be good with figures then.

WC: Well - -

CE: Well when you married Eloisa where did you live, in San Francisco, or did you come over here?

WC: Lived in San Francisco for about twenty years. Then we came over here to San Anselmo and - - - - And after her stroke we came out here because she couldn't - -

CE: Well it's hard to maintain a big house - -

WC: The hill - -

CE: Do you have children?

WC: Yes, two daughters.

CE: What are their names?

WC: Marian Jean Smith -

CE: That's her married name -

WC: and Barbara Ann Miller.

CE: Do the girls live in Marin?

WC: Marian is in San Rafael and Barbara in Marina, and that's Monterey Peninsula.

CE: Oh yes, near Fort Ord. Is she married to a serviceman?

WC: No.

CE: Do you have grandchildren?

WC: Each of them have three.

CE: Six grandchildren! Well let's talk about what you've seen in Marin and some of your experiences. You've seen a lot of changes haven't you?

WC: A few.

CE: Oh come on. You were here since 1903 - - -you moved over here.

WC: We moved here in 1903, the railroads were not electrified until 1904 - -

CE: Is that a fact? That's good to know, the railroad was electrified.

WC: And we saw electric cars come and go with the building of the bridge. Incidentally, my father had a picture drawing of the proposed Golden Gate Bridge in an exhibition he had in the 1915 World's Fair, so that was on the drawing board for a long time.

CE: When you moved to Marin and continued your job did you have to travel all over the state?

WC: Yes.

CE: But often you'd have regular commute hours wouldn't you between here and San Francisco?

WC: I had different territories. I traveled Marin and Sonoma Counties and then I had to take incidental trips up to Eureka and Yreka.

CE: Did you do it by your own car mainly?

WC: No.

CE: Train?

WC: No, no, by car, state car. So I've driven over much of California, Northern California from Kern County north.

CE: Certainly. Well you have seen changes.

WC: Yes.

CE: Look at the changes you've seen. Had you any thought that Marin County would grow as it has?

WC: No. The first time we went to Sausalito we went on the road that was there before the Corte Madera Grade was over the hill.

CE: There was another road before that?

WC: Yes, there was another road.

CE: And it was something I bet.

WC: Yet it was a little bit of something. And - - - then the main highway was over the hill and up through Larkspur, Kentfield, San Anselmo and down Fourth Street in San Rafael. That was the main highway to Eureka.

CE: I know Marshall Dill who teaches history at Dominican gave us a talk on Friday and he was tracing that road. You have to envision before the present 101 that to get to San Rafael you had to go over the Corte Madera Grade and then go through the towns, Corte Madera, Larkspur, and go around the slough there, the marsh, go around Kentfield - -

WC: Yes, Kentfield, Ross, San Anselmo - -

CE: Turn right and go into San Rafael.

WC: And down Fourth Street (imagine highway traffic) and out Lincoln Avenue, of course, and - -

CE: That's right. You had to go out through the main part of town like we used to have to go through Sacramento.

WC: Yes. And the Puerto Suello - - -

CE: Before they had that big cut what was that?

WC: Well, the cut was up a little higher, that's all, and you went down the road where - - Las Gallinas - - back of the cemetery - -

CE: Oh - - - You had to go up a steeper thing and go down a steeper curve around -

AK: I'd like to get back to those grandfathers.

CE: Yes. Well, you told us about your grandfather in Columbia. Now what about Mary Lamb Kelly and her parents from Healdsburg? How did the Kellys get to Healdsburg? Is that the side you wanted to know about Mrs. Kent?

WC: I don't know how. He was a - - - Kelly was a miller, grist miller - - - the old stones - -

AK: Where?

WC: Well, he had mills in various places.

CE: In California?

WC: In, mostly in Mendocino County. He had a mill at one time in Covelo, Round Valley, and then in Potter Valley and in Willits and then up in Rohnerville in Humboldt County. And I guess they came back each Christmas to Healdsburg to the family ranch. But he was a miller and - - -

CE: Well you talked earlier about Mr. Healds and you talked the other day about Mr. Guerne.

WC: Well, Healds and Guerne came to California, I think, together.

CE: Because we know the communities and I often wondered how they were named, they were people. Mr. Healdsburg and Mr. Guerne became Guerneville.

WC: I guess they wrote to my grandfather and he came out and settled in Healdsburg.

CE: Well when you were a young boy growing up were your grandparents alive? Did you go up to Healdsburg to visit them?

WC: Oh yes. I often went up to Santa Rosa, they lived in Santa Rosa in their later life. I'd go up to Santa Rosa and come back and find I'd have a new brother or new sister - - No, I guess just a new brother. We'd be put on a train in San Rafael in charge of the conductor, my sister and myself, and my grandfather would meet me in Santa Rosa and we'd stay there for a vacation and come on back.

CE: How do you feel about trains today? Don't you think we ought to bring them back?

WC: Oh it was - - -

CE: Would you comment on that?

WC: Being a good Republican I shouldn't criticize Mr. Reagan on his - - but this Amtrak is one of the things we do have left and to lose that would be a great loss to the country.

CE: Well, Mrs. Kent was talking one day, where Larkspur Landing is you know, and that community and the ferry system in Larkspur. Those tunnels are still there.

WC: Yes, the tunnels are still there.

CE: They could have a feeder line go down there and connect with that train. - - Sort of close to where that place called Detour and the cut-off place wasn't it?

WC: Detour was connecting between the railroad to Tiburon and the railroad that went up through Larkspur.

CE: Then the Northwest Pacific - - - well, anyway, there were the two lines, one of them would up in Tiburon and one in Sausalito - - -

WC: Two lines and my dad was involved with the right of way and that's where I - - - it went through Coleman and Forbes property and he was involved with that, I guess.

CE: Well, that was a good thing wasn't it, that cut-off? Otherwise if you were leaving the depot, the Union Depot in San Rafael, you'd have to go way up to the Hub and back down on that triangle and this enabled you to scoot - - -

WC: Scoot San Rafael people to come through to Baltimore Park, from Detour, and from Baltimore Park there was what they called the Flyer in those days and it went straight to Sausalito and - - - forty five minutes from Market Street.

CE: And both competing trains used this track?

WC: It was all Northwestern Pacific after that time.

CE: I see, it was all NWP.

WC: Yeah, the North Shore - - and what was the other line?

CE: San Francisco North Shore Railway, that had absorbed hadn't it?

WC: They combined - - Donohue and Coleman roads. After 1906.

AK: While you're mentioning that, working on the right-of-way there, you told me that your father had to do with that little road that takes off at the top of Wolfe Grade -

WC: Yes.

AK: And it's still, not very good, to be sure, but people live up there - - -

WC: Meyers Road, yeah.

AK: And you said that he made that and you used to have to take care of the water bills and - -

CE: Tell us about that Glenn.

WC: From the top of the Wolfe Grade - - - (end of side 1)

CE: Glenn can you sell us more about what Mrs. Kent is referring to. What road is this, off the top of - - -

WC: The Meyers Road is a dirt road that leads off to the right from the top of the Wolfe Grade where it runs into San Rafael and for some reason or other, my dad built that road and it connects up to Southern Heights Boulevard, and we lived for a while at the top of a hill in a big gambrel roof house at the head of the bridge.

CE: When you say bridge what do you mean?

WC: Well, there was a wooden bridge along the Southern Heights Boulevard, now it's just a one-way bridge, back in the horse and buggy days it was all right.

CE: Is there a bridge still there?

WC: The bridge is still there and in use.

CE: Do you know where he is talking about Mrs. Kent?

AK: Yes.

WC: And the house at the head of - - big two story house with the gambrel roof, we lived there for two or three years.

CE: Is that house still standing?

WC: Yes

CE: What would the address be, roughly? Do you think you'd know that?

WC: No.

CE: What's the name of the road?

WC: Southern Heights Boulevard.

CE: Thank you.

WC: And it's one of the historical sites on the San Rafael books, you know, that they set up. And being that that country up there was all above the Water District's range, or height of, we had to pump water up to that hill and supply the people that he sold lots to with water.

CE: Where did you get the water from?

WC: The water was pumped by Marin Light and Power from the Water District - - -

CE: But you stored it up there somewhere?

WC: We bought it from them and then had to pump it up to the tanks above. I think there were forty-two people that we had supplied with water and I know when I was in grammar school I had to read those forty-two water meters in cubic feet and we sold the water in gallons and we had to convert and then go and collect them, collect the money. So when I was in grammar school, that's one of the chores I had.

CE: Any other chores you had as a boy?

WC: Mow the lawn, which was a little bit around our house and sometimes turn it over a shovelful at a time.

CE: Did they have paper routes in those days?

WC: Yes. I never did that, my brothers did, but I never got into that.

CE: Well tell us about your other brothers and sisters. Gordon we know, Mrs. Kent mentioned, and his recent published book on the trees and evergreens of Marin.

WC: Western evergreens - - Of the West Coast.

CE: Is he younger than you?

WC: Yes.

CE: You're the eldest?

WC: I'm the eldest.

CE: All right, then there's Gordon and - - -

WC: Gordon Courtright and then my sister Margaret, Mrs. John Crosby Brown, Margaret.

CE: And she's next to the eldest, then comes Gordon?

WC: Yes.

CE: Then who?

WC: Then Bob is deceased. And Barbara Burns, she lives in Calgary.

CE: Okay. Tell us a little bit about Gordon.

WC: Gordon was a nurseryman in Berkeley and East Bay Nursery, and rather successful.

CE: Did he get this interest from your mother? I gather from Mrs. Kent your mother has always been interested in - - many things but

WC: Yes - - - Before 1929 and '30 - - - in those days you did what you could do - - what you could find - something, got involved in a nursery business because he had quite a large lath house and grew camellias at home and got taking care of gardens at home and then he had a chance to get this nursery in Berkeley at the beginning of World War II - - - Japanese had it and - - -

CE: We know what happened to the Japanese, they were re-located. Where was the nursery? Because I lived in Berkeley for twenty years.

WC: San Pablo and Bancroft.

CE: Sure, sure.

WC: East Bay Nursery

CE: So that was his interest.

WC: He's now gone to the Chelsea Flower Show.

CE: In England?

WC: That's where he is. Yes.

CE: He's a pal of yours, too, isn't he, Mrs. Kent?

AK: Oh yes.

CE: And is he part of your botany group, with Tom Howell?

AK: No.

WC: But last year he went to South Africa with a botany group and came back to New York and then went up to Connecticut to visit my sister and to do the fall foliage tour and he asked us if we wanted to come along, so we joined him.

CE: You did last year?

WC: Yes.

CE: How was it?

WC: Beautiful. The whole thing was -- the prettiest display of color was right out in my sister's front yard and back yard. She lives on the old Post Road. Have you ever been - - -

CE: Your sister's married name is?

WC: Margaret is Mrs. John Crosby Brown and she lives in Old Lyme, Connecticut.

CE: Is that where she does a lot of her preservation and her interests are in that community?

WC: She's appointed by the Governor of Connecticut Historical Society and she's a wheel wherever she rolls - - -

CE: Wherever she is - - a very effective lady. I see you have some postcards on your table today from her I believe. She's in Monaco or in the Mediterranean, she's living the good life right now, too.

WC: Oh I don't know what's going on, I don't know what led her there. And - -

CE: Your other sister is Barbara.

WC: Yeah. Let's take them in chronological order. Gordon was the next in the family, he became a nurseryman and wrote the book - - -

CE: Trees and Shrubs for Western Gardens.

WC: Yes.

CE: That's recently published, isn't it?

WC: 1979

CE: 1979 by Timber Press. We have a copy of that in our Moya Library, do we not Mrs. Kent?

AK: Yes.

CE: All right. Gordon lives in Marin also?

WC: Gordon lives in El Cerrito.

CE: We ought to talk to him sometime, Mrs. Kent, on his work. And then comes Bob?

WC: Well Bob passes away in - - - right after my mother passed away, about 1959 in Guam and - - -

CE: Was he still in the Navy? You said earlier he was a navy man.

WC: He was a civilian employee for the Navy and - - - because this is a Marin Art and Garden Center they had sent up a floral contribution for the service and my mother converted that into money to buy that Sequoia tree in the Marin Art and Garden Center.

CE: In memory of her son.

WC: In memory of Bob, yes. So that's why the two trees are Courtright trees.

AK: Just to the left of the entrance.

WC: Yes.

CE: Where is the other Courtright tree Mrs. Kent?

AK: Both together.

CE: In memory of your mother and your brother? Is that correct?

AK: Yes.

CE: All right, then comes Barbara.

WC: Barbara is Mrs. Earl Coffman around Palm Springs and after Earl passed away she took a trip on the Oriana and met this - - -

CE: Her present husband, Mr. Burns?

WC: Yes. Richard Burns from Calgary and they had the first dance together and this was at Christmas time and in June they went down to the Hawaiian Islands and got married and she's comfortable.

CE: And she lives in Canada but travels.

WC: She comes down here often. And - - -

CE: Well let's get back to your mother. Could we get back to your mother? I'd like to know more about her. She has been in public service so much of her life and I think Marin County and certainly the Town of Larkspur is in her debt, don't you, Mrs. Kent?

AK: Very much.

WC: Yes.

CE: What can you tell more about her contributions?

WC: Anything to be done in town, she did it or got it done.

CE: She loved it. She loved her job, I imagine too, and gave it her all.

WC: Yes. Back in the days when things went - - - Nicholson was the Chief of Police and Phil Gorreaux was chief of the streets and she was the chief of the City Hall, Chief Clerk, and I guess Larkspur was run by the three people. Now they have a whole building full - - - Fire Department wasn't - - -

CE: I bet she knew the Doherty family?

WC: Oh yes.

CE: Do you remember Nel Doherty and her husband?

WC: Yes.

CE: She's still with us, living at the Tamalpais.

WC: Yes, Nel Doherty.

CE: Was that hard for your mother, raising children and going to work? Did you all have your little assignments and things to do as you mentioned earlier?

WC: After 1921 I wasn't very involved in Larkspur.

CE: You were off working?

WC: I was off working, myself, and everybody was doing their own thing.

CE: Mrs. Kent mentioned earlier, didn't the girls go to - - weren't they educated at Katherine Branson's?

WC: One at Katherine Branson's and - - -

CE: Who was that?

WC: Barbara.

CE: And the other girl?

WC: Well she - - - Margaret went to Dominican.

CE: So your mother was very interested in learning.

WC: Educating the girls. And my brother, Gordon, went to Cal Poly in his late twenties not directly from high school and he got, then, up to his ears in the nursery business and was very successful.

CE: Well his education was in that direction, I presume?

WC: It developed into that direction.

CE: But you didn't aspire to do that?

WC: No I don't aspire, I've got an orangeman's thumb, I don't have a green thumb – so -

CE: Mrs. Kent do you want to bring up some points that maybe you could lead Glenn into about his mother?

AK: I guess he's just about to leave the fact that we had a - - Marin Art and Garden Center came into being and everybody thought of Mary Courtright. She was asked to be the secretary and continued to be the secretary. I really wanted to bring one of the letterheads, somewhere I have a letterhead - - -

CE: Oh here, Glenn has some dates. Now what are they Glenn?

WC: Well, the Marin Art and Garden Center was incorporated in July, 1945, and she was the Secretary of the Center until 1952, and on the Board until 1954.

CE: Are any of those records still extant in the Center?

WC: Yes. That I got from the Center.

CE: You got from the Center?

WC: Yes.

AK: I remember the day that I was on that Board, too, and David Walker was on it and Gladys Smith - - - and then - - - Ellie's father - - Oh, dear, can't think - - But anyway, it was a good big Board. And then I left it and Mary stayed on.

WC: Was Tyler on that Board? Dick Tyler?

AK: Tyler was on the Board and - - - I can't think of the man who's child goes off to Novato sometimes...

CE: Did your mother enjoy that experience?

WC: Oh - - anything that was historical or horticultural or botanical or bird - - -

AK: She belonged to some of the very, very, top botanical and ornithological things. Things that most other people had to be professors to join.

WC Yes.

CE: She was that serious in her endeavors.

WC: I can remember her coming into our house one Christmas, soaking wet, she's been on a Christmas bird count and she'd been out for two or three hours in the pouring rain counting birds in Golden Gate Park.

AK: You know it's on that same day, you see, it's done all over the United States, maybe all over the world I'm not too sure. But every year on that one particular day all of those counts are made and then they're all tallied.

CE: Audubon does that, don't they now?

WC: That was Audubon. She was involved with Audubon and the Cooper Society.

AK: She knew John Baker who was head of the Audubon Society for many, many years. In fact, he came to her house at her invitation I guess. She stopped at nothing, if there was somebody very famous coming within fifty miles of Marin County she'd see to it that they had an invitation to come over here and a great many people, I guess, who enjoyed those very important visits very seldom knew that she was the one that instigated it.

WC: She was a great one to move other people to do what she wanted to do.

AK: She was in the background of a great, great many things.

CE: Was she a large woman?

AK: No. She was just average size. She must have looked quite the way she did when she was just a little freckled redheaded Irish girl, I think. Sparkling eyes.

WC: I met a man, he says, "Tom Kelly, I knew him. He had a little redheaded girl about so high up in Willits."

AK: Believe me, I guess if somebody important came to visit her father, she probably was right there to see who it was. She was a wonderful, different, one of a kind.

CE: And she was a good friend of Mary Elizabeth Parsons?

AK: Oh very, very.

CE: How did that come about, Ann, I wonder?

AK: Oh, from the flowers. She appreciated what Aunt Elizabeth was trying to do and in a way Aunt Elizabeth was kind of a quiet, sort of in-the-background kind of a person, and Mary would just hop to it. If she thought some flower was on private land, she'd find a way to get to it and take her there to it.

WC: We had projects to go up - - - I guess Baltimore Canyon, Larkspur Canyon, is a very good source of wildflowers and she knew where each patch was and sent us up there to get something for a wildflower show.

CE: Was she a member of any of your garden clubs you belong to, Ann?

AK: Oh - - she belonged to the Garden Society of Marin (I guess that's what we call it) and before that we were called the Marin Garden Center and it was supposed to be the only one, the first one of a kind that really covered the County, and she was in that for quite a long time. We used to publish a paper, I have a great many of those things still, publish a paper. And if there was something very wonderful in any town, something that was blooming, she'd see to it that it was put in that little paper for people to take a ride out and see something over White's Hill or up in San Rafael, something that was very unusual and blooming.

CE: Well, the other day when you were honored at the Lagunitas Club, what garden club was that Ann? That was fifty-year anniversary - - -

AK: No that's a little garden club, she wasn't in that.

CE: Was that the Marin Garden Club?

AK: That's the Marin Garden Club, yes.

CE: Did she have any time to do anything with a garden at home, working as she did?

WC: Working other people.

AK: She didn't have much time.

WC: No, she didn't have. And she had her job so she wasn't free like a lot of people to get in many activities - - -

CE: She didn't have much leisure, huh?

WC: No. But a few things she kind of adhered to.

AK: I think if something came up off-time and those people, police or somebody, didn't really know the answer, they would call her, I'm sure, with all kinds of questions.

WC: I know she was involved with the Red Cross and - - - altering the time, you know, when somebody's house, not in the water activities but in the - - -

CE: Disaster of some sort you mean or trouble?

WC: Personal disaster, and I know Mrs. Eckert was - - would lean on her a lot.

AK: She sort of felt that she was responsible for Larkspur.

WC: Yes.

CE: She took her job seriously!

WC: When you're a Postmaster in a little place where everybody comes to get their mail, you know everybody. You know what they were and she knew everybody - - -

CE: And then next to be right in the civic center of the County and nobody bought or sold anything that it didn't go through her office. And I have a feeling that very often she was helpful when young people wanted to buy something and weren't quite sure how, she knew how to help them get a loan or direct them in the right way.

WC: Yes, she was a real estate broker also.

AK: She wanted Larkspur to have good people and good schools and there was always a little rivalry between the - - they called them Twin Cities, Larkspur and Corte Madera, but Larkspur was incorporated and Corte Madera wasn't. And I think there were a great many times when she's go to the bat for Larkspur, she just wanted to show that Larkspur really was a city.

WC: Back in the days, earlier days, the Corte Madera School was moved from someplace in Corte Madera into Larkspur and some place I had a picture of the Corte Madera School in Larkspur, name on it, and then they changed to Larkspur-Corte Madera School District.

AK: Put it then right on the line then, didn't they?

WC: Yes

CE: Do you remember some of those old properties, like the old Patrick King house opposite the Catholic Church there where the Costello's now live?

WC: Oh yes.

CE: Had you visited that home?

WC: Yes - - I - -

AK: Well then - -right next to it or close there's a house that shows now, a beautiful house, that must - - they must have taken something down because we never used to see it. It seems to be right next to that one, very old - - -

WC: On the highway or right on Madrone?

AK: Right on Madrone. And it must be as old as the other one. And then those people that you interviewed over at - - -

CE: Yes, Alice Mason, she was related to the Costello's who were part of O'Connor and Moffitt - - -

AK: I was thinking of the people who lived up on the hill, the nice Jewish family.

CE: Oh, Catherine Solomon Lillienthal. She told a funny story that her father had built several houses on that hill and she said we used to call it Kike's Peak - -

WC: Jew Hill.

CE: Jew Hill but she called it Kike's Peak instead of Pike's Peak. Is that how they referred to it when you were growing up?

WC: Yeah, the hill up there.

AK: Somebody in the family still own that do you think?

CE: Jewish families up there, oh I think so.

WC: Our neighbor next door, here, was - - - Did you know a Faure's in Kentfield?

AK: Yes - - that's who it is.

WC: That's her name. And as a girl, before she was married, she used to come over to the Solomon house, which was turned over to Temple Emanuel I guess it was, it was a girl's vacation.

AK: Oh I didn't know that.

CE: Well that's good.

WC: One of the Solomon Lillianthals.

CE: Well they had five of six houses up there.

WC: Yes, the Cagwins were up there and Faure's and - - - Trader Vic is in there - - - what's his name?

CE: Vic Bergeron.

WC: Yes.

CE: He's got a place up there?

AK: I didn't know that.

WC: I think he had one of the places.

AK: And they had a wonderful view from that hill.

WC: Yes. And the Kahn's - - -

CE: Do you remember that street off the Canyon Road there where the creek is, Doliver Park I think they call it now, you go up there and there's a street called Olive and there's kind of a villa up there that a family named Allen had. Do you know anything about that family?

WC: Yes. Mayhue Allen. Up the end of it.

CE: Yes, way at the end of it and gosh it's like a villa, Ann.

AK: Didn't know about that, but where does Harry come in then?

WC: That's the - - Do you mean the real estate?

AK: No, no, Harry Allen Trail starts right there, where you're talking about now.

CE: Well it's a different family. Where was this Mayhue Allen? He must have been a traveling man - there are oriental tiles in there, and - - -

WC: I just know that they lived up here on Olive and Mayhue and they had some money.

AK: I don't know that at all - -

CE: My friend Cal Johnson who works for Schultz rented for a while and it was like something out of Europe.

AK: No I don't know it at all, I never saw it and now I probably never will.

CE: Did you know the Seaton family up the canyon there, Frank Seaton, he was with Golden State Dairy?

CE: Maybe he's a newcomer.

WC: Was he in Larkspur or Corte Madera?

CE: Larkspur.

WE: Seaton, Seaton - - -

CE: Well there are a lot of people - - - and some of those old houses. What do you know about some of those old houses on Madrone? When you leave and you go out of North Larkspur on your way to Murray Park - - - On the left side there above the marsh. There's some big old houses up there.

WC: Yes - - Well - - Mc Cormick house - - Len Young's place which is - - which was a saloon and training ground for prize fighters.

CE: That's close to where the theater is isn't it?

WC: No, just beyond the theater. The high school, I think, has their offices, or did have their offices there, didn't they?

CE: I don't know.

WC: And then the Mc Cormick house was the next one - - Ella Mc Cormick - -

CE: On your way to Escalle, did you ever visit Escalle as a boy?

WC: Yes. I knew of Jean and Pete - - -

CE: Well, tell us about them. Gosh, we haven't talked to anybody who has known them. (end of tape 1, side 2) (Tape 2, side 1)

CE: I'm interested in the fact that you knew Joan Escalle and that place?

WC: Jean – Jean Escalle - - and - - he passed away and he left his wife - - what was her name, Wilhemina wasn't it? [Ellen]

CE: I don't know. Was he still making wine when you knew him as a boy?

WC: Yes - - he was. Before World War I he had the winery and the vineyards and everything and sometime in the early twenties the vineyard became diseased and I guess had to close up. But in prohibition days there was always wine available.

CE: I understand he delivered in a horse and wagon?

WC: Yes.

CE: Did you ever see that growing up?

WC: Well I've seen his horse and buggy. We used to go swimming in the creek from out that boardwalk right opposite his winery, it was old Hill's Boathouse.

CE: Now, this is another thing. Would you locate Hill's Boathouse for us? On what side of the Corte Madera slough is it?

WC: Hill's Boathouse was on a boardwalk that ran directly from the brick - - -

CE: Over towards where Marin General is today?

WC: Yes over toward Marin General. The boardwalk ran right straight into boathouse.

CE: So Hill's boathouse was on this side of, on the south side of the creek, is that correct? I see.

WC: Yes, on this side of the creek.

CE: Do you remember that hotel, the Bon Aire Hotel?

WC: Yes, the Bon Aire Hotel.

CE: Well they talk about meeting a train and coming over a corduroy kind of road, would you make that clear for us Glenn?

WC: The station, Escalle Station, was right there - - - about, I guess, where the highway where the signals were, for that intersection that goes across the hill - - -

CE: You mean right where the Safeway is today?

WC: Yes - - The signals in there. And then there was a roadway that was full of chuck holes and full of water and under water at high tide that went over to the hotel and there was a draw bridge there until 1922.

CE: There was a drawbridge?

WC: Yes. It had to open up - - - - Ross Landing was further up the creek, up near Kentfield, and they had to open the drawbridge when the schooners came through.

CE: Now do you remember any traffic, boat traffic, in your lifetime there as a boy?

WC: No. Just rowing up and down - - -

CE: But there was no coming up for any kind of produce or freighting?

WC: No.

CE: That was all gone by your time.

WC: Yes. And the Bon Aire Hotel had a swimming pool out in front of it about where the parking lot is and - - -

CE: And that's the site of the Marin General Hospital. And those trees are still there, those big palms.

WC: Yes. The Bon Aire Hotel was up near where the hospital is located and its extensive grounds and the swimming pool was there and we - - - Mrs. Murphy, whose husband was a blacksmith in Larkspur, used to run the swimming pool.

CE: Oh she did!

WC: Yes.

CE: Did you ever go in the Hotel?

WC: No, never.

CE: I understand it was torn down or burnt down around 1927, can you tell us - - -

WC: Oh, it was closed - - - I don't know when it ended but in its heyday it was quite a spot for - - -

CE: For what?

WC: For weekend couples, not married.

CE: I've heard that same story.

WC: Yes. It was a place to go, Hotel Rafael and Bon Aire.

CE: Well Glenn, getting back across the creek to Escalle's, they had an inn there at one time, I understand, called the Limerick Inn. Was that in existence when you were a boy?

WC: No, not that I know of.

CE: Katherine Solomon Lillianthal remembers it, but she's older than you. I guess it was sort of where those brick bath houses are still standing there.

WC: Not bath houses - -

CE: Well what are they?

WC: Was a saloon.

CE: That brick place down there?

WC: Yes, was a saloon and the beer gardens right adjacent to it in there and Escalle owned up the left and the winery to the right in back of it. The winery still stands with the Escalle name on it.

CE: They have their home opened occasionally for benefits.

AK: Did Jean Escalle's widow marry somebody who was right there at the winery?

WC: No, she was a widow for - - - Mrs. Escalle - - -

CE: Well she was somebody else first, married to a Frenchman and he died and as I understand it didn't Mr. Escalle come and work there, and when her first husband died he married her?

WC: That I didn't know.

AK: Something like that.

CE: Mr. Callot - - and they made bricks originally. Escalle was a winemaker from France.

AK: The bricks belonged to the Murray's I think.

CE: Belonged to this Callot Brickyard and that was - - - and that was - - he died, this is according to what's been written so far, than the widow married Jean Escalle who was

there as a worker and he saw the land and said why don't we plant grapes. Did you meet her? Did you ever meet her?

WC: Oh yes.

CE: Tell us about her, what do you - - -

WC: Wasn't she related to Mrs. Wagner? (sister)

AK: I don't know a thing about her.

WC: I think she was related to - - -

CE: Did they have children?

WC: No - - - not to my knowledge.

CE: It's an interesting piece of property today still.

WC: Oh yeah, and Tiscornia is quite a character, he was when he was alive. I met him and - - - what's her name?

CE: The one who's married to the grading contractor?

WC: Yes.

CE: That was Tiscornia's secretary?

WC: Yes.

CE: I knew you were going to ask me; I don't remember her name, do you Ann?

WC: Copeland, yes, Copeland.

CE: Didn't she get the property?

WC: Yes, he owned all this property and no family and she ran the whole show. I met them through my job with the state. I used to, once a year, go in - - - call on them and when he found out who I was he opened up a lot of his pictures and things like that.

AK: He had a lot of them there.

WC: He had a ramshackle office full of this stuff that you people like - -

CE: Wonder where all that stuff is, do you know?

WC: I don't know.

CE: Do you think the secretary has it?

WC: Oh she must have it.

CE: Is she living on the property here now?

WC: I don't know. See I've been retired for - - - sixteen, seventeen years.

CE: We ought to try and find that out Ann, I guess, huh?

WC: She ran the office for him. And Tiscornia was a good friend of my mother's too. Every time her Red Cross would say, she'd want some money for the Red Cross, he's come through. Got hold of him. She knew who had it and who would give it.

CE: He's a strange man though in many ways. He was a bit of an eccentric wasn't he?

WC: Very eccentric.

CE: I remember he owned that block on Kearney Street in the City and it was a disgrace to the City.. It was so run down and he'd never do a darn thing about it. And he owned a great deal of the marsh didn't he?

WC: He owned - - yeah, a great deal. From the Doherty's all the way up - - -

CE: All the way north.

WC: But his office was quite a place.

CE: Do you remember the McAllister house in Kentfield?

WC: Yes.

CE: Did you ever enter that as a young man?

WC: No.

CE: Do you remember the Mountain View Hotel in what is now the Laurel Grove section of Kentfield? It was the hotel owned by the Hotaling family.

WC: No.

CE: What are your memories of Greenbrae as such, just a ranch, a dairy ranch over there?

WC: Greenbrae was - - - the dairy ranch was San Eliseo Drive up there and Teixeira - -

AK: Nobody ever said the name.

WC: Teixeira ran it for a long time and then I guess Schulz bought the land from the Archbishop and Teixeira went up to what is now Marinwood, I guess.

AK: He held out that ranch quite a long time after Schulz bought all the rest and the little ranch was still running and then they just gave up.

WC: Yeah - - - He had the - - ranch where Marinwood is, I guess.

CE: Well, this Greenbrae ranch, though was a dairy ranch right down near where the Bon Aire Shopping Center is, in that lower part of Greenbrae? Up in the hills?

WC: No it was - -

AK: Where the gate is, the other entrance - -

WC: Where the gate opposite the Fire Department is, that one, the San Eliseo Drive - -

CE: I see, that most easterly gate there.

WC: Yes.

CE: What do you remember of the brickyard down there?

WC: Remillard Brick yard.

CE: Did you go visiting down there?

WC: No - - But I can remember the horse drawn, later the stages that came to the Greenbrae Station to San Quentin. And riding up to San Rafael, the convicts that they bring in - - -

CE: Off the train?

WC: Off the train, shackled - - - and put them on the bus. And Clinton Duffy, there's a person you should have - - -

CE: Is he still alive?

WC: Yes, still alive and very - - - his brother Ray is not very well. But Clint Duffy went to high school and they had to come over on the stage to Greenbrae and take the train to San Rafael and walk from Union Depot to the high school where the E Street School is now.

CE: We did interview two daughters of Warden Johnson, but that was later, in the thirties.

WC: He was later on.

CE: In the thirties, yes.

WC: Well Clint Duffy was born and raised in San Quentin.

CE: Really, born and raised!

WC: I think - - his father was the Warden there

CE: Well we'll have to look into that.

WC: He lives over at the Rossmoor now. Clint Duffy does.

CE: We go everywhere. We've been even to Nevada on the trail of a tale. Tell me, were there any houseboats there when you were a boy?

WC: Well there always were houseboats and they were floating houseboats.

CE: Okay. Now I understand that most of them originally were in Belvedere Cove, you know, and then when Belvedere started to get very posh these little things were towed to other streams around Marin County and so many of them were towed up to Corte Madera slough. About the turn of the century or maybe 1903, 4 or 5.

WC: I can't remember - -

CE: But you always remember some houseboats there?

WC: Yes.

CE: Did you go down there, have any friends there? Your family?

WC: Huh - - - My mother wouldn't allow us to go down there - - - let's put it that way. There were supposedly wild parties - - -

CE: I heard that - - in the early days.

WC: And I've gone down there - - - Of course my mother had a real estate office, you know in connection with that, and I used to hot foot people out to rent places for the summer and many times go down the creek. I think I've been in every house in Larkspur -
-

CE: You probably have.

WC: The old days - - - when my dad was still alive, about 1914 or so - - the Larkspur Water Company (don't write this down) - -

CE: What about them?

WC: Larkspur Water Company were two people, Cap Larsen and a fellow named Lou Cornick. And supposedly they got the water from the bridge, the little pump house back of the Town Hall in Larkspur. And that pump house pumped the water to Corte Madera. It was supposedly - - -

CE: Tapped off or something?

WC: No. There was a one inch pipe tapped on to the Water District line up there that ran over there and supplied the Larkspur mains with water. And of course the people at the higher elevations would often run out of water.

CE: Couldn't get it up there?

WC: Huh - -

CE: Getting back to those houseboats - -

WC: Cap Larsen that that and every time there was a fire they had to turn of a fire hydrant, he had to go and turn the pump back into the Larkspur mains.

CE: I know that the early days of the Boardwalk had that reputation. There were a lot of San Francisco policemen that would come over and let their hair down and have fun, rowdy dowdy stuff.

WC: Yes, and Pete Escalle was one of them. Jean was the winemaker but his brother was - - - they'd take a handtruck with the beer out to the Boardwalk. There were several Boardwalks, Boardwalk one, two, three and four.

CE: Well they've got landmark status now in this new book I understand, the Larkspur Historical Society put out. There used to be one down there called the Cozy. Did you go in the Cozy?

WC: Yes, I - - -

CE: Been in them all huh?

WC: After this, being as I had had some experience with the water from the San Rafael end of it - - - I had a job for a little while going around to every house in Larkspur in the water department.

CE: Did you ever as a young boy have to go to the May Pole dance that were given?

WC: Oh yes.

CE: At the kindness of Mrs. Kent. Her mother-in-law and her father-in-law's mother.

WC: Oh yes.

CE: Describe that experience. Did you go reluctantly?

WC: I don't - - - I guess I went because I was told to go. I did a lot of things that - - - you did - - -

AK: Your mother loved it though, she made you go.

WC: Yes - - - You don't rebel against some things when you're that age.

CE: Do you remember going up to the Kent's property for Grape festival?

WC: Oh yes. I remember when they were up there on her property and in the house and the Chinese cook giving us lichi nuts. Sing wasn't it?

AK: Sing, maybe. Maybe Lang - - -

CE: Do you know anything about the Murray's and Murray Park? That old house is still there?

WC: No I don't know - - -

CE: You didn't know that family?

WC: I met them, yes, but not - - -

AK: There were no young people there were there?

WC: Well Elmer Murray was the other - - - plumber - -

AK: Nephew - -

WC: Yes. I knew him. I don't know whether he's still alive or not.

CE: Tell up about the Larkspur Hotel or the Blue Rock Hotel. They had a big hotel, wooden one, that burned, I know, way up on the hill but the one that we know as the Blue Rock today, was that always a hotel in your lifetime?

WC: Yes that was always a hotel and a bar and it maintained a bar - - - all the time. You see my mother's office, post office, was right across the street from it. And from 1917 on, so we took all the prohibition days, so the prohi's come and knock it over and then they'd leave and they'd set them up again - - - it was always a good little place to eat.

CE: What do you call them, prohi's? Prohi's, is that what you call the prohibitionists?

WC: Prohibitionists - -

CE: Prohi's, I never heard that before. Are you a man who enjoys a drink?

WC: Yes. Do you?

CE: Sure.

AK: I just thought of something. May Day was a little hard for a boy to take but your mother was very, very fond of it and worked for it. It makes me think of something, she had a girl who lived with you and worked and helped - - -

WC: Margaret Patterson - -

AK: I don't know who it was. Anyway, one day your mother said, one day at the Grape Festival, Margaret was entranced with the children dancing and all the rest of it and she said, "Oh I wish I could work with children like that." And your mother said, "You mean that Margaret? Are you sure? Is that what you'd like to do Margaret?" So I guess she sent her to school and then in later years we passed a school up near Sebastopol, I think it was, and that made her think of it and she told me about Margaret and how she became a wonderful teacher just from that one little hint that she happened to say.

WC: I know mother was involved with her going to school, she lived with us and she went over to San Francisco Normal School. She was there just before you were.

AK: She was very proud of her.

WC: Yes. In fact I have a - - - she's down in the Odd Fellow's Home in Saratoga now.

CE: Well, you used to walk around and explore that area, most boys do, don't they?

WC: Yeah.

CE: And you got as far as Kentfield Corners, or whatever they called it then, before the College of Marin. What was it?

WC: The Butler place?

CE: Yes, the Butler place. Do you know anything about that property?

WC: I have a table from the house there.

CE: Oh you do! That's interesting. Do you remember some of those Italian gardens?

WC: Oh yes. The gardens where - - the school and gymnasium are

CE: Yes. Did you often buy produce there to take home?

WC: Yes. My mother was a great shopper for - - - in those kind of places. Cordoni's place up on where the Sir Francis Drake School is and then the Epidendio place.

CE: Does that ring a bell with you Mrs. Kent?

AK: Yes.

WC: My father brought Epidendio from the city or Daly City, old Pete - - -

AK: Did he make Heather Gardens? It was connected anyway.

WC: Well, the whole ranch, even where ? east, you know the whole ranch was all part of the Coleman-Forbes - -

AK: I didn't know that.

WC: Heather Gardens and - - - the old adobe house that used to stand out there - -

CE: Bickerstaff's?

WC: Bickerstaff.

CE: When was that?

AK: Darn I wish I had - - - I didn't know - - -

CE: Where was it roughly, near Palm Hill?

WC: No - -

CE: Near Niven's Nursery?

WC: Yes, the back part of Niven's Nursery. There was a hill in there, it's all been leveled down - - - Bickerstaff place - - - I remember taking the motion picture with Beatriz Michelina - - made some picture.

CE: In the old adobe?

WC: In the old adobe house was the center of it.

CE: Now that was that film company that was out in Sun Valley, in San Rafael?

WC: Yes.

CE: She was their leading lady, wasn't she?

WC: Yes

CE: That's something that a lot of people don't know, that motion pictures had an early start right in San Rafael.

WC: Yes. Stage pictures were in Fairfax - - - I don't know where the studio was but I can remember the stage coming down the Bolinas Grade - - you know, taking pictures of it.

CE: When you say Bolinas Grade, what do you mean?

WC: From the Cascade Ranch up to the Meadow Club.

CE: Oh, I see. Did you ever go over to West Marin as a boy with your family or did you ever go to Bolinas for a weekend or go over for hunting or fishing?

WC: I walked over to Bolinas and thumbed a ride across from the sandspit over to Bolinas.

CE: Thumbed a ride? In a skiff??

WC: Yeah skiff over there - - -

CE: You didn't hike the mountain much though?

WC: No. Sundays when everybody was out, Sundays I was in the real estate office.

CE: You'd answer the phones or be there - - -

WC: Take people - - -

CE: Take them out?

WC: Walk them out - -

AK: I know what you did, you took people riding who came over just for the ride half of the time. That's what lots of them did. They came on the train for a day in the country and they'd say they came to look for lots and people like you took them riding all over the place.

WC: Walking - -

CE: Walking?!

WC: Walking.

CE: You really did?

WC: Yeah. In the Larkspur Canyon. They wanted to rent a house for the summer.

CE: So you'd just walk them out.

WC: Yeah, it was only a mile up to the end of the canyon.

CE: What would you get for rent for those places?

WC: Twenty-five, thirty, forty, fifty dollars.

CE: Doesn't it just make it unbelievable what's going on today, then? They'd rent that same cottage probably - - - Glenn's talking about now, as a boy of three remembering the earthquake.

WC: The earth quake, you know, shook everybody up and - - -

CE: In Marin as well.

WC: Yes. And we all got out on the front porch, my dad in his long white nightshirt, you know, standing there, and we could see the arbor over the gate, we had a redwood arbor, and a telephone pole shake. I remember that. And my mother had a school friend of hers staying with us and she had a cot on the font porch and she was a - - - didn't get married until she was forty-five or so, and she was a prissy old maid and always accused us of running out and I crawled in bed with her. And one time - - - that's all I remember about the earthquake, except that the family camped out, tent out in our front yard later.

CE: Did you take any friends in from the city?

WC: Well this family, yes, we put up a tent and this family camped.

CE: Oh, on your property.

WC: And - - - So I crawled in bed with her and oh - - long time - - (end of side 1) And then these friends that they had come up - - -

CE: ...left San Francisco and camped with family and friends all over the place.

WC: Yes I know.

CE: Did you ever know Dr. Leo Stanley at the prison by any chance?

WC: Yes.

CE: He gave us interesting reminiscences of his experience of the earthquake. He was a student at Stanford - - By gosh that morning he looked up and there was the chapel all - - -

WC: Well I didn't see any damage, the only thing I saw was the telephone pole and this arbor (we had a big gate) shaking and my dad - - - I don't remember my mother's clothes, but my dad in a long white nightshirt. Then he hitched up the horse and buggy and went

down to go to the city on the first - - - they let one ferry boat go to the city and he was on that.

CE: What did he want to go into the city for, I wonder?

AK: His office was there wasn't it?

WC: Well he - - - no. He was working for the Custom Service at that time and he was what they called a bonded clerk and he - - - more history. He found somebody left a rifle parked next to a fire hydrant - - - pretty good rifle it was, and he got that and he got a hose from one of the destroyers and the warehouse that he had, he was able to save it.

CE: You mean as a result of the fire and earthquake?

WC: From the fire - - he had the Green Street warehouse and - - - But then right after that he left the Custom Service and went into the real estate business.

CE: Well, it was surprising how many - - - we've talked to quite a few people, haven't we Mrs. Kent, who have had that earthquake experience. One woman, now deceased, was ninety when we interviewed her, she was the granddaughter of Oscar Shafter who along with his brother James McMillan Shafter had the fifty thousand acres out at Point Reyes. She and her sisters were at the opera to hear Caruso. She was about eighteen and it was a high point in her social calendar and the father wanted to - - he had made reservations to stay at the Palace Hotel, and the mother (their home was in Berkeley) she said, "No I want to go home tonight and sleep in my own bed." So the girls were frustrated because they thought "Here's the enchantment of the city," you know, and they take the last ferry boat out, about 1 a.m., and the girls are sitting at the back, you know, and it's a beautiful night. And the woman told us that it was just a magical night, calm and beautiful and they didn't want to go home and their parents were making them go home and they had heard the great Caruso sing and - - - Well, so they go to bed, of course, in Berkeley, and then, of course, at five eighteen they were awakened and things happened and the mother said "Now listen to me again," you know, "I know, we should have gone home and I'm glad we did." So the next day, she goes with her father, or two days later, and they somehow get to Marin because the Shafter son wants to see how the property is and she said that she had gone up there, taken the train to Tocaloma, got off and a wagon met them and she had gone up and seen this cow with his tail up in the crevice, that the earth had opened and swallowed him up. Because I had asked her, was that really a story or legend?. She said, "It was true! I saw it on horseback with my father."

WC: I've seen that crevice that opened up opposite to Bear Valley Ranch. I don't know whether you can still see it now or not.

CE: Sure because they have - - - I don't know how recently you've been out there but the Park Service has a walk, they call it "Earthquake Walk" and it starts right there at park headquarters and goes along that red barn where they do a lot of training for Morgan horses and you walk all along this fissure. It's still there.

WC: Yeah. But the cypress trees that are - - it's spread out, I've seen them.

CE: Are you afraid of earthquakes?

WC: No.

CE: Most Californians are philosophical about it. You know people who are not natives they come here often and they are scared to death when there is a little tremor.

CE: An earthquake shakes you up and maybe shakes something down but it's not worse than a typhoon or a flood.

AK: No that's what I think.

CE: But some people get so terrified of it.

WC: But imagine a wall of water coming - - -

CE: Oh - - and the force of it.

WC: Or a tornado when they - - -

CE: Lift up houses and spin them around and - - -

AK: And they apparently hit in some unusual places, like Denver the other day.

WC: Yes.

AK: They didn't ever expect a tornado there. Places like Texas or Louisiana...

WC: I have a - - - In fact the girl that I went with out to a Halloween party at her place, lived in Chicago - - -

CE: How you met your wife.

WC: Yes. She lived in Chicago and she was so deathly afraid of earthquakes, she finally left San Francisco, went out to Chicago, she's just afraid of earthquakes. She lived through the San Francisco earthquake.

CE: Listen, getting back to Marin County a minute, I have to ask you to comment on this proposed legislation to do away with the Golden Gate Bridge District. What are your feelings on that? Do you think they've done a poor job and do you think the State should take it over, Glenn?

WC: I would hesitate - - - I think they've done all right by the Directors of the Golden Gate Bridge - - -

AK: But still that doesn't mean that the system isn't good, do you think?

WC: No - - they got out of the bridge district into the transportation business - - -

AK: That wasn't their doing though, it was sort of forced on them, wasn't it?

WC: Well yes, but they got into it and I think that was a mistake. I was in the Bridge District office many times and I always thought that they ran a pretty efficient job of that, but - - -

CE: Well, why are we going into such a deficit, is it - - was it a terrible mistake to buy those gasoline turbine ferryboats at the price we did? Were we shooting for something too sophisticated for the time?

WC: I think the transportation system in Marin County made their biggest mistake in 1937 or thereabouts when they rejected purchasing the right-of-way of the Northwestern Pacific and maintaining the old train system.

AK: That was sad, very sad. You know the trouble is you couldn't run a train with very few people and everybody could go so fast in cars. Before that they had hundreds and hundreds of people jumping on at every station and suddenly you have nobody, you can't run a train on that - - -

WC: I don't - - I think they should have maintained the right-of-ways and things like that because - -

CE: That would have given them some options now, wouldn't it?

WC: And options twenty years ago, too to, maintain something.

CE: Have you ridden the Larkspur Ferry?

WC: No.

CE: It's quite an experience.

WC: I've gone to Sausalito - - -

CE: Mrs. Kent and I went there on opening day, December 11, 1976.

AK: I remember something about you, too, Glenn, you told me you went to Australia and oh, we went on a ferryboat or something and the people were so kind and they took care of your wife and they did all these things and I thought, if you ever go on the Larkspur Ferry because they do the same thing.

CE: She'd be the first one on.

AK: They took the wheelchair and put it up on the very best place on the boat and watch out for them you know. I didn't tell you that that day but I thought, now I wonder how many people really bothered to go on our own ferry and why don't we as a County get together and say it doesn't have to be run badly, it is a wonderful thing and we ought to keep it, you know.

CE: It's a beautiful ride.

WC: We were down to Fry's in Larkspur and looked at that and everytime we go by there we say we should take a ferryboat ride. I took the grandchildren down to Sausalito one

time and took them on a ferry ride and then a cable car ride up to the Fairmont Hotel and Powell Street.

CE: Well, you ought to take your wife on this. My sister, whom you met, she loves to go and they're so sweet to her. She doesn't even have to get off. Normally you have to get off and get on because the Coast Guard regulations stipulate they have to know how many people are on that boat. But with your wife in her condition, get a wheelchair, and you don't have to bother getting off. And the bar is nice and the view in that middle deck - - Mrs. Kent calls it her yacht.

AK: I said I don't have to wait for my friends to invite me on a boat anymore. I've got my own yacht.

CE: - - - you must have known her?

WC: Yes.

CE: Well, now she was one of the founders of the Marin County Historical Society, I understand?

AK: I guess so.

CE: She lived up the canyon, didn't she?

AK: She lived right here in Larkspur.

WC: Yes, the second house - -

CE: Up on the left?

WC: On the left it was the Brown property. She was a school teacher - - -

AK: She was the one who was going to write the history you see, I think that Mrs. Donnelly would have done a great deal more if she hadn't thought, everybody thought Belle was going to do it and she thought so, too.

CE: What happened to Belle? Did she die prematurely?

AK: I guess she died and I don't know who it is that got all her things, maybe the Larkspur Library, I don't know.

WC: Her mother got her silverware, I know that.

CE: She did, huh?

WC: Yes. I mean, they were very close.

AK: It was too bad. I don't know where they are now, I don't know where everything - - - She saved so much. And we always understood that she was the daughter or granddaughter, whatever it was, of one of those men from Baltimore that Baltimore Canyon is named for.

WC: She was related in there.

AK: Somehow.

CE: That sawmill corporation that came out from the east, yes.

WC: And then Doliver - - -

CE: Who was Doliver?

AK: Is it the architect or no? Some other Doliver? I don't know who it was.

CE: They call it Doliver Park - - -

AK: I was surprised at that - -

WC: And Jewel

AK: But was that Doliver the same Doliver that was in Kentfield?

WC: No.

AK: No. I think not.

AK: I don't - - -I didn't know but I noticed there was a Doliver Park.

WC: That entrance park in Larkspur is Doliver park.

CE: Yeah. And tell me, Glenn, weren't there some Gardiners in Larkspur? The name Gardiner, wasn't that a prominent name in Larkspur?

WC: Very prominent. You know the Gardiner place?

CE: No. Tell me where that is. Where's the Gardiner place?

WC: On Baltimore Avenue and Magnolia. There's some new houses on the corner and in back of it is a kind of old - - -

CE: Oh, is that the Gardiner - -

WC: That was the Gardiner place.

CE: Is that old Rev. Ed Gardiner by any chance?

WC: There was an Edgar Gardiner, yes.

AK: That Ed Gardiner really belongs out over the hill, that's not the same one is it?

CE: I think Mrs. Theirback told me she used to, as a young girl (she's now gone, she would be your age Mrs. Kent), she said they used to come over and rent rooms from Ed Gardiner. Could that be the place?

AK: Yes.

CE: Or did he have a boarding house as well?

WC: I don't remember. He was a - - - father of Sam Gardiner. He was a judge and attorney and he'd be a good person - - -

CE: Hey, that's an idea, put that down. Contact Sam Gardiner, yes.

WC: Yes, Sam Gardiner would be a good person because of this. Sam Gardiner is the youngest of - - there are several Gardiner boys, and highly involved in history - They lived in this place, on a hill, and their house had a well inside the house, when they wanted water they just - - -

CE: Boy that was pretty fancy.

WC: Yes, it was.

AK: Did he have brothers and sisters?

WC: Sure, lots of them.

CE: One of them, wasn't he in charge of all the Fire Wardens for the County or Mount Tam or something?

WC: No. That was a Woodacre.

CE: Aren't they all kin to each other?

WC: No, no. Different ?? too.

CE: Oh dear.

WC: So old Pop Gardiner was a Presbyterian minister - - -

CE: Oh I didn't know that.

WC: And I think at one time he was superintendent of schools up someplace in Oregon and - - - and Sam and Paul, the two youngest boys, never went to grammar school. I think Sam went into high school for two years before he graduated, but he -

AK: Did the father teach them all?

WC: The father taught them and he's very, very smart. The father was an engineer for the PG&E. And one of the brothers was the first mayor of Larkspur, one of the early mayors, and - - - You know the house - - where our home was, Mrs. Kent?

AK: Yes.

WC: The house up on top of the hill, in back there? The one in the back of our house, that's his older brother's place. His was the first house on Palm Hill and ours was the second.

AK: I didn't know that.

WC: Tell me, that road that goes into the concrete bridge towards Palm Hill, it has big tall palm trees on it. Normally that leads to an estate. Was there an old home there or was that just a sub-division entry?

WC: No, I think you're a little bit - - -

CE: Mixed up?

AK: Didn't your father plant those trees?

WC: Yes.

CE: Your father did?

AK: Yes.

WC: He didn't - - ? planted them but he - - - Baltimore Avenue runs down to what was the station, Baltimore Station, and coming from the school - - back of the school and across the bridge is this other street that your talking. See Baltimore Avenue, where the palm trees are and where they got - - and some of the palm trees on the other ? ? ? ?

CE: Entrance to this - -

WC: Area on the hill about 1909. And I can remember the trees when they were just little - - -

CE: You've got pictures of that?

WC: No.

CE: Was your father, then, instrumental in developing that section?

WC: No, he - - Boardman and Company were the original sales agents for the thing and then - - - they had it for a year or two, then he took it over.

CE: They used to say that when you went on the train from Sausalito that you had fog until you got through the tunnel at Corte Madera and then you had sunshine. Is that true?

WC: Well, on foggy days yes.

AK: They used to always say, you know they'd say, we have one kind of weather this side of the tunnel.

CE: And they've got another over there- - -

WC: Yes.

CE: Marshall Dill when he was ? the other day, he was reminiscing, he's a man my age in his sixties, and he was talking about the old, the original road, Corte Madera Grade as he called it, and how you'd back up on weekends. The cars would be waiting to get on the ferries to get home on a late Sunday night. Do you remember all that?

WC: Yes.

AK: He told us about a road before that. Now I never heard about that road.

CE: Yes Glenn talked about a road - - - And was that road sort of where the present Corte Madera - - -

WC: No - - Of course it went over the crest of the hill there and it went right down and it came out at the entrance of town and it crossed the railroad tracks just outside of town.

AK: Is there any mark of it anymore?

WC: And there's - - -

AK: Of course people have houses in there now. There's a sub-division sort of in there isn't there?

WC: I don't know. I haven't been over that road in a long - - -

AK: Yes, all kinds of houses as you're coming up - - - as you're coming up the grade now you look off to the right - -

CE: Don't they call that Scott Valley, Anne?

AK: Yes, there's all kinds of nice roads and houses there.

CE: Did you have any idea when they built the Golden Gate Bridge that all of this would boom so, or did you anticipate it?

WC: I didn't think about it.

AK: I knew it because I had seen the same thing happen on Long Island exactly, about twenty years before that, you see.

WC: Of course I walked across the Golden Gate Bridge on its first day.

AK: ?? I couldn't go, he went.

CE: He went because he was bored. Mrs. Kent went. Her twin daughters went.

WC: What's your - - Marty and what?

AK: Nancy and Marty - - -

WC: Yes, Nancy - - I was trying to think - -

CE: And her mother went over the Brooklyn Bridge - -

AK: Don't say the twins did it - - - My mother went over every bridge that she could, that opened, on the first day it was opened. Well, she was too lame to go over the first day on this one so we got her in the very first in line in the car on the second day when they

allowed autos to go over. But, we've got that kind of a funny quirk in our family that's what we have to do. Did you go over the San Rafael Bridge the day it opened too?

WC: No.

AK: I did.

CE: When was that Ann, I kind of forget that?

AK: Don't remember when it was but my sister was too lame to go and she didn't know what was going on but she said, "You know, if you're expecting to go over that bridge tonight, if I were you I'd go over to the city and I would get in line and I would come over the San Rafael Bridge and then you'd be near home at midnight. But if you wait and you stand down there go over [inaudible] in Richmond [inaudible] and you know I think maybe you expect to do that.

CE: Isn't that darling? She was right.

AK: She was so right. We went over and there we were, the first people in line on the Richmond side because people never thought of doing that. They let us through, gee, we were in San Rafael on the brand new bridge and home.

CE: Well, you know we must tell you this, in addition to interviewing people we cover events. Mrs. Kent is aware that history is ongoing and what's happening today, will be history, you know, fifty years from now. So, when she found out they were going to open the new Larkspur ferry on December 11, 1976, she said, "We'll go aboard." We were down there, I think at six thirty or some ungodly hour, as cold as the devil, and here they've got these old guys, four of them are going to be kind of a band, play music, and the horns were so cold they had them wrapped under their jackets and the name of the band was the Geriatric Gypsies. Well, finally we get aboard and it was kind of fun. And they released all these balloons and we take off. And Mrs. Kent said, well, let's cruise around - - - Mayor Bettini was aboard, we talked to him briefly. We talked to Leo Noudaikis, who was the Chairman of the Golden Gate Bridge District. We talked to everybody. Passengers were, "Well how do you like it so far?" Someone would say, "It'll never get off the ground," other people said, "It's just wonderful." Finally I even asked the bartender. I said, "How do you think it's going to go?" He said, "Oh they got to get more liquor, if that's any indication, they've got to get more liquor." We had a wonderful time; we got a lot of impressions.

AK: It was fun, very nice.

CE: But it's true, history is ongoing and - - what we're doing today will be - - -

AK: Something about this place, this is history too you know. Who'd ever believe there'd be such a place as this - - -

CE: You mean this mobile home park?

AK: Yes.

CE: It's the prettiest one I've ever seen.

WC: And Marin County has turned their back to mobile home parks and here - - you know everybody here is, most everybody here, is well able to take care of themselves.

CE: Well what is it, because they don't get enough for their taxes?

WC: Well I don't know

[Balance of tape is inaudible]