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THE PATTERSON FAMILY AND RANCH:
SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY IN TRANSITION

Volume II

WATER, DEVELOPMENT, AND PRESERVATION
IN SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Interviews with

Mathew P. Whitfield
Wallace R. Pond
John Brooks
Robert Fisher, M.D.
Laurence W. Milnes
William D. Patterson

Interviews Conducted by
Ann Lage
Carole Hicke
John Caswell
in 1955, 1982, 1986 and 1987

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral history is a modern research technique involving an interviewee and an informed interviewer in spontaneous conversation. The taped record is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The resulting manuscript is typed in final form, indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley and other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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To cite the volume: The Patterson Family and Ranch: Southern Alameda County in Transition, Volume II, "Water, Development, and Preservation in Southern Alameda County," an oral history project of the Regional Oral History Office conducted in 1955, 1982, 1986-1987, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988.

To cite individual interview: Mathew P. Whitfield, "General Manager of the Alameda County Water District, 1953-1977," an oral history interview conducted 1986 by Ann Lage, in The Patterson Family and Ranch: Southern Alameda County in Transition, Volume II, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988.



MATT WHITFIELD

ca. 1977

Photograph by Steve Rubiolo

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The Bancroft Library, on behalf of future researchers, wishes to thank the following organizations and individuals whose contributions made possible this oral history project.

Alameda County Water District
Brooks Family Foundation
City of Fremont
East Bay Regional Park District
Oliver De Silva Company
David and Joan Patterson
Dorothy Patterson
J. B. Patterson Trust

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Berkeley, California

THE PATTERSON FAMILY AND RANCH:
SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY IN TRANSITION

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PREFACE

The Patterson Ranch

The historic George Washington Patterson home and ranch in Fremont, California, provides the focus for this oral history project which explores changing patterns of land-use in southern Alameda County over the past 130 years. George Washington Patterson was a forty-niner from Lafayette, Indiana, who left the gold fields to settle on the rich alluvial plain created by Alameda Creek, on the southeastern shore of San Francisco Bay. He accumulated properties to form a 4,000-acre ranch in this area known as Washington Township and an additional 10,000 acres inland in the Livermore Valley. In 1877, he married Clara Hawley and added on to his home to create the Queen Anne style mansion that now is the centerpiece of the Ardenwood Regional Preserve, a historic farm operated by the East Bay Regional Park District on former Patterson ranch lands.

Since George Patterson's death in 1895, three generations of his descendants have continued to oversee the ranch operations, sharecropped in the earlier years by tenants who grew vegetable crops on family farms and later leased to larger-scale and more modernized agricultural operations. Agriculture continued to flourish on Patterson ranch lands while surrounding lands succumbed to the pressures of urbanization from the burgeoning Bay Area metropolis in the post-World War II population explosion.

The rapid urbanizations of the area brought with it inevitable political changes. The several small unincorporated towns of Washington Township--Alvarado and Decoto; Irvington, Mission San Jose, Niles, Centerville, and Warm Springs; and Newark--incorporated into the three cities of Union City, Fremont, and Newark in the 1950s. The Alameda County Water District, formed to conserve the ground water for the area's farmers, expanded its operation and its water supplies to deliver water to suburban customers. The Alameda County Flood Control District channelized Alameda Creek, putting an end to rich alluvial deposits, but making year-round farming and, most significantly, housing development possible on the northern flood plain.

By the 1970s the Patterson family succumbed to development pressures and began selling off major portions of ranch lands for housing development. Their sale to Singer Housing of the lands surrounding the historic mansion and its landmark eucalyptus trees precipitated the controversy that, after several years of lawsuits and negotiations, resulted in the creation of Ardenwood Regional Preserve. In the 1980s, the family has organized into a corporation with professional management from family members and has managed the development process in accordance with a master plan that emphasizes planned development and preservation of open space. Three regional parks are on former Patterson lands: in addition to Ardenwood, the Coyote Hills and surrounding marshlands are preserved, and in Livermore, the Del Valle Regional Park stands in the middle of Patterson cattle lands. Adjacent to

the industrial park and the suburban housing tracts, lands still held by the Patterson family are leased to a modern truck farm growing cauliflower, lettuce, and specialty vegetables for Bay Area gourmets.

The Oral History Project

With a series of twenty-six interviews, the oral history project explores the transformation of the Patterson ranch as a case study of the complex evolution from agricultural to urban land use. The idea for the project came from the collaborative thinking of Knox Mellon and Leon Campbell. Dr. Mellon, former director of the California State Department of Historic Preservation and professor of history, was assisting the Patterson family to place Ardenwood on the National Registry of Historic Places. He saw the potential for an oral history project and found ready support among the Patterson family, particularly his friend and fellow historian, Leon Campbell, who was part of the management team for Patterson Properties. David Patterson, who has a keen interest in tracing family history, also took a supportive role.

Dr. Mellon came to the Regional Oral History Office with his idea, has worked steadily with us to formulate and direct the project, and has served as interviewer and consultant throughout the three years to the project's completion. Leon Campbell was instrumental throughout in arranging funding and serving as advisor. Because of his ability to look at the story of the Patterson Ranch with a historian's eye, as well as his first-hand knowledge as a family member, he was asked to write the introduction to the project, which places the twenty-six interviews in historical context.

As the planning for the project evolved, three main themes emerged, and these are reflected in the organization of the interviews into three volumes. Volume I focuses on agriculture and rural life on the northern plain of Washington Township in the prewar years and on the agricultural operations of the L.S. Williams and Alameda and Sons companies, the two outfits which farmed on the ranch during the transitional period from the mid-fifties to the present.

Volume II tells the tales of water, development, planning, and historic preservation in the area--topics seemingly diverse which are seen to be closely interrelated in these histories. Volume III focuses on the Patterson family, past and present. Two generations of family members combine nostalgic looks back to rural childhoods with insight into the processes of present-day property management by a family corporation.

Each volume has been enhanced with interviews completed on previous occasions for other purposes, but ones which added so centrally to our project that we requested permission to include them here. These include, in Volume II, the interviews with William D. Patterson, son of George

Washington Patterson, on his work with the Alameda County Water District; and Larry Milnes, assistant manager of the city of Fremont, on the city's role in the negotiations leading to the establishment of Ardenwood.

Volumes I and III have interviews which were recorded in 1975 and 1977 by family member Donald Patterson for the family archive at the Society of California Pioneers. These include the interview with neighboring farmer William McKeown in Volume I and cousin William Volmer in Volume III. Donald Patterson also recorded his own recollections on tape and later was interviewed for the Society of California Pioneers by Stanley Bry. Transcriptions of these tapes are included in Volume III. The project was further enriched by the volunteer assistance of Bill Helfman, a Fremont resident who recorded two interviews for the project. His interview with Donald Furtado is in Volume I.

To enhance the reader's understanding of the interviews, illustrative materials have been included. Maps of the southern Alameda County area in 1956 and 1987 are in the introductory pages for each volume. Family trees of the Patterson and Hawley families are included in Volume III (pages 2 and 31). The 1981 town development plan for the Patterson Ranch is in the appendix to Volume II. In addition, interview histories preceding each memoir give specifics on the conduct and content of the interviews.

All of the tapes for the project interviews are available in The Bancroft Library. Society of California Pioneer tapes are in their archive in San Francisco. In addition to the transcribed interviews included here, three interviews recorded for background information are available on tape only. These are interviews with Dorothy Wilcox Patterson, wife of Donald, and Eleanor Silva and Mary Dettling, former housekeepers for the Henry Patterson family.

Research Resources

Many resources exist for research on the subject matters of these interviews. The Society of California Pioneers has papers and business records and photographs of the Patterson family. A guide to these papers, a useful bibliography, and other information exists in Faces in Time: An Historic Report on the George Washington Patterson Family and the Ardenwood Estate prepared for the East Bay Regional Park District by Susan A. Simpson, 1982. The local history collection and the Grace Williamson collection in the Alameda County library in Fremont is another valuable source. Their collection includes many untranscribed oral history interviews with individuals prominent in Fremont's history. The library of California State University at Hayward also includes works on the history of the region. A CSUH master's thesis in geography gives specific information about the history of land use on the Patterson Ranch; it is based in part on a 1971 interview with Donald Patterson (Jerome Pressler. Landscape Modification through Time: the Coyote Hills, Alameda County, California. 1973).

Research Use

The diversity and the universality of themes explored in this series of oral history interviews insure that they will be consulted by a wide variety of researchers. They are intended to be of use to the East Bay Regional Park District in planning and interpretation. They provide information on the history of agriculture, particularly the loss of agricultural lands to urbanization and the problems of farming in an urban setting. They discuss the process of land planning from the perspectives of city officials, developers, and property owners. They give an indepth history of the Alameda County Water District and illuminate the role of water in development. Finally, they provide a candid look at a family business over four generations and give insight to the dynamics of personalities and intra-family, inter-generational conflicts in shaping decisions in family businesses.

Ann Lage
Project Director

September, 1988
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

INTRODUCTION by Leon G. Campbell

The three volumes of interviews prepared by the Regional Oral History Office of the University of California, Berkeley, dealing with the Patterson family and ranch between the years 1851-1988, constitute a case study of changing land use in southern Alameda County from the days of the first Californios to the present. George Washington Patterson (1822-1895) came to California with the Gold Rush but remained to found an extensive farming and ranching enterprise in Alameda County. Originally known as Rancho Potrero de los Cerritos (Cattle Ranch of the Hills), the 4,000-acre Patterson Ranch has remained in family hands as an agricultural and livestock enterprise to the present day. Under the ownership of George Washington's sons, Henry (1878-1955) and William (1880-1961), the Patterson Ranch became a dominant economic institution in southern Alameda County and the family an integral part of the emergence of Fremont as a major Bay Area community.

Situated between the eastern terminus of the Dumbarton Bridge, which connects Alameda County with the West Bay, and Highway 880, the Patterson Ranch is a prominent feature of the East Bay landscape. Today known as "Ardenwood-New Town" in honor of the Shakespearean title sometimes used to describe the ranch, Ardenwood serves as the western gateway to Fremont and the entire South Bay. Despite the fact that the planned district of Ardenwood is less than four years old, the size and scope of the changing land-use patterns on the Patterson Ranch resemble those taking place on the Irvine and Bixby Ranches in southern California, where uninterrupted family ownership has retained influence over time and throughout change.

Several important themes emerge from the various interviews contained within the three volumes. Volume I, Agriculture and Farm Life on Fremont's Northern Plain, chronicles the transition of the Patterson Ranch from a family farm in the nineteenth century to a large-scale agricultural enterprise operated by the L. S. Williams Company during the 1950s. The several interviews of tenant farmers and Patterson Ranch workers covering the period from approximately 1900-1950 constitute an excellent social history of farm life in Fremont's Northern Plain. Collectively, the memoirs of farmers and ranch workers not only inform about the Pattersons as owners but as well provide a third-party perspective upon changing public uses including the development of the Nimitz Freeway (1953), Alameda County Flood Control Project (1965-70), and the dedication of Coyote Hills Regional Park (1968).

The oral histories in Volume I hint at subjects which Volumes II and III treat more centrally, namely the immense changes taking place in the area during the lifetimes of the individual interviewees, particularly during the period following World War II. During the fifties and sixties, southern Alameda County shifted from a rural to an urban orientation, resulting in the incorporation of cities and the initiation of water and flood control projects, as these new municipalities began to debate the land and water use issues which had prompted their incorporation.

Volume I: Agriculture on the Ranch

The initial interviews contained in Volume I represent a broad sample of ranch workers and tenant farmers who were closely associated with the Patterson family during the postwar. As a group, they reflect the value of family and neighbors and of traditional virtues associated with farming and farm life. Quite apparent is the fact that these attitudes ran as deep in rural Alameda County as in more traditional agricultural areas outside California. Indeed, the Pattersons considered many of these individuals as their extended family, sharing with them an ethic of hard work and perseverance in the face of drought, flooding, poor crop years, and economic uncertainty. The interviews also cover the transition from cattle ranch to farming and provide important data on the presence of Chinese laborers, Mexican braceros, and migrants of all nationalities who came to comprise the ranch work force. Also recollected are recreational activities from horse racing to duck hunting, the introduction of the tractor to Ardenwood, and the life of the mind in a farming environment, particularly within the context of the development of Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley where many of the early Patterson family members matriculated.

The second section of Volume I covers the more recent history of the larger-scale L. S. Williams and Alameda family farming operations on the ranch. In addition to providing an excellent overview of the agricultural basis of the Patterson Ranch, this section chronicles the decisions to grow various crops and the reasons for so doing, particularly the ability of various crops to withstand increasing salinity levels as a direct result of the ranch's location on San Francisco Bay and saltwater intrusion into the underground aquifers.

These interviews also reflect the rapidly changing agricultural orientation of northern California as East Bay farmland was converted to housing and industrial uses and agricultural operations relocated into the Salinas Valley, which in turn reoriented transportation and marketing networks. Increasingly isolated from the large growers and packers in the Salinas Valley, agricultural operations in southern Alameda have been forced to either transship their produce to the Midwest and other areas by means of refrigerated trucks or to diversify and reorient their production towards local markets. Since 1984, the Alameda Company has shifted from agribusiness to more of a diversified local farm operation. The Alameda family operates at Ardenwood for only half the year, relocating to Arizona and northern Mexico to grow cauliflower and lettuce during the winter months on a more convenient and large-scale basis. These growers' interviews provide an important case study of the decisions required when farming in a community which is making a rapid transition to urbanization in a precarious agricultural environment.

Volume II: The Context for Rapid Postwar Development

Volume II, Water, Development, and Preservation in Southern Alameda County, provides a more in-depth study of the dynamic tension between development, preservation efforts, and the water projects which have all impacted Alameda County during the period after 1945. The first-hand account of Mathew Whitfield, general manager of the Alameda County Water District during the years 1953-1977, provides a case study of this process of change in the East Bay. Whitfield's vivid recollections, the longest interview in the history, offer a fascinating study of family, water and South Bay politics during the postwar period. Whitfield's oral history may well be the most important single contribution to the project, for the actions of the Alameda County Water District in the 1950s provided the foundation for the subsequent growth of Fremont and the Northern Plain.

Whitfield was a close associate of W. D. Patterson, himself a director of the Alameda County Water District from its inception in 1914, whose recollections, based on a 1955 interview on the subject, are also included in this volume. Whitfield's perspective on the 1950s, the period in which the water district took a central role in planning for controlled growth, provides a context for assessing the subsequent changes which would alter Fremont and the Patterson Ranch thereafter. His reflections also touch upon an important aspect of Patterson family history not treated in this project, namely the events leading up to and including the creation of the Del Valle Regional Park in Livermore, which was created as the result of state condemnation of Livermore ranch land for the Del Valle reservoir. At one time the Patterson Livermore Ranch in Alameda County complemented the Fremont Ranch in an integrated farming-livestock operation. The Livermore operation is not treated herein in any detail, but is an important component of the history of the East Bay Regional Park system.

In addition, Whitfield provides an important perspective on the State Water Project South Bay Aqueduct, which linked both Patterson ranches to the future of water transportation projects. These decisions to import water for groundwater recharge and the subsequent Aquifer Reclamation Program of 1974 to counteract saltwater intrusion were determining factors in the continued agricultural development of southern Alameda County in general and the Patterson Ranch in particular. This interview thus provides an important complement to the Regional Oral History Office's series of oral history interviews on California water issues and relates changes on the Patterson lands to statewide water issues.

Another pivotal interview contained within Volume II is that of John (Jack) Brooks, an important developer in southern Alameda County from the postwar to the present and the primary planner of Ardenwood. Brooks's recollections, because of his long association with the Patterson family and his central position as a political force in Fremont, offer an invaluable look at the city as it has emerged to become the fourth largest municipality in the Bay Area. As Brooks makes clear, with the five communities making up Fremont, the Northern Plain was always anticipated to be a sixth or "New Town," its name today.

Whether this concept of an urban area on the North Plain was acknowledged by Henry and William Patterson before their deaths as Brooks contends, it was apparently supported by William's oldest son, Donald Patterson (1905-1980), who, as the oldest surviving Patterson son, assumed management responsibilities on the ranch after 1961 under an informal primogeniture (Henry Patterson's children were both daughters). Brooks holds that Henry and Will Patterson had virtually agreed to enter a development plan just before Henry's death in 1955. Subsequently, he recollects that the city of Fremont had begun to insist upon cancelling the Williamson Act, which had protected the Patterson family from future tax increases as an agricultural enterprise, so that the Pattersons would in the future pay their fair share of taxes.

Although Brooks understates his role in the process, under his guidance and with Fremont's cooperation, Ardenwood was brought out of Williamson in 1981 and substantial parts of the Patterson Ranch were sold, initially to the Singer Company and later to Kaiser Development Company and to Brooks himself. No less important are Brooks's recollections concerning the advent of a planned district concept and the complicated series of negotiations which led to the creation of Ardenwood Historic Park and the preservation of the George Washington Patterson House at its present location adjacent to Highways 84 and 880. Brooks's interview also describes in some detail why particular land-use decisions were made as they were and how a series of urban villages were created to establish a residential new town and a commercial and high technology center amidst a traditional farming enterprise.

The interview of Dr. Robert Fisher also provides valuable background on the politics of preservation involving Ardenwood. Fisher, the leading light in the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, describes from his viewpoint how various interested local historical associations including the Washington Township Historical Society, Patterson House Advisory Board, and Ardenwood Regional Park Advisory Committee were all drawn into the question of who was to control and implement what had belatedly been recognized as an important historic and civic asset, namely, the Ardenwood Historic Farm and attendant Victorian mansion which formed its centerpiece.

The recollections of Fisher and of Larry Milnes, assistant city manager of the city of Fremont, provide a balanced view of how municipalities become involved in the process of acquiring valuable assets for future preservation, how these assets are administered, in this case through the aegis of the East Bay Regional Park District, which also operates Coyote Hills Regional Park adjacent to the site. Besides corroborating Brooks's reflections on the Ardenwood process, Milnes's interview describes how decisions were reached over the often controversial questions of deciding the focus and implementing the historical theme. Milnes also depicts, from the city's perspective, the evolution of the Patterson Ranch from agriculture to mixed use.

Following the gift of forty-six acres, including the family home, to the city of Fremont by the Patterson family in 1981, the city consulted the State Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento to verify Ardenwood's historic value. This in turn led to the city and the Patterson family petitioning the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., to have the ranch placed on the National Registry of Historic Places, which was accomplished in 1985. Since then, the historic farm has become an increasingly popular tourist attraction featuring demonstration farming and the recreation of nineteenth century farm life.

In sum, this volume treats the interrelated themes of water projects, municipal formation, planned district development and historic preservation within the context of Fremont politics, 1950-1988. It would be naive to contend that the issues delineated have all been resolved or to deny that choices forced upon the various groups involved have not produced bitter disputes. Nevertheless, these interviews, offered by the primary surviving decision-makers in each area, provide basic data about the campaign which transformed the Patterson Ranch from a sprawling agricultural enterprise beset by regular flooding and other natural hazards into a Planned Urban District (PUD).

From the Patterson's perspective, however, a view no doubt shared by Fremont and EBRPD, pride is taken in the fact that a large portion of the Patterson Ranch has been converted to public use, first for the Nimitz Freeway in 1952, then for the flood control uses proposed by Alameda County, and later by the dedication of large tracts of permanent open space, including both the Coyote Hills Regional Park and the Del Valle Reservoir and Park in Livermore as well as the most recent dedication of the Ardenwood Historic Farm now operated by the Park District. The Patterson family's strong advocacy of open space preservation is reflected in the creation of no fewer than three East Bay Regional Parks on Patterson family lands and a substantial portion of the acreage within the planned district being dedicated to public use. This distinguishing feature of Ardenwood, like the better known Irvine and Bixby Ranches in southern California, for example, is intended to provide for the needs of future generations and is a part of the continuing stewardship of the Patterson family management group.

Volume III: The Family Recalls the Past and Confronts the Future

Volume III, The Patterson Ranch, Past and Future: The Family's Perspective, is devoted to the reflections of the third and fourth generation of Patterson family members. The variety of these interviews reflect the quite different personalities and temperaments of George Washington's two sons, Will and Henry, who apparently contemplated a division of their undivided landholdings prior to their deaths, a decision which was never consummated. It was traditional in most large landowning families for the eldest son to assume management responsibilities following his father's death. This was true in the case of George Washington's eldest

son, Henry, who succeeded him in 1895 at seventeen years of age and subsequently with Will Patterson's oldest son, Donald, who assumed responsibility for ranch management in the period after 1961. Donald Patterson's interview, taped by the Society of California Pioneers prior to his death in 1980, provides interesting observations on both his father and grandfather and the nature of their lives at Ardenwood.

Perhaps the most insightful observation corroborated by many others in these volumes was the respectful and cooperative relationship between Will and Henry Patterson, who "never had a disagreement" and consulted one another on every major decision to be made concerning the ranch. Although the two sons differed in temperament and personality and were not what one might call close, they accommodated these differences pragmatically, with the quieter Henry running the ranch and his more outgoing brother Will dealing with the public. Their mutual respect and deliberate way of reaching consensus decisions in addition to their division of labors, both running the ranch and defending the ranch's interests in the South Bay, resulted in a profitable landhold. Ardenwood dominated the regional agricultural economy through the production of row crops (lettuce, cauliflower) and other high quality produce. Will and Henry were excellent farmers, good businessmen, and outstanding citizens, who extended and consolidated their father's agricultural presence in southern Alameda County.

The interview of David Patterson, Will's youngest son, who assumed management responsibilities for the ranch following the death of his older brothers, Donald and John (known as Jack), provides a frank assessment of the difficulties which a family agricultural enterprise faces when it suffers the loss of its patriarchs in a period of transition. During the period in which Donald Patterson ran the ranch, Henry's daughters, Sally Patterson Adams and Marjorie Patterson, were not actively involved in decision-making, this role having been assumed largely by John Brooks, a real estate developer who was close to Donald Patterson and both anticipated and orchestrated the development process.

The interviews with Donald's sons, George and Wilcox, provide considerable information concerning the ranch and their father. None of these memoirs, however, sheds additional light on the process of decision-making between the city, the Pattersons, and John Brooks, although it is likely that the public records of the period (1980-1984) would be helpful to historians interested in understanding the development process. The next stage of land use clearly mandated turning over of substantial portions of the ranch for residential development as rising land values and the shortage of available land for homes resulted in a new Fremont and a transformed Northern Plain.

Following Donald Patterson's death in 1980, David Patterson continued to manage the family farm as the city entered into a development agreement with Brooks. Despite serious rifts within the family, which included an abortive attempt by two of William Patterson's grandchildren to bring suit against their family to obtain the value of their undivided interest in the ranch property, the family held firm against this challenge. When the two

young people hired the nefarious Melvin Belli to sue the Patterson family and were defeated in court (1981), it prompted the Pattersons to move rapidly to incorporate as Patterson Fremont Management, Inc. (PFM) and to set up a series of limited partnerships to manage the land in order that one or more minority family members could not, through undivided ownership, lay waste to the family's plan for future ownership and management of the property. It was this incident which convinced the Pattersons that the days of consensus decision-making as it had existed with Henry and Will had ended. By 1982 the Patterson Ranch had converted to a true business organization.

Interviews of Sally Patterson Adams and her husband, Dr. John E. Adams, shed light not only on the personages of Henry and Sarah Patterson but also provide an alternative recollection on how decisions were reached during the 1960s and 1970s, as the transition was made from agriculture to development by individuals and forces outside the family. Sally Adams provides an intimate portrait of growing up at Ardenwood. John Adams, an ardent preservationist, casts a skeptical eye on the chain of events which led to the ultimate transformation of the ranch, contending that the demand for change was orchestrated by a prevailing coterie at City Hall rather than by population dynamics or other inexorable forces. Adams clearly believes that the ranch could have continued in farming had the family been given the opportunity to make this choice through timely dissemination of information and discussion of alternatives to development.

Interviews by the fourth generation of Pattersons are informative for their explanation of the transition from ranch management by individuals towards a corporate form of business organization. Bruce Patterson provides insights about his father, Jack, as well as the strongly independent natures of the W. D. and H. H. Patterson families. In this regard, interviews by the fourth generation of Pattersons make clear that the testamentary dispositions of their grandfathers, William and Henry, as well as their parents, has resulted in a current generation of Pattersons spread throughout the state and country, of different economic means and lacking common objectives for Ardenwood. This, in turn, has resulted in growing differences of opinion stronger than those developing during the tenure of the third generation. The implications of land being sold to outside developers and the first cash distributions to family members both raised expectations and produced further disputes, rather than silencing them. Certain limited partners began to question the decisions of those family members serving as general partners and to urge a liquidation of remaining ranch assets. In general, these disputes follow family lines.

Interviews with other members of the PFM Board include those by former president Robert Buck, a Patterson son-in-law and attorney who currently serves as PFM's legal counsel. Buck provides yet another perspective on the events leading to the Ardenwood development, particularly the Kaiser land sales and the creation of the Patterson Properties business enterprise during the 1980s.

Leon Campbell, another son-in-law serving as PFM's executive vice president, recounts how he and Buck were called upon to assume management and investment responsibilities for the Patterson family. As the vast, undeveloped acreage appreciated in value, situated within one of the most rapidly growing parts of the Bay Area, they completed tax deferred exchanges, putting the family into income-producing properties which PFM managed and operated. As they assumed their posts in 1985, Buck and Campbell were increasingly called upon to mediate between decisions which had been made prior to the Pattersons' complete awareness of a political process which had developed apart from them and future policy issues which loomed ahead, such as those of wetlands, the subsidization of agriculture, and the Town Center development.

These business recollections are paralleled by those of Donald Patterson's other son, George Patterson, who provides a sensitive internal history on the family at Ardenwood, and Abigail Adams Campbell, daughter of Sally Patterson Adams, on her grandparents, Sarah and Henry Patterson.

Taken together, the several interviews by the fourth generation of Patterson family management underscores the dichotomy of events which have transpired in Fremont's North Plain during the period since 1980 and particularly since 1984, when the initial land sale to Kaiser Development Corporation was instituted. Hardly conclusive in their entirety, these last interviews restate the younger generation's perspective on their fathers and grandfathers, as well as their own perceptions about the rapidly changing nature of the real estate which they have been requested to monitor in the future. These changes have rendered the personal managerial tradition of the Patterson family largely unworkable, although considerable nostalgia for the "old ways" still exists, which often precludes certain limited partners from adhering to a general partnership organization. In many ways the family runs each other rather than running a business, a not uncommon aspect of organizations with strongly paternal origins. The challenge ahead will be to forge a new consensus to accommodate an era promising even greater alterations in the Patterson Ranch and the East Bay.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

In conclusion, this oral history of the Patterson family and ranch, 1851-1988, has much to contribute to the general history of southern Alameda County and is particularly informative on the transitional years between 1945 and the present, which are largely omitted in the historical literature, by drawing on the reflections of those who were the primary actors during those years.

The Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, has provided an ideal method for understanding the linkages between the Patterson family, its agricultural and ranching enterprise, and actions taken by city, county and state

organizations in response to the pressures of rapid urbanization occurring in the East Bay during the postwar period. These interviews with the surviving senior members of the Patterson family and key individuals associated with the family agricultural and business operations over the past fifty years not only underscore the enormous changes taking place in the area during the lifetimes of those interviewed, but they also indicate how and why these changes were implemented. Often it appears that matters of great significance were reached by informal agreement rather than formal debate both within the family and perhaps outside of it. These interviews reflect a simpler time, prior to the advent of citizen-sponsored initiatives and environmental impact reports, a period when many leaders shared common assumptions concerning the value of growth and development to municipalities. Few could have comprehended the scope of growth which was to transform the Bay Area so dramatically during the postwar period and the reactions which it would produce.

The Patterson family is proud to have its history included in The Bancroft Library's treasury of interviews with major figures in the history of California and the West. The three-volume oral history project represents a substantial historiographical advancement towards the development of a comprehensive history of the East Bay and its progenitory families.

I should like to thank the staff of the Regional Oral History Office at Berkeley, particularly Division Head Willa Baum and Project Director Ann Lage, for the dedicated effort which they have made in bringing this project to fruition through the recording, transcription and editing of these interviews. The trained oral historians on the ROHO staff, whose careful research and sensitive interview techniques are clearly manifest throughout the project, have clearly set the tone for the entire project. My long-time friend, Dr. Knox Mellon, former head of the State Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento, who skillfully directed the nomination of the Ardenwood Regional Preserve to the National Register of Historic Places, has also been pivotal in finalizing this project. Dr. Mellon's liaison as a consultant to the Regional Oral History Office and ROHO's strong ties to state and local historical groups both assure that the project meets specific needs as well as serving the larger scholarly community through the questions it raises and the information it preserves.

This oral history project substantially advances earlier studies carried out by the East Bay Regional Park District, which were designed to analyze the property exclusively in terms of its archaeological significance. By recording the reflections of two generations of Patterson family members about life and work on the Patterson Ranch, the project also relates centrally to the history of Fremont and to the entire East Bay which otherwise might be lost forever.

Through the incorporation of interviews with members of the Patterson Ranch labor force, water district officials and a broad spectrum of Fremont city officials and politicians, as well as interviews with other key individuals now deceased, recorded earlier by the Society of California

Pioneers, and interviews with individuals charged with the stewardship of the remaining lands of Patterson, this oral history project anticipates a full history of the Patterson Ranch and the South Bay. The subject should be of future value to scholars interested in urban planning, land use decision-making, agricultural history, the process of municipal formation and water issues, matters related to conservation and historic preservation as they pertain to the East Bay and, of course, the political matrix in which these issues are situated. In this regard, this project, which deals with life, land and politics on the Patterson Fremont Ranch, exceeds the sum of its parts.

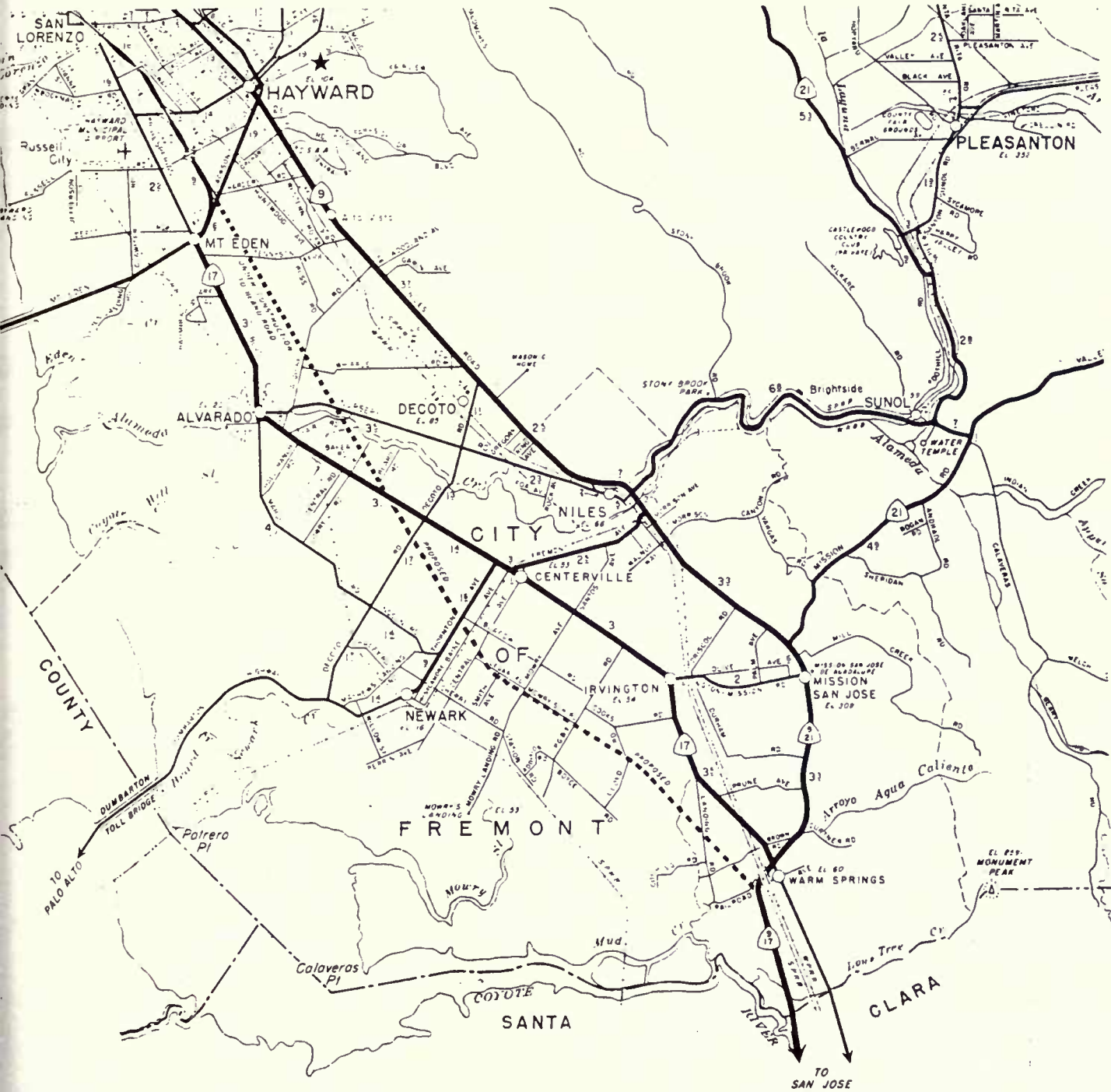
The personal and financial support of several individuals and groups also made the project possible. Financial sponsorship of the project has been provided by the East Bay Regional Park District, the Brooks Family Foundation, the City of Fremont, the Oliver De Silva Company, the Alameda County Water District, and various members of the Patterson family, especially David and Joan Patterson, Dorothy Patterson, and the J. B. Patterson Trust. David and Joan Patterson have been steadfast in their determination to preserve the history of the Patterson family over time and have supported this work at every juncture.

The present project goes well beyond the Pattersons to focus upon the Patterson Ranch during the years in which it was transformed from a rural agricultural enterprise to the Ardenwood planned community. A "New Town" both in concept and in fact, Shakespeare's idyllic Ardenwood may be an elusive metaphor masking the difficult choices that changes in land use inevitably bring.

Leon G. Campbell
Executive Vice President
Patterson Fremont Management, Inc.

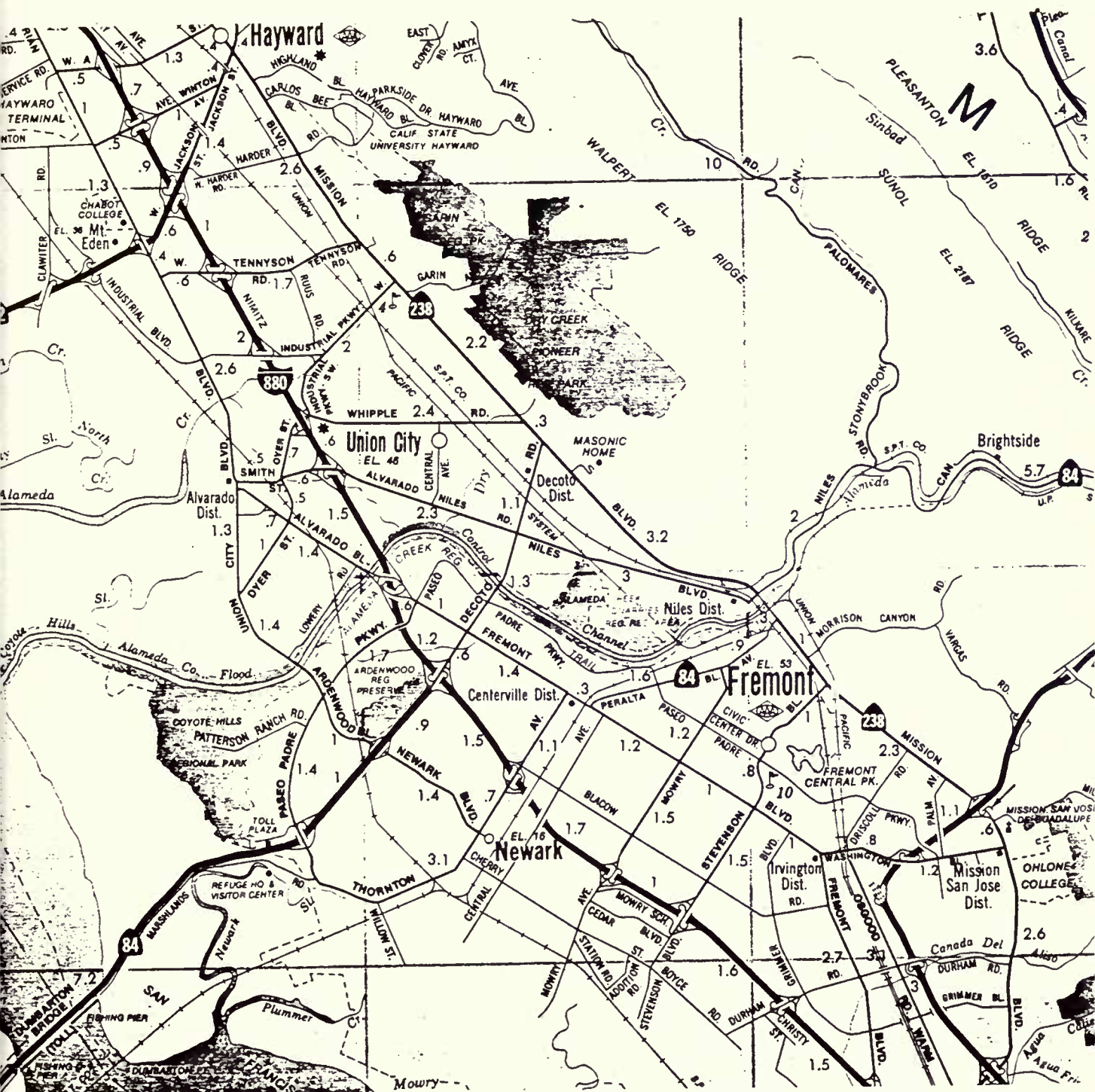
May, 1988
Fremont, California

SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY, 1956



from the 1956 Alameda County map
California State Automobile Association

SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY, 1987



from the 1987 Alameda/Contra Costa map
California State Automobile Association

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

THE PATTERSON FAMILY AND RANCH:
SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY IN TRANSITION

Mathew P. Whitfield

General Manager of the Alameda County
Water District, 1953-1977

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
in 1986

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INTERVIEW HISTORY -- Mathew P. Whitfield

Matt Whitfield was first suggested as an interviewee for the Patterson family and ranch project because, in his position as the general manager of the Alameda County Water District, he had worked closely with William D. Patterson. Patterson was the leading member of the ACWD board of directors, having served as board member since the district's founding in 1914 and as an active president from 1932 to 1954. He retired from the board in 1958. It was hoped that Mr. Whitfield could give a first-hand account of Will Patterson's work for the district and his modus operandi and philosophical approach as board member.

As the research for the Whitfield interview progressed, however, it became apparent that a more comprehensive documentation of Whitfield and the water district would serve the larger purposes of the oral history project-- to document the transformation of the Patterson Ranch as a case study of southern Alameda County in transition from an agricultural community to a residential and industrial suburb of the metropolitan Bay Area. The interview became an oral history of Matt Whitfield and of the Alameda County Water District during his term as general manager.

Matt Whitfield went to work for the Alameda County Water District in 1950 and served as its general manager from 1953 to 1977. Hired as a local boy, personally known by board member Dr. Grimmer, Whitfield managed a relatively small water district, which had been created to safeguard the local water supply and service a community that was primarily agricultural. By the time of his retirement, the district had expanded to service a burgeoning metropolitan area. He had worked with the district's board of directors to face the problems of rapid development and increased demand for water. The water district's timely response to demands of urbanization made possible the growth of the community whose water needs it served.

Whitfield's oral history recounts the milestones of the district's development: the 1955 bond issue; Resolution 81, which set up terms for development of water delivery systems in new subdivisions; ground water recharge and protection programs; the decisions and negotiations leading up to receipt of water from the State Water Project's South Bay Aqueduct; the controversy surrounding the pump tax on agricultural use of water from underground aquifers; and community furor over fluoridation.

It documents Matt Whitfield's low-key management style and his direct way of working with the district's elected board of directors, with officials of local governments, and with building contractors. It illustrates the contrast between the relatively informal operation of the district in the 1950s and the days of public hearings and environmental impact reports by the 1970s.

In addition, Mr. Whitfield was able to give a thoughtful portrayal of Will Patterson in his role as president and director. Whitfield's

predecessor apparently had functioned less as a general manager and more as troubleshooter in the field. During his tenure, Patterson, as board president, had performed many of the managerial duties himself. During Whitfield's term, he withdrew from this type of active management, but until his retirement, he continued to hold a leadership role on the board and was very supportive of Whitfield as general manager.

In the course of research for this series, we uncovered in The Bancroft Library a 1955 interview of William Patterson discussing his role as Alameda County Water District founder, director, and president. It is included as an appendix to this volume.

The following interview with Matt Whitfield was conducted at his home in the Mission San Jose district of Fremont on May 29, June 5, and June 26, 1986. Mr. Whitfield was most cooperative in assisting research and selecting topics for the interview, and in the careful review of the interview transcript. Tapes of the three sessions are available in The Bancroft Library.

Subsequent interviewing for the Patterson project revealed a high degree of respect for Mr. Whitfield among those in the community who worked with him. This respect is further evidenced by the district's recognition of his leadership and service in dedicating the Mathew P. Whitfield reservoir in the Mission San Jose district on September 27, 1986.

Ann Lage
Interviewer/Editor
Project Director

September, 1988
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name MATHEW P. WHITEFIELD

Date of birth JULY 21, 1917 Place of birth MISSION SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Father's full name MATHEW J. WHITEFIELD

Birthplace MISSION SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Occupation FARMER

Mother's full name KATE WHITEFIELD

Birthplace MISSION SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Occupation HOMEMAKER

Where did you grow up? MISSION SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Present community MISSION SAN JOSE DISTRICT OF FREMONT, CALIF.

Education UNIVERSITY OF SANTA CLARA, CALIF.

Occupation(s) MANAGEMENT AND ENGINEERING

Special interests or activities _____

I WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP YOUTH, ENGINEERING EDUCATION, AND EARLY CAREER

[Interview 1: May 29, 1986]##

Mission San Jose Family

- Lage: Today is May 29th, 1986, and this is the first interview with Matt Whitfield about the Alameda County Water District. We wanted to start with some personal background and background about the area. Before we recorded, you were telling me a little bit of history about the Gallegos water system.
- Whitfield: It was owned by the Gallegos family, Juan Gallegos, who came over here from Costa Rica. They somehow acquired most of the properties around Mission San Jose.
- Lage: This is the area we are in now?
- Whitfield: No, they didn't come this far down yet; they came down towards Irvington and the Mission San Jose area. They had vineyards. They had a little water system of their own in Mission San Jose, which is now a part of Fremont, the Mission San Jose district. After the water district annexed Mission San Jose which was around 1940 sometime, the water district took their system over. They paid them a small amount because I don't think they had more than fifteen or twenty customers [laughs]. As I remember, my great-aunt lived down the other end of town, the opposite end of town from the Gallegos, and that's where the water came from.
- Lage: So she got water from them.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 117.

- Whitfield: Yes. I think they had about a one-inch line, so on Saturday night not too many people could bathe at once [laughs].
- Lage: Did this private delivery system continue until Mission San Jose was annexed?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. Most of the people in town had their own wells, but the Gallegoses had water that came from springs, and they supplied probably fifteen or twenty customers in town.
- Lage: Let's go now, after that little aside, to talk about your background, your family. You started to tell me where your family came from.
- Whitfield: You want to start back with my grandparents?
- Lage: Well, not in tremendous detail but tell what your roots are.
- Whitfield: My mother and father were both born in Mission San Jose and lived there all their lives.
- Lage: Give me their names.
- Whitfield: My father was Mathew Joseph, and I'm Mathew Paul Whitfield. My mother's name was Katie Boggini; that was her maiden name. In fact, her real baptismal name was Henrietta. That was because Mrs. Gallegos was her godmother when she was baptized in the old wooden church, St. Joseph's, up there. That's a Costa Rican name, but she never went by that, she always went by Kate.
- Lage: Was she related to Mrs. Gallegos?
- Whitfield: No, she was just a godmother. The reason she was a godmother was because my grandparents came from Switzerland. First of all, my grandfather came over here to work in the Gallegos Vineyards up in the Mission San Jose area. He didn't bring my grandmother with him. He had one child, my Aunt Mary, who was only six months old when she came from Switzerland. He worked for the Gallegoses so my grandparents lived on the Gallegos property that's now owned by the Sisters of the Holy Family. So my mother was born on the Gallegos property.
- Lage: Were your grandparents Swiss-Italian?
- Whitfield: Swiss-Italian, yes, from the Italian part of Switzerland.
- Lage: How about your father's roots?
- Whitfield: Let me say that in my mother's side of the family there were ten children. They're all deceased now. The last one just passed away about eight months ago. Then on my father's side of the

Whitfield: family there were eight children. There's three of them living now; I have three aunts that are living, Tess, who's ninety-one; and my godmother, Irene, who is eighty-seven; and the youngest living is eighty-four, Winifred.

They were all raised in Mission San Jose and went to the local schools. All my father's sisters except one went to San Jose Normal when it was just a normal school and took up teaching. They were teachers after they graduated, in the general area of Fremont and Newark.

Lage: They're the ones you told me knew Tillie Logan*, who also went to San Jose Normal.

Whitfield: Yes. I'd say that Tillie is in the age group of the elder of my three aunts.

Lage: It must be unusual to find many people who have roots here for that length of time.

Whitfield: No, because one of my grandmothers was twelve when she came here. The other one from Switzerland was seventeen. So that goes back. I think my grandmothers would be over 120 biological years old if they were still living.

Lage: Now how about your father's family? Where did they come from?

Whitfield: My grandmother, Teresa Nolan, came from San Francisco. Her family moved up into the Sheridan Road up by Sunol. There was a colony of Irishmen up there. My grandmother's maiden name was Teresa Nolan.

Lage: Was she Irish?

Whitfield: Yes, she's Irish. Then my grandfather came from England. He went from England to New Zealand and left New Zealand and somehow get into the town of Niles. So he was English. So I'm a quarter Irish, a quarter English, and half Swiss-Italian.

Lage: Well, a nice mix. As I was looking at the water district records it seems as if your father worked for the district.

Whitfield: Yes, my father worked in the operations department. He put in waterlines and meters and all that kind of thing. That's when they had about three people working for them.

*See interview with Tillie Logan in this series.

Lage: It seemed that way. And he was paid almost as much as the general manager, fifty dollars less a month.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, the pay scale was very low then. In fact, when I was hired—talk about pay--the board of directors didn't know what to do about what kind of salary I should get. I had been making \$429 a month in the late forties when I was available to work for them, so that's what they gave me. But it was just slightly under what the general manager was making.

Schooling

Lage: What was the community like here as you were growing up as a young boy?

Whitfield: Do you want to talk about my education, or--?

Lage: Your education, but also--

Whitfield: Yes. Well, let me say that all my father's and mother's families went to the Old Mission school up here in Mission San Jose, which subsequently became the second temporary city hall for the city of Fremont. That's the same grammar school I went to. It was in operation from 1915 to 1955, and then the state condemned it.

Lage: As earthquake--?

Whitfield: Yes. Then Ed Huddleson bought it. He was the one who purchased the Witherly property where the Ohlone College now stands. So the city rented space in the old school for several years before they built a city hall of their own.

Lage: It was a public school?

Whitfield: It was a public school. I went there.

Lage: Was it small?

Whitfield: Yes, there were four classrooms, you know, and multiple classes for one teacher. In fact, my Aunt Tessie taught there in the year of 1919. She taught some of my mother's brothers and sisters when they were younger.

Lage: When were you born?

Whitfield: I was born in 1917 in Mission San Jose.

Lage: Then what about high school, where did you go?

Whitfield: I went to Washington High School. In fact, some of my aunts and uncles went to Washington High School. It was at another location about five blocks from where it is now. That's where Tillie Goold and all the Logans went. In fact, my aunts used to ride an old horse and buggy down there every day to go to high school, from Mission San Jose.

When I went to high school there, Washington High was the only high school between Hayward and San Jose. Then this whole area--you see, Fremont's made up of five little towns, and then there is Newark; then Decoto, and Alvarado, which are now a part of Union City. Each one of those little towns had an elementary school. Then, of course, after the incorporations they all went into city unified school districts. There's three different unified school districts here now.

Lage: There was just the one high school, though, then.

Whitfield: It served the eight little towns around here, yes.

Lage: Did they have a bus; did you take a bus to school?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Whitfield: I had one sister. She passed away in 1958. I have two nieces and one nephew, my sister's children.

Lage: We are skipping over this quickly, but I just want to get a general view of your background.

After Washington High--

Whitfield: I went to San Jose State and I took pre-engineering because in those days San Jose State wasn't that big. First of all, my sister was taking teaching. My aunts, Tessie, Irene, and Winnie, went there and they became teachers. I was very young when I got out of high school; I was only sixteen, so I wasn't sure what I wanted, so I signed up for teaching. I was in there two weeks; then two of my buddies that went with me all through high school signed up for pre-engineering. I kind of liked what they were doing so I switched over to engineering. We could only go there two years, so I then transferred.

Lage: It was just a two-year school?

Whitfield: In the engineering. It was just pre-engineering; it was four years for teachers and other professions. Then I transferred to the University of Santa Clara and went there three years. I graduated in 1939, with a bachelors of science in mechanical engineering. That's the extent of my education, other than some courses that I took and that type of thing.

Lage: When you were here in the local school district, did a lot of the children go on to college? Were there teachers that encouraged you to do that?

Whitfield: Well, they encouraged me, yes. Of course, one thing--see, none of my mother's brothers or sisters went. In fact, my father always said his education was he graduated from the fourth grade. None of my mother's brothers or sisters or my mother went. Well, the younger daughters and son went to high school, and the older ones didn't. One thing about it was that one of my father's brothers, the only one of the boys that ever went part-time to college--he went to the University of Santa Clara, he was a football player--but he died from spinal meningitis when he was about 19 years old. So I always thought that if I ever went to college I'd like to go to Santa Clara.

Lage: But his sisters went to college to become teachers.

Whitfield: Well, three of the sisters became teachers, and one was a milliner; she worked for a hat place in San Jose. But none of the boys--my father's brothers--went on to school.

Lage: Did your family encourage you to go? Was that a goal?

Whitfield: Yes, very much so. It was struggle because we didn't have much. You know, my father ran the ranch up there, and it was pretty close pickings sometimes.

Lage: Now what ranch did he run?

Whitfield: Well, he ran the property all of which at one time belonged to the Gallegos. The main part was the gardens: there were seventeen acres of gardens. Most of it is now owned by the Sisters of the Holy Family.

Lage: Has it been preserved?

Whitfield: Oh, yes. The Sisters have their novitiate up there and their convent. It's a beautiful place.

Lage: Is it something people can go and see, or is it--?

Whitfield: Oh, if you wanted to go. I work very closely with them. I ran their festivals for years.

Lage: This was a sideline, running their festivals?

Whitfield: Oh, yes. I'm a Catholic, and I used to run them. Well, we had a wonderful time, yes. It's was an annual fair, raising funds for them. I was kind of their advisor on things when they were building up there. My father used to go up and help, too.

Then there were a hundred acres of prunes. In fact, some of it was right up here on Palm Avenue, twenty-seven acres. I started my professional life as a prune picker. [laughter] On my knees, picking prunes for my father, yes.

Lage: So your father managed that ranching operation?

Whitfield: Yes, he ran all the ranching operations for them.

Lage: Was that later after he worked for the district?

Whitfield: No, that was before. He left there in 1941, I think, and then he went down and worked for the water district for about four or five years. Then he took over a service station and ran that until he retired. In fact, the service station was right across the street from the water district yard, which was about as big as my backyard.

Lage: My goodness! Times have really changed. In this area you notice it more.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, when I was growing up there were just these little towns. You know, maybe five or six hundred people at the most.

Lage: And then just open space, farms--?

Whitfield: Farms, orchards, a lot of row crop, not too much irrigation up in this area like there was down in the valley in Centerville and in through there. But the orchards had to be irrigated, the prune orchards once or twice a year. I think they had about four acres of apricots, too.

Lage: Was that irrigation system based on wells?

Whitfield: Yes.

Engineering Jobs

Lage: What kind of jobs did you have after college? You graduated in what year?

Whitfield: Nineteen thirty-nine. Let's see, the first job I had was--well, in fact, when I got out of Santa Clara there were eleven in our graduating class of engineering. I was the only one that had a job because in those days there weren't too many jobs around.

Lage: This was Depression time.

Whitfield: Yes. So this fellow--I think his name was Cochran--had called up Dean Sullivan at Santa Clara and asked if they had any young engineers that might want a job. So he asked me if I would be interested. It was just a one-man operation; he worked out of his house. He did design work. It was in industrial gas burners and that kind of stuff. I took the job at \$115 a month. I was with them for, oh, a year, about a year. He went out of business.

Then I called Dean Sullivan and asked if there was anything else. There was another one-man operation in San Jose and his name was Erstead. He had invented and built a burlap bag turning machine. You know, when they sew the burlap and then they cut the bags out. Then they have to be turned so that the seam is inside. When I saw that machine [laughs], it was an inventor's nightmare. I thought, "How am I ever going to figure what this thing does?"

Lage: Now what would have been your job as an engineer?

Whitfield: I did a little design work, then I did drafting.

Lage: Relative to this machine?

Whitfield: That was the only thing he had.

Lage: Did he want you to kind of refine it?

Whitfield: Yes. Well, he had ideas but did a lot--you see, in those days when you got out as an engineer you usually went to work doing drafting work. There weren't any of these big plush jobs at forty thousand dollars a year.

Lage: Were you a particular kind of engineer?

Whitfield: Mechanical. He was a very difficult man to work for. He'd go off on a tangent, you know, yell his head off. But he had reputation of being rather strange in San Jose because he'd go into one of these supply places and they'd practically throw him out all the time. [laughter]

Lage: That must have given you great experience to prepare you to work for a board of directors later.

Whitfield: Well, none of them were like him, thank goodness. But, then, I wasn't very happy there. Then Dean Sullivan called me and said there was an opening up at Pacific Gear and Tool. Well, the chief engineer up there had graduated from Santa Clara as an engineer, too. That was at Pacific Gear and Tool.

At Pacific Gear and Tool, all the sons went to the University of Santa Clara and took engineering. One became a Jesuit priest. So they always had the "in" at Pacific Gear and Tool if you were a Santa Clara graduate. I went to work for them. I spent the first year or year and a half just drafting. Then I got into some designs. What they did was gear work and speed reducers. Have you see pictures of these big oil well pumps, the things that pump up and down? Well, they made the big gear drives to drive those. I did design work on those and that type of stuff for four years.

Then in 1944, I was deferred because Pacific Gear was doing mostly national defense.

Wartime Service at Mare Island Naval Shipyard

Lage: The draft must have picked up about that time.

Whitfield: Yes, it had. I worked for Pacific Gear until '44. I was deferred. Then this fellow, another Santa Clara graduate who was there before me, we were both talking about going into the navy, but we had a wonderful boss to work for and we didn't want to leave him in the lurch. I said, "Well, you're a senior to me so you go first." [laughs] Then I waited about almost another year, and then I signed up. I got a commission in the navy as an ensign.

Then they sent me down to the University of Arizona at Tucson for a two-month indoctrination course. I was down there two months and then I was transferred back to Mare Island up at Vallejo. I spent the duration of my service up at Vallejo.

Lage: So you never got overseas?

Whitfield: No, I never got any experience at sea. I was assigned to the ship superintendent, which involved ship repairs and replacements in the mechanical and electrical equipment area on auxiliary vessels, and I learned an awful lot because I had never been exposed to such a variety of equipment before.

Then I was transferred up in the planning department. What we had to do was there'd be two officers assigned to each ship. One would be for the hull repairs, and one would be for machinery and electrical. I was machine. But our job was to get everything done while the ships were in the yard for a specific time period. We had to report weekly on the progress to the captain who was the repair superintendent.

Lage: It had some relationship to engineering but not--?

Whitfield: Well, it was good practical experience of learning about machinery and mechanisms and all because on a ship there's practically every type of machinery and equipment aboard.

I'll never forget the first time I went up to the ship I was assigned to. It was the El Dorado, a flag ship for landing-craft operations. I had done some design work at Pacific Gear on some of the units that were involved. They had a CIC, a communication information center. You see, this ship would go out and direct all the amphibious ships' operations. They were putting in this CIC, this communication information center. I walk in this compartment, as big as this room here, and there were wires hanging all over the place. [laughs] "Oh, God! If it's my job to get those wires hooked up, forget it." But it worked out.

Then I was transferred, after being there about a year, I was transferred up into the planning section under another captain. There were civilian planners assigned to machinery and hull work, but they had officers over them. We used to go out and meet ships way out at sea, and then we'd have conferences with their officers. They'd have their lists of repair and work and alterations that they wanted done, and we would make decisions on the way in as to what we could and could not do. Say, if they were in for thirty days or sixty days, we would decide what materials were available to do it and authorize certain work to be done.

Lage: It sounds like good training for the job at the water district.

Whitfield: Yes, it was very enlightening and gave me some good practical experience. The only thing is I was only an ensign and we used to meet sometimes with commanders and captains, four strippers, you know.

Lage: And tell them what you could do for them?

Whitfield: Yes, yes. In fact, we had a very senior captain who was over the planning section, my boss, Captain—oh, I can't even think of his name. He was a nice guy, though. Some of these officers, you know, like commanders, they'd resent the fact that an ensign would say, "I'm sorry, sir, we can't do this." A couple of them said, "Well, I guess we're going to have to go over your head." I said, "Fine." [laughs]

In our office we had two desks facing each other, and one would always be the mechanical man for officers that worked in our department, and one would be the hull man. When a captain rang, the planning superintendent or the repair superintendent, it was a continuous ring so you always knew when a captain called. So we got back to an office from this excursion after reviewing all the job requests. When I went in, I sat down at my desk, and I was there about half an hour and [making a ringing sound] it was the captain, the planning superintendent.

He says, "Whit, come on in. I've got some friends of yours in here. I went into his office where there were several of the ships officers. I thought, "Oh no, I'm in trouble now." So he said, "Captain so-and-so wants to know, you turned him down on such-and-such. Why?" I went through about ten different things, you know, and he'd say, "Why did you do it?" "Well, we don't have that equipment available. It is too short a time," or whatever the reason might be. He knew all these other officers. He turned to the captain, "Well, Bill, that's the story."

Lage: [laughs] That's nice to be backed up.

Whitfield: Oh, wonderful. It certainly gave me a feeling of courage, I tell you that, yes.

Lage: So after the war you came back to Washington Township?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: How old were you then? Would it have been '45?

Whitfield: Yes, it was 1945, and I was then 28 years old.

I didn't tell you about my job after Mare Island. I went to work for A.B. Chance Company. They manufactured high voltage electrical equipment, switches, tools, etc., in San Francisco.

Lage: This was after the war, then?

Whitfield: Yes, that was in '47. Their home plant was in Centralia, Missouri. When they first moved out here, the union pulled them out on strike. They pulled five companies out on strike, and they were one of them. Well, they hadn't even gotten established out here.

Then when I was with them, after a couple of years, they did the same thing again, so A.B. Chance Company just made up their mind; they said, "Well, we're not going to fight this anymore." They had just started to build up some sales territory and all that so they just decided to move all the production work back to Centralia, Missouri. So I went back there with them for about three weeks to familiarize them with the San Francisco operations since they had not done this kind of work before.

Lage: Did you ever think of moving back there?

Whitfield: No. I was their methods engineer in San Francisco, and I did some design work, too. But then when they took everything back, they just left an assembly shop. No, I stayed with them while they were in the transition while they were moving. Then I was just in charge of the assembly department for a time.

They wanted me to come back, but I'd never been to the Midwest before. When you lived in Centralia, Missouri, you either worked for A.B. Chance Company, or you raised corn and soybeans, or you had a little store in town. It wasn't very big. But they were a very wonderful company to work for.

II THE ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT IN THE 1950S

Hired by the Water District

Whitfield: So I was in between jobs, and I think I've told you before that Dr. Grimmer, who was on the board of directors [of the water district] when I was hired, Dr. E.M. Grimmer was our family doctor. He was a fishing and hunting buddy of my father's. We were going up to Winchester Bay in Oregon on a fishing trip, both families, and I was driving Dr. Grimmer's car for him.

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Whitfield: He asked me what I was doing. I told him I was in between jobs. We got talking about it. He said, "Well, you know, we've been thinking about hiring a young engineer for the water district because the present general manager is getting way up in years, and we know things are going to start growing around here." He said, "We've been talking about hiring someone. Would you be interested?" I said, "Yes, I'd be very much interested."

When we got home, he said, "Well, I'll call Will Patterson," who was president of the board, "and talk to him about it." So I went down and had an interview with him. Then they said, "Maybe we ought to have the rest of the board"—well, I knew some of the other board members anyway.

Lage: Did you say you talked with the two of them?

Whitfield: Yes. We went down to Mr. Patterson's together to talk about it.

Lage: That was a long time ago, but do you remember any of the conversation?

Whitfield: They knew I was an engineer, and I brought them up-to-date on what I had been doing and what my experience was, what my educational background was. I didn't know Mr. Patterson before that but Dr. Grimmer knew me well. But they knew me, they knew the family. Mr. Patterson knew my father.

Lage: Was Mr. Patterson really a part of the community? Other people I've talked to spoke of the family as if they were sort of removed.

Whitfield: They were to some degree. In fact, I didn't even know of the Patterson family. I lived in Mission all the time, and they were down in the north plain area. Of course, in those days everything was spread out, and there were just individual little towns. They weren't recluses or anything, but they didn't participate in functions in the community. They helped out on things, charitable things and all that.

Lage: But your father did have some contact with him?

Whitfield: Yes, my father knew Will Patterson because of having been in the farming business.

Well, the interview was just generalizations, "Would you be interested in it?" I reemphasized that I never had much experience in design or anything in the water works business. There wasn't too much questioning of me. I think they were kind of pleased to find that they found a young engineer who would be interested.

Lage: I wonder if they were happy to find somebody from the community?

Whitfield: Oh, I think so.

Lage: Knowing Dr. Grimmer was a big help?

Whitfield: Oh, yes. There was only one board member that I didn't know, and that was Louis Amaral. He was from the Alviso district, down the other side between Centerville and Alvarado. Then I met with the board of directors and had another preliminary discussion. They asked some questions; then they said, "Well, we'll have to give it some thought."

So I waited around a while. I had an offer to go to Westvaco in Newark.

Lage: What was it?

Whitfield: That was a chemical plant. I went down and applied down there. In fact, Clark Redeker, who has been on the water district board since 1966, worked for Westvaco. Anyway, I went down, and I was

interviewed. They didn't have any openings down there, but they had an opening for plant manager up in Pocatello, Idaho. I wasn't too interested in going there, but it was a job. So I waited around a couple of months.

So I waited, and finally I met Dr. Grimmer once, and I said, "Hey, I haven't heard anything." Oh, he said, "Yes, well, the real problem is we don't know what to do with Ed." I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "He's getting old. We're kind of a little squeamish about bringing someone in and letting him know that he's going to be retired or something like that."

Lage: Ed Richmond is mentioned as being involved in water since 1906.

Whitfield: Oh, yes. You see, the Alameda County Water District took over the plant in Alvarado from the Oakland Water Works. You remember reading about that? They had several wells in Alvarado which pumped out of the water basin. Ed Richmond operated that plant for the Oakland Water Works. So in 1930 when the water district took the plant over, they took Ed over also. They made him general manager.

Lage: And he'd been there ever since.

Whitfield: Yes. He was in his late seventies.

Lage: I see. They felt squeamish about retiring him.

Whitfield: Yes, because they didn't have any retirement benefits. He had worked hard. He physically worked; he put pipes in and all that stuff. He was very conscientious, but he was--until you got to know him--a little hard to work with. They had another engineer who was retired from Southern Pacific, Herb Harrold. He was secretary of the board. In fact, he was a trustee of the high school when I was there.

Lage: But he was an engineer, not a board member?

Whitfield: Yes, he was an engineer. He was retired from the Southern Pacific. See, in those days, they didn't have any maps of where the pipes were, anywhere. Everything was in Ed Richmond's head. So they hired Herb Harrold to come in and get the information from Ed and put it on paper, on drawings.

Well, Ed could be in a bad mood some day [laughs], and he didn't want to be bothered with Herb, and he wouldn't go out with him to show him where the pipes were. So when I got there I got in the middle.

Apprenticeship Under Ed Richmond, 1950-1953

Lage: How did you deal with that problem with Ed Richmond? Did you have a better time with him?

Whitfield: Well, let's go back to--this was the board before I got hired. So we met again with the board of directors. They said, "We want you to come to work for us, but we just don't know what to do with Ed." I said, "I'll make a suggestion if you really want me to come to work for you. Appoint me assistant to the manager and I'll get in, learn all I can as fast as I can." That's what I did. [Hired September 20, 1950.]

In those days, they wrote water bills out by hand. Sometimes that's what I had to do, doing that.

Lage: What kind of staff did they have besides Ed Richmond?

Whitfield: They had Ed Richmond. Herb Harrold was paid by the hour, and he was secretary of the board. Then they had Jewell Amaral, who I went to high school [with].

Lage: Who was the board member's daughter?

Whitfield: No, he was her uncle. That was Louis Amaral.

Lage: Was she clerical staff?

Whitfield: Yes. There was her and Marie Santos. I knew all her family; they were from Mission. There was a total of eight. That's all that was in the office, but there was a total of eight employees when I went to work for them. I was one of them.

So that's what I did. I went in, and I did everything Ed asked me to do, except a couple times. You know, I always wanted to get out in the field and see what was going on. He had me locked in there too much of the time.

Lage: Was he jealous of letting go of his job by training you, do you think?

Whitfield: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. But one day there was a big water main leak over in the underpass at Niles. We always had a problem with that darn pipe over there. I was in the office. It was billing time, and I was doing bills. So I waited about four or five hours, and Ed didn't come back, so I got in the car and went over.

He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I've come to see what's going on, what the problem is?" "You're supposed to be back there doing bills." And I said, "Well, I'm going to stay and watch to see what's going on." "Well, I want you to go back." I said, "Listen, I'm not going back. I was hired to learn what's going on in the district, and get educated in the field of water engineering. I'm going to go out and see what's going on from now on." He said, "Okay." [laughs] And after that everything was fine.

Lage: So that was resolved without your having to take it up with the board.

Whitfield: Yes. Oh, I wouldn't take it up with the board. I think you're right, though. I was very lucky because, when I worked for this guy Erstead down there in San Jose, I learned that at times I was going to run into people who were hard to get along with. I felt that I could have enough patience to stay long enough to learn something.

When I was up at Mare Island we had Captain Burris, who was the repair superintendent. He was a pusher. We had to have a conference every week and a progress report of what was going on on our ships. I never had any compunction in answering him. I'd tell him the truth. If you were behind, you were behind. "Why are you behind?" "Well, we can't get this, we can't get that." So I had learned to work with him. He was very gruff, and most of the guys were scared stiff of him. It didn't bother me.

In fact, [laughs] when I was up in the planning section, we had a ship come in that had main propulsion gear problems. This required setting up an inspection group to resolve the problem. The group was composed of two officers representing the repair superintendent, two officers from the Design Section, a representative from the gear manufacturer, and myself. At that time they were in the process of changing the planning superintendent. Commander Moore, who was the design superintendent, was filling in as acting planning superintendent. So whenever you had a gear problem with the main propulsion of a ship, you had to report it to Commodore Lee back in Washington, D.C.

Well, the question came up of who was going to call and make the report. Commander Moore called me in and wanted me to. He said, "Would you be qualified to call and explain it?" "Yes." He said, "Well, you've got to go down and talk to Captain Burris about it." He called Burris and told him I was coming down. We had a repair superintendent and a machinery man and a hull superintendent. Their offices were together, and

Whitfield: they had a window right between where they could talk back and forth. So the window was open and this other captain was Bill something or other. He was a younger man.

Anyway, Captain Burris says, "Sit down, Whit." [laughs] I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Your Commander Moore tells me you're a little bit too bashful to call Washington, D.C." I said, "Well, I don't know why he said that. He asked me if I would do it, and I said sure. I can't understand me being too bashful or scared to call a commodore back in Washington, D.C., when I speak very frankly to you." He turned to the window and said, "Bill, did you hear what this young upstart said." He put his head back, and he laughed. So I had a good experience, and I was well prepared.

Lage: And you learned that you do have to sort of assert yourself.

Whitfield: Yes, once in a while.

Lage: Was the district board involved just with day-to-day problems, like leaks, or were they deciding to plan for some of the growth? Was there an awareness that there was going to be a lot of growth?

Whitfield: Oh, yes.

Lage: I'm thinking about when you first came on, the first couple of years.

Whitfield: We had the Conway and Culligan problem in the period between when I came there and 1955.

Lage: You're already general manager, though, when that happened.

Whitfield: Yes, I was. But that's what started us. The reason Patterson and Grimmer wanted somebody in there with an engineering background was because they knew it was going to hit.

Lage: Tell me more about that. Can you remember discussions about growth?

Whitfield: Well, they always said, "We've got to plan because the development is going to be coming down this way, and it's going to come pretty fast." And it did. Say after '55 and in there, we were putting on three or four thousand new customers a year. When I went there we had two thousand customers.

Lage: So there were day-to-day problems but then there were long-term ones too?

Whitfield: The first big problem we had--Ed Richmond didn't get along with the various fire chiefs. In fact, my father was a fire chief, the first volunteer fire chief in Mission San Jose, but he never had any difficulty with Richmond. But, in fact, he knew Ed Richmond pretty well.

But, anyway, the first thing that had happened was--you know, the fire hydrants you see out on the street are two-nozzle-type. Well, in the early days, in a small district sometimes they put in a wharf hydrant which was just a four-inch pipe coming up with a valve on top. That would satisfy for the area they were in. In those days, the fire districts paid three dollars-a-month rental for a fire hydrant, but the water district paid for putting the fire hydrants in. Ed was always trying to save money, so he was always trying to get by with just putting in the wharf hydrants.

Joe Pashote, who just passed away a couple of years ago, was the fire chief in Newark. He knew my father quite well, too, because they were both fire chiefs.

Lage: This was a volunteer fire chief?

Whitfield: Yes, at the time. Ed had a big tiff with Joe Pashote because he was supposed to put in, in certain streets in Newark, I think it was four hydrants. Well, Ed decided that he wasn't going to put in the standard hydrants; he was going to put in wharf hydrants. Apparently, he was going to put in three-inch wharf hydrants. Joe Pashote said that if he did we won't pay the rent. They got in a tiff and Ed just stopped the job.

So they had a public meeting in Judge Norris' court down there with Joe Pashote and some of the other fire chiefs.

Lage: And representatives from the district, the water district?

Whitfield: Yes, the board of directors and me, and I guess Ed Richmond was there. I had to catch a plane--I was going to a meeting in Los Angeles, a water district meeting--and so they left it on the basis that I would get together with Joe Pashote and talk about it. [laughs] Of course, Joe was adamant with Ed Richmond, but he wasn't with me.

So I went down, "Joe, really, what's the big to-do about, what's the problem?" I said. "Nothing too big it can't be solved." "God dammit," he said, "that old stubborn so-and-so. He wants to put in all wharf hydrants. I said, "Well, what do you want?" He said, "I should have standard hydrants, or I want four-inch ones." "There's no problem there. Where do you want them?" So we agreed on them.

Lage: And did he get what he wanted?

Whitfield: Sure.

Lage: Because it was a reasonable request?

Whitfield: Sure. There was no reason to fuss about it. Pashote and I were buddies all the time. [laughs]

Lage: The board didn't usually get involved in little things like that? Except in this case they had to have a hearing about it.

Whitfield: Well, because, I guess, Pashote must have complained to board members.

But then after that, Mr. Patterson then found another consulting engineer, a Stanford graduate. Will Patterson went to Stanford. Will Patterson had three boys and they all went to Stanford. So whenever he was looking for information about engineers he always went to Stanford. So he got Thad Binkley, who was a consulting engineer.

Lage: Did he stay on with you for a while?

Whitfield: Yes, he was with us quite a while.

Lage: But it was just on a consulting basis?

Whitfield: Yes, on a consulting basis. He did a lot of the engineering for our percolation pits and all that kind of stuff.

Lage: Was he a specialist in water?

Whitfield: Yes. In fact, he ran his own water company over in the peninsula over there, too. He specialized in water.

Planning for Growth: The 1955 Bond Issue

Whitfield: So then we started thinking in terms of planning for growth. The only bond issue that the water district ever had was in 1930, a quarter of a million dollars to buy out the Alvarado plant. The Oakland Water Company, or the People's Water Company--it was named both at one time--had acquired the prescriptive right to pump eight million gallons of water a day from Alvarado into Oakland. There was a thirty-inch line that went to Oakland. When they were going to sell out, our water district didn't want them to sell it to anybody else, who would

Whitfield: then have a prescriptive right to pump it out. So they floated a bond for a quarter of a million dollars, and we paid that off over the period that I was there.

Then it was decided, because some of the towns weren't even connected with pipes, and we had no major mains anywhere--

Lage: Many people were getting water from wells, isn't that right?

Whitfield: Yes, wells. For storage we only had the hundred-thousand gallon tank up at Mission San Jose and a one-hundred-thousand gallon reservoir over in Niles, in the Niles Canyon area. Now they've got eighty million gallons of storage.

Knowing we didn't have storage and we didn't have adequate wells and all that, in 1955 we had a bond issue. That's when the planning started--it preceded '55.

Lage: Planning for the future needs?

Whitfield: Yes, yes, and for the major expenditures. So we had a \$4,297,000 bond issue, which was the biggest bond issue ever floated down here. They were general obligation bonds paid out of water revenue. If you have a general obligation bond, you have the backing of the taxes although we never used taxes. We paid for it out of water revenue sales, like a revenue bond. But revenue bonds you pay a higher interest rate.

Lage: Did you do a lot of campaigning for that, or was it controversial?

Whitfield: No, it wasn't. I went out and did all the promotional work, went out and talked to the chambers of commerce and whoever wanted to listen. It was successful.

The ACWD Board of Directors in the Early Fifties

Lage: Let's go back just a little bit to earlier in the 1950s. I'm thinking about the board at that time. What kind of people? You mentioned Bernardo, Amaral, and then there was Patterson, and Grimmer, and Prouty. What were their backgrounds?

Whitfield: Well, Dr. Grimmer was purely medical. He was a physician. In fact, for years there was only Dr. Grau over in Niles and Dr. Holman in Centerville and Dr. Grimmer here. Patterson was in business and agriculture, a big land holder. He owned land where Del Valle is [in Livermore Valley]; I think he had about

Whitfield: three thousand acres up there and about three thousand acres down here. Then Louis Amaral was one of the farmers that farmed a lot of Patterson's property. He leased it out on shares.

Lage: Did he have his own ranch at all or was he mainly--?

Whitfield: No, I think he leased everything. He and his brother had a garage down in the Alviso district where they both lived. Later, when he got out of farming, he was in the insurance business. Manuel Bernardo years back was the constable around here, and then he went into farming. He owned about twelve or fifteen acres of apricots down in Centerville. Jack Prouty was a schoolteacher, originally.

Then, when the war came along, Bailey was the next big farmer, next in size to Patterson.

Lage: What was his name?

Whitfield: Lloyd Bailey. He had a lot of property, too; he was a very wealthy man.

Lage: Was he involved with the water district?

Whitfield: No, but somehow Jack Prouty figured he was going to get into the farming business. I don't know what the relationship was with him and Bailey, but he supervised a lot of Bailey's operations for years. He never did go back to teaching.

Lage: So these were mainly men of substance on the board, or is that not a good generalization? They were elected.

Whitfield: They are elected, yes. What do you mean?

Lage: Well, men of means. They had a fair amount of money?

Whitfield: Well, I don't think Bernardo did, no.

Lage: They had ties to agriculture basically.

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Did they take a real hands-on attitude towards the water district or did they pretty much leave it in Richmond's hands?

Whitfield: Well, in the days before I got there, when Ed Richmond was manager, it was my understanding that Mr. Patterson did all the negotiating or making agreements and all that. He did all that type of thing.

Lage: From just looking briefly at the minutes of board meetings this morning, I do notice a change when you come on as general manager. [Appointed general manager September 10, 1953.]

Whitfield: I hope for the better! [laughter]

Lage: You are much more involved. You are shown in the minutes far more than Richmond is; he's barely mentioned. When you come on, the minutes note a "General Manager Whitfield this and General Manager Whitfield that."

Whitfield: He didn't participate. When they had their board meetings before, well, they never had any agendas so I talked to Mr. Patterson. I said, "Would you like me to prepare an agenda?" Well, that worked out fine. I would give them write-ups in advance, you know, a little explanation of what was coming up.

They never had anybody to really help them in this; Herb Harrold never had much push. He was an older man, you know.

Lage: They didn't have a real manager, it sounds like.

Whitfield: They didn't. They had a good pipe man, and a good pump man and a good installer, and a very hard worker. He knew how to tell people how to do things, and that's what he was.

Lage: It sounds as if Patterson took more of a managerial role before you came on.

Whitfield: Right, he did.

III WILLIAM D. PATTERSON AND THE WATER DISTRICT

A Private Person

- Lage: Since we want to develop a little information about William Patterson, can you recall any conversations with him or dealings with him? Was there any problem with his giving up this managerial role when you came on?
- Whitfield: No, it was just a smooth transition. I think he was very relieved because Patterson was getting older, too. He'd been on it since 1914.
- Lage: That's right. That's a long time.
- Whitfield: But he was a wonderful man. I loved the guy. He was so laid back and once I got to know him I knew that, boy, if I ever need a friend to defend me in the water district, he'll be there. He let you know that he had confidence in you and you felt very secure.
- I was very lucky in working twenty-seven years. I think I served under about twenty different boards of directors. I only had one board member who gave me a bad time--threatened my job and all that.
- Lage: That is lucky when you can say that.
- Whitfield: Yes, because it's political. When you work for elected officials you serve at the pleasure of the board. I had no contract. A couple of times some of the board members would say, "Oh, I think we ought to have a contract with Matt." I said, "If you want one, it's all right with me. I don't care for one." I said, "I'd rather just serve at your pleasure. If you don't want me, I don't want to be here."
- Lage: That made them feel comfortable.

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Whitfield: Did Tillie Goeld tell you about the Pattersons?

Lage: Not about the Pattersons but I talked to her about farming in the area.

Whitfield: I meant about Will Patterson, personally.

Lage: Well, not really. I mean, she didn't know him at all according to her. Her farm was in that same area. Mr. Goeld said they lived in a different world, a completely different social world.

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: And he [Mr. Goeld] seemed to sort of steer clear of the Pattersons so as not to create any problems.

Whitfield: Well, you know, one example of--a lot of people thought it was terrible--Will Patterson had a beautiful home. All this cherry wood banisters. I used to go down there and meet with him. But when he passed away, he left it in his will that the whole thing was to be burned down.

Lage: I heard that. None of the family wanted to live there.

Whitfield: Yes, none of the family. He did not want--like the other house, I guess--he didn't want people traipsing through it and making a public thing out of it.

Lage: Didn't he ever assume that anybody would want to live in it, a non-family member.

Whitfield: I think what really concerned him was that those old buildings ultimately become public buildings.

Lage: You don't think he would have liked what's happened to the other house [the G. W. Patterson home]?

Whitfield: No, because he was a very private person.

Lage: So he probably wouldn't like us running around getting oral histories about him.

Whitfield: Oh, I don't know. You probably wouldn't get any personal history from him about himself, but I'm sure he would support what you're doing now. When John Caswell wrote the history of the water district, Mr. Patterson thought that should be documented.

Lage: A lot of the family has historical interest. Donald Patterson did some oral history interviews. He taped himself; he taped a couple people in the community. Dave Patterson now has an interest.

Whitfield: I've only met Dave a couple times. He was younger. Jack Patterson, who was about my age, was Will's third son. He passed away rather young.

Lage: Did you know Donald Patterson?

Whitfield: Oh, yes. Don was very active before and after his father passed away, coming over to talk about the water district. He was on the water committee of Fremont.

Lage: What would he have done with the water committee?

Whitfield: It was the water committee of the chamber of commerce, and they had a subcommittee on whether we should have ground water repercolation; they had a committee that was slanted against the ground water. We had a lot of opposition to spending money to recharge the ground water basin. Donald Patterson, like his father, was a great supporter of the ground water projects.

Lage: Did Donald Patterson, do you know, take a role in running the ranch?

Whitfield: Yes.

Resolution 81: Blueprint for Growth

Lage: We had talked about trying to get a picture of William Patterson and how difficult it is to do that. You mentioned you might be able to tell of an incident that occurred that would show something of his style.

Whitfield: I mentioned to you that I felt very comfortable with him, and I always felt that I had his support if I ever needed it. That time came when I recommended to the board that we change our policy on resolution 81.

Lage: First, tell us about resolution 81.

Whitfield: In 1955 we adopted resolution 81, which took about six months to prepare. That was the future format and the bible on how we were going to pay for things: who was going to pay for water mains, whether there was going to be reimbursement, or oversize, and all that.

Lage: For the new developments?

Whitfield: For anybody that came in and wanted service, for developers and all that.

Lage: Or industry, too?

Whitfield: Yes, for everybody, but primarily for the new developments coming in.

Lage: Now, who developed resolution 81?

Whitfield: Well, it was done jointly between Thad Binkley, Morris Hyman, our attorney, and myself. Morris Hyman is now president of Fremont Bank.

Lage: Did the board give you any direction, a policy direction, on what they would like to see?

Whitfield: No. We talked to them about what we were going to do: First of all, the developers were going to have to pay for certain-sized mains, and under certain conditions they'd get reimbursement. Then, when we needed oversize, if the subdivision needed a twelve-inch line to serve it, based on hydraulic calculations, and then we decided that we want to put in an eighteen-inch line, then the subdivider would have to put the eighteen-inch line in. After we saw the bids and all that, then we would reimburse him for the difference in cost between the twelve and eighteen, under certain conditions.

Lage: That seems fair enough. You were trying to see that they paid their share.

Whitfield: Their share, yes. So we developed this policy. Then we tried to figure out the details. If you had a street, and the developer hooked up to one side, well, they'd have to pay for that side. If the other side wasn't part of their subdivision then we would set them up for reimbursement of half of their costs for putting in the water main. Then we had it where you had a three-sided lot or a four-sided lot [laughs] or a five-sided lot, the whole thing.

Lage: So this is a very detailed policy?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: And then that came before the board for approval?

Whitfield: Yes. They got advance copies of it. Subsequently--

Lage: They approved of it, I assume? Did they vote on it, were there any hearings?

Whitfield: No, there were no hearings; we reviewed it with them at a meeting and they then adopted resolution 81.

Lage: But they didn't hold public hearings. It wasn't controversial.

Whitfield: I think it would have been controversial the other way around--if we didn't have a policy--because a lot of the farmers and property owners, everybody says, "Well, you know, these developers are going to come in and get everything free." In fact, I had many compliments about it because once a developer got in here--and I always said one thing, "We're going to tell you right up front what you're stuck with, and we're going to tell you what you're going to get back."

The reimbursement--they set up for reimbursement for ten years. If they got it all back, fine; if they didn't, they didn't get any more. But in some of the other districts where they worked they weren't sure what they were stuck with. What they want to know is, "What am I stuck with financially before I get into this thing?" They don't want someone coming around afterwards saying, "Hey, you've got to put in \$10,000 more of this in there." So most of the bigger developers always complimented us. They would say, "Well, we may not agree that we should put all this in, but we know what we're going to be stuck with and you don't stick us with anything extra."

Lage: Were they required to pay more than most places around here?

Whitfield: Well, East Bay MUD [Municipal Utility District] and all those didn't have these charges like we did because we didn't have anything to work on.

Lage: Well, you were building in new areas. There must have been a corollary in Santa Clara County, I would think.

Whitfield: I think Binkley got copies of some extension plans that other entities had, and of course, he had been in the water business himself.

Quiet Support and Leadership from Will Patterson

Lage: I've been taking you off the track here. You were saying something about Will Patterson.

- Whitfield: Subsequent to that resolution we found that the growth was coming in more, that we were going to have to begin making them pay for larger sized pipes and sometimes not getting reimbursed until later on.
- Lage: How would they be reimbursed--when another developer came in and shared the pipe?
- Whitfield: When anybody hooked onto a pipe that was put in by other than the water district funds, there would be a charge, a front-foot charge, say, for a six-inch main or ten-inch or whatever it is. So that went into reimbursement funds. Now, it didn't go directly to the developer that put that pipe in, it went into one big pool. At the end of the year we knew how much a credit balance we owed each developer, so it was prorated based upon the credit balance that they had coming. So even though I put twelve hundred feet of pipe along this street, and even during the next year if no one hooked up to that pipe, if someone hooked up to a pipe in the other side of town, I'd still get a part of that money.
- Lage: So any future growth in the area would contribute to that reimbursement.
- Whitfield: Yes, rather than have to keep track of whose money it is we did it this way, which worked out fine.

But anyway, subsequently we had to change the policy to make it more severe on the developers. We had prepared the plans to put into effect--I think this was probably in June or something like that, but my recommendation was that it was to be adopted, but not to be put into effect until August or September, and then we were going to insist on having written contracts all the time. My rationale for delaying until August or September was that I had negotiated with people. They'd come in with their drawings, and I would tell them what they have to put in and all this kind of stuff.

When I briefed the board on it, some of them, Dr. Grimmer, for some reason, decided "No, let's not wait. Let's just cut it off like this," [slaps his hand] "and make it effective immediately." I had maybe a dozen developers that I had talked to, or maybe ten or something like that. I just thought it wasn't fair to impose this upon them when they may have had all their plans, financial plans, made. Mr. Patterson sat back, he never said a word. Everybody else talked, got more vociferous: "Well, we can't let them, blah blah blah--"

Then there was a long silence, and somebody turned to Mr. Patterson and said, "Will, what's your opinion?" He said, "Well, it's very simple." He said, "Matt has explained to us." He asked, "How many people have you talked to?" And I told him. "How much money do you think it involves?" And I told him. He said, "Well, that's my opinion. I agree with Matt. We've gotta be fair about this thing." Without any fanfare, it passed unanimously.

Lage: You mentioned that Mr. Patterson seemed sort of a serious person on the surface. Not full of smiles and not a gladhander.

Whitfield: No, he was a gentleman, but he wasn't a politician-type. He was just a very sedate gentleman.

Lage: You said something about his sense of humor.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, maybe I shouldn't tell you this one, but I hope you've got a sense of humor. At the time, Marcella Hewett was the secretary to our board. I think that it was on this same occasion; one of the comments Mr. Patterson made about why we shouldn't enforce this policy immediately was--he said, "I think we should just stick it to them gently." [laughter] And I thought, "My, that's unusual for Mr. Patterson to say something like that." So the next time I saw him, I said, "Mr. Patterson, we've got a real problem. The first problem we've had with you since I've been with the water district." "What's the matter, Matt?" I said, "Remember the comment you made about sticking it--?" [laughs] He said, "Yes," and he kind of smiled. I said, "Mrs. Hewett wants to know how you want that phrased in the minutes." And he laughed. I'd never seen him guffaw before. [laughter] That's the only one that I can think of.

Water, Flood Control, Development, and Growth

Lage: Did you detect Patterson's attitude towards development and growth? Did he have any sense this change was a great thing, or was just an inevitable thing?

Whitfield: I think he would have preferred that the status quo remain, but I think he was pragmatic enough to know that it wouldn't, and he wasn't going to fight it.

Lage: Did he sell off any of the lands while he was still alive?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Oh, he did? Into development?

Whitfield: Yes. He was on the flood control board, but I have never had any indication on anything that he ever voted on or anything that he was thinking of his own interest. I'm sure in the back of his head he was, but he never said anything about, "I don't want that to happen to my land," or anything like that.

Lage: Well, the flood control project certainly had a lot to do with allowing development.

Whitfield: Oh, sure.

Lage: And probably especially on his land.

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Was the water district involved with flood control in any way?

Whitfield: No, we cooperated with each other. The only problem we had with flood control, at one time, was with some of the city fathers and other people in the community that weren't in favor of spending all the money we were spending on recharging the ground water basin. They wanted maybe more Hetch Hetchy water. They tried to impose zone eight over our district.

Lage: Now you're going to have to clarify zone eight here.

Whitfield: Well, the flood control district is county-wide, but they're broken down into various zones of flood plains. Then when they float a bond issue, it's assessed against that zone. At one time, they wanted to have a whole zone five that covered all Livermore Valley and our district, but there was too much politics in that. There were a lot of politicians who wanted to say something about it.

But there was a feeling that they would prefer to have zone eight under flood control, under the manager of the overall flood control district, who was more politically inclined than we were. Then they wanted instead of us contracting directly with the state of California for the south bay aqueduct, then zone eight would have contracted.

Lage: Then they would have become a water district.

Whitfield: Yes. Our board and our attitude was, "Why have another layer of government?" In other words, they would have bought water from the state and sold it to us. So why have another political layer in between, with more expense. Then you have them controlling where the water goes.

Lage: Now when did that come up?

Whitfield: That came up prior to '62 when we were negotiating contracts for state water.

Lage: I see. Maybe we will talk about that again more next time.

IV ISSUES AND PROBLEMS OF THE FIFTIES

Recharging the Ground Water Through Percolation Pits

Lage: We've brought up a lot of things that were happening in the fifties, but let's look at them more directly.

Just when you came into the district or just prior to it, wasn't the Shinn Percolation Pit opened up?

Whitfield: Yes, that was in '49. That was opened up where they took water from the natural runoff and any releases that came from Calaveras Dam were diverted. That was at '49. They had opened it up the year before I came in.

Lage: And they diverted this natural runoff into an old quarry?

Whitfield: Yes, an old abandoned quarry.

Lage: And that allowed it to percolate down?

Whitfield: Yes. The Shinn Pit, that was one of the first quarries that started. It's right up back of Niles.

Lage: Was Shinn connected with that quarry, or was it named after the first president--?

Whitfield: It was the Shinn property. The whole area belonged to Shinn.

Lage: He was the first president of the water district.

Whitfield: Yes, Joseph Shinn.

Lage: Was that a common way of dealing with water problems, or was it a new solution that this district found?

Whitfield: I think Santa Clara County had gone into it years back and in southern California there was a lot of recharging. The old channel of Alameda Creek was the main source of water to recharge the ground water basin. Now, when they put the main flood control channel down there we were concerned that they might install a concrete lining in it. We made our position clear on it to the Corps of Engineers, who were doing the work.

Lage: The Corps of Engineers did like to concrete things.

Whitfield: Oh, yes, because then you can confine it and have less area to worry about.

Lage: Did that negotiation present any problem, or did they listen to you?

Whitfield: No, no, there was no real problem. We made our position clear all the time.

Pressure to Purchase Hetch Hetchy Water from San Francisco

Lage: When Fremont became incorporated, did that bring a new layer of problems to you, or was it easier to deal with just one city instead of the five little towns?

Whitfield: Well, with the five little towns there wasn't really any dealing with them. We floated the bond issue before Fremont came in, and the people voted for it. I guess they felt like we did, that we needed to look to the future. One of the anecdotes about Louis Amaral--when we were talking about importing water from the state plan, he would say, "The only amount of water we will ever need is a ten-inch pipe flowing down Alameda Creek year around." That wouldn't be a drop in the bucket. [laughs]

Lage: Was he the one who wanted Hetch Hetchy water? I came across the notes in the minutes, and I thought it was Amaral saying we want Hetch Hetchy water and forget this ground recharge. Was that Amaral?

Whitfield: Well, I don't remember.

Lage: It was a little bit later on.

Whitfield: Or Jack Prouty?

Lage: No, it wasn't Jack Prouty.

Whitfield: There's always been a big to-do about that. The city of Fremont wanted us to get more Hetchy water.

Lage: Maybe we should talk about that, now, as one of the main issues. It probably went on more than just in the fifties. Was this a continuing tension?

Whitfield: Well, at one time, before we had enough pipes put to connect it up, Irvington, where Dr. Grimmer lived, was supplied by Hetch Hetchy water. We didn't have any storage for it. We had isolated the areas where we didn't have any pipes where we had Hetch Hetchy water. In fact, this area here, this subdivision here, was all Hetch Hetchy water from a connection on Mission Boulevard.

Lage: I see. So you brought it direct, purchased from San Francisco.

Whitfield: Yes. But then subsequently we got water mains installed around it, and then we took the areas off, which was always a complaint then because Hetch Hetchy water was softer. I'll never forget when we took this area--this was before I lived up here--off Hetch Hetchy water. The people came down to protest, and one very attractive lady got up. She was complaining about how hard the water was, and she said, "I just wish you could come up sometime and see me trying to take a shower." [laughter] That about brought the house down.

Lage: They really noticed it when you changed from Hetch Hetchy water.

Whitfield: Yes, because Hetchy water was softer. Well water has more minerals in it. It was about two hundred and something parts per million with total dissolved solids.

Then we put in the Bernardo Softening Plant over there which was controversial. We went to an election on that, too.

Lage: Why was that controversial?

Whitfield: Well, because some people wanted us to spend it on Hetchy water, and some people didn't want soft water.

Lage: But could you have purchased enough water to satisfy the district's needs from Hetch Hetchy, from San Francisco?

Whitfield: I don't think we could have.

Lage: And what about the price, was that higher?

- Whitfield: Oh, the price was higher, yes. Very much higher. You see, one of the reasons why we rebelled all the time about going all Hetchy was that the other entities that buy water from San Francisco have no say in the rates they pay. They come under the San Francisco Public Utility Commission. They don't come under the Public Utilities Commission of the state of California. So wherever the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission sets the water rates, that's what you've got to pay. You have no recourse, no political recourse by voting for supervisor or anything like that. So we could have another municipality deciding or predestining what you're going to do.
- Lage: They probably have first claim on the water as well.
- Whitfield: Yes, right.
- Lage: But that was a continuing thing. People would rather you didn't put so much into the percolation pits and--
- Whitfield: Yes. Well, there were some people adamant against spending money to recharge the ground water basin and wanted all Hetch Hetchy water.
- Lage: What about candidates that ran for the board of directors?
- Whitfield: Some were in favor of using more Hetch Hetchy water and less ground water. After they got on the board because they didn't like what we were doing, and when they got in and learned about it, then they saw the rationale and supported the ground water program.
- Lage: How were they educated? Was that part of your role?
- Whitfield: They were just educated by attending the board meetings to see what we were doing and asking questions.
- Lage: Did you ever see them individually to show them around?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes, if they wanted me to. I always offered. You know, if you want to come in and talk about things, I'd be very happy to spend the time with you or take you out and show you.
- Lage: And most, when they saw the overall picture, agreed with what you were doing?

Whitfield: Yes, they saw the light. In fact, if you read this history* the ending is very complimentary about how the water district is operating, yes.

A Controversy with Developers Conway and Culligan, 1954

Lage: Let's talk about this Conway and Culligan issue which was about '54.

Whitfield: Yes, it was before Fremont was incorporated, not too long before that. I guess we were down in the old office—we rented space in the county building, the one on Martha and Peralta Boulevard that's gone into a nursery school now. They built the court house out here. There was a big to-do about where that should go out here. It was a bunch of politics, you know, somebody wanted it in their various areas, but Dr. Grimmer owned the property down there. He said, "Well, I'll settle it. I'll give them the property." And he did. That's where it settled. But I think that's where we were at the time.

We got a phone call from this guy, Glassbrook or something like that. He was from Oakland. I had never heard of Conway and Culligan before. They were from over in San Mateo. I think it was San Mateo, somewhere on the peninsula. He called me up and he said, "Oh, we're going to put in 350 homes on the Stevenson property in Irvington where the old dairy is. I want to stop by and see you and see about putting in water mains and getting water." I said, "Fine."

Lage: Did the Stevenson property belong to the same Stevenson that became mayor?

Whitfield: No, I think this was the cousin; this was Max Stevenson. That area is now called Irvington Square. It's out of Irvington towards Warm Springs.

He got in my office, and I don't know how he dropped the hint that they were not used to paying for putting in more than two-inch lines. I said, "We've got to back up a little bit. We

*Larowe, Martin, "A Short History of the Alameda County Water District: A Story of Survival in the Metropolitan Bay Area," (Research paper for History 4900, California State University, Hayward, 1978)

Whitfield: don't put in two-inch lines anywhere." He didn't like that. I said, "I can't tell you what mains you're going to put in until you bring a map in so we can lay it out and do the hydraulics on it."

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Whitfield: Fortunately they had filed a tentative subdivision map with the county planning commission, and they had hearings on that. They always had to put on the maps who was going to be the water purveyor. ACWD was on the maps; and that's where we got them, finally.

They had two wells on the property; they were irrigation wells. Then there was a Hetch Hetchy pipeline right down in that area.

So Conway and Culligan came over and said, "Well, we're not going to spend all the money to put the pipes in the sizes you want. We'll form our own mutual water company. We've got two wells of our own and"--they inferred later on--"we've had a discussion with San Francisco, and they'll give us a connection." Well, we've always had an understanding with San Francisco that they wouldn't serve in our district, unless we gave approval. So I took that with a grain of salt. We got together with the board, and they were having another hearing at the county board of supervisors. They were down there in full force, down in Oakland. That was before they had a courthouse in Hayward. Both Conway and Culligan were there and their attorneys. I made a presentation about it's in our district and we have the facilities and all that. The supervisors decided that there was already a record on the map, and they weren't going to allow them to change it.

Lage: So did it end there or did you go on about it for a while longer?

Whitfield: No, it ended.

Lage: So the threat was that they would secede, sort of?

Whitfield: Well, a mutual water company is one where it's owned by the property owners in it, and it's run by them.

Lage: I see. Now what were they unwilling to--?

Whitfield: They thought that they were going to just come over and tell us what size pipes they were going to put in. We just told them they weren't.

Lage: Was this a case where your board had to back you up?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Did they all back you up? Did Stevenson come in on that, the future mayor?

Whitfield: I can't remember whether he was involved in that.

Lage: But you did have run-ins with him another time, is that right?

Whitfield: Well, I didn't have any direct run-ins, and I don't think I want to mention his name in this regard. But I think I told you that Jack Prouty, who was an ex-director of the water district, had property down there by Jack Stevenson.

Lage: Down in this same area of Irvington Square?

Whitfield: No, off Prune Avenue. Prouty was one of the people that was kind of backing flood control to handle zone eight, too. Not officially, but—I think Jack was—because they had a lot of water committee meetings down at Prouty's house.

Lage: Now was this the same water committee Donald Patterson was on?

Whitfield: I don't think Donald was on it then.

Lage: A chamber of commerce committee?

Whitfield: Yes. I don't think he was on it then. But I got a call at 3:30 one afternoon inviting me to come to a meeting. I said, "What meeting?" So I went down and, it was about the same kind of thing, you know.

Lage: Elaborate a little bit more about what were the issues there.

Whitfield: Well, one of the issues was that they—I think we had the same thing, too, when Western Pacific came in down in the Warm Springs area, and they wanted water down there. A big tract of land. I think it was about the same time when the city of Fremont got the idea that maybe they should take over serving water. The city went out and retained a consultant engineering firm, "Engineering Science," who I knew pretty well. He came down and interviewed me. He said, [laughs] "I just can't understand them thinking that they can come in and set up a whole water district for the city of Fremont and handle it as efficiently as you guys do." So he wrote it. He didn't recommend it. He recommended cooperation with the water district. That was an actual approach the city took because they hired a consultant engineer for a feasibility study.

- Lage: So there were a lot of feelings. Do you think there was the sense that they wanted more service to subdivisions and less to farmers, was that part of it?
- Whitfield: I don't think so, no.
- Lage: Because the farmers must have been in favor of this ground water recharge.
- Whitfield: Oh, they were, because some of their wells were going salty.
- Lage: And the people who did more drinking of the water were probably the ones who wanted the Hetch Hetchy.
- Whitfield: Yes. Well, you see, you couldn't afford Hetchy water to put in the ground water basin because, you know, it was a hundred and something dollars an acre foot.

Water District Role in Planning for Growth

- Lage: Last time I asked you about planning, and you mentioned that it was the cities that did the planning and told you what the needs were.
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. When we floated our bond issue in '55, the industry in this area was completely disbursed throughout the area. I think Fremont was right: they took it all and put it down in the Warm Springs area. You know, that's where you should have an industrial complex. You don't want industries splattered all over. So we just took the position that, you know, fine. What we did is--I forget where our first reservoir was going to be, I think it was going to be over in Niles somewhere--so when they put it down there we put our first reservoir over here off of Washington Boulevard above the railroad tracks. Seven and a half million gallons, that was the first reservoir we put in.
- Lage: What's the name of that one?
- Whitfield: Middlefield Reservoir.
- Lage: It's to service that industrial area?
- Whitfield: Yes, so that we'd have some water to head down that way and now we've got another eighteen-million-gallon one down there. You know where Mission Boulevard makes a turn before you hit the 680

Freeway? Well, we built an eighteen-million-gallon reservoir down there. Right up here, on Paseo Padre, they're finishing a twenty-one-million-gallon one now.

Lage: So you more or less followed what they were planning as far as growth and the areas for growth?

Whitfield: Yes. Our board has always taken the position that we're not in the land-use planning business for municipalities. It's up to them to decide what they want; the people decide, and we'll provide the facilities.

Lage: Did you have people, though, making projections about what future needs might be in terms of population growth?

Whitfield: Oh, yes, continually. In fact, they're just finishing another update of future needs.

I'll never forget, when we got involved in the Arroyo Del Valle Dam up there in the site up in Livermore, we hired Sid Harding, who was an old water expert who taught at UC California in the irrigation department. He was about seventy-five years old. One day Hyman and I were talking about, "What are we going to do after twenty-five years?" He just kind of sat back, he says, "Well, what makes you two fellas think that twenty-five or thirty years from now a couple of guys just as brilliant or more brilliant than you will figure it out for the next fifty years?" Taught me a lesson. You know, if you plan out twenty-five years with a master plan for the future, if you can cover for twenty-five years, you're doing all right.

Lage: Sidney Harding did an early oral history with our office--*

Whitfield: Oh, did he?

Lage: He has a little section in it on his work with the Alameda County Water District.

Whitfield: Yes, he was a great man. He was very well respected in the state as a water expert.

Lage: He seemed to be involved all over. Now what did he do for you; he was a consultant engineer?

*Sidney T. Harding, "A Life in Western Water Development," 1967.

Whitfield: Yes, he did a lot of the studies of the hydrology of the Arroyo Del Valle and all that.

Lage: Did he do any negotiating with other entities?

Whitfield: No.

ACWD and the Arroyo Del Valle

Whitfield: I think I told you, but maybe you want to wait, but the Arroyo Del Valle wouldn't be there except for us.

Lage: Why don't we talk about that next?

Whitfield: Yes. Well, we knew the state was coming through with the south bay aqueduct program for us. But the timing was slow. They didn't have any bond issues floated then. Our salt water intrusion was getting worse. Harvey Banks was director of the Department of Water Resources at the time. So we were, well, good friends, and he was an outstanding guy.

So we went up and met with the state people. The plans showed a tunnel being drilled through Brushy Peak—that's the Altamont area—to bring water in, which was going to take a long time and be very expensive. We said, "Ask Harvey if he could have some of his staff just do a cursory study for us of a small temporary aqueduct coming over just for our purposes." When they got into that they decided that they found it more feasible than putting the tunnel through.

Then when we got into the Del Valle, when we applied for the unappropriated water of the Del Valle, the Department of Water Resources had disregarded the Arroyo Del Valle as a site for terminal storage. But when we got into it, then they decided to come back. There was some cloud on the geology of it that wouldn't make it feasible. Then they found out that they didn't research it enough, and they decided to build that dam themselves up there.

Lage: So the state built the dam at Del Valle?

Whitfield: Yes, in the state water plans. They were going to put one down at Evergreen in San Jose for terminal storage instead of up here.

Lage: This probably made it better for you.

- Whitfield: Oh, yes. And then we got the advantage of capturing the local runoff. We didn't put up any capital for it. We agreed on a storage charge so that the local water that they save and release when we can percolate it, they charge us so much per acre foot for just storing it in there.
- Lage: But you've got the water rights from the Arroyo Del Valle?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: Along with Pleasanton Township County Water District.
- Whitfield: Yes. At the time, see, Binkley and Hyman were also consultants for the Pleasanton Township Water District.
- Lage: Oh, I was wondering how you worked so well with them.
- Whitfield: Yes. Well, they called us and asked if we had any objection if they hired them, and then Binkley and Hyman asked us if we had any objection. We said no. It would be better because we have common problems: they've got a ground water basin that they have to protect up there. So we figured that rather than to litigate how much of the runoff from Del Valle is theirs, and how much in ours, we would come to an agreement on it so they get a share and we get a share.
- Lage: Was it hard to reach that agreement, to come to some fair understanding?
- Whitfield: No, because the attorney and the consultants were familiar with both sides.
- Lage: And wasn't there some question about ground water problems for the people down the stream there, too? Did that come up? The people downstream from the place you took the water on Arroyo Del Valle?
- Whitfield: No, no problem because we applied for the unappropriated waters. See, if someone has a right to the water, you can't get it. But when you apply for water in the state of California to export it somewhere, you apply for the unappropriated, that water that isn't being used.
- Lage: Is it hard to get? What is the application process involved?
- Whitfield: It's really a formality as far as the Del Valle was concerned. Sometimes there are bitter battles over taking water from one area to another. You know, like the Owens Valley down there in southern California.
- Lage: Or like the Alameda Creek over to San Francisco.

- Whitfield: Yes. But, see, in those days there wasn't any entity really to fight.
- Lage: But you didn't run into that type of problem in bringing water over from Livermore?
- Whitfield: No, no. I think the water district gets about 4,000 acre feet a year on there.
- Lage: Was Del Valle, the site of the reservoir, part of the Patterson ranch over in Livermore?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: Now, would that have been sold to the state or to the county?
- Whitfield: Oh, to the state, the Department of Water Resources.
- Lage: But was there any reason it was chosen? Did the fact that it was Patterson's private property have anything to do with why they chose it?
- Whitfield: No.
- Lage: It just happened to be a good site?
- Whitfield: It's a good reservoir site, yes. And there is some runoff in it.
No, in fact, that wasn't the best thing in the world for Patterson at the time because I think it's right in the middle of his property.
- Lage: Yes, that's what I've heard, too. It sort of took a chunk right out of it.
- Whitfield: But he never fought it. He just figured it was the right thing to do.

Patterson Interest in Flood Control and the Reber Plan

- Whitfield: Of course, channelizing the Alameda Creek may have been a mixed blessing for him also. You know, the farmers way down on the flood plain used to get a lot of new top soil down there from the runoff when it flooded.
- Lage: Yes, that's right. I've heard that, and Patterson was among them. So the flooding benefited the ranch operation.

- Whitfield: To some extent, but from the standpoint of damage that the flooding did when it broke the levies before, there's an economic balance point in there somewhere. But the development would never have occurred in this area if that old creek hadn't been channelized.
- Lage: Did you have the sense that it was being channelized so there could be development? I mean, was that behind the campaign to get people to accept it?
- Whitfield: Yes, to some degree.
- Lage: Because weren't the local people taxed to fund the flood control work?
- Whitfield: Yes. In fact, Mr. Patterson was on the flood control board. He was during the regime when it was built.
- Lage: Let's discuss briefly the Reber Plan* and then maybe we'll stop for today.
- Whitfield: You had asked me what the Reber Plan was and why Patterson supported it. I think one of the main reasons he supported it was because the intent was to put this barrier across the southern end of the bay and make a fresh water lake. That would have precluded all the saltwater intrusion into our ground water basin, which he had a vital interest in because he was a big farmer, and he was pumping a lot of water.
- Lage: So he was a big supporter of it?
- Whitfield: Yes, he was. He knew Reber personally for years.
- Lage: Did you get involved in that at all?
- Whitfield: I went to a lot of meetings, hearings, on it, yes.
- Lage: Who was holding hearings about it?
- Whitfield: Well, they weren't hearings, there were just meetings explaining it. I'd been to a couple where Reber was the speaker.

* The Reber Plan was developed in the 1940s by John Reber, a self-taught engineer. He proposed to divide San Francisco Bay by a series of earthwork dams topped by highways and railways. The result would be two large freshwater lakes at the north and south ends of the bay. The plan was endorsed by the Alameda County Water District in 1947.

Lage: What kind of a person was Reber; was he an engineer?

Whitfield: No, I don't think he was.

Lage: Was it John Reber?

Whitfield: John Reber, yes. I forget what he did. It was some field you wouldn't expect him to evolve from, into the Reber Plan, though. But he had a lot of people supporting him. I don't know whether Patterson supported him financially or not, but he supported him for a long time until--Reber just wouldn't give in on anything. He had this master plan for metropolitan airports and lakes, navy shipyards and all that stuff.

Lage: So the fresh water lake down here was just one aspect.

Whitfield: I think that was probably what got--and I'm just surmising--but that probably got Mr. Patterson so interested in it because the saltwater intrusion started back in the 1920s here, into the upper aquifer. Then when they developed a centrifugal pump they could pump from a greater depth, and it started to come in worse.

Lage: Was the Reber plan seen as sort of a overall solution to their problem?

Whitfield: Yes. We've always said that you never could afford to build a storage facility as large as the ground water basin we've got in here.

Lage: Not subject to evaporation, either.

Whitfield: Yes, and it's safe from radiation, too, to a greater extent than open-surface reservoirs. I think that was the main reason why Patterson was behind it. But when they got to the nitty gritty on it and Reber just wouldn't back down on any of these aspects, then you could see the handwriting on the wall; it didn't have a chance.

Lage: Did any public agency take it up or endorse it that you know of?

Whitfield: I think our water district endorsed it. I don't know whether the cities did or not.

Lage: It would have taken a tremendous amount of cooperative effort since it included the entire bay.

Whitfield: Yes. Now you see the recent judgment that came out from the appellate court or the federal courts on the Water Resources Control Board that they never set the standards for protecting the delta high enough. That's a landmark decision for the courts to step in under another jurisdiction and tell them. I

Whitfield: think they didn't tell them to revise it, but I think legally it comes up within another year for review and revision and the court warned that they'd better think more in terms of the quality of water in the delta now.

Lage: That's right. Your district gets delta water, doesn't it? So that would be a direct concern here.

Whitfield: Well, it comes from way up there.

Lage: Further up?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: I asked you about the Soito well, which was an issue about 1954.

Whitfield: Yes. In those days, we went out and rented wells that were drilled. We had three or four of them that we rented. The Soito well was down in Newark off Mayhew Landing Road. You know, some of the well water is naturally soft in this area. It's a phenomenon in the ground water structure or geology that softens the water. Soito's, we found, was a soft-water well, so that's why we leased it.

Lage: Didn't the farmers in the area feel that when the district pumped out the Soito well, they were going to start getting salt in their water?

Whitfield: Yes, or we were going to pump the water table way down. They wanted us to pay for them having to pump their water more.

Lage: Amaral was involved in that. Was that near the Patterson property?

Whitfield: No, it's only about a thousand feet out of the center of old Newark, I'd say.

Lage: So Amaral, at that point in the minutes, said he wanted to rely more on Hetch Hetchy water instead of drawing out of the Soito well.

Whitfield: I think his intent then was to buy more from Hetchy.

Lage: Yes, instead of endangering the ground water. How did that get resolved? Patterson wanted to pump, and actually he lost, according to the board minutes. Patterson wanted to continue to pump the well, and the board voted 3-2 not to pump it.

Whitfield: Oh, did they? I have no memory of this. [laughs]

Board Member Jack Prouty

[Interview 2: June 5, 1986]##

- Lage: Today is June 5th, 1986, and it's a second interview with Matt Whitfield. We were going to start with a couple of windup things from last time. I had run across the portion of the minutes that talked about when Jack Prouty was asked to leave the board because he moved out of the district. You were going to give me some background on that and Patterson's role there.
- Whitfield: Yes. The problem was that Jack Prouty had moved out of the district, and the legal opinion was that he could no longer be a board member because of the fact he moved out. (Subsequently that land has been annexed.)
- The attorney for the water district was concerned because, if he was not legally on the board and he voted on anything that might have involved a bond issue or something, that might invalidate the action of the board. So the president of the board, John Pihl, asked Hyman's legal opinion. He researched it and he concluded--he checked with other attorneys--and concluded that you cannot be a member of the board if you don't reside in the district.
- Lage: Prouty didn't agree with that interpretation?
- Whitfield: He didn't agree with it, no.
- Lage: Earlier you were giving me a little background about Prouty's position on the board.
- Whitfield: Jack was a friend of Joe Eastwood, and anytime we asked for an idea of what Joe's opinion was, he always used to say, "Well, maybe Joe Eastwood won't like this," or you know.
- Lage: Tell me more about Joe Eastwood.
- Whitfield: Joe Eastwood II owned Pacific States Steel over in Niles, which in those days was the major industry out here besides West Vaco.
- Lage: So he was an influential community man?
- Whitfield: Yes. I think they had about four or five hundred employees. Joe Eastwood was a very interesting man because his father founded Pacific States Steel over on the Peninsula, and then they moved to San Francisco. He was an independent steel company and you had to be plenty rugged to succeed in the steel industry, you know, with big Bethlehem Steel and all those. He was a very forceful man and very outspoken.

- Lage: Is this father or son that we're talking about?
- Whitfield: Oh, this is Joe Eastwood—I never knew his father, but there's another Joe Eastwood who survived his father. After that they went out of business.
- Lage: But the Joe Eastwood we're talking about is probably the second.
- Whitfield: Yes, he was the main man over there.
- Lage: Then you mentioned to me that there'd been a problem in the flood of '55?
- Whitfield: Yes. That was before the Corps of Engineer channelized the Alameda Creek from Niles Canyon to the bay. The flood was so spontaneous it overtopped our levy into the Shinn Pit, and it went out in two directions then. It went down into the steel mill and flooded them partially out. It also flooded the Shinn subdivision over in that area, which was a fairly new subdivision. People, in fact, had just moved in that summer, and that winter they got floating around over there.
- Lage: I read in the minutes about some of the people who came to the board meeting to complain. It sounds as if you were put on the hot seat there.
- Whitfield: We had a couple of public meetings in the old courthouse down there over it. It was a hot and heavy thing.
- Lage: Was it a case where it could have been avoided through the water district--?
- Whitfield: No. There was nothing to do because the flood was one of the big floods we had. We had one, I think, in '54 and one in '55.
- Lage: That was a big flood year everywhere.
- Whitfield: Yes, everywhere. The channel was of a minimal size, and that's one of the reasons why when we had talked previously about the interest in getting the Corps of Engineers to come in and channelize the creek, which they did.
- Lage: I know there was reference in the minutes to the fact that the flood control bonds had been voted down previously. Then were they voted for after that? I mean, did that provide the impetus to pass those?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: So Joe Eastwood would come to the water district?

- Whitfield: He would come occasionally or call up. In fact, I got to be good friends with him after the flood situation. He used to call me up and [laughs] say, "Hey, Matt, now tell me honestly what the hell's going on over with the water district?" So I'd tell him. I said, "What do you think's going on that I won't tell you?"
- Lage: Did he have a particular interest in the direction the water district would take?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes.
- Lage: What kinds of concerns would he have, aside from the flood?
- Whitfield: Well, ground water. He was all for the ground water recharge because they were relying on wells over there for their plant. Then they started to get smatterings of salt water intrusion. So that was his main interest. Then, after that, he took an interest in it, yes.
- Lage: So Prouty saw himself as something of a go-between for Eastwood?
- Whitfield: I think, yes. There was friction between John Pihl and Prouty on the board—they're both deceased now—because Prouty felt that he was being bypassed. He couldn't be his own official conveyor of information through this Joe Eastwood. [laughs]
- Lage: You didn't mention on the tape that Pihl was manager for the steel company, so he was a more direct representative of Eastwood. Did Pihl generally, then, represent the point of view of industry on the board?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. Well, he represented everybody.
- Lage: He didn't have a particular point of view?
- Whitfield: No, but he ran for the board after the flood.
- Lage: Was this attempt to have Prouty leave the board any kind of a personal vendetta, or do you think it was just strictly that legal question?
- Whitfield: Oh, no. The main thing was a legal question. You can see the logic of that. You can't go on operating if Prouty's on the board illegally, and it might invalidate our bonds or something like that. Or maybe make them more expensive to sell if you have that kind of a cloud hanging over the district.
- Lage: I notice that William Patterson was, I think, the only member who voted not to put Prouty off the board.

Whitfield: Did he? I don't remember that.

Lage: He voted no. Do you remember his feelings about this, or his role in it at all?

Whitfield: Well, I think you hit it pretty well. He was very much of a peacemaker type of man. But I don't recall that he voted against it.

Lage: That's what the board minutes show, and then he spoke up for harmony on the board. He hoped to avoid any more incidences that didn't show harmony.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, I think that was probably in all my time with the board the most delicate, undesirable thing to have to do.

Lage: Kind of a personal thing.

Whitfield: Yes, because we all knew Jack. Jack was on the board when I was hired, and he was well-known in the community.

Lage: What was his business?

Whitfield: He was school teacher in the Irvington school district. I don't know whether he was a principal down there or not. I think he may have been. Then when the war came along somehow he got in with Lloyd Bailey, who was another big landowner and a big farmer--not quite as big as the Pattersons. Somehow he helped Bailey run his operation for several years.

Lage: Patterson mentioned also at this meeting that Prouty had given a great deal, donated things to the district; he particularly mentioned that he donated water rights from a certain well.

Whitfield: Prouty had?

Lage: That's what he said, that he'd given more to the district than anybody else, and he mentioned a well.

Whitfield: Oh, I know. The Olive Avenue well. Well, I don't know that he donated it. I don't think he donated the lot to us. He may have, but I don't remember it. That's still in the system, off Olive Avenue.

IV THE STATE WATER PROJECT'S SOUTH BAY AQUEDUCT

Early Applicants for Delta Water

- Lage: Why don't we go onto the state water project and how the district fit into that?
- Whitfield: Well, the state water plan was long in formulating. There was a lot of study and design work and all that. The district, before I came to work in 1950, had applied for unappropriated water at the delta. This was long before the state water plan became a reality. We had the idea that we would build our own aqueduct someday.
- Lage: Oh, I see. So the idea was to apply where water is available and then in the future, if you need it, you have the rights?
- Whitfield: You apply for a certain amount of unappropriated water, but anybody that has water rights on that stream or body of water has prior rights. You can't appropriate.
- Lage: So you put your bid in for some delta water?
- Whitfield: I think they went in in the forties and applied for unappropriated water of the delta, with the idea that maybe we would build our own aqueduct. Then the state plan came along, so then we took the position, well, if the state's going to build one we won't have to.
- Lage: Did the water district have a representative in Sacramento?
- Whitfield: No. We used to go up and meet with them.
- Lage: Did you lobby for or support legislation having to do with water?
- Whitfield: We took action in favor of things, endorsed things, yes.

Working with the Department of Water Resources

Lage: Did you have a pretty good relationship with the Department of Water Resources?

Whitfield: Yes. Harvey Banks [the director of the Department of Water Resources] was an engineer. Thad Binkley, who was a consultant engineer for the district in those days, was, I think, a classmate of Harvey's over at Stanford, so he knew him personally. Then we got to know him quite well. He was a good, straightforward, straight-shooter type of guy.

Lage: Not a politician type?

Whitfield: No. The subsequent one, Bill Warne, was more politically oriented.

Lage: Now, how would that be evidenced? When you say someone's politically oriented, how does that affect the way you deal with them?

Whitfield: Well, I don't think you deal with them any differently except that you have the feeling you're dealing with a big operating politician, as compared to Harvey Banks, who was a very smart man. He knew engineering, and he knew the projects.

Lage: Maybe he knew his business better?

Whitfield: I don't think Warne understood as much about the state water plan as Harvey Banks did. Harvey Banks is still a consultant engineer for many districts. In fact, he's been consultant engineer ever since he got out of the Department of Water Resources. But I think his character and reputation in the state had a lot to do with the state water plan going through. I think Warne was back in Washington for I don't know how many years in some capacity or other prior to coming with the state of California.

Lage: He and Banks were both interviewed by our office.*

* Harvey O. Banks, California Water Project, 1955-1961, 1967. William E. Warne, "Administration of the Department of Water Resources, 1961-1966" in California Water Issues, 1950-1966, 1981.

Whitfield: Well, don't let him read what I said. [laughter] He's not there anymore.

Lage: No, then Gianelli came in?

Whitfield: Bill Gianelli was a young engineer when this all started out.

Lage: Was he with the Department of Water Resources as a young engineer?

Whitfield: Yes. And John Teerink. It was very interesting, the attorney they had was a very brilliant man, and he was totally blind, Russ--I can't remember his last name. He was amazing. The contract is about an inch and a half thick, and he had his Braille copy. Boy, he'd enter in the discussions, and he'd flip a page and quote what it said and all that.

Ground Water Basin vs. Hetch Hetchy Water: The Primary Conflict

Lage: Now, in the mid-fifties, there seemed to be a lot of discussion in the district about state water as one of the options or directions you were going to take. In my research I picked up a statement from [former Fremont mayor] Jack Stevenson, which must have been in the newspaper, that the district seemed lukewarm about Feather River water. Did they feel you weren't going after it hard enough?

Whitfield: I think what happens sometimes is people get excited about something, and they think they're all for it prior to knowing what the facts are. I think the district has always taken the conservative approach: we want to pursue avenues, but we want to know what we're doing before we commit ourselves, before we go out forcefully endorsing it, and I think that's always been the district attitude.

We had the Hetch Hetchy lines going all through the district, and we had connections to them. There was some faction that wanted us to forget the ground water basin. The only conflict we had in our district was ground water basin vs. Hetch Hetchy water. Of course, Hetch Hetchy water was much softer, less mineral content and all that, but more expensive.

Lage: The state water system meant ground water recharging?

Whitfield: No, not necessarily.

Lage: You could bring it in as a surface distribution?

Whitfield: We have a ten-million gallon a day treatment plant up on the hill with South Bay Aqueduct water.

Lage: And that's for surface distribution?

Whitfield: Then since I've been retired, probably in the last five years, they bought another location for another treatment plant up there, because there's more capacity in the aqueduct. But southern California does both ground water recharge and surface distribution.

Lage: So were these two separate issues? I guess it was never too controversial that you would get the state water, or was it? Did some people say, "Forget the state water project?"

Whitfield: Well, there were some people who were against the state water, yes. But our main conflict was ground water vs. Hetch Hetchy water.

The problem with Hetchy water was that it costs more. There were times when saltwater intrusion was getting worse, and the board would say, "Well, let's go take more Hetch Hetchy water." But if you took more Hetchy water, then you had to raise rates, so then they'd back off. A board director in a community as small as this was never wants to raise rates, you know.

Lage: They seem very conservative fiscally.

Whitfield: Yes, right. So we finally got over that hurdle.

Jurisdictional Disputes with the Flood Control District

Whitfield: Now where we got in a difficulty here on the South Bay Aqueduct was with plans of the flood control district. The flood control district has zones, run-off zones and all that. Herb Crowle, the public works director of Alameda County, and others, were on the side of creating zone eight, which would have been all this area down here.

Lage: Zone eight of the flood control district?

Whitfield: Yes, but it never went through.

Lage: Did Crowle want to combine it with water distribution?

Whitfield: No, he wanted a set-up like zone seven in the Livermore Valley. They do conservation work, and they import water from the state water plan up there.

Lage: And do flood control.

Whitfield: And do flood control. Our district doesn't do any flood control. But if they created zone eight, it would mean that there would be another layer of government between us and the state.

Lage: I see. Zone eight would have contracted for water with the state.

Whitfield: Yes, that's what they wanted. That would mean that we would have nothing to say about anything. Flood control would contract with the state, and then they would set rates for us, to sell it to us. The board never would go along with that. Why put somebody else in there responsible for determining your rate structure?

Lage: That's right. Why did Herbert Crowle support that? Would he have had more authority in zone eight?

Whitfield: Oh, sure.

Lage: Any other local politicians that supported it, city politicians?

Whitfield: Yes, there were some people.

Lage: Again hoping to have a say over things?

Whitfield: Yes. I think there are certain people in the community who took up the idea, and maybe some of the cities too, and particularly Fremont.

Early Water Conservation Measures

Lage: Did the proponents of zone eight have a different approach to water policy--less ground water recharge or any of these issues that we've talked about?

Whitfield: They may have been swayed more by less ground water recharge, but the only problem is, Ann, with that issue: the ground water basin is like being just a little bit pregnant; you're either going to have salt water in it or you're not. So the steps that we've taken have been necessary to keep salt water out of the ground water. In the earlier years and the late forties it was

Whitfield: just local run-off that was diverted into pits to recharge the ground water. Then we got some releases. In 1936, we got releases from San Francisco in accordance with the Bailey formula again. The Bailey formula was determined when Spring Valley Water Company in San Francisco built the Calaveras Dam on Calaveras Creek, a major tributary to Alameda Creek.

Lage: The Bailey Formula went way back to an early court decision, didn't it?

Whitfield: Yes. What that did in essence was, when you put in all these factors of humidity and rainfall and all this—I never did understand it—but you come out with a figure that will tell you how much water would have percolated from the Alameda Creek into our ground water basin had the water flowed uninhibited by the dam.

Lage: That's really an interesting figure.

Whitfield: Yes. It's a simple feature, but I never did understand the formula, I never had to calculate it. But then in the mid-thirties the ground water level went way down, and salt water kept coming in worse and worse. Mr. Patterson went to San Francisco and negotiated with Tom Espy and George Pracy. He was the general manager, chief engineer.

Anyway, they worked out a deal where if we took over some of the free water obligations that San Francisco had inherited from the Spring Valley Water Company, in the entire community, they would give us some advance releases. They gave us many thousand acre-feet of water. We used to have a hydrograph on the boardroom—it's taken down now—back to 1913, and you could see the water level going down, down, down, and then when they started releasing this water, up, up, up again. That was one of the district's first conservation efforts.

The first conservation thing was buying out the Oakland Water Works at Alvarado to prevent that eight million gallons of water from being exported. Then the next one was the San Francisco releases. They used the original Western Pacific borrow pit, where they dug out the gravel when the Western Pacific came through this community to make the road beds for the railroad tracks. San Francisco had a thirty-six inch water line that went down Peralta Boulevard. The water district ran a pipe over into the pit and that used to percolate thirty million gallons of water a day. Of course, that was clear water with no turbidity in it at all.

Lage: That was Hetch Hetchy water?

Whitfield: No, it came from the Calaveras, the local run-off that was stored in their reservoir. So those were the main steps in trying to eliminate the saltwater intrusion. In other words, they tried to get the water level up to sea level, so the gradient wouldn't be inland; it would reverse the flow and prevent salt water from entering the ground water basin. They succeeded in doing that.

Lage: Then when was the next crisis period? Was there another real crisis during the thirties, or were you planning ahead enough?

Whitfield: The planning that they did was to get everything that was available within reason because the district didn't have the finances to build big projects. Before the South Bay Aqueduct came in, we didn't know what chance we had because there were no real bond issues in this district.

District Role in Del Valle Reservoir Planning

Lage: This is another question that came up in the research. You hired Sidney Harding—I think we talked about that last time—in '57. In his oral history, he talks about his role in working with the state. Was he an important person in the negotiations?

Whitfield: Yes, he was. He helped with them.

Lage: Did he have anything to do with those key decisions, which we need to get into, about the way the water would come from the aqueduct instead of through the tunnel?

Whitfield: Well, he was the consultant on the Del Valle Dam for us. You see, we had applied for the unappropriated water of the Del Valle watershed. We thought that maybe the state would put in a regulatory storage dam. They would bring water from the delta in the wintertime and store it there, and then it could be released in the summer here.

But for some reason, their geology indicated that it wasn't a suitable site for a dam and they decided not to make it a part of the state plan. But, since the district had applied for the unappropriated water, we had an interest in seeing the dam built there, and he did the calculations and all that and represented us in Sacramento with the Department of Water Resources.

When you apply for unappropriated water, you have to keep making reports every so many years on what your progress is. That keeps your application alive. So we just decided to push it a little harder and go up to talk to the Department of Water

Whitfield: Resources with Harvey Banks and others. Harvey decided, "Well, since you guys are interested, why don't we go back and take another look at it?" They went back and did some more geology and found that it was a suitable site.

Lage: So they have built the dam. Do they use it to store the South Bay Aqueduct water?

Whitfield: Yes.

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Lage: What about Thad Binkley? He was a long-time engineer with you. How did he fit in with Harding?

Whitfield: Well, Binkley helped us negotiate the contract, and he did a lot of our actual design work for physical facilities of transmission, reservoirs, and that kind of thing. In the early days, we had a limited engineering staff.

Lage: When did you start developing more of an engineering staff?

Whitfield: Before '58 we only had about three engineers. We gradually just kept adding.

Lage: As you expanded?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: In fact, one of the things Harding mentions is that he broke off his contract because it wasn't enough engineering help for him. This is in his oral history.

Whitfield: You mean, with us?

Lage: With you. That he contracted for a certain amount of time but he got out of it earlier because the district hadn't provided the proper engineering support for him.

Whitfield: I don't think Sid had a staff. I think Sid did all his own work.

Lage: Well, that's why he was complaining about it. [laughs]

Whitfield: That doesn't stand out in my mind. My recollection is that the work that he had done had been accomplished.

Lage: Well, he did make it sound as if he completed his basic goals. He worked with San Francisco he said, and then on Del Valle and then also in negotiating with the state.

- Lage: Another thing he mentioned was that he seemed to find that he had less to do with the board of directors and more to do with the staff, you, I assume. That surprised him that the board didn't deal with him more. Do you recall?
- Whitfield: They didn't deal with him. He'd been to a couple of meetings, explained things and stuff like that.
- Lage: It didn't seem strange to me. It would seem--
- Whitfield: Unless Sid had been used to working with bigger organizations.
- Lage: With boards that were more active in day-to-day management.
- Whitfield: The board in general was not active. The only one that was really active in the day-to-day business was Mr. Patterson--not in a pushy way or anything, just as a businessman interested. He used to stop and see me a couple times a week. He'd say, "Well, Matt, how are things going? Anything new come up that I don't know about?" I'd tell him.
- Lage: Did he have a pretty good grasp of the technical aspects of it all?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. We had board members that just loved grilling engineers, but he wasn't that way. His was always a very gentle approach, and you always respected him for that because you knew he was truly interested.
- Lage: He didn't have a critical approach. It seems like more of a supportive--
- Whitfield: It was always supportive, yes.
- Lage: Would he ever ask questions that put you on the spot, do you recall?
- Whitfield: Sometimes things that he would bring up at the board meetings and ask me a question were things that we talked about in the office.
- Lage: That he felt others needed to hear?
- Whitfield: Yes.

Transporting Water over Altamont Pass

Lage: My notes show here that in '59 they began constructing the South Bay Aqueduct. You have told me that initially the water was going to be transported through a tunnel and that your district suggested a change from that plan.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, back in the planning stages of the South Bay Aqueduct, the plans called for boring a tunnel through Brushy Peak, which is in the Altamont Pass area. We were talking about some way of getting something to us faster than anticipated because of the lowering of the water table. We asked Harvey Banks if he would prepare a preliminary design of a pipeline coming up over the hill to bring water down into the Livermore Valley and let it run down the stream. So he said he would.

Then when they got into that, that's when the state Department of Water Resources concluded that it was more feasible, economical, from the power standpoint and all that, to run the thing over the hill than to build the tunnel.

Lage: So water would be pumped up the hill? Then did it go into a natural steam bed near Altamont Pass?

Whitfield: Yes. In '62, when we first got the water, it came over the hill and into the channel alongside the Altamont Pass highway. That channel normally takes care of the runoff from those hills. It's about twenty miles from there down to Fremont. So the water meandered down this channel--

Lage: Just through a natural system.

Whitfield: It came down the Niles Canyon.

Lage: All the way here without stopping at Del Valle?

Whitfield: Yes, because the Del Valle wasn't finished yet.

Lage: Now is that still used or did they change that after Del Valle was built?

Whitfield: Yes. We were taking our water at the turnout at the base of the Altamont Pass. They just shut that off. Then, when the aqueduct came further south and came down--you know where the Vallecitos Pass road is? Well, it's up in the hills on the other side here. You know, the Vallecitos is the backroad that goes to Livermore from this area. You've heard of where PG&E built the nucleonics plant up there?

Lage: No.

Whitfield: Well, it's right in that general area up there. So we decided for percolation purposes rather than pay for more aqueduct to bring it down, to take our water at the Vallecitos turnout. That's where we've been getting the percolation water ever since. But that happened a couple of years after we first took water from the Altamont turnout. I think we ran it down through the Livermore Valley maybe three or four years.

Lage: It sounds like a very good emergency procedure, simple.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, it was the only way we could get it.

Lage: When did you actually get the state water?

Whitfield: We got it in '62. We were the first ones to get water from the state plan.

Changing an Unreasonable State Contract

Lage: You mentioned to me that the district shaped the way contracts with the Department of Water Resources were written. Tell me about that.

Whitfield: That was after Harvey was gone and Bill Warne was in charge. There are several contractors with the state for state water. Each contract with the various water districts was the same-- they wanted them all uniform so they wouldn't have to interpret different things--and each contract had what is called a Table A in it. This specifies for the next so many years how much water you're going to take. So you start out with a lower amount, so many acre-feet for the first year, and you keep increasing it based upon what you think your needs are going to be over the next fifty years.

Since we were primarily going to be using ours for ground water recharge, and with the uncertainty of weather conditions, we were concerned about the inflexibility. You had to take as much water as you had in your Table A for that specific year. The way the contract was written, and everybody else had signed it except us, you had to pay for your water in that year. If you didn't take it, then you could have the opportunity of taking it just the next year, but not beyond that.

Lage: So if you had wet weather for a few years, as you usually do, kind of in a cycle--

Whitfield: We'd lose the money all the time, yes. So we held out. We wouldn't sign the contract until they changed it.

Lage: Now, how did those negotiations work out?

Whitfield: Well, Mr. Warne didn't like it too well.

Lage: Did you deal with him directly or with an attorney for the district?

Whitfield: No, the attorney and I convinced him. Now I understand that all the state contracts have changed.

Lage: That's interesting. Why do you suppose the other districts didn't try for the same thing that you did? Was it not as important to them?

Whitfield: Let's see, Santa Clara County uses ground water percolation and southern California does. I don't know why they didn't. Maybe they didn't see it as a critical item as we did because we weren't a very rich district down here. We just couldn't see ourselves having to pay for water for an illogical reason.

Lage: Now, would this have been something that you and the staff would have noticed and pushed, or someone on the board?

Whitfield: No, we did. We did all the negotiating on the contract. We kept the board apprised of where we were and what our problems were.

Lage: They were supportive of that, I'm sure.

Whitfield: Oh, yes.

Fighting Saltwater Intrusion in the Ground Water Basin

Lage: This discussion of state water leads into a longer discussion of the saltwater intrusion problem. You've given us some background on that problem over the years.

Whitfield: The saltwater intrusion, as I remember, started about in 1920. That was before centrifugal pumps came in. The water was primarily used for agriculture. As time went on, the water tables started to go down. You could only pump a certain height with the pumps they had. Then they developed the centrifugal pumps, so then they pumped down deeper.

- Lage: I've also read that they changed to different crops that required more water.
- Whitfield: Yes, right. More irrigation, yes. I think in the early days there was more dry farming, you know, wheat or barley and that type of stuff. Then they went to row crops, like peas and corn and cauliflower.
- Lage: And lettuce. That takes more water.
- Whitfield: But then, as I say, the only things that were done to help alleviate the problem was to buy the Alvarado plant, which eliminated Oakland's proscriptive right to pump eight million gallons of water a day out of the ground water basin. Of course, that was 1930, way before my time.
- Then the next thing was getting the advance releases in the thirties, getting it from San Francisco to put in the Western Pacific pit. I thought maybe you would be specifically interested in the fact that that pit was the first quarry dug out here, by Western Pacific for the roadbase for putting the railroad tracks through here.
- Lage: Did that mean the pit was dug down into the water level.
- Whitfield: Yes. Well, if the water level was down it may have been below the pit. It wasn't a deep pit; it must have been about two- or three-thousand feet long and about seven hundred feet wide or something like that. It was just a V dug down. All that Western Pacific did was just dig enough gravel for their own purposes. Then the Shinn Pit was dug. The Shinn Pit was the first commercial gravel pit operator. Then the Ford and Bunting pits on this side were done about the same time.
- Lage: Also for a commercial purpose?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: Were the quarries out of business when you took over the pits?
- Whitfield: Well, the Shinn Pit belonged to the Shinn family. Mr. Shinn had been on the board.
- Lage: He was the first president, I think?
- Whitfield: Yes. They had signed an agreement that the district could use that pit. It was a fifteen-year agreement for, I think it was, seven hundred dollars a year or something like that. Then we had an agreement about the Western Pacific and that expired, but they let us use it for several years afterwards.

Lage: Now, was there a feeling among some people that you couldn't really control where that water was going to go, that some of it would waste to the bay? When you recharged the ground water, how did you know it was going to stay in the aquifers?

Whitfield: That was quite a question in a lot of peoples' minds.

Lage: Was it among the engineers? Were knowledgeable people questioning that or just--?

Whitfield: No.

Lage: How did you know it wouldn't just drift out to the bay?

Whitfield: Well, by studying the ground water geology, the ground water basin geology. We had a couple of studies made there. There may be--in fact, there was some contention that one of the aquifers went clear across to the peninsula. But there was nobody pumping over there at the time.

Lage: It's an interesting geological feature.

Whitfield: Yes. One of the problems with the ground water issue was that there were not too many people, even engineers, that understood much about it. Engineers understand surface distribution systems, reservoirs and all that, but you have to have some knowledge of geology too. I learned all I knew about it from coming with the water district.

Lage: The geologist may be the one who can tell you what you need to know.

Whitfield: Yes. The only time I knew anything different was when my father drilled a well about two thousand feet up here in the prune orchard, dug down and got water. You know the interesting part of that? My father believed in the old weegie stick. The well driller wanted to drill it down by the creek. I think they did drill, and they got nothing, so my father told him, "You go up in the corner." And he got water.

Lage: And did your father use the weegie stick?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Do you know anyone else who's done that?

Whitfield: I've tried it.

Lage: Does it work?

Whitfield: I don't know. I never drilled a well to see. [laughing]

- Lage: But have you ever felt the tug of it or had an experience with it?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. The interesting thing about this well that my dad drilled was that they hit a pocket of natural gas down there. Every irrigating season when they first started the pump up, you could put a match--you know, the bottom part would be water and the top part would be natural gas--and it would burn for three or four days.
- Lage: Goodness! It sounds like it could be dangerous.
- Whitfield: Well, it wasn't that high an explosive.
- Lage: It seems that with ground water recharging you had a public relations problem in explaining to people how you can let water seep into the ground and be sure that you're going to have it to pump out.
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: I want to ask you about the California State Department of Water Resources Bulletin 81 issued in 1960. How did that come about, and did it have an influence?
- Whitfield: This area is one of the classic examples in the state of salt water intrusion and depletion of the water basin. The state was interested in it, and they were studying this area for a long time, the geology and all that. Their studies were one reason we knew that we wouldn't lose much water through the percolation pits. They culminated their study with Bulletin 81, which covered all the ground water problems, how much water was available and that type of thing.
- Lage: So was that a useful thing for decision making?
- Whitfield: Oh, sure.

The Aquifer Reclamation Program, 1974

- Lage: I have a date of 1974--is that accurate?--when you started the aquifer reclamation program?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: Why don't we talk about that?

Whitfield: Well, subsequent to getting state water in and bringing the water table up to sea level, we started the aquifer reclamation project.

We went down along the extremities of the district towards the bay and drilled wells to start pumping out the salt water that was in the upper strata where it had to be pumped out and discharged back into the bay.

Lage: Through channels, surface channels, or pipes?

Whitfield: Through channels, flood control channels. I don't think they had to lay much pipe, but there were drainage ditches.

Lage: So they'd actually pump out the upper--

Whitfield: They pump salt water out and dump it back into the bay. The point is, then, to bring the water level up in the forebay area. The forebay is the main part of the gravel where most of the gravels are contiguous. By bringing south bay aqueduct water in, we brought the level up, but to keep the salt water from coming back in again, you've got to keep pumping, and you've got to keep recharging what you pump out. [See diagram, page 82.]

Lage: Because otherwise water would be sucked in from the bay?

Whitfield: It would suck it back in from the bay, yes.

Lage: Was there any construction done?

Whitfield: No, no barriers, no.

Lage: Was that ever a plan, to build some barriers?

Whitfield: No. It was thought of but just disregarded as being impractical.

Lage: Salt water was pumped out, and then was the south bay aqueduct just allowed to percolate in, or did you have to force it into those wells?

Whitfield: Well, they put in injection wells now. That's another stage. That's what they're doing now.

Lage: I see. Has that been successful?

Whitfield: Yes, I think it has. Of course, I've been out of it for eight years. It's doing its job. Incidentally, I saw in that local paper that comes out from the San Jose Mercury--did you see that article about Ardenwood Park?

Lage: No.

Whitfield: They're having a problem with salt water in the ground down there. Some of the trees are dying and they're wondering whether they can keep the farm going because the salt water and boron is getting down in there.

Lage: I thought that this salt water plan was working.

Whitfield: Well, it isn't absolutely perfect. There are certain spots where there are problems.

Lage: It sounds like it's a difficult problem to solve.

VI THE PUMP TAX: CONTROVERSY WITH DISTRICT FARMERS

Enabling Legislation and Rationale for the Pump Tax

Lage: The other issue that came up with the state water that sounded like a very interesting controversy was the issue of who pays for the state water--the pump tax or replenishment assessment.

Whitfield: That was very controversial.

Lage: First of all, it seems, there was enabling legislation at the state level in 1961.

Whitfield: That's what gave us the ability to even impose a pump tax.

Lage: Was that particularly designed for this district?

Whitfield: Well, it's applicable to the Alameda County Water District. But for southern California there is the same kind of legislation. They have the ability to do that. I think when our attorney drafted the thing he used that as a guide. So there are others, but it has to be passed by the legislature for specific areas.

Lage: Who was your attorney at that time?

Whitfield: Morris Hyman.

Lage: So you developed the idea that this was going to be a necessary way to pay for the water?

Whitfield: Because there were predominantly farmers on the board, they weren't very enthusiastic about a pump charge. You see, the claim as the area grew was that it was the municipal water users that were causing the problem: they're using all the water. In reality, the farmers back in the beginning, they were the only ones who pumped it out. They pumped for years and years, and it lowered the water table.

Lage: And the city also pumps?

Whitfield: Yes, the city pumps now but not very much. They've only got a well over at the lagoon and the lake over there. But, in the early days, the farmers were pumping up predominantly the largest quantities of water.

Lage: And not paying anything, except the price of their wells?

Whitfield: No, the only thing they're paying was the ad valorem tax because there's an ad valorem tax for the conservation aspect of the water district. But everybody in the district pays that.

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Lage: So you had the ad valorem tax, which everybody paid, and that was for conservation?

Whitfield: It went way back when, yes.

Lage: Then you had the charge for water used by surface distribution.

Whitfield: Yes, but that's--see, the water district has really three divisions: water importation; water conservation, percolation, recharge; and water distribution. Now the predominant pumper is the water district because as we have grown we are pumping more water from the ground water basin for municipal distribution. So the water district is the predominant pumper of water.

Lage: For surface distribution?

Whitfield: Yes. Well, we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Lage: Yes, let's start at the beginning.

Whitfield: The only reason that there were attempts to convince the board that the pump tax is a logical thing is that there's no relationship between an ad valorem tax on assessed valuation and water consumption. In other words, if the farmers had relatively cheap land, they're paying relatively cheap ad valorem taxes yet they're pumping most of the water.

Lage: Whereas industry might have a--?

Whitfield: Well, it's still not just because, you know, it's just like a service station, what you pay for is what the pump says you pay for. You've used that water. Then there was a condition in there where a lot of a given size with a well on it paid a flat ten dollars, or something like that.

Lage: Now was this after you passed the pump tax?

Whitfield: No, that was in the act itself.

Lage: Oh, I see, in the enabling legislation.

Whitfield: Yes. The only reason they finally acquiesced to push for the legislation was that--let's see. Yes, they had--I'm trying to remember the sequence. I think the minimum charge was ten dollars, and for some time we went along without any meters. They had to fill out forms estimating what they used and that didn't work out so well. Then they had the act amended again so that--by that time the cities were incorporated--they would limit the agricultural cost for water to eight dollars per acre foot.

Lage: Oh? Now who amended that or who made the move to amend it?

Whitfield: The board did. The only way to get agreement on the board to impose the pump tax was by limiting the amount the farmers would pay. Otherwise the farmers were fighting.

Pump Tax Hearings: Outraged Reaction from Farmers

Lage: That's what it sounds like from the minutes of these two hearings. You had a tremendous amount of public reaction.

Whitfield: Oh, yes. All of the farmers, "We've owned this land all our lives, that's our water, it's under our property," and all that. Well, they are entitled to a certain amount of that water, but you know, different farmers pump for different crops. As an example, somebody has two hundred acres and maybe they farm one crop a year, and somebody has two hundred acres and maybe they farm six or seven crops a year. Well, you're going to have six or seven times the amount of water used.

I got accused of being on both sides. Somebody would yell at me because I was for the pump tax, and some would yell, "You're holding it back."

Lage: In this first hearing, several people called you on the report you'd written and seemed very unhappy with your report.

Whitfield: Oh, I'm sure there was disagreement on the quantities of water that different operations use--agricultural, industrial, municipal and all that. I wasn't very popular.

Lage: But both sides were after you?

Whitfield: Yes, I was accused of being on both sides.

Lage: Which side were you really on?

Whitfield: I was on the pump tax side, yes. And, you know, I'd been born and raised in this community, and my mother and father were, and they didn't think it was too nice for a local boy to impose a pump tax on all these old friendly farmers. But farming has always been subsidized to some extent by the federal government or something like that.

Lage: What does this say about the strength of the farmers in the community that they were able to fend off the pump tax for quite a while? In the sixties, I'm surprised they still had that much strength. How do you explain that?

Whitfield: Well, there was still a lot of farming going on.

Lage: Were they people with a lot of political ties?

Whitfield: They're just farmers. Oh, I'm sure they had political ties with local politicians, yes.

Lage: Now what about your board members? Let's see who I have here at that time?

Whitfield: You've got Amaral--

Lage: But the president was Humpert--this is in '64.

Whitfield: Bill Humpert. He was an insurance agent. He used to be a game warden and then an insurance agent. He was from Irvington.

Lage: Did he have sympathies with the farmers?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Then we have Tony Alameda. Tell me about Alameda.

Whitfield: Of course, he worked for L.S. Williams, who was the second largest farmer and he had a packing shed here in Centerville. Tony ran his operations, hiring the Mexicans to pick and harvest the crops and all that kind of stuff. Of course, he was against the pump tax.

Lage: Yes, I could see that. Then there was Bernardo.

Whitfield: Bernardo. Well, you know, most of the farmers around here were old-time friends of his. He used to be the constable of our area for years. He had twelve-acre orchard of apricots down on Baine Avenue.

It's hard for me to remember exactly who took the strongest position, but I know Alameda was against it.

- Lage: Then also at that time Borghi and Redeker were on the board. They voted for the pump tax, it seems. My notes show that on May 12th, 1964, Alameda and Humpert opposed the tax—this was after the two hearings—Borghi and Redeker favored the tax, and Bernardo was absent.
- Whitfield: Yes, [laughs] that was convenient. So they couldn't impose it.
- Lage: Right, because they didn't have enough votes to impose it. When was the pump tax finally imposed? Not until '70?
- Whitfield: Yes. We had a number of public hearings. For a while we didn't even have public hearings, I don't think, but the way the legislation was written, every year by a given date the board had to order that a survey, a report, be prepared showing the water sources, water levels, etc., if the board wanted to consider imposing a pump tax for that year.

Then you'd have a public hearing on the report. Half of the people that spoke at the hearing probably had not read the report. They just wanted to holler and convince the board that it's unjust and all that stuff. Then when the community grew and more people kept moving in, there was considerable change. The farmers all alleged that they didn't cause the problem: it was the industry and pumping water for all the new houses. But, in those earlier days, that wasn't true.

- Lage: The pumping wasn't really for the new houses?
- Whitfield: The farmers were still pumping a substantial amount of water, yes. But the proportions changed over the years. Now, I'd probably guess about seventy-five percent of the water is pumped by the water district for municipal distribution.

A Shifting Balance of Community Power: Pump Tax Passed, 1970

- Lage: So, by 1970, you think the change in the community, the balance of power, say, made the difference?
- Whitfield: Right.
- Lage: It would seem that the 1964 vote against the pump tax was the most controversial decision, wasn't it?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Was there any move electorally to replace the board with those more sympathetic to the pump tax?

Whitfield: I don't think so.

Lage: Just kind of a natural evolution?

Whitfield: This board that's in there now, they've been in since, oh, sometime in the sixties.

Lage: Oh, really? You mean, there's that much continuity on the board?

Whitfield: Yes. Oh, except the one that's relatively new on there now is Carl Strandberg. He's an ecologist. He got on as a water conservationist and ecologist.

Lage: Does he have training in ecology?

Whitfield: He's taken some courses, and he says that he writes some of these books. He knows many people in that field.

Lage: Again, we're a little off the subject, but I think it's interesting because I wanted to talk about environmentalists and how they related to the district, which happens probably more in the seventies. Does he have a particular point of view about the water conservation program here?

Whitfield: Oh, yes, he's all for it and supports it very much.

Lage: Does he have any policy ideas that you would object to?

Whitfield: No.

Lage: What types of things does he propose?

Whitfield: Well, just somewhat far-out things.

Lage: How does he get elected?

Whitfield: He's a conservationist, he's an ecologist and environmentalist, and he writes books.

Lage: I imagine incumbents tend to get elected in a district like this. It's probably not a hot issue, who's running for the water board, would you say?

Whitfield: No.

Lage: Has it ever been? Do you remember any controversial elections?

Whitfield: It never--no. I think maybe when John Pihl ran for the board everybody was concerned that he was going to raise hell because of the flood. I think I've mentioned to you before that I've seen people come on the board of directors who were against rehabilitation of the ground water basin, and they're not on the board very long before they're a staunch supporter of it.

Lage: [laughs] Once they become educated.

Whitfield: So, you see, in the last ten years policy has been pretty well carved in granite. There's not much you can do about changing it. We've got so much invested in the ground water basin it would be crazy to try to abandon it now. It would be the wrong thing to do because we're saving--just from local runoff we get maybe about twenty-five thousand acre-feet a year on the average. One year will be less, another greater.

For the distribution system, we've still got Resolution 81 that sets forth how the developers pay for storage and all this stuff. There doesn't seem to be any criticism of that anymore, except--the only problem I used to have was the little developer. He'd say, "Oh, that's all right for the big developer, they can afford it." I'd say, "Well, that's the policy whether you're big or small."

Lage: Was it a lot harder for the small one to afford it, then?

Whitfield: Well, sometimes, yes.

Lage: Did you have dealings with Jack Brooks?

Whitfield: Oh, yes. I had many dealings with him, yes.

Lage: Did he understand your needs?

Whitfield: Yes. He was one of the biggest developers around here. He'd come in and negotiate with me sometimes and then later on as they got bigger, he'd send other people. He was a very cooperative person. He just would come in and say, "Well, what are we stuck with now?" "Resolution 81." [laughter]

Lage: So maybe it was easier to deal with the larger developers.

Whitfield: Yes, excepting Conway and Culligan. They were large developers, but they just thought they were going to come over here to their country cousins and push them around.

Water Pump Meters

- Lage: Interesting. Anything else about that pump tax that we should talk about, any other--?
- Whitfield: One of the big flaps was over the flat charge the board had imposed on small lots. The little guys would complain about it, so the board just eliminated that charge.
- Lage: And eventually they went to meters to actually measure the water usage?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. Then they cried about having to supply their own meters. That was another one of the stalls because, you know, they were not too cheap. The board finally decided, well, we'll pay for the meters and put them on. Yes, so that was another sticky wicket.
- Lage: That was later, after '70?
- Whitfield: Before they put in the meters. They first imposed the pump tax without meters. There were some weasel words in the legislation that they could see a way to avoid putting in the meters. Temporarily you could, for certain reasons, delay the time when they went on.
- Lage: And then you went on the farmer's estimate of how much water he used?
- Whitfield: On the estimate, yes. We used to get into arguments with them because they had to give an estimate of what they were going to use and then a finalization of what they did use. And they didn't--
- Lage: It was way off-base?
- Whitfield: Yes. You know, we had charts showing how much water peas would take for an acre, corn would take, potatoes and all that stuff, and they argued over it. They very seldom would agree with the figures we used.
- Lage: Did this cause you any trouble, personally, I mean, or trouble between the board and the staff, since the staff seemed to be in favor of the pump tax and even had gone so far as to urge the board to get enabling legislation passed? It's kind of an interesting situation.
- Whitfield: Well, let me say this. We knew that ultimately it had to go in. We knew it had to go in. It was just when it would be politically astute. So we never pushed it that hard. In fact,

Whitfield: in talking about it, I don't think we got in any arguments with the board. We'd just talk about it outside and that type of thing.

Lage: You just kind of waited for them to come around?

Whitfield: Yes.

VII PROTECTING THE GROUND WATER BASIN

Standards for Well Abandonment, Well Drilling, and Drainage Wells

Whitfield: Another thing we did do to help stem off the salt water intrusion was to deal with abandoned wells. There were abandoned wells that could deteriorate and the casing could rot and let the salt water come down from one aquifer to the other. So we got together with the cities because they have the power to pass an ordinance for well abandonment and well-drilling standards and all that. We wrote the standards, and then we agreed to issue the permits and inspect them. There's a fee for that that the well driller has to pay, or the property owner that's filling the well.

Lage: So you would inspect well drilling?

Whitfield: Yes, and well abandonment. But the city had the enforcement powers.

Lage: How did you deal with abandoned wells?

Whitfield: We would find the log of the old well. The cities made it a condition of their building permits that if there was a well on the piece of property they had to agree to abandon the well in accordance with the specifications. What they did was--see, here's the ground level here. We were fortunate in that we got copies of all the old well logs from one of the old well drillers that drilled most the wells around here.

They go down and clean the old well out if it's dirty. Then they go down and they know where the gravels are in the stratas, and they go down with a tool and slit the casings; then they pack the well with cement, so that salt water could not leak down around the cement plug and couldn't get into the lower aquifers.

Lage: That must have been an expensive process.

- Whitfield: Yes. The developers had to do it. In the old days, when they had the Oakland wells down there in Alvarado, there were a lot of wells that we went in and plugged ourselves.
- Lage: So that was a known technique to plug the wells so they wouldn't pollute the aquifers.
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: Something I wanted to ask you, going back to the fifties, was about the problem of drain wells.
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. We had no street drainage systems in our towns, so when development started--we should have fought it more than we did, but I think it was a political thing because the development couldn't start without drainage--the county let them put in drainage wells in certain locations to drain the water off the streets.
- Lage: Down into the ground water?
- Whitfield: Into the first aquifer of the ground water. The concern there was that the contamination from the streets could get into the ground water basin. Those wells have been all plugged up now.
- Lage: That was something that you were against, but sort of allowed to happen to a degree?
- Whitfield: The board should have taken a more firm position about it, but it was the beginning of development out here.
- Lage: What was the alternative? Well, the flood control district would have been the alternative.
- Whitfield: Yes, but they didn't have it yet.
- Lage: But is that how the drainage problem was solved, by getting flood control here?
- Whitfield: Yes, when they created zones for the different areas out here, for flood control only and drainage and that type of thing.

Addendum on Saltwater Intrusion and the Aquifer Reclamation Program

[Begin Interview 3: June 26, 1987]##

- Lage: Today's June 26th, 1986, and it's our third and final interview with Matt Whitfield. You had given me an article last week about saltwater intrusion at the Patterson Ranch. Before the tape came on today, you and I talked a little bit about what might be done to solve this problem. I want you to sort of clear up the process of how saltwater intrusion is prevented.
- Whitfield: Yes. The water district first started getting releases of water in the Alameda Creek which is the main contributor recharging the ground water basin. That's all through the Niles, Centerville, and Alvarado areas. That's where originally nature recharged the ground water basin from the local watershed.
- Lage: Just percolating down through the creek bed?
- Whitfield: Through the creek bed, and that was the natural phenomenon that occurred. Then people pumped the water out and the level went down. That's how from excess pumping years back, the salt water from the bay started coming in to the upper strata, which is about a hundred feet below the ground surface. Then it came up into what they all the forebay, which is the recharge area all along Alameda Creek. As pumping continued and they got centrifugal pumps and pumped from the deeper second strata, then the salt water came from the bay up over the lip and came in the forebay area and went back into the lower strata.
- The recharge is accomplished by taking water from the Alameda Creek, either natural runoff or imported water from the South Bay Aqueduct, and pumping it through the levees into the pits. The pits are big lakes, maybe twenty or thirty or forty acres, and then that water percolates. The water surface that is seen in the pits is the natural water table in the ground water basin.
- Lage: So the water just sinks down through the gravel in the pits.
- Whitfield: The gravel in the stratas. In what we call the forebay area along the creek, that's where all the gravels are contiguous. Then they stratify out from that area in the ground water at different levels of gravel--which are separated by impervious aquifers, or layers of clay--but it's all recharged from up here along the creek.

Lage: I think we'll include with this interview a diagram, such as this. [See diagram page 82.] That will explain this more clearly.

Tell me more about the aquifer reclamation project in 1974. What did that do?

Whitfield: Well, we had some studies made and we [laughs]—I keep talking "we"; it's not "we" anymore. They drilled test holes before you get to the bay out there, in various areas, after geological studies, and found where the aquifers were and good places to put the water and to put the wells to pump the salt water out of the upper strata. Because if you stopped the salt water from coming in the upper strata, then it won't reach into the forebay area and get into the lower strata.

So these wells are pumping water into channels which discharge the salt water back into the bay. But the theory is if you pump the salt water out, you've got to replace it with something. So the objective is to keep the water in the forebay, or in the general Alameda Creek area in the gravel, at sea level so that the salt water can't come in.

Lage: So you pump the water out and then the water you put in the pits--?

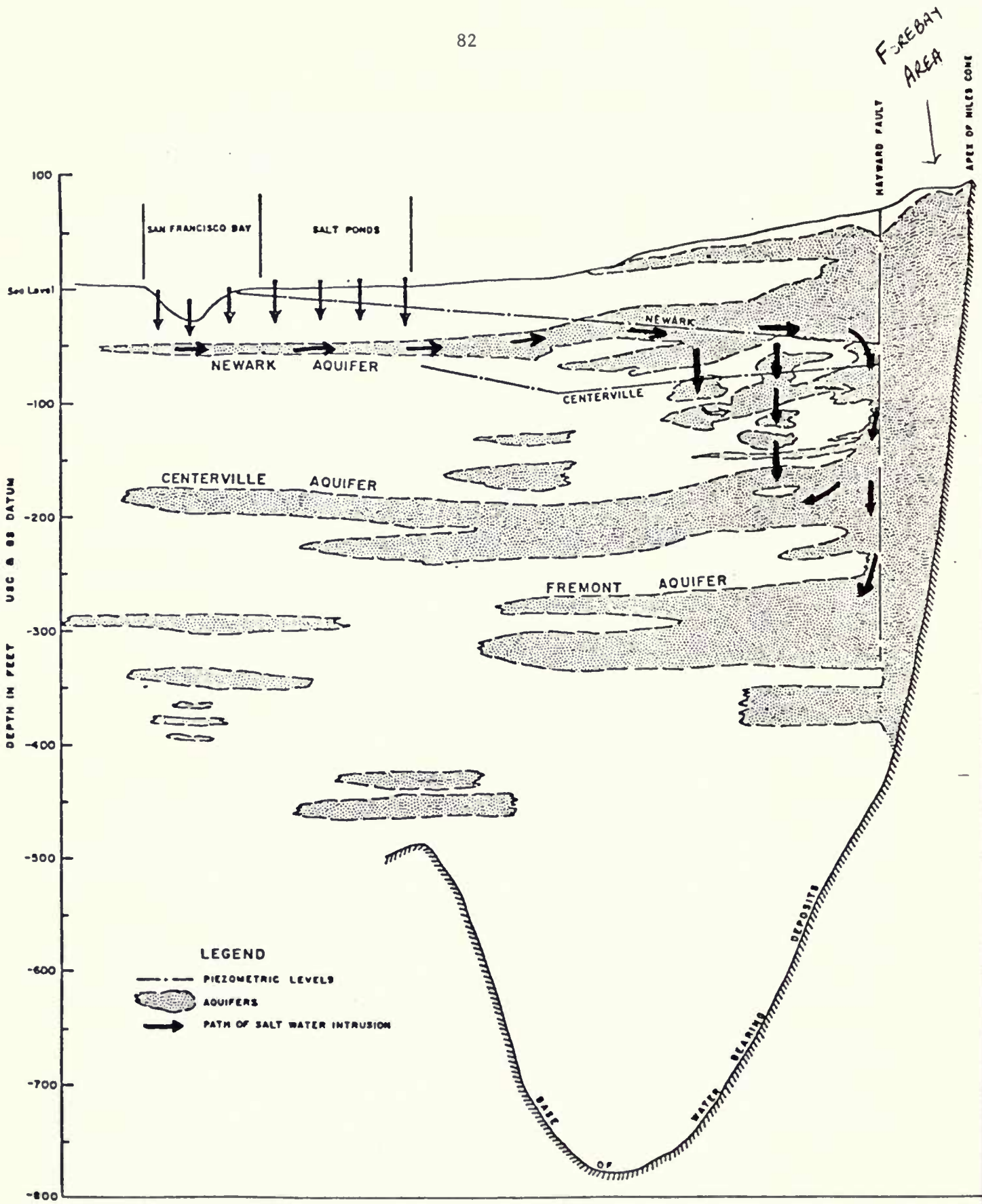
Whitfield: Is what goes into replacing it, yes.

Lage: So it's a very natural process.

Whitfield: And it not only replaces it, but it takes into account the consumption as people pump water out of wells. It used to be predominantly agriculture, which is now very minimal--there's hardly any agriculture there now. Industry pumps, but the water district itself is the major pumper for its domestic water distribution system.

Lage: The article about the Patterson Ranch just raised the question in my mind of why they're facing this problem of salt. It appeared to me that it had been taken care of with the aquifer reclamation project.

Whitfield: Well, the project isn't a hundred percent yet. But, as we were talking, there can be pockets of salt water in the stratas and if there's no pumping in that area, the water won't move in the strata. The water won't move if no one pumps. If it lies dormant for some time and then they started pumping in an area, then it may move water from one place in the strata. It'll flow towards the direction where it's pumping.



Courtesy of the California Department of Water Resources

INTRUSION OF SALT WATER INTO THE FREMONT STUDY AREA

PLATE 2

MAP 1

Whitfield: I think one of the things that are mentioned in that article is that they've got boron in the water also.

Lage: Right.

Whitfield: Boron is very detrimental to plant growth. We had an area up here in the Niles area above the fault--the fault goes through Irvington and down there in the Niles. It's an impervious barrier--and it's about eight or ten or twelve inches thick. Above the fault there were some pockets of boron up there.

Lage: Just naturally occurring?

Whitfield: Yes, it's a natural phenomenon in the mineral content of the water. Now, they did mention that there was boron in that water.

Lage: Right, that that was another problem besides the salt.

Whitfield: Yes. I don't know, maybe one of their answers is there. I don't know which strata they're pumping from. You know, these are all on the Patterson Ranch, and there's a lot of these wells that may be older wells that they tried to rehabilitate to use. Maybe those were some that were salty.

Lage: It could be.

Whitfield: I don't know whether they could drill other wells in their area somewhere. If they hooked up to the municipal distribution, that's pretty extensive water for irrigation.

Lage: Yes, that was the other alternative.

Whitfield: The only ones that can afford that is the Glad-A-Way Gardens that grow all those gladiolas. Sometimes they have hooked onto our system. We'd give them a connection to the system, but it's metered. Of course, that gladiola production is a very lucrative industry to be in.

Lage: So they can purchase the water?

Whitfield: Yes, because the water costs--well, I don't know what the rate is now, but maybe \$150 an acre foot. For water you pump out of the ground, maybe \$50 an acre foot.

Legal Action against Water Waste by Quarry Operators, 1968-1974

- Lage: Let's turn to another major issue in the seventies. Actually, I think it started about '68. That's the problem with the quarries pumping water out of your ground water basin.
- Whitfield: Yes. Of course, our recharge problem, recharging the ground water, is in direct opposition to the quarries approach because they came in and for years they just dug down to a certain level. Then, as the land got more expensive and they were running out of gravels, they started going down deeper. Well, the water table was down in those days. But when the South Bay Aqueduct came along we had a major supply to start recharging the ground water basin. Then we started raising the level in the ground water basin back to the state of nature. We called it the "state of nature" theory of what the average elevation in the ground water basin was.
- Lage: How did you determine what that "state of nature" was? Did you have good records on it?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. We had records going back to 1913. There used to be a hydrograph, you know, a chart, in the boardroom. We plotted every month and we had certain wells that we plotted.
- Lage: So you had good records going way back, then?
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. So we arrived at what the "state of nature" was from those records. These go back for many years. Well, back to 1913.
- Lage: What were the quarries quarrying?
- Whitfield: They were quarrying sand and gravel.
- Lage: Was their operation disrupted when you raised the water table?
- Whitfield: They got dredges in so they could quarry in the water, but then you can only dredge so far down. Then they started pumping the water out of the pits and dumping it in Alameda Creek, wasting it into the bay. That was directly contradictory to our purpose of raising the ground water to sea level for use, plus to rehabilitate the strata to get rid of the salt water.
- Lage: So they were taking water you'd pumped in, and pumping it out. How did you discover that they were doing this? Was it common knowledge?

Whitfield: Oh, yes. You could see the big pipes over there with their pumps running twenty-four hours a day. We put up with that. We tried to work with them and negotiate with them. They would say, "Well, we're going to do this and then we'll cut back," and all that kind of thing.

Lage: Were there several different companies?

Whitfield: There was Niles Sand & Gravel, and Rhodes and Jamieson, and PCA, Pacific Coast Aggregates. But PCA had more land, and they just moved into higher lands and quarried in there. They were not out of business yet, but they had lands where they could quarry without pumping water. They pumped a little, but not--

Lage: Rhodes and Jamieson and--

Whitfield: Rhodes and Jamieson and Niles Sand & Gravel, yes.

Lage: Kaiser is mentioned, also, in the minutes.

Whitfield: Well, yes, their pit is the only one on the south side of the creek; all the rest are on the north side. Their pit straddled the fault, east and west, so they had a high water table. They were the first ones that dredged up there, because the ground water above the fault was about thirty to forty feet higher than below the fault. So Kaiser was not involved in pumping water into the creek. They were practically out of business.

Lage: Before it became a problem?

Whitfield: Yes. There were just the two of them that pumped substantially.

Lage: Rhodes and Jamieson and Niles Sand & Gravel.

Whitfield: Yes. So we filed a lawsuit. We hired a special attorney who handled the case. Then we had Harvey Banks, who was the former director of the Department of Water Resources, who was very instrumental in getting us state water. That was the main purpose of the state water project--recharge of the ground water basin. He had retired from the DWR, so we hired him as our consultant, and he was one of our chief witnesses, plus Stan Saylor, at that time my assistant chief engineer.

Lage: Was one of the approaches to get the quarries to pay for the water they were pumping out?

Whitfield: No.

Lage: That wouldn't solve the problem?

Whitfield: The water they pumped out was completely wasted. It couldn't be put to beneficial use. It wouldn't help the ground water basin if they kept pumping the water out, even if they paid for it. We could only get so much water from the state. Our Table A in the state contract stipulates how much water we take each year. The fact that we got monetary return on it would not solve the problem. We didn't sue them for money; we were suing them to stop their pumping. We felt that the overlying landowners had the right to the ground water basin.

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Lage: There seemed to be some tie-in with the city here. The initial things that I noticed in the minutes in '68 and '69, you were going to request the city to enforce the use permits. Do you remember that at all? That was before the suit was filed.

Whitfield: The quarries were in operation before the city of Fremont was created, before they incorporated. I think in the newer permits we got in there that they could not pump water that wasted to the bay.

Lage: Do you remember if the city cooperated with that?

Whitfield: Well, they weren't too anxious to. Very frankly, they weren't too anxious to get their foot in that pie.

Lage: Pretty controversial?

Whitfield: Yes. Well, it was kind of political.

Lage: Did the quarries have a lot of political power?

Whitfield: Some, yes. One of them thought he had a lot more political power than he had.

Lage: Was this the Niles Sand and Gravel Company?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Was that a local company?

Whitfield: Well, no. Guy Clouser ran the thing; he was a part owner, but there were other investors in it.

Lage: You mentioned the "state of nature" theory that was very important. How did you develop that?

Whitfield: Let me just tell you what happened at the trial.

Whitfield: We had the experts, and we were in court quite a while. We were very fortunate to have Judge Lyle Cook, who was very interested in understanding the technicalities of what was being explained. We were fortunate to have him because knowledge and expertise in the ground water basin, in those days, was limited to a few. An average civil engineer had no background in it at all, but you learned through actually being involved in it. It's complicated. It's like any other technical thing; they have their own terminology.

But everything that he didn't understand he asked about. In fact, he had very high respect for Mr. Banks, Harvey Banks, and several times when Harvey had explained something the judge would ask, "Mr. Banks, would you mind going over that again for me? I want to make sure I understand it." Judge Cook even came out in the field to see the pits and get his own visualization of what was going on. He saw the pumps going and the water running down the creek and going out to the bay.

Lage: How about the witnesses for the companies? How did they counter Mr. Banks?

Whitfield: Well, they had some civil engineers who could design a pipe and that kind of stuff, but they didn't have much assistance in this problem. The fact is that the problem existed and to waste the water--even in those days, wasting water was not the socially acceptable thing. More now than then.

They had engineers who testified, but Harvey Banks was so knowledgeable. Harvey Banks was up there when they wrote Bulletin 81 and all the studies, and he was very familiar with all.

Lage: He knew your district well?

Whitfield: Oh, yes, yes, he did.

Lage: Did it become a question of public interest vs. the private property interests? I noticed in the minutes they talked about hiring the law firm, and they picked a firm that was expert in eminent domain.

Whitfield: Yes, John Rogers.

Lage: Did that bring up the interests of the entire district here vs. the individual property owner?

Whitfield: Yes, the public interest, yes. Who has the right to the water? That's the question. What right do you have to property? Do you have the right to go down and dig a hole, or dig pits, and by so doing waste another natural resource?

- Whitfield: They're quarrying gravel, which is a natural resource, to sell for profit. Now, people need water, so it's a question of the right to use your land to obtain the benefits of a natural resource, when in so doing you take another natural resource which is more valuable--you could probably do without gravel, but you never can do without water--and waste that to the bay for the purpose of profit.
- Lage: It's an interesting issue.
- Whitfield: Yes. Frankly, we had a very sharp attorney in John Rogers. He was more versed in eminent domain, land and appraisal, but he did his homework.
- Lage: Then there was another suit, the countersuit of the quarries against the district?
- Whitfield: Yes, for their damages. Rhodes and Jamieson dropped it. Our suit was over damages to the ground water basin. Rhodes and Jamieson stipulated and they decided not to go pursue that avenue, but Niles Sand & Gravel did, and then they had to pay--I forget what the settlement was for the water that they had wasted.
- Lage: Oh, they did pay for it?
- Whitfield: Yes. I forget what that figure was.
- Lage: But then they sued you for damages and lost that in 1974.
- Whitfield: I guess that's the one that they lost.

Pump Tax Update

- Lage: I also noticed--I think it was 1970--they went to the state legislature to try to get an amendment to your replenishment act or something. Do you recall that?
- Whitfield: The quarry operators? Oh, yes, because they were pumping water and using water from the ground water basin themselves, in their own well. When we got the legislative act through to allow the district to impose the replenishment assessment--that's our pump tax, commonly known--we had a lot of agricultural interests and some of the board members had backgrounds in agriculture. When the act was formulated, one board member took the position that he wouldn't vote for sponsoring the legislation unless the farmers got an \$8 maximum. So then when that happened the cities, particularly Fremont, got the bee in their bonnet. They

Whitfield: figured that since they were a public agency, they should get the benefit just like the farmer. So some of the board were ex-city councilmen so they acquiesced in that.

Lage: They got the \$8 maximum also?

Whitfield: Yes. Then the quarries wanted that same benefit. With the relationship not being too good over the quarry problem anyway, [laughs] the board said, "No way."

Lage: The board seemed pretty unanimous in most of its dealings, I noticed.

Whitfield: Well, that's right.

Lage: The pump tax was an exception.

Whitfield: That's a ticklish thing. You know, you're in an old community: it was farmers. It was a farming industry when it started; that was the only industry for years. You have that heritage, and the farmers had the idea, "Well, that water is under my property and I have unlimited use."

That just isn't true. It's true throughout the states. It's only in recent years--in the last twenty years or so--that some of the people have realized the value of the ground water basin, because the average citizen can't see it. Like our customers' water, you know, it doesn't matter where the water comes from--you pull it from the ground water basin, and the aquifers and they just don't--If you see a big surface lake, you know, that's a big bucket of water, but I don't see anything; I see ground.

Lage: I noticed that even the pump tax, after about '72, didn't seem controversial. Then the board, again, was unanimous every year when you were assessing the tax.

Whitfield: Well, but the law as written calls for the board to pass a resolution of intent every year before a certain date stating that they intend to charge a replenishment assessment, if they are going to charge a replenishment assessment in that year.

Lage: And that became kind of a routine matter.

Whitfield: Well, because that's what the law said. You have to go through a public hearing, publish a report and all that. The first one we had was held at the old Washington High School Auditorium, where there might be three hundred people.

Lage: Then I came across one where nobody showed up. The public hearing was declared closed. [laughs]

Whitfield: That's right. That's as it's been for a long time now, although the replenishment assessment, the pump charges, have gone up considerably. When we first imposed it, I think it was just \$10 an acre foot. I think it's up about \$60 or \$70 now. I'm talking about when I was there, so--

Lage: It may be higher yet.

Whitfield: Probably. Ann, you know what you ought to do is ask Ruth to give you a copy of one of the replenishment assessment reports. That will tell you how much water we've imported, how much we've percolated, how much was pumped out by industry and agriculture and all that, and how much overdraft there is. It will give you a good background. I should have thought of that before because that will give you a whole background.

Protecting the Alameda Creek Watershed in the Livermore Valley

Lage: Let's look at the situation in the Livermore Valley. I had remembered some litigation that you didn't recall [Larowe, p. 17].

Whitfield: I don't think we went through litigation in the Livermore Valley. We worked through the Regional Water Quality Control Board because Livermore came under their jurisdiction.

Lage: I noticed in the minutes that one time somebody suggested you look into a lawsuit, and then there's no further mention, so maybe it never got that far and you continued to work through the regional board. Did you get a lot of support from the Regional Water Quality Control Board?

Whitfield: Yes. We started early on to attend the Regional Water Quality Control Board meetings. You know, back in the old days, you'd drive into the entrance of the city of Pleasanton, and they had their settling ponds from their sewage treatment, and you had to hold your nose to drive by.

They contained their sewage in settling ponds. Then as time went on and they started building treatment plants, they came under the jurisdiction of the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the quality of the effluent that they pumped into the creek. We were always opposed to lax standards. We always worked with the board's staff to get the most rigid standards. What we were fearful of in those days was that these little towns in the Amador Valley would be interested in promoting industry. The whole area drains into the Alameda Creek up there, and eventually we'd get their wastes down here.

Whitfield: We figured that someday maybe a plant of the magnitude of General Motors would decide they wanted to settle in Livermore or in that area. There's no way that the politicians, or even the Regional Water Quality Control Board, would turn them down, unless water quality standards were in place.

Here in Fremont the industrial wastes go into sewer systems, but our sewer system dumps into the bay.

Lage: Yes, and their sewer system dumps into Alameda Creek, is that the idea?

Whitfield: Yes. We get the benefit of all their sewage effluent. We figured that if a plant would go in, aside from bacteriological considerations, if their discharge was high in boron or high in something that you just couldn't tolerate, where would we be?

Lage: Right, any type of toxic waste. But this was before there was so much concern with toxic waste.

Whitfield: Yes, there was a lot of opposition to controls, and, in those days, really the Regional Water Quality Control Board didn't have too many teeth, legally, but we were always a staunch supporter of them.

Lage: Did they work well with you?

Whitfield: Oh, yes.

Lage: So those things didn't come to a head because the Regional Water Quality Control Board kept the standards strict, is that correct?

Whitfield: Oh, yes. They kept them strict. In fact, they passed Resolution 91-126 that set the standards, and there was a lot of opposition to that. We weren't the most respected people in the Livermore-Amador Valley.

Lage: Then this same short history [Larowe, p. 17] mentions the district joined in opposition to a scheme of Kaiser Sand and Gravel to turn an abandoned gravel pit near Pleasanton into a solid waste garbage dump, supported by San Francisco.

Whitfield: That's right.

Lage: I guess San Francisco saw the site as a potential city dump.

Whitfield: No, no, because San Francisco gets water from the Sunol Valley.

Lage: The history says the project was supported by San Francisco. They needed a solid waste garbage dump facility. And that Kaiser didn't obtain a permit because of opposition of the Sierra Club and the Alameda County Water District.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, my memory isn't as good as it used to be, but San Francisco depends on some Alameda Creek water, too. They used to take water out of Alameda Creek at the water temple in Sunol and transport it through a thirty-six inch line that went under the bay to San Francisco.

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Whitfield: You put garbage in an abandoned quarry that is all connected with the ground water basin, and where does the contamination go? It goes into the ground water basin.

VIII THE WATER DISTRICT AND THE COMMUNITY

Fluoridation Controversy, 1969-1971

- Lage: Why don't we turn to the fluoridation issue. That seems like an ongoing controversy for a couple of years, anyway. Do you remember how that came up?
- Whitfield: Well, there were a lot of proponents of fluoridation.
- Lage: They seemed to start the issue by bringing a petition to the board in favor of fluoridation.
- Whitfield: Yes. In fact, I got my introduction to the fluoridation issue up in the Livermore Valley, when the California Water Service there was considering fluoridating the water. That's a private corporation, like Citizens Utility Company down here. I learned that they were having a hearing on the fluoridation issue up there, and I was going on vacation on a Friday so I went that way. That's where I got my first baptismal fire about the controversy in the fluoridation issue. In those days, whenever you had a fluoridation issue, they came out from all over, organized groups.
- Lage: From out of the area.
- Whitfield: To fight it, yes. A lot of people just don't believe in additives. They don't mind chlorination, that's sterilization, but additives are adding minerals or whatever it might be. In other words, they could say it could be a Communist plot. You know, you could put anything in the water you want if you want to wipe out a city or something.
- Lage: Well, did you find that opposition when you wanted to soften the water, for instance? Doesn't that involve putting things in the water?

Whitfield: Well, that changes the composition of calcium and magnesium. It changes from calcium hydroxide or something—I've forgotten now--into magnesium or something, which is not hard.

Lage: But do people object? That's an additive, too.

Whitfield: It really isn't an additive. It isn't--what you do is you run the water through a zeolite, which takes out certain minerals.

Lage: I see. You're removing minerals.

Whitfield: You're removing, you're not putting in. But there was controversy on the softening plant, too, because in softening you use the zeolite process, which is a resin type of thing. You filter it; you've got big tanks you can run it through. Then you backwash it with salt water to recharge the zeolite. Well, people get the idea that you're putting the salt into the water, which you're not.

But when you do that process, if you soften it too much--if you soften it to zero--then you do produce sodium in the water. So we had doctors in the heart business--that's where the problem of sodium comes in, you know, for people because of heart problems they can't have too much sodium for blood pressure and all that. Well, we had doctors who were representing the American Heart Association write letters that if you kept the salt content below a certain level that it wouldn't be a problem.

Lage: Was there an organized group here in the area that opposed that, the softening plant?

Whitfield: Not an organized group.

Lage: But just a few individuals?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: And then fluoridation came up. It was first mentioned in '69, and then there were two elections in '70 and '71. It sounded like the district was very evenly divided over it. The elections were very close.

Whitfield: Yes. Well, the board took a neutral position on it. If the people wanted it, and we could get the necessary financing, then we would do it; if the people didn't want it, the district wouldn't do it, which was sensible. There were no real proponents or opponents on the board.

Lage: I see. They were more or less neutral, then.

Whitfield: Yes. They were criticized for that. Some said, "Well, you should be the leaders and tell us what we should have."

Lage: I noticed that in the first election in '70 they didn't put any pro and con arguments on the ballot, and then for the second election they were directed that they needed to do that.

Whitfield: I think so, yes.

Lage: And also put a district argument, but I never did see an example of what that district argument might have been. Do you think it was a pretty neutral argument?

Whitfield: I can't remember. It might have been.

Lage: What were the people like who came to the board on both sides of those issues, do you remember?

Whitfield: The ones that were against fluoridation were really rabid activists. Some woman would get up from Pomona or wherever it is, "I had my aunt, it ruined her kidneys, and she died from it." Then they'd come in and say, "Well, you know fluoride is rat poison, used to kill rats," and all those far-out things. "Communist plots." "Kill people."

The softening controversy wasn't that intense. But let me tell you this, John Black spearheaded the opposition to fluoridation.

Lage: He was a local person?

Whitfield: Yes. I think he still lives around here. I haven't seen him for a long time. But he was not rabid like these other people. He was contained and sensible, no hollering, with these far-out accusations and all that.

Lage: He didn't go with the Communist plot theory?

Whitfield: No. In fact, I enjoyed working with him because he was just a smart man. He just believed in the theory that there should be no additives to water.

Lage: Just better not to take a chance?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Then who were the people who actually actively worked for fluoridation?

Whitfield: Well, the parents with little kids, who believed that if you start the kids young enough on it, fluoride does inhibit tooth decay. I don't know, they've never run a dental survey since we did it to see what the effects are, but--

Lage: I've read reports that show very much decreased tooth decay.

Whitfield: Do you mean about our district?

Lage: No, not your district, just in general.

Whitfield: Oh, yes. But I mean there were no local studies made. See, how they discovered fluoridation in certain states, they have natural fluorides in the ground water, in their water. But they noticed it because I think it was on an Indian reservation where the teeth got all mottled and discolored from too high concentrations of fluoride, but none of them ever had any cavities. So that's why you keep it down to a certain amount, so you don't mottle the teeth.

Lage: As a person responsible for running the water district, did you think there was a problem that errors could be made, or--?

Whitfield: You mean in operation?

Lage: Right. Did you have any doubts about whether the district could control the proper amount?

Whitfield: No, because they had developed equipment. We visited plants that had had it. To my knowledge, I've never even read in the paper about any overdoses of fluoride. Up on Olive Avenue we had an individual well that had an individual fluoridation thing on it, and one of the controls did go floeey, and we found out about it right away and shut the thing off and drained the lines. That only took half the day. That's the only time we ever had a problem.

Lage: At what point is fluoride put into the water system?

Whitfield: At the wells or treatment plants. See, most of our wells-- they're just getting finished drilling five more wells down at Mowry and Peralta Boulevard. That's the Mowry well lot. The other one is just across Mowry, on the north side of Peralta, where I guess they've got about eight wells, and that's above the fault because the benefit there is you don't have to pump it up so high. So they've got separate fluoridation injections there.

In fact, the Mowry and Peralta-Tyson well fields are where the major softener plant is.

- Lage: Did you have personal pressure on you as a result of all this controversy?
- Whitfield: Oh, I got accused of being on both sides.
- Lage: As usual? [laughs]
- Whitfield: Oh, yes. I never took any positions. Somebody that I know would ask me what I think, "I think it's the thing to do."
- Lage: But it wasn't your role to take a public position or to try to lead public opinion or something like that?
- Whitfield: No, I didn't take it because the board of directors wouldn't take a position on it. I got by with it. I was still there several years afterwards.
- Lage: Right. [laughs] Well, that final election was '71. Then I noticed you made available a faucet that was going to be unfluoridated?
- Whitfield: That was one of the hearings we had, and a person asked, "Well, is all the water to be fluoridated?" We said, "Yes, it would be." "Well, what am I going to do if I don't want it. Then you are forcing me to go buy bottled water." So one of the board members came up with the idea, "Well, we'll put a free faucet over at the softening plant." So we bypassed and ran a pipe out outside the fence and installed a faucet.
- Lage: So people could get unfluoridated water?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: Was this a metered faucet?
- Whitfield: We never installed a meter. I said, "You know, it would cost us more, and very frankly, I don't think anybody's going to use it."
- Lage: They probably didn't after the first couple of months.
- Whitfield: I asked the plant operators up there if they were seeing anybody using the faucet. "Oh, once in a while." It was just an argument, you know, to say, "Well, you're forcing me to buy bottled water." So we'd just say, "Well, get your jug and go over to the softening plant and get free water." It's good psychology.
- Lage: You've had enough experience with that now. You could give some good advice.

Whitfield: Well, the only advice I'd give anybody that runs a public agency is don't—I used to get churned up when I was younger, and I just learned that the things that I feared that would be hard to handle were never as bad when they happened. I figured I don't want to give myself ulcers. I learned that after serving under twenty-one members of the board.

Lage: Twenty-one members you served under?

Whitfield: Yes. But I learned early in that game to save my energy and my abilities for the important things, win the big battles and lose the little ones.

Lage: And not fret over those little ones?

Whitfield: Yes, because a lot of the little ones are a matter of opinion; a lot of them aren't a matter of strict engineering.

Lage: Probably a lot of the big things that you did weren't controversial?

Whitfield: Well, the ground water basin. We had people, the farmers and everybody, yelling to get rid of the salt water, get more water in and all that. And a lot of people were averse to using the ground water, "Should we take more Hetchy water and less ground water?" and all that. But, you know, the ground water basin is an invaluable natural asset. You couldn't build a water supply like that for less than billions of dollars.

Lage: Yes. No evaporation.

Whitfield: Yes, that's right. And the other argument is for radioactive fallout. The ground water is more protected than an open lake that has surface. Like near the Chernobyl plant [site of nuclear power plant], they have a big lake there that serves all of the city of Kiev. I was in Kiev once.

Trip to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1972

Lage: I noticed in 1972 you went to Russia and all of Eastern Europe. What was that about? This is off the track, but--

Whitfield: President Eisenhower started, after he was president, a People-to-People program. It was just the concept, and it wasn't financed by the federal government or anything, but he pushed for that. So the American Water Works Association, which we belonged to, decided to go on one of these People-to-People tours.

- Whitfield: We went to England and the Soviet Union. We went to Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, and Budapest. We had some entree to the water departments. Even in Russia, or the Soviet Union--you know, everybody refers to the Soviet Union as Russia, but there are seventeen republics: Russia is only one of the republics. Kiev is a capital of the Ukraine, which is another republic. But you read in the paper, and you hear commentators, and all you hear about is Russia.
- Lage: Yes. Was the focus of the trip to meet with the water department people?
- Whitfield: Yes. Going through water treatment plants and other facilities.
- Lage: Did you see anything that surprised you, or anything we should note?
- Whitfield: No, the only thing that's very noticeable in the Soviet Union is that on the exteriors of their water treatment plants or their water facilities, they don't spend much money for architectural refinement, for beauty. They spend the money for the quality inside. Inside they're immaculate, and they have very modern techniques. The thing that surprised me there was that they had so many women, and this was back--when was that? In '72 I went?
- Lage: Right, '72.
- Whitfield: Yes, there were so many women. A lot of the operators in treatment plants were women. The first thing in Leningrad, I saw a utility truck you know, like a PG & E truck--with an all-woman crew.
- Lage: Of course, that wouldn't be so unusual now here.
- Whitfield: Yes, but over there the women you see really were pretty hefty.
- Lage: How about the engineers, were they women?
- Whitfield: I think we met a couple, yes.
- Lage: But it wasn't as striking as the workers?
- Whitfield: No.
- Lage: Did you run across any ground-water-based districts?
- Whitfield: No, we didn't get involved. Everything was on surface distribution treatment plants, from rivers. I saw the Blue Danube, and the Blue Danube wasn't very blue; it was polluted.

Lage: That must have been an interesting trip?

Whitfield: It was. We had an interesting group that went. I think there were thirty-six of us. Through the American Water Works and people that were up in the water industry, they had made contacts, and we had prior appointments.

Lage: Now would Fremont be the kind of community at all where you'd get some raised eyebrows about your going to the Soviet Union?

Whitfield: No. It was in the paper.

Lage: No reaction?

Whitfield: No.

Lage: It wasn't in the fifties, of course. The McCarthy period was gone, but sometimes you do find--even now--

Whitfield: Well, even now there is sensitivity about supervisors and city councilmen going on junkets. Our board of directors is careful when they go to the American Water Works convention, or the Irrigation District Association convention [it's now called AQUA]. Our board was always very sensitive about announcing that they were going to a convention, so they always referred to them as conferences. [laughter] Then I used to go, and I'd pay all the bills and get reimbursed.

Lage: The bills for other people?

Whitfield: For the directors, for their dinners. When they'd take their wives with them, we had to allocate certain costs for their wives. But the water district was very fortunate, it was never a real political type of thing, like some are.

Back in the early days, we had an editor of the Township Register, which was a predecessor of the Argus now, who was very rabid in trying to sniff out expenditures. We'd get criticized once in a while, but very seldom.

Lage: Well, it seemed like it was a fairly conservative district. You didn't have a group of people taking advantage--

Whitfield: It used to be that at the board meeting they authorized going to convention; they authorized certain directors. Now they don't: they just put in the budget, and it's an approved item.

Lage: Well, I ran across one item in the minutes where Carl Strandberg was denied approval. He was going to a UC workshop, and it was said he didn't need to have a technical background; he was a policy maker. Apparently, the workshop was oriented towards a technical background, and they denied him.

Whitfield: Well, he used to go to a lot of meetings and put in an expense account, but they weaned him of that.

Lage: He's still on the board?

Whitfield: Yes. His desire was to be a technical author. He had many ideas about water conservation and recharge and pollution. He came up with many ideas; the board kind of suggested that before he bring some of these ideas up to talk them over with Matt.

Lage: What about this anti-pollution committee he seemed to be involved with?

Whitfield: Well, he's written books on pollution. I've read a few of them.

Citizens Utility Buyout: Community Pressure, Company
Recalcitrance

Lage: Let's talk about the Citizens Utility Committee. I mentioned, I think before we went on the tape, that it seems fairly well covered in Larrowe's short history, but I'm sure there are things that you remember about that long controversy. Why don't you give an overview of the problem first?

Whitfield: Citizens Utility is a private stock company. One thing about them, they pay excellent dividends so they're a good profit-making organization. They're nationwide, and they're in the sewer business, the telephone business, the water business, and I don't know what else, but it's my understanding that they had an approach of going out and buying out small water companies, then operating for some years and then selling out to a public agency.

Lage: I see, to the larger district.

Whitfield: Yes, because the publicly owned utilities have become more prevalent in the last twenty-five years. I can say that the service Citizens Utility Company gave was poor.

Lage: Really bad?

Whitfield: Yes. We used to get calls. Some of the girls would refer them to me, and I had to explain.

Lage: Calls from the--?

Whitfield: From the customers in the Citizen Utilities section.

Lage: Now, what area did they cover?

Whitfield: They covered Niles and Decoto; Niles is part of Fremont, and Decoto is now part of Union City.

Lage: I see, so it went across city bounds. That complicated it further, probably.

Whitfield: Yes. But they wouldn't respond to any complaints.

Lage: What kind of complaints would there be? Quality of water--?

Whitfield: Dirty water, mud in the water, lousy tasting water.

Lage: What about water pressure?

Whitfield: Water pressure. After we took them over, we found a lot of two-inch lines where their maps said they had four-inch lines, and one-inch lines where they said they had two-inch lines.

Lage: Were they pumping? Is that where their water came from?

Whitfield: Yes. They only had the one source, the ground water basin. They couldn't buy Hetchy water because Hetchy is governed by the Raker Act since it's coming from federal lands in Yosemite. That act prohibited them from selling to profit-making corporations. They can only sell to municipalities and public agencies--flood control and water districts. So they didn't have a secondary supply of water. They had hardly any storage for fire protection, and they never had capacity to pump enough water for a fire.

We'd get a lot of complaints, "Would it do any good if we went to your board of directors?" "Well, you're welcome to come, but the board has no jurisdiction over--" They wanted us to do something about it. We said the only thing to do is to call the health department.

Lage: But there was an effort made to get you to buy the Citizens Utility Company, and apparently there was some disagreement about price.

Whitfield: Oh, there was a substantial disagreement. We, unfortunately, got a judge in that case that was anti-publicly owned utility.

Lage: This was the judge setting the price for the--?

Whitfield: It was a condemnation suit, and he was the one that heard the suit. He made a statement in his opening remarks, I don't remember the very words, but the essence was that he was against these publicly owned utilities going around willy-nilly and buying out well-run private water companies.

Lage: This was his initial statement?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Sounds as if he should have disqualified himself.

Whitfield: I told our attorney, "Why can't we--?" No, he didn't want to do that. We didn't have a special attorney on that one.

Lage: So that judge was the one that determined what price you had to pay?

Whitfield: Yes. We had three experts. We had Bartlett Wells, and Bookman and Edmonston, and I can't remember who else, who joined to give us a valuation. We thought we don't want just one. There are several different ways you could evaluate it: price new, less depreciation. There are several methods. The judge wouldn't let any of our experts testify, excepting the only testimony he would hear was the replacement cost new, less depreciation, which is the most expensive one.

First of all, the Public Utilities Commission was on the spot because they were getting all these complaints from Irene Vincent and all of them. She'd go up there and raise hell. They wanted us to take them over because--they didn't say this publicly, but that would get them off their backs. So we met a couple times with the Public Utilities Commission.

One approach would be you could go to the Public Utilities Commission and have them set the price.

Lage: Why didn't you take that approach?

Whitfield: Well, we thought they were too prejudiced in favor of the utilities that they regulate.

Lage: I see. They regulate the private companies.

Whitfield: They regulate private companies, profit-making companies, but we don't come under the Public Utilities Commission. The publicly owned ones come under a board of directors. In other words, the theory there is, the privately owned ones do not have any

Whitfield: publicly-elected members running the company, whereas our board of directors is in charge of running the district and they're elected. So if the public doesn't like it, they can elect somebody else. With private companies, you don't have that alternative. That's why you have a Public Utilities Commission, with members appointed by the governor.

Lage: How did you find the local officers in the Citizens Utility Company? Did you have to deal with them?

Whitfield: The local people were just puppets. They had Catherine Meyers, whom I've known since I was a kid. She ran the place over there, and she had no authority to do hardly anything.

Lage: So you couldn't negotiate with her on the price of the company?

Whitfield: Oh, no. We negotiated with the president of the company.

Lage: How did you find him?

Whitfield: Arrogant. Yes. He said, "We've got no problems out here; we have no complaints." Just blatant. I almost said, "You ought to come over and listen to my phone sometime." The funniest call I ever had was from a beauty operator in Niles. Apparently they shut the water off in her block. She called up, and she was just livid. Well, she called Citizens Utility and they wouldn't pay any attention, so I got her call [laughs].

She said, "What am I going to do? I've got the dye on this woman's hair, and the water's shut off." I said, "All I can suggest is you come over to one of our faucets and get some water to wash her head." I said, "We have no jurisdiction over them." [laughter] I think she was dying this woman's hair red or something.

Lage: Oh, it must have come out wonderfully.

Whitfield: Well, it was going to be true red.

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Lage: You mentioned Irene Vincent, and the Larrowe history mentions Al Redd as being on this--

Whitfield: Al Redd, yes, he's passed away. He lived up in Niles Canyon.

Lage: Were they pretty forceful individuals?

Whitfield: Irene was. Al was very laid back, quiet; he had ideas, but Irene was the one that held things together.

Lage: What kinds of things would she take on?

Whitfield: She'd have coffee klatches and meetings. In fact, they wanted someone from the water district to have a community meeting in Niles and Decoto, so we had them and I was elected to do the talking. We had a few board members in the audience.

Lage: Now this was before the takeover?

Whitfield: Yes.

Lage: Was this to explain your options to them?

Whitfield: Yes, just what we would do if we took them over.

Lage: I see. They had to pass a bond issue?

Whitfield: Yes. That's the one where they had to pass two bond issues because the first one wasn't large enough. It only provided for two million or three million or something, and the costs were greater than that.

Lage: It ended up costing you more than you had anticipated?

Whitfield: Yes. We went to the general obligation bond on the first one; the second one, we went to a revenue bond, paid out of water sales.

What I had to tell them--first of all, we knew that if we didn't take them over, Citizens Utility was probably going to spend a lot of money to put in a new system because they were so run down. Consequently, if we waited until they did that, then it would cost us much more money to take them over. We explained that to them.

Then there was a controversy as to whether the water rates should be the same in the area we would take over as in the remainder of the district. The board concluded, and I think it was logical, that it should not be the same because those people all had been paying low rates for their service. Not everybody had bad service in Citizens Utility, but the ones that had the worst were the ones that screamed the most. You know, maybe they had a one inch line in front of their house or something. So we had to tell them what our rates would be, that they would be higher than what Citizens Utility was charging them.

Lage: I see. You were going to have to raise their rates.

Whitfield: See, one of the reasons we had objections was because some of those people didn't have problems with their water, and Citizens Utility always had a lot lower water rates than we had. The

Whitfield: reason for that is that we would take a lot of our revenues and reinvest them in replacing old pipes and putting in bigger ones, building reservoirs and all that kind of stuff.

Lage: They gave theirs to their stockholders.

Whitfield: Yes, that's right.

Lage: Did it work out that the people who lived in that area paid most of the price for the district to take it over? Or did the whole district have to absorb it?

Whitfield: No, we created a separate improvement district. In other words, we set an improvement district--like the first bond issue we had in 1955 was over the entire district. That was for \$2.9 million; that was in the early fifties. That was the biggest bond issue ever floated in this area, and it was passed the first time.

Then, as time went on, we've had other areas that have been annexed. The Warm Springs area was about fifteen hundred acres so we had a bond issue for them to pay for their facilities. Then we created an improvement district including Niles and Decoto and the area in between, because that was served by Citizens Utility.

Citizens Utility has a map they file with the Public Utilities Commission that shows what their service area is. They threatened to sue us for invading their service area several times. In certain areas that we served, it was questionable whether it was in their service area or ours. We had facilities near there.

But I forget how much higher the water rates were in that area than they were in the balance of district. There was no reason why the balance of the district should subsidize them over there, because they had the benefit of all the lower rates all those years. [The purchase of the Citizens Utility system occurred in 1976.]

Lage: Well, then, would their rates have gone down by now, or are they still paying off their improvements?

Whitfield: Oh, they're still paying off, but I don't know. I have never specifically asked Roy Coverdale, the district manager, if the water rates are the same as in the rest of the district now. At that time, the differential water rate situation was of considerable concern. Some people in the existing district felt that they should be able to vote on this Citizens Utility take-over. Some people in Citizens Utility area thought that they

- Whitfield: should vote on our other bond issues. The area that Citizens was serving was within the water district boundaries, and they had the legal right to vote for directors.
- Lage: Oh, they did? Even before they were--
- Whitfield: Yes, because they were in the district. That's because of the ground water basin. You see, the surface area that was included in the district originally was the area overlying the ground water basin.
- Lage: I don't understand, then, how Citizens Utility got a foothold.
- Whitfield: Because we didn't get into the water distribution service until 1930. That was only because of taking over that plant in Alvarado, the Peoples' Water Company, the old Oakland Water Company, said one of the conditions for the purchase was that we serve their customers in Alvarado and Newark.
- Lage: Then did Citizens Utility buy water from you?
- Whitfield: No, we didn't have a pump tax in those days. They were pumping from the ground water basin. But when the pump tax went into effect, then they had to pay it. Now, the people that lived in Niles and Decoto were charged our ad valorem taxes. But, in those days, the ad valorem tax only went for water replenishment and ground water rehabilitation.
- Lage: So they did get some benefit from it.
- Whitfield: Well, in other words, the water that Citizens Utility pumped from the ground water basin under Niles and Decoto was partially being paid for by the ad valorem taxes, before we had a pump tax. Then, when the pump tax came in, Citizens Utility had to pay the pump tax.
- Lage: I can see why the citizens over there, the consumers, were confused--they paid taxes to you, but when they called you to complain, you said you had no jurisdiction.
- Whitfield: They never pressured me enough to give them the long explanation, but I'd have given it to them. But this woman who called about the redhead with her head getting redder, she wasn't interested in theories or technicalities. [laughter]
- Lage: She just wanted you to get down there with a bucket.

Perspective on Environmental Impact Reports

- Lage: In the seventies when the EIRs, the Environmental Impact Review reports, came into the law, how did that affect you? That must have affected your procedures?
- Whitfield: It just cost you more money because you have to go out and hire a consultant to write an EIR.
- Lage: Did it change your decisions, or make any other substantial change?
- Whitfield: The things that they have in EIRs are exactly what we do all the time anyway. We're very conscious of being a nuisance, like digging up streets and all that. The street is where you have the legal right to put utilities, even private utilities have that right. But EIRs didn't change us much. If you're building a reservoir and you have access roads, you've got to water the roads down so you don't create dust. We've always bent over backwards.
- Lage: So a lot of it was on procedures, not basic policies?
- Whitfield: No. They put it in the environmental reports what we were always doing, the things that we watch out for.
- Lage: You had to have more public hearings?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: Was there much interest in the hearings? You'd had hearings before on the pump tax, for instance.
- Whitfield: There was hardly any interest in the EIRs when we had a hearing. You have to publish a notice that you were going to have a hearing on an EIR.
- Lage: Can you think of any issue that was handled differently because of the EIR process?
- Whitfield: Well, it slows you down a little bit because you've got to get the EIR written, and you've got to have the reviews and the hearings and all that. And I think there's a condition in there for emergency types of things that you can do by notice or something, but I don't remember the details of that. But all it does is slow you down in accomplishing your plans. In other words, if you plan far enough ahead (but sometimes you can't plan that far ahead)--

Whitfield: Legally, the water district didn't have to go to bid. We'd adopted the policy that for projects over a certain cost we'd go to bid. Then you'd get a consultant engineer and in three years from now you've got another project very similar. You hire them, and they take the EIR and rewrite the thing with the same stuff in it, just change the name.

Lage: It's more just procedural paperwork, as far as you can see?

Whitfield: Yes. It may be that there are public agencies and municipalities that were doing things without being more conscious of the public relations type of thing.

It would cost you--depending upon the magnitude of the jobs--so many thousand dollars to have it written. For certain jobs, you can make a negative declaration and you file that. We had a lot of those. They were smaller jobs that you didn't have to go through all this mishmash with the EIRs. Usually the negative declaration was done by the water district staff.

Lage: For smaller, non-controversial kinds of things?

Whitfield: Yes.

Response to the Drought of 1977

Lage: We just briefly mentioned the drought last time, but it sounds as if there might be something of interest there.

Whitfield: Well, it was interesting because the district was put on the pan by Sacramento.

Lage: That was '76 and '77, wasn't it?

Whitfield: Yes, '77. Everybody was going into water conservation and water rationing. Everybody was doing that. Because of our ground water basin, we didn't have that kind of a problem. The board didn't want to put in rationing, so I kind of talked them into the fact that, you know, we can't be the only one in the Bay Area that doesn't have water rationing.

Lage: Were you afraid that other districts would come and buy your water, or what did you--?

Whitfield: We had approaches from Water Resources, or somebody. The real problem started over in Marin County, where they, for years, were always opposed to any improvements over there. They voted down bond issue after bond issue for building up their water

Whitfield: supply. I can remember when they were building the roads over there, and they had a big article in the paper where these ecologists were out laying down in front of the bulldozers so they wouldn't bulldoze all the trees down and all that kind of stuff.

But they were their own problem. So then the East Bay MUD [Municipal Utilities District] volunteered to run water from their system over the Richmond-San Rafael bridge. I don't know who paid for that; I think Marin County got a grant or something. We were asked one time by the Water Resources Control Board if we would be willing to share our water with others. We said, "Well, we'll wait until the time comes when somebody asks us."

I went to a hearing. It was over in Marin County somewhere. I forget which governmental state agency was hearing it. We had adopted a tentative rationing policy.

Lage: And this was more for public relations, is that it? [laughs]

Whitfield: Yes. But the board said they would adopt the policy, with the idea that it would not be initiated for a time. People were really worried, though, because we had done that. We had little old ladies calling, "Oh, I've got an azalea plant or rhododendron out there." She said, "I just sneak out at night and I take a bucket of water and water my azalea, and I'm afraid I'm going to get arrested."

What we had done was we would charge a surcharge for any water that they would use over their allocated ration.

Lage: Was the rationing level higher than it was in the East Bay MUD?

Whitfield: Oh, it was comparable. I think it doubled the amount of money you paid for the water over your ration level. We didn't have any shut-off ability.

Lage: Well, neither did the East Bay MUD.

Whitfield: No, it was comparable to those.

Lage: Did you feel your supply was in no danger? Was the state still giving you your full amount?

Whitfield: Yes, we were getting our entitlements.

Lage: Did you foresee a future problem if another year of drought had continued?

Whitfield: No, we didn't.

Lage: So things were still working pretty well.

Whitfield: One night, one of the board members came in--I forget who it was--and decided that we should just delay indefinitely the mandatory rationing. And they did. This got into the newspapers, and it got to Sacramento. [laughs]

Lage: Then what happened?

Whitfield: Well, we never imposed the mandatory rationing. But they were terribly upset because here's the rest of the state with rationing and we're just saying we're not going to set a time for putting in the rationing. Then we got into a problem because even under the voluntary rationing, the water sales went down, so our revenues went down. So, consequently, we had to raise rates a little bit.

We had people coming in with all kinds of ideas on how to save water, you know: brushing your teeth in a glass and don't let the water run in the sink, and flush your toilet only so many times a day.

Lage: Well, there was so much publicity that even though you didn't have a problem people were conscious of it.

Whitfield: Oh, and then one board member got the idea of selling water rationing--some water rationing idea. So we bought these plastic bottles, and we put in our newsletter and everything, to put these in the back of your toilet so that it'll save maybe a gallon of water each time you flushed. That didn't appeal to anybody. We were charging, I think, a dollar for it. Then we decided to give them away, and so we had a lot of people do that.

So that got all in the newspapers, and the state people were saying, "You know, you're buying state water, and you should ration it like everybody else." We said, "Our consumption has gone down." So then I went to a meeting in Marin County. It may have been a Water Resource Control Board meeting. None of our board members went. I had to explain why we didn't set mandatory rations.

Lage: How did you handle it?

Whitfield: Oh, I can't remember. I just told them, "Well, we didn't think it was that serious in our area." "Well, what about saving it? If you have that much water, why can't you sell it to somebody

Whitfield: else?" I said, "When the time comes and it's a feasible project to help somebody out, we'd probably do it. But we're not facing that issue until that time comes."

Lage: If you didn't use a certain amount of water, wouldn't it end up in the bay? And if you saved a great deal of water and you're still getting your input from the state--?

Whitfield: But we got that condition changed--remember I told you that--on Table A where they said, "If you don't use it in one specific year when you're supposed to, then you only have the next year to use it." Well, we got that eliminated.

Lage: I see. So you wouldn't have to take the state water.

Whitfield: No, so we could build it up and we could take it in subsequent years. I think all the state contracts have changed that now. I don't know why they didn't do that in the first place.

Lage: Anything else about the drought? It sounds as if it made your water conservation program look good.

Whitfield: It did, yes. In fact, I think our people should be complimented because they really took it seriously. They were worried about what was going to happen.

Lage: Has that lower level of consumption remained?

Whitfield: It's gone back up some, but I think it's still effective.

Lage: I think everyone's more conscious than we used to be.

Now are there any other issues that you think we've missed? That was about all I have on my list.

Whitfield: Well, I'm telling you, you reminded me of a lot of them that I've forgotten. We've been talking about the fifties and the sixties. But I was thinking about the little water companies, the private ones we took over earlier, like the Centerville water system. Before the water district got into water distribution, Centerville had the Pierce system and the Dusteberry system. Then there was a Hirsch system in Irvington that we took over.

Lage: When would these have been?

Whitfield: They were all taken over before I came, and I came in October '50.

Lage: So slowly the district has enlarged its service area.

Whitfield: Yes. They took over the smaller, privately-owned companies.

Relations with Cities and Citizens Groups

Lage: To wind up, let's look at some of the general questions that have come up as we were talking. We've looked at how you dealt with the city of Fremont in various instances. What about Newark and Union City? Did you have many dealings with the city councils there or city departments?

Whitfield: Fremont was probably the one that was more aggressive in trying to push ideas on us. You know, I told you about Conway and Culligan and some of the Warm Springs area and that kind of thing. In the city of Fremont I think some of the officials were more in favor of using Hetch Hetchy water. In fact, Don Dillon, who lives up a block and was a councilman, was in favor of Hetchy water. He was against the ground water basin. I guess he was one of the original councilmen.

The city staff at that time were way ahead of their era. They were high class municipal management and engineers.

Lage: People you had respect for?

Whitfield: Well, what I'm saying—they were too aggressive when they first came in. They were pie-in-the-sky stuff, and they were pushing for Hetchy water.

Lage: Could you mention any names? Would it have been the city manager?

Whitfield: Yes, Bob Coop.

Lage: What about [assistant city manager] Larry Milnes? Was he there from the beginning?

Whitfield: No, he's the second one. But he is a top man. He's sharp. He came from over in the valley; he was well-versed in ground water replenishment because they do it over there. So he backed the ground water.

Lage: He seems like a really good public servant.

Whitfield: Oh, yes. Whenever we had any problems with the city or he had anything, we'd give each other a buzz. Never a problem.

Lage: That's the way you like to see it work.

Whitfield: Yes, that's the way it should work. Management shouldn't take all this stuff politically. I stayed out of politics. Clark Redeker's on our board, and I'd known Clark Redeker for years. He's a chemist. He was on the city council in Newark, and a former mayor. Frank Borghi is from Decoto. He was a trustee of the Washington High School District for years. Let's see, those are the only people that have been involved in politics before.

Lage: Did that affect how they dealt with things on the board? The fact they came from a political background?

Whitfield: They're old-timers from those areas. A lot of old-timers know them, and they used to needle them every once in a while. They'd come in and want to check on this and that.

Very frankly, all the board directors that came on, everybody always was taken over to support the recharging of the ground water basin.

Lage: That's what it sounded like. I noticed when you retired—I didn't write down who made the comment, but one of the comments was complimenting you for educating them.

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Lage: You mentioned outside committees of experts at one time and how some of them were difficult to work with. Then you particularly complimented the League of Women Voters for being good to work with.

Whitfield: There are a lot of people who think they know how to do things, but the League of Women Voters have their water committee, and they used to meet with me regularly. We'd have a meeting and they'd ask questions, and I'd answer them. They were interested in trying to understand. They were never a pushy group; they were a bunch of nice ladies with good heads on their shoulders.

Lage: Would they be wanting to take stands on bond issues or take stands on fluoridation issues? Is that why they'd come to you?

Whitfield: I don't think they took a stand on fluoridation. I don't think they even took a stand on the Citizens Utility thing.

They were an educational group, and they listened. They were trying to find out if there were things that they would oppose or endorse.

Lage: The final topic I had planned was the board of directors, but I think you've pretty well made comments on that, unless there's something you want to add.

- Whitfield: I don't know whether I mentioned this, but the sanitary district just went to a vote on whether their directors should run at large, or whether they should be from districts. Our board never went for districts. They never thought of it very seriously, but when someone retired or died or something on the board they tried to pick someone from that area where he was from.
- Lage: So it was fairly well distributed?
- Whitfield: Yes. We've had two men from Irvington in the past. We've always had someone from Alvarado or Decote--at least since I've been on here.
- Lage: So they had a sense of the districts, but no district elections.
- Whitfield: No. They ran at large, so you'd vote...
- Lage: Did they usually run unopposed, or were there contests?
- Whitfield: Oh, there were contests. In fact, after I retired I ran, and I lost by fifty-eight votes.
- Lage: You wanted to get into the policy-making side?
- Whitfield: Well, I kind of thought I wanted to keep my finger in the pie.
- Lage: It would have been very different, I would think, having somebody with your background and sense of all the technical aspects.
- Whitfield: The fellow that beat me was Joe Damos. He's a local fellow, an engineer. He's with East Bay MUD. I was pleased to see that he got in because he's an engineer. They've never had an engineer on the board.
- Lage: How about your retirement? Was there a particular reason for picking the time you did to retire?
- Whitfield: I just felt that I had been at it long enough. Stan Saylor, who was my assistant engineer, I felt was very qualified to take over.
- Lage: And you recommended that he be chosen?
- Whitfield: Yes.
- Lage: At least from the board minutes, that didn't seem to be controversial.

Whitfield: They gave him a more difficult time than they gave me because I was a native and an old-timer. I knew most of these people for years.

Lage: Made it easier.

Whitfield: I was very fortunate, though, in the quality of directors. We were particularly fortunate that we never had any activists on there. I think the only one that came on the board with a particular purpose was John Pihl, who was an excellent man. He was kind of hard headed, but once he got confidence in you, things worked out fine.

##

Transcriber: Anne Schofield
Final Typist: David Pollock

TAPE GUIDE -- Mathew P. Whitfield

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NOTES ON HISTORY AND OPERATION OF
ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

August 1979

Alameda County Water District was founded in 1914 to protect the Niles Cone Ground Water Basin and to conserve the waters of Alameda Creek. The District's original objective was to prevent further appropriation of Alameda Creek water supply for export to San Francisco.

On March 31, 1930 ACWD purchased the Alvarado Pumping Station for \$250,000 from East Bay Municipal Utility District to reduce ground water pumping. ACWD then found itself in the business of distributing water as well as conserving it. With the purchase of the Alvarado Tract ACWD also contracted to serve the water needs of the people of Alvarado and Newark. Once the district was in the distribution business it expanded by purchasing municipal water systems of the towns within its service areas. By 1950 ACWD was the major distributor of water in Washington Township.

CHRONOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF ACWD'S HISTORY INCLUDE:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1914 | ACWD organized |
| 1930 | Purchase of Alvarado Pumping Station |
| 1938 | Purchase of Irvington Water System |
| 1939 | Purchase of Centerville Water System |
| 1940 | Purchase of Gallegos (Mission San Jose) Water System |
| 1949 | Filed for rights for surplus water from Alameda Creek |
| 1951 | Mission San Jose area annexed |
| 1955 | Warm Springs area annexed |
| 1956 | Filed for rights for surplus water from Arroyo del Valle |
| 1958 | New office center opened |
| 1961 | ACWD signed contract for South Bay Aqueduct water |
| 1962 | First delivery of South Bay Aqueduct |
| 1963 | VII Hills annexation |
| 1964 | Contract with San Francisco for water supply |

Page Two
History of ACWD August 1979

1967 Office complex enlarged
 1971 Manuel J. Bernardo Softening Plant
 1972 Fabridam No. 1
 1974 Aquifer Reclamation Program starts
 1975 Fabridam No. 2
 1975 Mission San Jose Water Treatment Plant
 1976 Purchase of Citizens Utilities Company Niles-Decoto System
 1976 New Chemistry Lab Building

GENERAL OPERATING INFORMATION:

Service Area - Fremont, Newark and Union City, 96 Sq. Miles

Population 195,000

Customers 50,886 as of May, 1979

Water Sales \$6,880,766 (June 1978 - May 1979)

Personnel 119 Full-time, 10 Part-time and Temporary

Miles of Pipe 546 Miles (1978)

Average Daily Consumption - 26.5 MGD (July 1978 - June 1979)

Maximum Day Consumption - 54.0 MGD (July 13, 1979)

Ultimate Sources of Supply:

Niles Cone Ground Water Basin Yield	20,000 AF per year
State Water Project	42,000
San Francisco Water Department	<u>10,000</u>
	72,000 AF per year

Sources of Distribution System Production in 1979-80, projected:

Ground Water	15,525 AF	49%
MSJWTP	8,037	26%
SFWD	<u>7,810</u>	<u>25%</u>
	31,372 AF	100%
	or 28.0 MGD	

Detailed information on the District's existing production and storage facilities is shown on the attached appendices.

Reflection of the District's growth is shown in the following comparisons of meters installed in the system.

June, 1969	30,669
1970	32,547
1971	34,339
1972	36,537
1973	37,911
1974	38,812
1975	40,141
1976	41,984
1977	47,065 (including 10 #5 3,403 meters)
1978	48,905
1979	51,112

The District's total budgets for the past ten years have been:

1969-70	\$ 3,921,626
1970-71	4,708,770
1971-72	5,486,196
1972-73	6,875,498
1973-74	9,439,157
1974-75	7,462,464
1975-76	10,138,795
1976-77	12,244,768
1977-78	13,897,841
1978-79	16,182,697
1979-80	20,433,377

The breakdown for the 1979-80 budget (which includes funding for future projects) is:

Conservation General Fund	\$ 5,601,340
Distribution General Fund	8,700,487
I.D. No. 5	786,177
Major Facilities Improvement Program	5,148,569
I.D. No. 5 Capital Improvement Program	196,804

Customer Connection Charges and Estimates are shown on the attached sheet. Other rates and charges include:

Account Establishment Charge	\$ 11
Meter Installation Charges (5/8")	70
" " " " " " (1")	190
Delinquent Water Service Charge	10
Returned Check Charge	8

Page Four
History of ACWD August 1979

The resolution spelling out rates and charges is attached which includes rate schedules for service inside the District, outside the District, for exclusive San Francisco Water Department users, for ID 5, for batteries of meters, private fire services and public fire services.

Replenishment Assessment (for ground water pumped) -

Agriculture and City Recreation Uses:	\$ 8 per acre foot
Municipal, Industrial, Other Uses:	41 " " "

The present Board of Directors, with lengths of service is:

Frank J. Borghi, Jr., President - February 8, 1962 to Present

Harry D. Brumbaugh, Vice President - March 22, 1966 to Present

Clark Redeker, March 2, 1964 to Present

John Gomes, May 12, 1966 to Present

Carl Strandberg, November 4, 1969 to Present

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

THE PATTERSON FAMILY AND RANCH:
SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY IN TRANSITION

Wallace R. Pond

The Pattersons and the Incorporation of Fremont

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
in 1987



WALLACE R. POND

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INTERVIEW HISTORY -- Wallace R. Pond

Wally Pond, a third generation pharmacist in Alameda County and prominent civic leader, was suggested as an interviewee in this project for his recollections of the role of the Patterson family in the incorporation of Fremont. In the wake of the rapid postwar development, community leaders of five small unincorporated towns of Washington Township began in the early 1950s to discuss unification and incorporation. Mr. Pond served as chairman of the study committee for incorporation.

In his oral history, Mr. Pond notes that the major opposition to incorporation came from the large landowners and that winning the support of the Patterson brothers--Henry and Will--was crucial to gaining the trust of this important group. He then recounts the visit of the incorporation committee to the Patterson Ranch and the response of the two brothers.

Mr. Pond's interview is of interest not only because of its information about the Pattersons, but also for the insight gained into the Washington Township community in the postwar years and the attitude of community leaders toward development and change. He also relates how the boundaries of Fremont were set, explaining why the Patterson Ranch was divided between Fremont and Newark, and provides some insight to the competitive relationship between the cities of Newark and Fremont.

Mr. Pond has been interviewed previously on his role in the incorporation of Fremont. The tapes of that interview are available in the Fremont Public Library. The following interview was conducted at Mr. Pond's home in Fremont on April 10, 1987. Mr. Pond reviewed the transcript, making no substantive changes. The tape is available in The Bancroft Library.

Ann Lage
Interviewer/Editor
Project Director

September, 1988
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name WALLACE R. POND

Date of birth 10.24.12 Place of birth RELSEYVILLE, CALIF.

Father's full name RAYMOND LAWSON POND

Birthplace WOODLAND, CALIF.

Occupation PHARMACY

Mother's full name HAZEL COLE

Birthplace PORTLAND, MICH

Occupation HOUSEWIFE

Where did you grow up? IRVINGTON (FREMONT)

Present community FREMONT

Education PHARMACY

Occupation(s) PHARMACY

Special interests or activities FREMONT CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL
ROTARY, FREMONT PHILHARMONIC, PHARMACY

Third Generation Pharmacist in Alameda County

[Date of Interview: April 10, 1987] ##

Lage: You started to mention that you are a third-generation Californian, so let's start with that as a background.

Pond: Well, yes I am. I'm kind of proud of that. My grandmother was born in California. Her folks came in covered wagons. I think they arrived in California in 1853, if I'm not mistaken. We always called my grandfather "the foreigner"; he came from Vermont. [laughter] He too was a pharmacist, so I'm a third-generation pharmacist in Alameda County.

Lage: They came to Alameda County?

Pond: They came to Alameda County in 1898. There were three buildings on the University of California campus: North Hall, South Hall, and Bacon Hall. North Hall was gone when I was there, and either South or Bacon is gone now, I don't know which one.

Lage: Only South Hall is left.

Pond: The steam trains used to come into Berkeley in those times.

Lage: Did your family have a tie with the university? You went there, is that right?

Pond: Yes, just for two years. I took a pre-med after I finished pharmacy school. Then I met a woman, and that took care of those plans!

Lage: You were born in Kelseyville, though. How did you get to Kelseyville from Alameda County?

Pond: Well, my dad went to Woodland Grammar School, Berkeley High, and pharmacy school. He bought a drug store in Kelseyville in 1910. In 1911 he married my mother. In 1912 I came along, and I spent the first four years of my life in Kelseyville, the second four in Berkeley, and at age eight I arrived in Fremont (or Irvington, as it was then).

Lage: So you've really been essentially raised in this area.

Pond: The Bay Area all my life, really, except for the first four years.

This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see page 140.

Chairing the Study Committee for the Incorporation of Fremont

Lage: We're skipping way ahead here, but give us a little background on the incorporation of Fremont--when it occurred, and what your role was in it.

Pond: Well, after I got through pharmacy school, I worked mostly in Oakland and Berkeley. I was in the service for a while, and then I returned to Fremont in 1950. I bought my dad's drug store. This, of course, was after World War II. It was a time when rapid development was taking place; we were recovering from the war, and everything was go, go, go. You could see it was going to happen out here although we never dreamed it was going to be like it is. But we started to talk about the city, just in general, somewhere along 1950 or so.

Lage: Who were the people talking about it, the chamber of commerce folks?

Pond: Well, just everybody in general, in a casual way. Somebody would say, "Well, gee whiz, with this growth we're going to have to do something. Maybe we should think about incorporation." Well, this was all very casual; nothing was done until the Niles Chamber of Commerce had the CORO Foundation, which I believe comes from the University of California, do a survey. As I recall, it didn't cost them anything because it was mostly done by graduate students as part of their work. That was the first official thing ever done. The CORO Foundation report came back and said that every one of these towns could incorporate independently, but the wiser course would be to incorporate as a single unit, which is what we finally did. As a result of that a meeting was called by the Niles Chamber of Commerce. We met at Washington High School, and I was elected chairman.

Lage: Chairman of the Incorporation Committee?

Pond: At that time it was the Incorporation Study Committee. It wasn't a committee for incorporation. We proceeded to work on the boundaries. I had a boundary chairman, chairman for a name, chairman for taxes, and two or three other chairmen. We were proceeding with the study. We got some very helpful ideas from the University of California; I don't know what department published it, but it was called "Incorporation or Annexation," if I remember correctly. That was our original bible, you might say.

Lage: Another study that--?

Pond: No, it wasn't a study; it was something that was done on a general basis for any city. It wasn't directed to Fremont at all. It was just information that could be used any place in the state, even today, although things have probably changed a lot from then. It

Pond: was designed for when you want to think about incorporation--are you better off annexing? In other words, it gave the pros and cons of things you need to look for.

Lage: Sounds like Institute for Governmental Studies work to me.

Pond: It could have been. Anyway, once again, that was out of the University of California. We used that.

The incorporation studies began probably in 1952. Then somewhere along the line, maybe '54, Hayward filed annexation--I should back up for a minute. Our original plan called for incorporation of all of what is now Newark, Union City, and Fremont. Then somewhere along the line Newark decided they didn't want any part of it and decided to form their own city. They figured they had all the industry down there, and they would be tax-rich, and we would be tax-poor. They made one big oversight, and that was that PG&E had more assessed valuation than all their industries combined, so we weren't tax-poor.

Lage: PG&E was located in Washington Township (now in Fremont).

Pond: Yes. It still has a sub-station down there. There's a big sub-station, and all the power lines go into that station; they still do, like spokes to the hub of a wheel.

Lage: And that provided as much taxes?

Pond: Yes, so our tax rate has always been lower than Newark's. I don't know about recent years, but all the early years our tax rate was lower than Newark's.

So I tried to get Newark to be a part of it, but no way. And then Hayward filed to annex part of what is now Union City. So we separated ourselves from Union City because we figured that if Hayward and we were involved in Union City it would result in litigation and delay our incorporation for years.

Lage: I see. If you had a controversial section.

Pond: That's right. We'd have to suspend the plans until this was resolved, and you know how these things can go on. So we dropped Union City. The boundaries were determined by school district, which would be Decoto school district and Alvarado school district.

You see, our own incorporation map was done without charge by an engineer, Bill Dutra his name was, and he said the simple way to do it would be to just follow the boundaries of the school districts. Then we wouldn't have to do any surveying because the description was already there. So that's what we have. We have five towns, but six

Pond: school districts because there is an Alviso school district which is between Centerville and Alvarado, or was at that time. So we just followed the boundaries.

Lage: Did Alviso go with Fremont?

Pond: It did. It is part of Fremont.

Lage: The Newark area had its own school district?

Pond: Newark had its own, and Decoto had one, and Alvarado had one. Union City didn't exist at that time; it was Decoto and Alvarado.

Lage: So you dropped Decoto and Alvarado.

Pond: That's how we got down to the present boundaries.

Lage: Let's make this specific to the Patterson Ranch. On the phone I asked you why the Patterson Ranch was divided in two between Newark and Fremont. You told me that was probably because that's where the school district lines went.

Pond: I would guess that. It would have to be that way. Yes, we followed school district lines in forming the boundaries of Fremont.

Lage: Now, was there a lot of controversy about accepting the idea of incorporation?

Pond: Not really. The fact that it passed by two to one, I think, is indicative of the general acceptance. Two things happened. First of all, there was a lot of growth, and people knew that we were going to have to do something someday, somehow. And we were only a study committee, not a committee for incorporation; we determined the wisdom of incorporation. But when Hayward filed that annexation of part of the property that we were going to take into Fremont, they did us a great favor because that scared hell out of everybody, if I might say so, and anybody who might have been against it was now for it.

Opposition to Incorporation from Large Landowners

Pond: The only people who were against it were a number of the large landowners. As chairman I was, of course, ex officio member of all committees. There was one man who wanted to create Fremont by a circle surrounding each of the little settlements or towns and a connector along the highway, and leave the rest of it open spaces belonging to nobody.

Lage: And that would leave the ranches out?

Pond: All the ranches out. And he wasn't a rancher, he was a dentist! I argued, let's leave everybody in and let them ask to be excluded. At the hearing before the board of supervisors about three different groups asked to be excluded, and none was accepted.

Lage: What groups would they have been? Can you recall?

Pond: I can only recall one, and that was the McClure family whose property is on top of the mountain up there on Mission Peak. They requested to be out because their land was all hill land. But our point was that it would be very difficult to exclude because we had a description of school districts, and they were in the school district, so therefore they ought to be in the proposed city. So nobody was excluded.

I think, but I'm not positive about this, that PG&E also protested; it was also disallowed. Then, when Newark incorporated, Leslie Salt said, "We'll support your incorporation if you leave our ponds out, and we'll even give you some money toward it," because they didn't want their ponds in a city. Newark accepted that, so the ponds are in Fremont. So if you cross Dumbarton Bridge, you go from here through Newark and back into Fremont.

Lage: How was Fremont able to get its boundary, then, to include the ponds?

Pond: We followed the lines right around, and what Newark excluded we took in. There was one tiny section of land that Newark wanted. As chairman of the committee I opposed that, so the supervisors left that out of Newark's plan. Then when we were incorporating and we proposed it, we included it in our plans and Newark opposed it, so it got left out of ours, too.

Lage: So it's still county?

Pond: It was county for a while, but then Newark made a masterful stroke. They incorporated a lot of land to make it impossible for Fremont to incorporate it. It really paid off for them because that land is now NewPark Mall. So that was the no man's land that is somebody's land now.

Lage: It sounds like there was a lot of rivalry between Newark and Fremont.

Pond: There was in those days.

Lage: But that didn't exist between the five towns that formed Fremont?

Pond: Not really, no. Newark was the only one that wanted to be really independent. None of the rest of us said, "Let's do it on our own and forget the rest of them."

Lage: Was the opposition that you did have based on fear about taxes?

Pond: Yes.

Lage: They were afraid their taxes would go up?

Pond: That's right. We might have had a tough election, except Hayward did us that wonderful favor. So it passed by a two-to-one margin, and every single precinct voted it in; nobody could say they got brought in. Some of them were just barely in, and some of them sizeably in by three, four, or five to one, like up in this area. But every single precinct voted it in; nobody could say they were forced in.

Efforts to Promote Incorporation

Lage: Tell me about your efforts to win cooperation from the ranchers. You mentioned to me that you were part of the committee that called on the Pattersens. I assume you called on other ranchers, too.

Pond: We called on other ranchers. One of our programs was to try to get them involved, and we were successful. Michael Overacker, later our second mayor, was one of the leaders among the ranchers; we talked him into running for the city council. With him running for the city council, it was hard for some of his rancher friends to oppose something that he wanted to be a government official of.

Lage: The city council election was at the same time as the incorporation?

Pond: Yes. It has to be. We also voted for one more thing, and that was a city manager form of government, which doesn't have to be, but we voted for it. It was on the same ballot. Do you want the city incorporated, which councilmen do you want, and do you want a city manager? Those three propositions were on it.

Lage: Did you run for council?

Pond: I was on the council. I figured I was a shoe-in because I'd done all the work for the incorporation, but I came in fifth. [laughter]

Incidentally, I was not the chairman of record at the time of incorporation. I know how to organize, and I did organize it. I think I did a good job, but when it came time to promote the thing, I was dragging my feet. I could do a better job now, but even then, why, I'm not the promoter. I don't promote as well as I organize. So some of the fellows came and said, "Pond, how about giving way to Stuart Nixon?" Stuart Nixon was a newspaper editor at that time, but he's in public relations today. So he's the one who did the promoting and selling.

Pond: It's too bad that more things don't work that way. I did what I could do best: that was organize the thing and get all the material, put the package together. Then I resigned, and he refused to accept the nomination unless I was nominated as co-chairman. So I did what I did best, he did what he did best, and we worked as team all the way through. Too often somebody wants the glory; you've seen it-- somebody like me will do all the work, and then a guy like Stuart Nixon will come in and take all the glory and never mention the other guy.

Lage: He wasn't like that. Also, I think it's a credit to you that you recognized your strengths.

Pond: Well, that's right. And my weaknesses! Yes, one of the fellows said, "Pond, you're not doing so good right now; you're dragging your feet." I said, "I know. I need to get bailed out of this thing!" He said, "I have a suggestion." I said, "What is it?" He said, "I'd like to propose Stuart Nixon as chairman. Would you accept that?" I said, "I'd be very happy to." Because I knew I was in over my head at this point.

Lage: What was required for the promotion effort?

Pond: Selling it to the people. To get out the vote. That's a different type of thing, different type altogether. I know more about it now, but the other guy was a professional.

Lage: Tell me what you remember about approaching the Pattersons. Why you did approach them, first of all.

Pond: Well, we had to approach a lot of the key landowners. You'll have to look up what the requirements were, but as I recall, a petition had to represent a certain percent of the landowners representing a certain percent of the assessed valuation, or some formula like that.

Lage: This was the original petition--

Pond: The original petition. It may be changed, but at least I do know that there were two requirements so that neither the small home owner nor the big ranch owner could overrun each other, sort of like our Senate and House in our government. You couldn't get a bunch of small property owners to dictate to the big landholders, who were fewer in number. We needed to get signatures of a certain percentage of voters and a certain percentage of landholders. So to get the percentage of landholders, we needed the big landholders. We would have needed 50 percent of the small people, because their properties were so small, if the big owners didn't want to come in. We wouldn't have been able to get that many signatures, I don't think. In fact, it is doubtful that 100 percent of small property owners would have had a sufficient assessed valuation to make the petition legal.

Lage: So at that time you still had some really large holdings in the--

Pond: Oh, yes. Large holdings. Patterson was one; Huddleson up there was another; Overacker was another; Bailey was another. There are probably others that I'm not thinking of right now.

Williams was another. Lee Williams was a prominent farmer. He was interested enough to be willing to serve on our committee, but he had to drop out because of illness. I can still recall one meeting when someone said, "Well, let's see if we can get Lee Williams to get back into this thing," and I said, "No, we'd do him no favor. He's got a bad heart, and I don't want any part of contributing to his death." Little did I know that at that time he was dying of a heart attack; that night he died while we were in our meeting.

Lage: Oh, my goodness. He actually owned a lot of land, then? I know he had a lot of leased land that he farmed.

Pond: Yes, he owned a lot of land, and he rented a lot of land. The firm he founded, L.S. Williams, is still in existence. That's about the size of that.

Lage: I interviewed his son, Gene Williams, as part of this project, talking about the farming, particularly on the Patterson Ranch.

Meeting with Will and Henry Patterson: "In the Best Interest of the Community"

Lage: Tell me what you recall about going down to meet the Pattersons and what their response was.

Pond: Well, it was a little thing, and yet it was a big thing. A group of us went down there one afternoon to see the Pattersons, the two brothers. Will is the one I remember the most. He was prominent, and he was active in the community, on the water board [Alameda County Water District] for years. We weren't invited in the house. There was a good reason for it, I guess, because there were ten or more of us who went down there to talk to them. The only ones I can think of that were there are dead, except that Stuart Nixon and Bruce Michael were probably there. Bruce Michael was on the first council, and Stuart Nixon I've already mentioned. A number of other people were there, but I can't recall who. Anyway, we thought it was very critical for us to convince the Patterson brothers that they should support it.

Lage: Were you hoping for support to the extent of signing of the petition?

Pond: Correct, because they had fairly large holdings, you know. So we explained to them what was going on and what was going to happen. They were pretty visionary, and they could see what going to happen, too. We were only there about a half hour, I guess.

Lage: Sitting on the porch? Was this on the porch of the old Will Patterson home, do you think?

Pond: I don't know which home it was. As I recall, it was white. And we weren't sitting, we were standing. There was a rail around it, and there was a curve to one end of it; it didn't square off, it curved around. That's all I can remember.

Lage: It's not terribly important; I was just trying to visualize which house it was.

Pond: Anyway, after we made our points and they'd asked several questions, finally Will Patterson said, and this is why it was so short, I think, he said, "Well, my brother and I have discussed this, and we don't believe that incorporation is in our best interest, but we do believe it's in the best interest of the community. Therefore, we support it."

I suppose there was hand-clapping then, but I don't recall it! There was certainly relief on our part because this was the key thing; if the Pattersons supported it, we were in a "go" situation. We had the Pattersons. I don't know if Overacker had yet decided, and this could have influenced Overacker to run for the city council. So this was a very, very key decision--one of the major landholders, a prominent landholder, supporting it.

Lage: And they did it seemingly on the basis that the community interest was at stake.

Pond: That's right. The community would be better off for it, even though they themselves would not be.

Lage: Do you think that was true, that it wasn't good for the ranchers? It's hard to predict what would have been.

Pond: Well, you knew growth was coming. It's hard to say. Certainly, the Patterson Ranch of today is nowhere what it was then. It's gone. But what would it have been like? With all the growth coming in and surrounding it, I strongly suspect that would have probably been taxed enough--in those days, and it maybe still is, property was taxed for its highest and best use.

Lage: Even in the county areas?

Pond: That's right. So if there was development around it, their assessed valuation was going to go up. It isn't going to be assessed for agricultural property; it's going to be assessed for homes. They probably, this is purely conjecture on my part, would have had to sell it off piece by piece anyway to pay their taxes. So I'm not so sure they wound up worse off than they otherwise would be.

In fact, probably better because this way the decision was made, and it was peaceful. If they had decided against it and we incorporated anyway--which may have been delayed some years if they had opposed it; this is one thing that could have happened, a delay--but eventually it would have to have been incorporated, and development would have taken place. They would have been in a constant struggle against developers, taxes, etc., and their peace of mind for the rest of their lives would have been destroyed. So I have an idea that they probably came out ahead even though Patterson Ranch in effect is destroyed. I think it would have been destroyed anyway although the time table would have been different.

Lage: And who can say what the time table would have been.

Pond: That's right.

Lage: But it does appear that they were enough a part of the community and the current scene to know what was happening.

Pond: They're to be admired for that decision. They could have made a lot of trouble for this area, and for themselves, and kept their ranch together for a much longer period of time if they chose to do it. They chose not to.

##

I have an idea they probably considered its impact on themselves. The many things I speculate on they probably thought about too, because they weren't stupid men. Particularly Will was a farseeing man, and he might have realized, too, that the things I'm saying might have happened could have happened to them. It was never stated by anybody. Who knows what a man's mind says? But--

Lage: They didn't really discuss with you; they listened to you and then they gave their answer.

Pond: They said they'd already discussed it. It's inconceivable that men of that caliber would have not thought about this side of it: what if we don't support it; what if we oppose it; what happens? I'm sure they explored it, the two of them sitting there talking about it. Maybe had advice from other people, I don't know. But I'm sure they must have considered all the ramifications, whichever their decision was.

Lage: Do you know what kind of arguments you would have presented to them? I'm sure you don't remember precisely what was said to them, but can you think of what approach you would have taken?

Pond: Well, no, of course I don't remember what was said. Well, two things. The approach would be, it's going to happen anyway. We have an opportunity now to make our own decisions more effectively if we do it now before other people come in and start making them for us. You can't stop development. It's coming.

I can go back, and so can the Pattersons of course, to when there was all farms between Hayward and San Leandro. San Leandro was called "the cherry city." San Lorenzo was nothing. Development after World War II was moving out in this direction. I could see it. Anybody with any foresight could see it, and I'm sure they saw it.

So I'm sure we used that type of argument, and probably appealed to their community pride and loyalty, which is something that they responded to even though they had decided already. [laughs]

Lage: They'd probably thought of that.

Pond: I think if we'd made a bad argument they'd have said, "Well, let's think it over." In other words, they may have said, "Well, no, based on what we've heard today," to themselves, you know, "maybe we weren't making the right decision." Although they had decided what they wanted to do, I'm sure if we hadn't presented some good arguments, the meeting wouldn't have lasted just a short period of time.

And incidentally, at this time I was not the chairman anymore. This meeting occurred when Stuart Nixon was the chairman.

In the Wake of Incorporation: Development, Traffic, and City Politics

Lage: When you were on the council, the first city council, was there an effort to sort of take care of the ranchers or the agricultural interests or, was most of the thrust toward designing for development?

Pond: I have no real recollection of taking care of the ranchers. We were aware of the ranchers' problems, but most of the problems were coming with the developers coming in and wanting to file on land and getting the city underway. We met at midnight to establish city laws because that's when government starts; when county government ceased to exist, we had to meet at midnight to enact all the county ordinances that applied to us.

Lage: To get the basic legal structures in?

Pond: Well, you could put a wrecking yard next to a beautiful home because zoning laws ceased to exist. Speed limits ceased to exist. Criminal law, of course, still remained the same. But the building codes ceased to exist. All this we adopted at midnight on January 23, 1956. All the county ordinances by reference: the county building code shall be ours, the Sheriff's Department shall be our police department. The fire department was different; we had our own volunteer fire department, so they were incorporated as the Fremont Fire Department. So all these were done.

We hired a city clerk, which the law required. This was arranged through our advisers who helped us, and they supplied the city clerk for us. We didn't pay the city clerk; we paid the firm, Krøeler and Associates, who developed it for us. One of their employees was our first city clerk; she was part of the package deal.

Lage: Of course, the Nimitz Freeway, that was put in in '53, that probably had a lot to do with bringing development down.

Pond: Did that go in that early?

Lage: That's the date I have. Or maybe it was just started then, but most everyone I've talked to refers to it as '53.

Pond: It was done in segments. I can remember it first coming out as far as Hayward, and then finally it went out to Fremont Boulevard, I think.

Lage: Well, the people who tell me about are talking about when it came through the Patterson Ranch, and that would have been one of the earlier portions, further north.

Pond: Jack Parry could tell you precisely because when the freeway went through there he went to--he gets the bit in his teeth, he goes! He went down to find out how much they paid for the land because he had Berchem Meat Company, which is right down near where New Park Mall is now. He wanted to know how much the state was paying these people for this land they were taking. The state said, "No way, that's privileged information." So he took them to court. Pleaded his own case, no attorney. Finally the state came to him one day and said, "Mr. Parry, you can look at anything you want to see." He said, "That's not what I want. I want it to be established that anybody has the right to do it." And it was so determined. So that's why I'm telling you Parry could tell you precisely when that was going through there!

He's a former mayor. He and I are good friends, although I don't like his bulldog attitude.

Lage: But that's probably what won that lawsuit.

Pond: That's right, that's right.

I can remember when the freeway was first extended from Hayward to Fremont. After you left Hayward, you were all alone! You've been down Highway 5, you know how that is. That's the way the freeway from Hayward to Fremont was back in the fifties when they first extended it.

Lage: You never dreamed it was going to be all clogged up like it is now.

Pond: Then, of course, digressing just a moment, when 680 ended at Mission Boulevard right out of the pass here, when that first opened, Don Dillon, another mayor, predicted what was going to happen. The traffic backup was so far it was unbelievable. Everybody was going on this freeway, but when they got to the end, it stopped. Just like when you have an accident like they have from time to time on the bridge. Stops everything. Just the other day, what was it, a five-mile backup? Well, that was a little one compared to what this one was. The ones in the know came down through Niles Canyon, when they could get there because it was backed up way beyond that.

Lage: When was this? More recently--

Pond: More recently. I can't tell you exactly when that was, but Don Dillon is the man who can tell you on that one. He's another mayor.

Lage: Well, have you been happy, just to kind of wind this up, with what incorporation has wrought?

Pond: Yes, I have been. There's good, and there's bad. Just like a marriage. It isn't all sweetness and light. There are problems in every marriage. Anybody that says no is lying.

Lage: Or hasn't been married.

Pond: That's right! Or one completely dominates the other. In a healthy marriage, you're bound to have little struggles, little things from time to time, and we've had some pretty good ones here. One was over where the city hall was going to be. Maybe you've heard about that one.

Lage: Briefly.

Pond: We had some battles on that. I forget how many times, it was three or four or five votes before we finally got a two-thirds majority to accomplish it. So we've had that problem.

We've had the pro-growth, the no-growth, and the in-between, and that's where I am. I've tried to be friendly to all sides, and I

Pond: think I have been. Some of them won't talk to each other, but I've always been able to. Sometimes they say, "Pond, you do it. I can't talk to those people." But I've always tried to be friendly, socially at least.

Lage: Civility always helps, I think.

Pond: I was in business as a pharmacist. The old story is don't argue politics when you're in business. I adhered to that, but that's not the whole truth. You can discuss politics. On the civic center, for instance, I'd say, "Remember, don't forget to vote on our coming election."

"Oh, I intend to."

"I hope you'll vote for our civic center."

"Oh, I intend to."

"Fine. I appreciate it."

"No way!"

"Okay, that's your decision."

But to the people that said, "Well, I haven't made up my mind," those are the ones I zeroed in on. I didn't try to change anybody whose mind was made up. That's where you get in trouble.

Lage: You have to know people.

Pond: You have to understand that if a person's mind is made up, you're not going to change him, you're going to make an enemy.

Lage: What was the objection to the civic center? Cost?

Pond: No, the big objection was that one of the landlords wanted it on his property, where Ohlone College is now. We felt it ought to be more central. First we didn't even get a majority, then finally our votes got a majority, then a more sizeable majority, and eventually--we had to get two-thirds, you see. We just had to keep pushing at it and pushing at it. Finally made it.

I shall be ever grateful to the Pattersons for their part. It was just a little meeting, but their support, although it wasn't active in that they didn't go out and speak in behalf of it, but their decision to support it by going along with it and signing the petition certainly benefited the whole community. It was a real statesmanlike movement on their part.

Lage: Very good.

TAPE GUIDE -- Wallace R. Pond

Date of Interview: April 10, 1987

tape 1, side A

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tape 1, side B

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Transcribed by Leslie Johnson
Final Typed by Shannon Page

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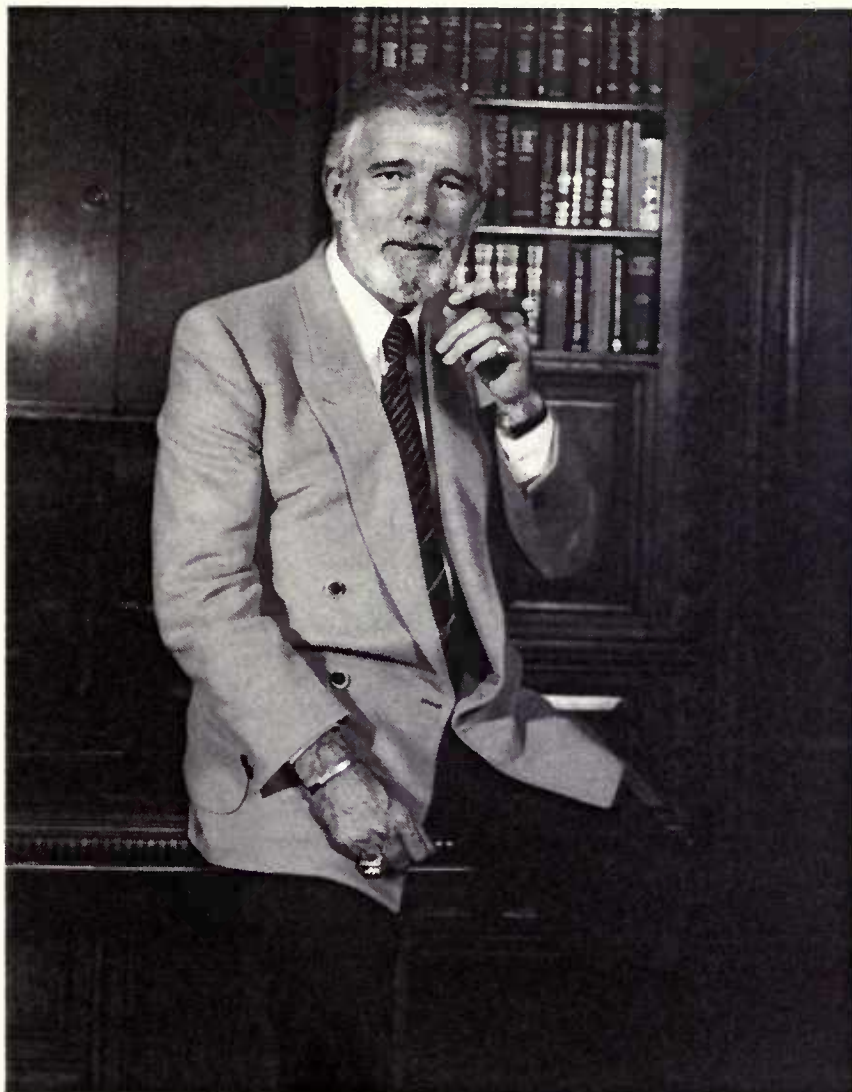
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THE PATTERSON FAMILY AND RANCH:
SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY IN TRANSITION

John Brooks

Consultant to the Patterson Family:
Master Planner, Developer, and Politician

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
in 1987



JOHN BROOKS

ca. 1980

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INTERVIEW HISTORY — John Brooks

Over the past thirty-five years, John "Jack" Brooks has worked with three generations of the Patterson family. His recollections are a crucial element in the story of the evolving land-use patterns on the ranch lands since the 1950s. They also provide a great deal of insight into politics and planning in the city of Fremont.

In his oral history, Mr. Brooks recounts his first meeting with Will Patterson and the first purchase of ranch lands for housing development in 1952. The Patterson purchase was Brooks's introduction to the Washington Township area, where he became the most prominent developer and a community leader whose skills as planner and in politics shaped the growing city of Fremont. His recounting of his close relationship with the director of Fremont's city planning department and the evolution of the planned unit development and planned district concepts are of particular interest.

Brooks discusses the 1971 purchase by Singer Housing Company--which he headed as president--of the tract of lands that included the George Washington Patterson home and the eucalyptus grove. This is the tract which became, after years of litigation and negotiation, the Ardenwood Regional Preserve. Brooks, a key figure in the negotiations, gives his perspective on the process of reaching agreement with the city of Fremont. (The perspective of the negotiator for the city, assistant city manager Larry Milnes, is given in an excerpt from a 1982 interview with Milnes, included in the appendix to this volume.)

Brooks served as consultant to the Patterson family in the 1980s and was responsible for preparing and promoting the master plan for Patterson Ranch lands which eventually was adopted by the city of Fremont. His explanation of the delicate balancing act required to satisfy the pro-growth, no-growth, and low-growth forces within the community and within the Patterson family attests to his well-acknowledged skills as a master politician as well as a master planner.

The interviews with Jack Brooks were conducted in his office in Fremont, California, which is sited on the former Patterson ranch lands sold to Brooks in 1952. They took place on November 5 and November 20, 1987. Mr. Brooks made no substantive changes in reviewing his transcript.

Ann Lage
Interviewer/Editor
Project Director

September, 1988
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name John Brooks

Date of birth 9/16/23 Birthplace Oakland, CA

Father's full name _____

Occupation _____ Birthplace _____

Mother's full name _____

Occupation _____ Birthplace _____

Your spouse Barbara Mathews Brooks

Your children William Mathews Brooks and John Brooks, Jr.

Where did you grow up? Oakland, CA

Present community San Francisco, CA

Education Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Healds College
Degree in Law from Lincoln University Law School

Occupation(s) Real Estate Developer and Investor

Areas of expertise Real Estate

Other interests or activities _____

Organizations in which you are active _____

I FAMILY, EDUCATION, BUSINESS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

[Interview 1: November 5, 1987]##

Family and Youth in Alameda County

Lage: We want to start with some personal background, just to set the scene--where you were born and raised, and particularly if there are things in your background that helped shape the direction you took.

Brooks: I was born in Oakland, California, on September 16, 1923, so I've been a resident of Alameda County for my whole life. My parents were both born in Alameda County. Our children are the fifth generation born in the same little city of San Leandro because my wife's people have been there that long.

Lage: My goodness. When would that date back to?

Brooks: Oh, it goes back to the 1800s.

Lage: As early as the Patterson family.

Brooks: Yes, about the same time. Her side of the family came to San Leandro at that point in time, and each generation was born in the same city. I was born just across the border, on the Oakland side of the line from San Leandro.

Lage: What did your father do as an occupation?

Brooks: I had a father and a stepfather. My father was in the steamfitters' union, president of the union at one time, for a number of years. My stepfather was a naval officer.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see page 207.

- Lage: I understand you went to the Maritime Academy. Did that have anything to do with your stepfather's influence?
- Brooks: Yes, it did because during part of his career, he was an instructor in engineering in the navy, and he became aware of the US Maritime Academy--it's different than the state academy--in King's Point, and he recommended to me that I take a look at it. I thought it was pretty good free education! So I'm a graduate of King's Point.
- Lage: Where is King's Point?
- Brooks: King's Point is in New York. The federal academy is in New York. Most people don't know that there are four federal academies: naval, army, air force, and maritime.
- Lage: I jumped ahead there, getting you clear up to the Maritime Academy, but what about education in general? Public school?
- Brooks: Public school. High school in Oakland. Castlemont High School. Of course, I went to the academy shortly after leaving high school.
- Lage: Did your early education or high school show any of this interest in politics that you took up later? Were there any extracurricular activities that were related?
- Brooks: No, not really. I worked all the way through high school. I worked nights in a parking lot, parking cars, and I worked in the summer, as was typical of this area, in the local canneries. The local canneries provided summer jobs in southern Alameda County in those days. Now the canneries are mainly gone, but that was a major source of employment then, in the late thirties.
- Lage: How far would you have to come to find a cannery in those days? Into San Leandro?
- Brooks: Well, I worked in two in Oakland. One was in upper Oakland, near west Oakland, and I later worked in one just across the line from San Leandro. Do you know where Fifth Avenue is?
- Lage: Yes.
- Brooks: One of the major canneries was at Fifth Avenue. You know, where that old yacht harbor thing is. The other one was at 98th Avenue in Oakland. So rather than a lot of extracurricular activities in school, I spent a lot of my spare time working.
- Lage: That wasn't so unusual then, during the Depression days.
- Brooks: It was fairly common in those days because that was right at the end of the Depression period.

Training in Engineering and Law

Lage: When you went to the Maritime Academy, was this with the idea of getting into engineering?

Brooks: Yes, I asked to attend the engineering portion of the school, and I was assigned that portion.

Lage: Any reason for that choice?

Brooks: I had an interest in engineering throughout my teenage years.

Lage: Did the building of the Golden Gate and Bay bridges and the excitement surrounding that have anything to do with your decision?

Brooks: No, I think probably the factor that was most important was that my stepfather was an instructor in engineering.

Lage: Now tell me about the academy.

Brooks: Well, I came to the academy. Of course, it was during the war years, and like all the academies, they had shortened the courses from four and a half years to two and a half years. The Maritime Academy, like the Naval Academy, has a midshipman program where you attend the academy and then you go to sea and then you come back and finish at the academy. So during that period, the war years, I served as a midshipman on various ships in combat zones. Because of the midshipman status, I was promoted at sea to an officer's status, then when you come back to the academy you revert back to your midshipman status.

Lage: That must have been a hard transition!

Brooks: Then, upon graduation from the academy, I was commissioned in the navy as a naval officer specializing in engineering and served in the navy throughout the Pacific. I served in the navy as a midshipman in the Pacific before I went back to the academy. I also served in North Africa and India as a midshipman. In fact--you're too young to remember--as a midshipman I landed on Guadalcanal. After being commissioned I again served in the navy, in the amphibious forces.

Lage: And the war was still going on at the time?

Brooks: Yes. We'd make landings throughout the islands and the Philippines and Okinawa, the usual war stories.

Brooks: After I left the navy I went back to engineering school and got a degree in mechanical engineering from Heald's College. During that

period I worked as a ship's officer in San Francisco at night and went to school in the daytime.

You may not know it, but the law requires that every ship have an engineering officer aboard while they're in port, and on all merchant ships all the regular officers are off every night and weekends when they're in port, so they put a relief officer on. So through engineering school I worked at night as a ship's officer and went to school in the daytime. Then later I did the same thing again while I went to school to get a law degree.

Lage: That sounds like a very good sideline to have.

Brooks: Yes, you make a reasonably good living while going to school. And it was a good job too because most of the time as a ship's officer you're not doing very much so you have a lot of study time.

Lage: Right. You just have to be there.

Brooks: You have to be there. You have to move a ship once in a while, from one port to another, but that didn't occur often enough to interrupt your study time.

Lage: Where did you get your law degree?

Brooks: Lincoln University of San Francisco.

Lage: And what did you have in mind with the law degree? Were you thinking of becoming an attorney or just a general education?

Brooks: I was more interested in a general education, but during the period I was going to law school I seriously considered becoming an attorney and practicing law, but near the end of the period I was in law school, I went into the development business and no longer desired to practice law. There were several mental changes during that period.

Lage: I imagine the legal training has come in handy, though.

Brooks: Yes, the combination of the legal training and the engineering training has been very valuable because most of the development business is made up of those two areas.

Lage: So without really knowing exactly where you were heading, you ended up getting the right degrees.

Brooks: Yes, I was fortunate to get the right training at the right time. I also think that the training at the academy was particularly important, particularly in the area of teaching self-discipline.

Brooks: which you have to apply in business, so that the training at the academy was, I think, very important in teaching you to discipline yourself to get certain things done at a certain time. One of the sayings they have at the academy is that you do the hardest job first and the easiest job last. That has been kind of a rule I've followed throughout my life.

Lage: You just mentioned something that was intriguing and that was the mental changes you went through, ending up in the development business. Why don't we talk about that a little bit?

Brooks: During that period I thought, "Well, I'll practice law." In fact, at that point in time, while I was going to school, I was working part-time as a law clerk in a legal office. It happened to be a criminal practice, and I found that very interesting.

Lage: Was that in Oakland?

Brooks: In Oakland. I found that very interesting and at that point in time I said, "Well, I think this is the kind of thing I would like to do." Then I changed jobs really and got into the development business during my last year in law school. So I completed law school and just stayed in the development business.

Launching a Career as a Developer

Lage: How did you happen to make the change into the development business?

Brooks: While I was still in the navy, the ship came to San Francisco. We were in for repairs, so we were here for a couple of weeks. So while I was still in uniform, I went down and took an examination and received a real estate broker's license. I didn't really use it for a number of years, but then an opportunity came while I was in my last year in law school where these two contractor-developers, a father and son, needed a part-time real estate salesman. So they hired me. Of course I made more money doing that than I did as a law clerk. By the time I finished law school they asked me to become a partner, so I became a partner in the development firm and the construction company.

Lage: What was the name of that firm?

Brooks: Leonardo and Son.

Lage: I always find it fascinating when I'm talking with people how this combination of intent and chance come together.

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: Now, when you got your real estate license, what were you thinking? Did you see that things were going to be happening here?

Brooks: I said, "Well, someday I'm going to get out of the navy, and I'm going to have to do something." I've always been kind of oriented to study. When I was in the navy I had books with me; I studied engineering books. I had a friend--a lady friend, by the way--who was a real estate broker that I visited while I was ashore during that period, and she had a book about real estate. So she gave me the book, and I took it to sea with me, read it and studied it, and having read the whole book, the next time I came back I said, "Why not take the test?" [laughter]

Lage: And that kind of moved you along the path you took.

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: You must have liked the real estate business when you did get into it.

Brooks: Oh yes, I really liked the development business, and I could apply my educational background to it. That went very well, and the two partners I had almost turned over the whole operation to me.

Lage: Was the son also older than you?

Brooks: Yes, they were both older. I was a young kid that they thought, I guess, was willing to work and do things and come up with some imaginative ideas, so they kind of stepped back and said, "Do whatever you want."

Lage: That's a great opportunity. Then when did you get your contractor's license?

Brooks: Well, as a result of that association, working in the business, I was able to get a contractor's license. So that was back in '52 or '53, someplace in that area.

Lage: Did you eventually buy that business?

Brooks: Yes. The business got larger, and they were kind of small operators, and it made them very nervous that they kept expanding. So they came to me with a proposal. They said, "We just want to go back and be little tiny developers." So on a very friendly basis, I bought them out. We were friends. There wasn't any problem. We were friends at the time we were partners and after we were partners.

- Lage: They just didn't want the big vision that you must have had. They didn't want to get involved in it?
- Brooks: Well, they saw that they were getting bigger and bigger, and they had trouble relating to the size.
- Lage: Well, tell me what you were thinking of at that time. I understand there was a tremendous boom after the war. Did you see this coming on?
- Brooks: Well, I didn't necessarily think in terms of a tremendous boom. I just thought it was a good business. It was a challenging business. I think that was the most important part of it; it was challenging to be able to get things done and create things. As a young man I was more interested in that challenge and just doing things, creating things. So that's what really motivated me more than whether there was going to be a big boom or not.
- Lage: You weren't analyzing demographics and all that at the time?
- Brooks: No. Then as you go and mature in the business, you begin to get into those other areas. At the beginning stages you're focusing on just what you're doing and the challenge of trying to solve the problems.
- Lage: When did you marry? In this period?
- Brooks: I married right as I was getting out of law school. By the way, I married the gal that was my girlfriend in junior high school.
- Lage: Oh really? I wondered because you said you lived so close by.
- Brooks: She was my girlfriend in junior high school, in high school. We didn't see much of each other during the war years. Then after the war years we got together, and we've been married ever since.
- Lage: That's wonderful. What was her maiden name?
- Brooks: Matthews. Her name was Barbara Matthews.
- Lage: That's why there're Matthews in your family. Isn't your son Matthew?
- Brooks: Yes. In fact, her father was a real estate broker and did a considerable amount of development work also.
- Lage: Was she the one you were dating who was in real estate?
- Brooks: Yes.
- Lage: Okay, now we're clear on this.

Brooks: I guess you're aware of San Lorenzo Village? It's just south of San Leandro. It was a major development during the war years. That was one of the projects that her father put together. Unfortunately, he died in the middle of the war, 1944. But she took over his business at the age of eighteen and continued to operate it until just a few years ago. She was very, very successful in her own business.

Lage: This was in real estate, as a real estate broker?

Brooks: A real estate insurance broker. Very successful and operated completely independently. We operated our two businesses completely independently with no crossover.

Lage: That's very interesting. So she didn't get involved helping you much?

Brooks: No. She ran her own thing, and I did my own thing. That's probably why we're still married!

Lage: And you stayed in separate areas?

Brooks: Yes, she had her offices in San Leandro, and I had offices in Fremont, then later in San Leandro, separate from hers, and then back to Fremont again.

Involvement in Democratic Party Politics

Lage: I want to get some indication of when you got involved in Democratic Party politics.

Brooks: I began to get involved in politics shortly after I got into the building business, and really in just the local area, the local city council things and billboard things. Then gradually I began to get more and more involved in the state things, like Pat Brown's campaign for governor, the first time he ran, and Alan Cranston's campaign. The first time he ran for controller, I was his chairman for Alameda County [1958]. Then that just kept growing into state politics and then national politics. It was just kind of a natural thing. I kept getting more and more involved.

Lage: Now, was it related initially at all to your interest in development? I mean, did you get involved in city council politics in order to influence development decisions?

Brooks: Not really, because you don't really influence them that much. It was, I think, kind of a challenging thing I hadn't done.
[laughter]

Lage: I can see you love challenge!

Brooks: Then later I became the northern California chairman of the party [January-September, 1971].

Lage: So you really made your mark in a lot of areas.

Brooks: I ended up as state chairman for the Kennedys and for any number of politicians.

Lage: Did this continue to be a challenge?

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: How about this last election?

Brooks: I've kind of stepped back at the present time. I still participate, but on a lower-key level. You know, I'm getting older and I'm saying, "Well, it's time for the young guys to really get out and do the work." [laughter] My oldest son is very much involved in politics, so I assist him.

Lage: Is he behind the scenes?

Brooks: No, he's out in front. I try to stay behind the scenes now!

Lage: He's running for office?

Brooks: No, he has no interest in running for office, but he has an interest in being involved, as I was.

Lage: Well, maybe we'll get into the politics more later. There must be some relationship, or some way that it influenced or helped you to make things go the way you wanted them to go.

Brooks: Well, I think it's very difficult to identify the relationship between business and politics because in the process of politics you get to know a lot of people, and as you know more people it's helpful in business, but you can't identify a direct relationship where knowing this particular person helped that particular thing.

Lage: Of course, knowing how things work helps.

Brooks: Yes, how all the machinery works is very, very helpful.

Lage: In talking to Bob Buck [of Patterson Properties. See interview in this series] that was one thing he brought up, in terms of your contribution with your involvement in their corporation.

Brooks: Well, I think I've learned how the whole system works. I've served on a number of commissions and committees, so I know how the state thing works, how the federal thing works, how they work locally.

Lage: It doesn't hurt.

Brooks: No.

Association with Wayne Valley

Lage: Let's get back into the building. You were associated with Wayne Valley for a long time.

Brooks: Yes, Wayne Valley and I became partners in about 1954, I guess.

Lage: After you had bought out Leonardo?

Brooks: Yes. I operated independently for a while. Then we became partners, and we were partners until we merged our companies with the Singer company in 1974.

Lage: And then that ended your association?

Brooks: No, I remained as president of the Singer Housing Division and became president of the national division which included a number of housing companies across the country, from Florida to California to New Orleans. It's every place.

Lage: And you headed up their entire housing division?

Brooks: Yes. I was president of their entire housing division.

Lage: It must have been completely different, dealing with Florida and—

Brooks: No, the basic business is the same. Integrating with an industrial company that's oriented to industrial operations is a difficult kind of thing to make mesh.

Lage: Singer hadn't been in housing before? This was completely new?

Brooks: Yes, this was a completely new business for them, and it was considerably different than the industrial type of business that they were used to.

Lage: Didn't they drop out of that after a few years?

Brooks: Yes. I stayed as president for about three years and then said, "I think it's time to retire and do something different." Then, a couple of years following that, they decided to get out of it, so they sold off the various divisions.

Lage: Well, that's another story in itself. Would you want to make any comments about Wayne Valley? I noticed he passed away fairly recently.

Brooks: Yes, he passed away about two weeks ago. He was an unusual man, very intelligent, a very good businessman. He had some problems in relating to people. He was friendly, but he was very direct. He said what he thought, and he was very honest, but because of those characteristics he had trouble relating to a lot of people because he was too direct.

Lage: He was blunt with people?

Brooks: He was blunt and to the point, but he was a very good partner. We had a very good relationship. I don't think during the whole time we were partners, twenty-plus years, we ever had a serious disagreement. When something would come up and we might have different points of view, quite often we'd just say, "Okay, what are we going to do?" and we'd flip a coin to decide. That's a great way to decide how to operate a business. [laughter] I would say 90 percent of the time when we had differences of opinion, he'd say, "Okay, go ahead and do it your way."

Lage: So he was blunt. Could you be blunt with him?

Brooks: Oh, certainly. We were very direct with each other. We had really good communication.

Lage: He was the one that first got involved with the Raiders [professional football team], is that correct?

Brooks: Yes. He was part of a group that went down and got the original franchise, and then he brought in partners to the franchise, and I was one of the partners that he brought in to make up the franchise group. Then later, I guess it was about 1976 or in that area, I and Al Davis bought Wayne Valley out because he and Davis could not get along because they're both very blunt personalities. [laughter] They just didn't get along at all.

Lage: And did that take place with continuing friendship between you and Wayne Valley?

Brooks: Wayne and I remained friends--

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Brooks: And Davis and I are very good friends. Our two wives are very good friends. In fact, my wife and his wife travel together quite a bit. They went to Asia last year and to Italy last year together. So we're very good friends, but I still had a good association with Wayne. We still owned investment properties together. I still have some joint ownership even with the estate now. We had a very good relationship. When Wayne was ill and couldn't get around too much, he'd get on the phone, sometimes for an hour, an hour and a half, and just talk.

Lage: I think that tells us something about your relationships with people. I'm sure this issue between Wayne Valley and Al Davis was a hot one.

Brooks: Oh, it was a very hot one. [laughter] They really had a very definite dislike for each other.

Lage: And then to be able to continue a separate relation with each one says something about your abilities.

II THE BURGEONING FREMONT AREA IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD

First Purchase of Patterson Ranch Lands, 1952

Lage: Let's talk now about Fremont and its growth and development. What do you recall about the Fremont area in the postwar period when you first got involved in this area?

Brooks: In the postwar period there was no Fremont, first of all.

Lage: Right. That's why I said Fremont area!

Brooks: I was developing properties and building houses in Hayward, and I was looking for some more land, and I didn't even think about coming down to this area, which was called Centerville in those days--it was way out in nowhere, in the boondocks--but one of the things I did was I put a little squib in the real estate board bulletin that they send out to the various brokers saying that I was looking for some development property.

An old gentleman--I'm trying to remember his name; he was a broker here in Centerville--called me and said, "I'd like to show you a piece of property." I said, "Where is it?" and he said, "In Centerville." [laughing] I said, "I'm not really that interested." He said, "Well, come on down." He was a nice, friendly fellow, so I just kind of came down to accommodate him, and I didn't really have that much interest in being that far out from where there was other activity. So I came down and he introduced me to Will Patterson.

Lage: Oh? Now, when would that have been?

Brooks: That would be about 1952 or 1953. I think it was '52.

Lage: Tell me about that. That's intriguing.

Brooks: Well, he introduced me to Will Patterson. Will's three sons, Don, Jack, and David, each had a hundred acres right back here.

Lage: Not on the Patterson Ranch?

Brooks: Well, it was part of the Patterson Ranch then, but it had been put in their name.

Lage: But when you say, "right back here"—

Brooks: Right at the end of this street that you're on.

Lage: Okay. I'd never thought of that as part of the Patterson Ranch.

Brooks: Yes, the Patterson Ranch started two blocks down from where we're at right now. [Mr. Brooks's office, where this interview took place, is at the intersection of Thornton and Cabrille Avenues in Fremont, east of Highway 880.]

And so I went over and met Will Patterson. We began to talk, and he said, "Well, you know, these parcels that my three sons have we'd like to do something with." We began to talk about how we could do it. At that point it didn't have any access to a major street, so I said, "In order to do something, we need to buy this little strip of land in order to get back to it." It's the strip of land you're sitting on right now! Then, over a period of five or six months of talking, we structured something, an agreement. I bought this little piece of land to get back to it, and we just started gradually developing it over a series of years.

Lage: Were you discussing this with his sons too?

Brooks: Donald would attend some of the meetings, but not all of them. I met David and Jack during that period because they came out especially to meet me because their father requested it, to talk to me about what my plans were and what I thought, but David and Jack weren't really directly involved in any of the negotiations.

Lage: But it was their property rather than Will's?

Brooks: Yes. Donald, as I recall, owned it outright and David's property was in a trust for his benefit; that is, his father was trustee, but it was going to expire in the near future. I think Jack also owned his outright, but he kind of left it up to his father to do what he thought was right.

Lage: That's earlier than I'd realized that the family became interested in developing some of their property.

Brooks: See, we look at the family as two sides: Will and Henry, and this was Will's three boys that really got started here.

Working with Will, Henry, and Don Patterson

Brooks: So we started a relationship with that, then that relationship continued, and I formed a rather close relationship with Will Patterson. He was a nice gentleman, an older man.

Lage: Yes, tell me more about him.

Brooks: He was a real gentleman from the old school; in other words, very interested in what happened to the community. As you probably know, he was president of the water board [board of directors of Alameda County Water District]. He used to drive around in a jeep with a great big white dog. He'd be on one side, and the big white dog would be sitting on the other side, on the seat! He'd come by--not to this office because the original office I built, a small office, was out in front of this office, where the street is now-- and he'd come by on an average of once a week or so with his dog. He'd come in and sit down and talk for an hour or so. Sometimes I'd drop over to his house and see him. So we had a very good, friendly relationship outside of any business relationship.

Lage: Did he seem pretty aware of the coming of development?

Brooks: Yes, he was very knowledgeable. He was a very knowledgeable and intelligent man, but a very gentle kind of man, very kind and gentle. But he was a good businessman.

Lage: What kind of an arrangement did you strike on this particular area that we're talking about?

Brooks: Well, we bought some property and had a contract for a series of options on the balance because he wasn't sure and I wasn't sure that, you know, anybody would ever buy any houses in this area. So we said, "All right, we'll buy a portion and try and see what happens, and then if we can make it work, I'll have a series of options to continue."

Lage: But they didn't get involved in sharing in the development at all?

Brooks: No. They were land sellers, really. They did not participate in the development in any way.

Lage: But when he'd come by to sit and talk with you, was he interested?

Brooks: Oh, he was interested in the development and how it was being done. He was very interested in the whole process: what you were doing, how you were doing it, the whole process.

Lage: I guess I get the picture from others that Henry was more the farmer and Will was kind of out in the community and into his mining enterprises.

Brooks: Well, there was a big difference in the personalities of the two. Henry was a very strict kind of person who wasn't really a friendly person, and when he talked to you he didn't say very much. He was very direct in what he said but said very little. [laughter]

Lage: But you listened to those few words?

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: Did you talk to him about the property?

Brooks: Well, later on, subsequent to that time, then I talked to both Henry and Will. Henry said, "Well, here's another portion of the ranch that the whole family owns that we may have an interest in doing something with." So I had a number of meetings with both Henry and Will. In fact, we concluded an agreement, although it wasn't signed, just before he died.

Lage: I see. Before Henry died.

Brooks: Yes. And he died rather suddenly. That agreement never went into effect.

Again, Henry was a good guy to deal with. He just wasn't as open and outgoing as Will was.

Lage: Kind of reserved.

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: Did he have as much interest in the development as Will?

Brooks: No. I didn't see him as often and, you know, he just wasn't as friendly.

Lage: But he didn't object to the idea of developing part of the ranch?

Brooks: No, he didn't object.

Lage: Some of the pictures we've been given are that Henry really wanted just to farm.

Brooks: Well, very few people know, and probably a lot of the family don't know, that Henry and I sat down and worked out a complete contract for a portion of the ranch before he died, with Will and Henry together.

- Lage: What portion would that have been? Was it a very large one?
- Brooks: Yes, it was. The portion where the Ardenwood Regional Park is now, what we called at that time Tract O.
- Lage: So that portion would have been developed a lot earlier had Henry not died?
- Brooks: Yes.
- Lage: Was the flooding controlled at that point?
- Brooks: Alameda Creek wasn't constructed, and it had the flood problem. I'd worked out an engineering solution for that, which I had tentatively approved by the governmental agency to do a diversion kind of engineering project where we diverted the flood waters, with a series of ditches and dikes, around the property. We had worked out a tentative engineering solution to the flooding problem.
- Lage: So was that all part of the contract?
- Brooks: Yes, it was all part of the whole program. Then, of course, about that period the Nimitz freeway was proposed also, and that worked into the whole engineering problem of the freeway needing some fill materials and so forth. So that was coordinated with the whole program.
- Lage: Why did you decide to come way down here? You said your first reaction was it was too far from the center of action.
- Brooks: That's a hard question to answer. I thought, you know, "Maybe there's some potential there and maybe it's worth trying." And Will and Donald both were so good to work with, and they said, "We know that these problems exist, so let's try to structure something that will relate to them. We'll try it, and then we'll do the options, and we'll be somewhat flexible. If things go well, then we'll move faster, and if they don't go well, we'll move slower."
- I thought they were sincere in that, and they were. They were very flexible. In the beginning period, there were lots of ups and downs, but they would adjust, regardless of what the contract said, because I don't think anybody ever looked at the contract after it was signed. They'd look at things as they were occurring, and we'd adjust to them.
- Lage: That's interesting. And it did go well, I assume.
- Brooks: Yes. With Will and Don and Henry, a handshake was much better than a written contract. If you got a handshake from them, you were

Brooks: much better off than having a written contract! If you ignored the contract and just dealt with them as things occurred, you were much better off.

Lage: What kinds of adjustment had to be made? In payment schedule, that kind of thing?

Brooks: Well, things would go faster or slower, and we'd have tight money periods and loose money periods. As you did the detail engineering, there'd be changes in the plans where you'd have to take more or less land or reduce the size of one piece and make another piece bigger. So those kinds of problems that would flow with the economy and with the engineering problems. In those days there was a whole host of engineering problems because the whole area was mainly undeveloped, so you had to go out and start from scratch and solve the various engineering problems. Access and drainage problems and sewer problems and water problems. You had to face each one of those and find a solution to it.

Lage: Now, we're talking about the period before incorporation?

Brooks: Yes.

Designing Systems and Working with Government to Facilitate Development

Lage: Were you one of the first developers in the area, then? Or the first?

Brooks: One of the first. The only one that came down about the same time that I can recall was a fellow named Jim Myers who developed Glenmoor. He came down about the same time.

Lage: How did you deal with problems like the sewer problem?

Brooks: Well, you just begin to design systems. Sometimes interim systems, temporary systems, that would work until a whole master system could come into place. All the Patterson land wasn't even in the sewer district.

Lage: Didn't you have something to do with getting people signed up for a sewer district?

Brooks: Yes. Well, at this end of the city there were two sewer districts: Union Sanitary and the Decoto districts. They were two small districts, serving small areas, but the land in between them was kind of no-man's-land.

Lage: They didn't need sewer districts on the farm.

Brooks: So I got the sewer districts together, and they decided they'd be much better off with one big district than two small ones. But in order to merge the districts, they had to get all the land in between. So I went to all the property owners involved and all the farmers and got a petition to annex to the Union Sanitary District, and then the Union Sanitary District annexed the Decoto District to make it one big district.

Lage: And you were the force behind that?

Brooks: I did all the work on it. You see, when I first came down here, the Union Sanitary District had one part-time employee. They only had one employee. He worked half a day! That was the whole district. So they didn't have any staff at all. So in order to get it done, somebody had to do it. The one employee they had was an older man, kind of semi-retired, you know, who would spend half a day--

Lage: The district kind of ran itself, it sounds like.

Brooks: Yes. In working with their board, which was local merchants and farmers, I laid out the whole plan to them. They were receptive to it, but they didn't have any staff to implement it, so I just went out and did it.

Lage: How about the Pattersons? Did Will Patterson do any of the politicking on this?

Brooks: No. Except for being cooperative in annexing a substantial portion of the Patterson property, signing the petition for that--which both Henry and Will together did; it wasn't just Will alone--other than that they said, "Well, if you can get it done, fine. We will not oppose you in any way. If anybody asks us, we'll tell them we signed the petition."

Lage: But they didn't go to talk to their neighbors.

Brooks: What I'd do is I'd work during the day and in the early evenings I'd just go out and visit each landowner or each farmer and explain the whole program to them and have them sign the petition. After doing that for several months I had enough signatures on the petition so that the annexation could take place.

Lage: What about the drainage problems? What did you do there?

Brooks: Before the major Army Corps of Engineers project, the whole area was subject to flooding.

Lage: Even this far in?

Brooks: Well, it was from about two blocks down, all the way north, and then all the way east, swinging around, even above this area.

So I designed a series of interim systems to bypass floodwaters for the various things I was working on. Of course the governmental agency knew that the Army Corps of Engineers project was going to come along some day. They weren't sure of the timing, but it had been worked on for some twenty years prior, and like most governmental projects, they start the studies and twenty years later maybe they'll start some work. [laughter] So they were aware that there was an overall commitment that some day in the future there'd be the Alameda Creek project. So I did a series of interim projects that would take care of special, localized problems.

Lage: And these were diversion canals?

Brooks: Diversion canals, dikes, and a whole series of things. Bypass kinds of systems.

Lage: Did you feel pretty comfortable that those would take care of the problem?

Brooks: Oh, sure. In fact, I sat at the drawing board and did them myself.

Lage: So there's your engineering background coming into play.

Brooks: I took the basic plans to the governmental agencies involved and had their engineers say, "Yes, this will work." Then we did the detailed engineering drawings from that.

Lage: And then who paid for the work involved?

Brooks: I did.

Lage: You did, as the developer.

I talked to Matt Whitfield as part of this project [see interview in this series] and he mentioned some of the early drainage solutions weren't very good for the water basin. I think this was runoff into the--

Brooks: Well, Matt Whitfield was, you know, general manager of the [Alameda County] water district and they depend a lot on percolation, so if water is laying on the ground, for his specialized interest, if it percolates into the water basin, you know, it's good for them. When I take a piece of land, I isolate it so that it will not be subject to flooding, it would not have surface waters going into the ground. But the water district never had any serious objection to what we were doing. In fact, they were very cooperative.

- Lage: But I thought there was something about diverting runoff and letting the runoff go into the water basin. He was fearful of contaminating the water basin, I thought.
- Brooks: Well, he's always been fearful, but on the projects I was doing, that was not an issue. No, Matt Whitfield and I have been friends for years and years and worked together on various projects for years and years.
- Lage: Did you find that the water district was adaptable?
- Brooks: Oh, very cooperative. They've always been very cooperative. Historically, they've been cooperative, and they're probably one of the best districts to work with of any district. Matt ran the district in a very practical, businesslike way and was very straightforward as far as engineering solutions were concerned. He did not get involved in inserting politics into engineering solutions, which some districts do.
- Lage: And, there again, you had the Will Patterson tie with the water board.
- Brooks: In the early period Will Patterson was with the water board, but through much of the development of Fremont and after, Will left the water board and then he later died. [William Patterson served on the Board of Directors of the Alameda County Water District from its founding in 1914 to 1958. He was president of the board from 1932 to 1954. He died in 1962.]

The Incorporation of Fremont: Conflicts with Newark

- Lage: We're talking about dealing with governmental agencies and that should bring us to Fremont's incorporation. Before it was incorporated, who were you dealing with?
- Brooks: The county. The county had authority, except for the local districts, like the water district and the sanitary district. The county had planning and development authority.
- Lage: How receptive were they to your plans?
- Brooks: There weren't any real problems. The county was, I'd say, very receptive to the plans I brought to them.
- Lage: How did you feel about incorporation? Was this something that you wanted to see happen?

- Brooks: Well, I was one of the incorporators, one of the leaders on the incorporation committee, so it's obvious I favored it.
- Lage: What were your reasons? You hadn't had trouble working with the county. I know that was one of the arguments for incorporation.
- Brooks: I just felt, and I think there was a general feeling in the community and with the chambers of commerce, which I was very active on, that the time had come to have some really local government and not government at the other end of the county and to join these communities together. It was like joining the two little sanitary districts together, making one good district out of it. The same thing applied to the city. So I was very active in that incorporation movement.
- Lage: Was there a particular thrust? Was land planning something that they were concerned about in planning for incorporation?
- Brooks: Oh yes, that was one of the big thrusts. There were some disputes with the county because Newark had incorporated first and they wanted to include a great portion of the Patterson Ranch in their incorporation, and the local leaders from Fremont got the supervisors to reverse that in a mysterious kind of way!
[laughing]
- Lage: Tell me more about that because I wondered--
- Brooks: Well, they had it all lined up in all the--
- Lage: Newark was first?
- Brooks: Newark was first.
- Lage: And at the time they incorporated, did they try to get the Patterson Ranch?
- Brooks: Yes. They had that all on their incorporation plans.
- Lage: And why was that omitted, if Fremont didn't have its plans in place yet?
- Brooks: Well, some of the local leadership from what would become Fremont just didn't think that Newark should have that portion of land in Newark. So they were able to politically convince the local supervisor it shouldn't be included, and he convinced the rest of the members of the board and excluded that property from Newark. It has been a problem between the two cities over the years. This continued because Newark really thought they got cheated out at the last minute in some mysterious way, because they didn't realize what was happening until the actual vote was taken by the board!

Lage: Newark is a very tiny city, and the Patterson Ranch would have made it much bigger.

Brooks: It would have been much larger if the political maneuvering hadn't taken place.

Lage: Can you tell me more about what was behind the political maneuvering? Were you involved in it yourself?

Brooks: Well, I was involved in it, along with several others. You know, there were some thoughts at that point of time of incorporating Fremont. It was thought that would be a logical property for Fremont to have and not Newark. That was kind of a separate, opposing group. You know, it became kind of a little challenge between the two groups.

Lage: And one had the ear of their supervisor.

Brooks: They both thought they had the ear of the supervisor, but the way it wound up, at the last minute, the vote went against Newark.

Lage: Who was the supervisor? Do you remember him?

Brooks: I'll try and remember his name. I can't remember his name offhand.

Lage: Now, did the Pattersons take a position on that?

Brooks: No, they did not get involved with that at all.

Lage: And here it was their land.

Brooks: Yes. No, they did not get involved with that at all. They pretty much stayed away from local politics through the years. Will was interested in the water district and some politics, but the family pretty much isolated themselves from local politics until just recently, in the last couple of years.

Lage: Now, I'm still curious. Was there something about the Newark scene that made you, who had some interest in developing the Patterson Ranch, feel it wouldn't be as good?

Brooks: No, that did not enter into it because the big portion they were talking about nobody even thought about developing. It was at the far end, so far removed. But the group in Fremont that was thinking about incorporation and beginning to work on that problem just didn't think it properly should be in Newark!

Lage: They just wanted the land.

Brooks: Yes. [laughter] It was like the old cowboys and Indians, I guess you'd call it, and if you can take it over, it's yours.

III PLANNING IN FREMONT, 1950s-1960s

Community Divisions over Timing of Growth and Development

[Date of Interview: November 20, 1987] ##

- Lage: Last week we talked about the incorporation of Fremont and I asked you whether there was a no-growth sentiment involved in that. You said, "It's not so much 'no-growth' as 'let's plan things better.'"
- Brooks: Yes, that was the motivation behind the incorporation, I understand. Have planning transferred from the remote county area, where there was only one representative of this area on the board of supervisors which controlled the planning, zoning, and whatever happened, to a local group in the form of a city council that could deal with the local communities.
- Lage: Now they talk about Fremont, "the planned city." They pride themselves on that. Was the initial impetus to plan growth?
- Brooks: Yes, that started immediately after incorporation. Of course, it was part of the motivation for incorporation. So almost immediately following the incorporation, the city employed some outside planning professionals to develop various plans for the future growth of the community. Those plans were finally adopted. Although they've been amended a number of times, the concepts incorporated in those plans are still the concepts being used for planning and growth in Fremont.
- Lage: That's pretty unusual in a young city.
- Brooks: I look upon the amendments more as adjustments to the original plan. The original plan is really still intact.
- Lage: That's interesting. I had heard that there was, in the fifties and sixties at least, a strong division on the council and even in the community between a no-growth sentiment and a move-ahead plan.

Brooks: Throughout the history of Fremont, there've always been these factions. One faction comes into power that slows growth down, then another one comes into power and speeds it up, and it's gone back and forth. But it really relates to the timing for growth more than the general plan developed. You know, growth more or less followed the general plan. The timing questions were the big questions, and then also some of the interpretations to implement the plan.

Lage: Hasn't the plan been cut down somewhat, in terms of density of housing and--

Brooks: Well, it's been cut down somewhat in the number of people that will eventually live in Fremont. The various areas have the same general kinds of uses, but less intense.

Lage: I've heard that this division was even in the social clubs. There must have been a lot of tension involved.

Brooks: Yes, it existed throughout the community. The chamber of commerce had one position, and the more affluent people, for example in Mission San Jose, had another opinion.

Lage: Were they more "slow down"?

Brooks: Yes, more affluent people in the community wanted to raise the drawbridge so that nobody else could come in. You know, if they had some vacant land next to where they lived, they wanted it to stay vacant for their own use. If they had a vacant parcel behind their house, they would prefer to see that vacant.

Lage: Did it divide along party lines, Republican and Democrat?

Brooks: No, not really. Not really. The party lines made almost no difference.

Lage: How does the Fremont area line up in terms of parties? Is it heavily one or the other?

Brooks: It was heavily Democratic for most of its history, but if you look at the voting records, it's gradually becoming more and more conservative, although whether they're registered Democrats or Republicans doesn't really indicate the sentiment.

Lage: But the vote does.

Brooks: The votes have indicated that the community is becoming more and more conservative, moving more and more to the right from the left.

Lage: That's a bit off our topic, but do you have some thoughts about why that's happened?

Brooks: Well, because people located here originally with barely enough for a down payment on a house and sometimes borrowed some money from parents, and the value of properties has increased very substantially. As a result, their net worth has increased very substantially, primarily because of the homes they own. As people get more and more affluent, and with the higher and higher net worth, they tend to be more and more conservative and move from the left more to center.

A Cooperative Relationship with Planning Director Roy Potter

Lage: We talked about the planning aspect. Let's discuss how you worked with the planning staff of the city and how you evaluate their abilities. You mentioned Roy Potter in particular [planning director, 1958-1966].

Brooks: Yes, well, Roy Potter probably was the person who had the most influence on the present plan, although he's been gone a number of years. His concepts still exist. The planning concepts he had are still part of the plan, and then the concepts of implementing the plan that were developed by Roy Potter are largely in place. Although they've been refined and have become much more sophisticated, the basic theory of what he was talking about still exists.

Lage: What would have been his plan?

Brooks: He developed the planned district [PD] and the PUD [planned unit development]. At that point in time most developments were just taking place on a standard-ordinance basis. You had certain size lots and streets. The planning tended to be rectangular kinds of subdivisions. He was interested in creating a different kind of living environment and being able to create parks and open spaces and more attractive streetscapes. So he began to develop these planning kinds of strategies that would change the nature of the way things were developed. Working with him we created the first park in Fremont.

Lage: Was that a park created within a development?

Brooks: It was created in a development by rearranging the lot sizes, taking a little bit out of each lot and accumulating what he thought was really excess and not usable to the homeowner. We combined those little tiny increments into one large parcel.

Lage: Sort of a commons idea.

Brooks: Yes. He was very much for the commons idea.

Lage: And that was the planned unit concept?

Brooks: Yes, planned unit development. That was kind of the first stage because moving the political forces very far at one time is very difficult. So it was done in gradual stages.

Lage: That seemed like a pretty radical idea?

Brooks: Yes, that was a pretty radical idea, although, you know, it was a very simple, unsophisticated kind of approach.

He'd come into this office. I was located in this office at that time, and that wall had a big blackboard on it. He'd come in and we'd spend a whole afternoon, four or five hours, talking about what could be done and what was economically feasible. So he'd draw some kind of sketch on the blackboard and he'd say, "Why won't this work?" Then I'd comment on why it wouldn't work. I'd say, "If you change it this way, then it might work." And we'd keep making various sketches and analyzing the various sketches until we came up with not only something that we thought would work as far as development is concerned, but something that was acceptable politically as well.

Lage: That's really interesting. Would you meet with him in the very first stages of a development?

Brooks: Well, it was kind of an unusual relationship because I don't think he did that with any other developer. He'd come in, and it was kind of a personal relationship between the two of us. Once we worked something out, then he'd try to get other developers to go along with the idea. In fact, most of them would not even go along with the PUD idea until we had done a couple of them and they could go out and see it.

Then he was able to take the planning information and the information I'd given him to present arguments to other developers on why they should do it. Then sometimes the other developers would check with me to see how the economics were working out, and I would support Roy's view because we'd worked it out together. [laughter] It was really kind of a partnership between government and private enterprise, trying to arrive at some common ground that would create a better community environment and then that partnership selling it to the other people who might be involved in development.

Lage: And selling it to the council too.

Brooks: Yes, and selling it politically. I would sell it to the chamber of commerce, for example. He would try to sell it to, you know, people within the city. But the end result was, I think, a better living environment, without raising the cost of housing to the purchaser.

Lage: Did you find that this was helpful on the sales end of things? Did the public like it?

Brooks: Well, the public, to begin with, coming out to buy a house, paid little attention to the fact that there might be a park down the street in the future. They usually focus on the need for a park after they've lived there for a while. So it really wasn't a big plus as far as marketing is concerned, but it relieved a lot of pressure on the city as time went on because they didn't have the pressures to create parks at city expense.

Lage: Sounds like a very well-thought-out idea. You mentioned that planned unit development wasn't new to Fremont, that it had been practiced in the East, but that this was one of the first--

Brooks: Yes, it had been done in the East, but very little of it had been done in the West, in California, at that point in time. There were some projects, and some we looked at, Roy and I reviewed, that were done in the 1800s that had some of these concepts. You know, like the commons area in Boston and places like that. We tried to look at those and see how they worked over a long period of time. We'd say, "This one's been there a hundred years, and people living there are happy, and they'd be very unhappy if you tried to take those benefits away from them. So it was a good idea a hundred years ago, and it's still working, and values have increased substantially because of that kind of planning there; why can't we use it here?"

That was part of the discussion process and the questioning we went through. "Why can't that concept be used?" Then we'd get into various areas and say, "Well, we can take the basic concept, but we have to modify it this way to make it fit the current situation and the current economics."

Some of these things are not new. You know, some of the basic planning ideas that are being used now were used by the Romans.

Lage: That's right, we're reinventing the wheel with a lot of things.

Brooks: Yes, you're just picking up ideas that were developed a long time ago. A lot of the housing types were developed as a result of these discussions. The kind of walled-in lots with entrances with inside gardens and that kind of thing that have been done in Fremont, well, you know, the Romans had done that and the Europeans still do it.

Lage: Did some of this come out of discussion with Roy Potter also? It wasn't just the public spaces, but some of the design of the homes?

Brooks: Yes. Typically, we'd come in without any agenda, just explore and talk for four or five hours at a time about almost anything that came to mind in, you know, that general area of planning and living environment and how you could do a particular lot that might be more desirable.

Lage: It sounds really exciting.

Brooks: It was just a brainstorming session, and we did it pretty regularly.

Lage: You must have had a meeting of the minds with him.

Brooks: Well, we pretty much did. He'd come to my office, rather than me going to the city, because we didn't have the interruptions here. I'd turn off my phone. He had trouble turning off his phone and his staff people at City Hall. So he'd come down here, and we'd close the door and spend the time just reviewing these things.

Lage: What was his background? Where did he come from?

Brooks: I can't recall where Roy came from. He was the first planning director here when the city hired him. He was planning director in some other city.

Lage: Do you remember how long he was here? When did he leave?

Brooks: Roy was here, oh, three or four years, something like that.

Lage: Oh, it was that short a time?

Brooks: Yes. He wasn't here for a long period of time.

The Planned District Concept: Planning and Politics

Lage: Now, from the planned unit development you went into the planned district concept. How was that different?

Brooks: Well, the planned unit development was merely how you reduce a series of lots, maybe the width from sixty feet to fifty-eight feet or fifty-five feet to create an open space, whereas the planned district becomes more sophisticated. You can have private streets, and you can vary the ordinance requirements for setbacks and side yards, and you combine units with common walls. You can do a whole series of things. With a PUD you can't change the street size. With a planned district you can vary the street width to accommodate what you're really creating.

Lage: But the overall balance has to remain the same?

Brooks: The overall density remains the same, whereas one of the differences between a PUD and a PD is that a PUD has lots all of the same size. You deal with lots all of the same size, whereas with a PD you can vary the lot sizes. You've just got total flexibility. The limitation it has is, "Does it create a better living environment and do you maintain the general plan density?"

Now, the general plan, it's not a fixed density for each parcel, it's in steps. The first step is what would be a regular development or a PUD, and then it's got a step two and three, and you can increase the density within those ranges by creating a better environment and better facilities for the people who live there. You do landscaping of streetscapes and common recreational facilities for the home owners, and that kind of thing, in a PD that you can't do with the standard ordinance or the PUD.

Lage: When would you have started working with the PD concept? How late are we talking about?

Brooks: Well, the PD concept grew out of the PUD. Once we got that to where it was acceptable, politically acceptable, then we said, "Well, why can't we do some of the other things that they've been doing for 2000 years?"--to pick up some of those concepts that were good and had been working for that long a time.

We said, "Well, the ordinances that require a twenty-foot front yard and a ten-foot side yard and a twenty-foot backyard just won't work. You can't apply those concepts because they're too confining." So the basic idea behind the PD was that you did not have to comply with any of these ordinances. The PD is a separate zone of itself. You zone it PD so you don't have to comply with any of these ordinances. You just try to take that parcel and just create a superior living environment.

Lage: Now, who judges if it is superior? This must have gotten into the political arena.

Brooks: Yes. Then, once you do that, then the staff judges and makes the recommendation; the planning commission then reviews it, and either supports the staff or doesn't support them. Once the planning commission has their comments, then it goes to the city council for final approval, and then the city council makes a judgment. So it's a whole series of political judgments made along the way.

Lage: Would the council pretty much support the planning commission or did some of these things become controversial?

- Brooks: Well, both ways. Quite often they'd support the planning commission, more often than not, but any number of times the council would say, "Well, we really don't like everything the planning commission has done, so we're going to vary that." So then they'd send it back to the planning commission with some of their recommendations, "Well, I think this should be changed and that should be changed," and the planning commission would review it again, then it would go back to the council again!
- Lage: And you would be actively there, supporting the--
- Brooks: Yes, well, during that period the council was meeting one night a week and the planning commission one night a week. I spent at least two nights a week in council chambers, before one or the other, and quite often these meetings would go on till one, two in the morning. I remember one that went on till three o'clock one morning. They'd argue for hours and hours about these various things.
- Lage: Was this during the sixties that they went on that long or right at the initial stages in the fifties?
- Brooks: Well, from the initial stages on through the mid-sixties. Then it gradually began to boil down to some more or less standard--Roy was gone by that time--some standard concepts and getting back to some standard rules they would follow, which I think was a mistake because they'd taken the flexibility out of it.
- Lage: So they did stop working with these more flexible arrangements?
- Brooks: No, they kept working with them but they began to develop standards for that kind of thing, which more or less gets back into moving towards, effectively, ordinance requirements again!
- Lage: I see what you mean. That seems to be the progression of things.
- Brooks: Well, it makes it a lot easier for the political forces to deal with something that's related to a standard.
- Lage: Right, but it may be easier also for a developer. Now, you seemed to like the challenge of this more flexible approach.
- Brooks: The standard approach is a lot easier for developers also. It's easier for everybody involved, but it takes the challenge away from doing something really different.

Involvement with the Alameda County Flood Control District

- Lage: We'll be coming back to some of this business with the council, but I want to talk a little more about flood control. We talked last time about some of the interim measures that you took to deal with flooding, but we missed the part about the Alameda County Flood Control Project itself.
- Brooks: You're talking about the Corps of Engineers project on Alameda Creek?
- Lage: Right. Now, one thing I mentioned is that Will Patterson was chairman of the Alameda County Flood Control District, or president.
- Brooks: No, he was president of the water district.
- Lage: But also he had something to do with the flood control district [first chairman of the advisory commission of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, from 1949 until 1955, or later].
- Brooks: No, he wasn't really involved in the flood control district. He was president of the water district and was the person who was the motivating force behind getting the water district formed. But the flood control district is completely separate.
- Lage: I know that, but I believe he was involved in the flood control district also. Maybe it was an advisory board chairman.
- Brooks: He might have participated in the meetings and that sort of thing, but he had no official position with the flood control district. Because the flood control district didn't really get going until--
- Lage: Well, there must have been something earlier to deal with it.
- Brooks: You see, all the flood control measures before incorporation were really controlled by the county engineering department. There wasn't really a flood control district as such.
- Lage: Right. That was when he was involved, when the county was in charge of it.
- Brooks: Yes, but that was under the standard engineering staff of the county.
- Lage: Right, and he was sort of advisory board chairman, apparently.
- Brooks: Well, he may have been, but was in no official capacity.

Lage: But when the concrete channel got put in, he was dead, I think.

Brooks: Well, they formed a flood control district, which was somewhat different than the way it was handled before, then the district really got in and began to develop long-range plans for flood control.

Lage: Now, did you get involved in that?

Brooks: Oh, I was involved with the flood control district on a very regular basis! I'd been down at their offices once a week.

Lage: Tell me about that. What were you working toward?

Brooks: We were working towards mainly interim solutions to a major problem. The major problem was the flooding or the overflow from Alameda Creek. Everybody knew that eventually there would be the major project by the Corps of Engineers on Alameda Creek that would eventually solve the flooding problem. What could you do in the interim?

Lage: And maybe how could you speed the Corps of Engineers up? Was that a problem?

Brooks: That was always a discussion, and that was a major thing with the chamber of commerce and the city again. Every agency involved was trying to find ways to speed up the federal government! And get appropriations from the Congress so the Corps of Engineers would have the funds to do the project.

Lage: Did you get involved with that with your political ties to Washington?

Brooks: Well, everybody was involved. I was involved. You know, every time we talked to a representative in Washington, the question always was, "When will you get the move on this?" [laughter] So really everybody was working on it in the community.

Lage: It was a major concern?

Brooks: Yes, it was a major concern in the community. Before that, we almost had to look at individual parcels and say, "Well, because of the flooding, what's happening to this parcel and what kind of an interim solution could you develop that would give future residents the full protection if the Corps of Engineers project never occurred?" So it was a matter of just taking a particular parcel and doing the engineering studies relative to that parcel and what could be done and what were the alternatives.

Then I'd sit down with flood control people and say, "I think this is a solution and here are the engineering concepts and the basic numbers." We'd go over that and after discussion and

Brooks: modifications and so forth, they'd say, "Okay, we think that concept will work. Now let's refine it and do the detail engineering to make sure it will work."

Lage: So you often brought in the concepts?

Brooks: Yes. In fact, I developed most of the concepts right in my own office. I'd sit down at a drafting table and sketch these things out and make the basic computations that would give you the general magnitude of the numbers you had to deal with, then take those to them and through a discussion we'd refine it. Then I'd come back at that point in time. Then I'd turn it over to our professional engineering group, and they would refine it with refined numbers and refined concepts, and we'd get that approved. Then we'd come back and do the detail engineering for construction drawings.

Lage: Would this be something you would have to pay for as the developer?

Brooks: Oh sure.

Lage: The flood control district didn't help out?

Brooks: No, no. They didn't pay for it at all.

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Lage: Now we'll move to the Patterson Ranch again. Once all this flood control was in place, particularly the Corps of Engineers project, isn't that what allowed the Patterson Ranch to become developable?

Brooks: That removed the flooding hazard from the ranch, but even before that I'd worked on an interim solution that was also acceptable to the flood control district. So we had an interim solution in place that would have made it developable, would have worked. We'd done detailed studies on that, and those studies were approved by the flood control district. But we never had to use that interim measure because the Corps of Engineers announced that they were proceeding with their project. So we could abandon the interim measures and go to what was going to happen in the future. When the Corps thing became a certainty, then we could abandon a lot of the interim solutions and wait for the corps project.

Lage: It made it simpler for you, I would think.

Brooks: Yes. It made it a lot simpler because I devoted a lot of my time in the days before the corps project to just the flood control, engineering kinds of studies I'd do myself. I'd just take maps and I'd draw all kinds of schemes--scheme maybe is a bad word!--until I found one that I thought would work on an engineering basis.

- Lage: What were you planning for? I interviewed an engineer from the Corps of Engineers and he talked in terms of fifty-year floods, hundred-year floods.
- Brooks: Well, for different kinds of projects there're different standard criteria. The flood control corps project is a hundred-year flood design. They have other things. Sometimes it might be a fifty-year flood or even a twenty. It depends on the nature of the project, and you design to a criteria.
- Lage: Are the home owners advised that they're living in a flood plain?
- Brooks: Well, there's no need to advise them because at the time the home owner arrives, the solutions to these things have been well worked out and they've all been engineered out to standard criteria so that they don't have any more hazard than living anyplace else. In fact, probably in the north plain area, which was the area that flooded all the time, there's less hazard now because of the modern engineering design of flood control facilities than there are in many other areas, older areas.
- Lage: That channel is very wide. It looks like it would take an awful lot of water to run over.
- Brooks: Right, yes. Then, also, the interior designs within the developed areas out there have a much higher standard than other, older areas within the community.
- Lage: One thing I'm interested in, part of the lands that the flood control district purchased from the Pattersons then became part of Coyote Hills Regional Park. Do you know anything about the process of Coyote Hills becoming a park? Apparently, there was some conflict between Fremont's idea of a "new town" in that area and the park district's hope for a really major park.
- Brooks: I think there was maybe some dispute on boundaries, but I think in concept the Coyote Hills Park, which is a series of hills right on the bay, had always been considered from the beginning that it should be some kind of open space area, which was nothing more than saying it should be a park area. So I think that concept existed from the beginning. You know, the park comes down to a portion of the flatlands and some marshlands and that kind of thing, and there was some dispute about maybe what those boundaries were, but that kind of thing is a relatively minor dispute.
- Lage: And there was apparently a dispute with the Pattersons over purchase price.
- Brooks: The Pattersons weren't anxious to sell a major portion of the ranch, but at that point there was little choice as the agency has power of condemnation, so it's a matter of negotiation.

Lage: Did you act as an adviser on that at all with the Pattersons?

Brooks: Not in that area, but I got involved in reinvesting some of the funds that came from that.

Lage: From the sale?

Brooks: Yes. Really the negotiations on that were not that difficult.

Lage: Oh, they weren't?

Brooks: No, they were pretty straightforward. You know, the government agencies had appraisals, and they can't pay above their appraisal, and of course landowners always think their land is worth more. So it's a pretty straightforward negotiation. It didn't need much talent to negotiate that.

Lage: I've been reading some newspaper clippings about it, and apparently some of the community was unhappy because the flood control project increased the value of those lands. The government paid for the flood control project, but the Pattersons wanted the additional money for the land.

Brooks: Well, that's a typical kind of argument. There are standard rules of law that apply in arriving at the appraisals, and they applied the standard rules of law. Some people are happy with the law, and some people are unhappy with the law, but that's the law! And that occurs in everyday experiences. You know, some people don't like the seatbelt law. They have the seatbelt law for your car, and some people think the law should be rigidly enforced. There's a difference of opinion, but the law is whatever it is.

Genesis of the New Town Concept in the North Plain Area

Lage: I was surprised, in reading about this Coyote Hills thing, how early the term "New Town" was used in that area, clear back in the early sixties.

Brooks: The New Town term was used from the very beginning with Roy Potter, from the very first general plan of the city. There were five existing communities that made up Fremont, and in addition to the five existing communities, one great big open area to the north that was not identified as a community. He looked at that one big open area and said, "That should be the sixth community." So it got that identity from the very beginning, that that should be the sixth community--

Lage: And kind of have its own little center.

Brooks: And whereas each of the other five were called "towns," and still are, he just picked that up and said, "That community equals town." You can say "community" or "town," it's the same thing.

Lage: So way back in the early sixties he saw this as potentially developable.

Brooks: Yes, he saw that it should be planned as a sixth town.

Lage: Now, was this something that the two of you worked out together or did he pretty much bring that up?

Brooks: He pretty much brought that up, although we discussed it and we were very much in agreement on that concept. In fact, there was not a whole lot of discussion on the concept. He just said, "Gentlemen, that's going to be our sixth town," and everybody seemed to accept it. There wasn't very much controversy on that subject.

IV PATTERSON RANCH DEVELOPMENT, 1970s

Purchase of Tract O by Singer Housing

Lage: Let's talk now about the development in the seventies on the Patterson Ranch, the controversial sale of land that is now Ardenwood Park, and subsequent lawsuit.

Brooks: The sale wasn't controversial. The Pattersons decided to sell a portion of the ranch, and that portion was called Tract O in those days because I had a series of parcels and each one had a letter to identify it. Tract O was the parcel that their homes were on. It had the private parks and all the trees and very specialized agriculture. You know, the portion that was agriculture was walnut trees rather than row crops. So they decided to sell that tract.

Lage: Do you know why they picked that tract to sell?

Brooks: Well, I think there were a couple of reasons. Number one, it was immediately adjacent to the highway. It was not in the Williamson Act.

Lage: I see, so the taxes were high on that.

Brooks: Yes, the taxes were high on that. Also, most of it could be served by sewer at that point in time. So if anything was to be developed, that was the logical place to develop.

Lage: And what did they think might be the fate of the home and the trees? When they sold that to you, was there any--

Brooks: There were no restrictions, no restrictions. When they sold it, they sold it, which included everything that was on the property.

Lage: Because I've heard two points of view from the family. Some people say, "We always wanted that home saved in a park." And then I've heard other people in the community say they were afraid that they were going to burn that house down.

Brooks: Well, there were no restrictions in the sales agreement, because I know. I negotiated it and signed it, and I was purchaser, so I know what the agreement said. There was kind of an informal thing, not part of the agreement, between myself and Marjorie Patterson. She said, "Well, if you're going to have, in the future, a park within this parcel as part of the development process, I would like to see you put the park where the home is and see if you could preserve the home with a park site around it." But she always made it clear it was not an obligation on my part. It was just she would like to see that.

Lage: She had lived there longer than anybody, hadn't she?

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: Was she living there at the time it was sold or had she already moved?

Brooks: I just don't recall. She was either living there at the time it was sold or moved out shortly before the sale. For practical purposes she'd been living there.

Lage: Now, you were with Singer by then.

Brooks: Yes, I was president of Singer Housing Company. I had merged my companies; I had a whole series of companies with the Singer company, which is the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Subsequent to that merger, then, I became president of Singer Housing Company, which was a national real estate building company with divisions in Florida and Colorado and Arizona and a number of places.

Lage: So you had your mind on a lot of things besides Patterson Properties.

Brooks: Yes.

Fremont's Moratorium on Development in the North Plain

Lage: In 1969, before you purchased that land, it was rezoned from agriculture to residential and commercial.

Brooks: Yes. One of the problems was that part of it was in Newark and part of it was in Fremont. The part that faced the highway, a strip a thousand feet wide from the highway back, was in Newark, and the balance of the property that was behind that, with no direct access to the highway, was in Fremont. [laughter]

Lage: So you worked on plans for this area?

- Brooks: Yes, we developed plans for this area, and of course we had to process them through both cities at that point in time.
- Lage: What were your original plans? Did they involve a park around the house?
- Brooks: Yes.
- Lage: So you did try to do that?
- Brooks: Yes, I tried to accommodate that wish.
- Lage: Was there also anything expressed to you by the community or people in the community that showed they wanted a park there?
- Brooks: There was a faction of the community that wanted the whole thing to be a park. Then there were other factions in the community that just wanted to see it developed. Mainly the business community wanted to see it developed. There was a lot of controversy at this point in time, and there were major differences between what the city of Newark wanted and what the city of Fremont wanted.
- Lage: And how did they differ?
- Brooks: The city of Newark wanted high-density housing and commercial development. They didn't care about a park. They didn't want any park.
- Lage: They wanted more tax base?
- Brooks: They wanted more tax base, and they wanted more housing, and they wanted higher density than other areas of the city. They wanted that to be their high density area, and they wanted a major commercial development. Whereas the city officials in Fremont at that time really didn't want to do anything. They just wanted to leave it as open space!
- Lage: Was this at the time the slow-growth faction was in power?
- Brooks: Yes, they were in power at that point.
- Lage: And how about the planning department? Were they with you on this?
- Brooks: Oh, the planning department follows the lead of the council. If you've got a slow-growth council, the planning department, because they're employees, if they're going to keep their jobs, they're going to respond to their bosses. So in Fremont you had one approach, and in Newark you had another approach, and roughly half the land was in each city. [laughter]

Lage: At one point, I think, you suggested maybe Newark should annex the rest of it.

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: You must have gotten pretty frustrated working with the two cities.

Brooks: Well, the parcel being split down the middle wasn't logical for either city. It didn't make any sense for either city. You'd have to go through Newark to get to the Fremont land. So you'd have to go through the Newark city limits to go back around to get to the Fremont land. Then, Newark had the property that faced the major thoroughfare and Fremont had the rear piece. Part of that logic was, if you take all those factors together, it probably should be in Newark. Well, of course, Fremont didn't want to give anything up.

Lage: So what was the upshot? I know it ended in a moratorium on the development for Fremont.

Brooks: Well, Fremont declared a moratorium, and Newark approved all the plans for their half. So we had a division line with everything approved in Newark, and a moratorium on the Fremont side.

Singer's Lawsuit and Negotiations for a Settlement Agreement

Brooks: I just didn't think they could do that legally, so I filed a law suit against Fremont. The court agreed with me and ordered Fremont to process our development plans.

Lage: Were they ordered to process specific development plans or just to work with you?

Brooks: They ordered them to process the plans in accordance with the existing ordinances and regulations within the city. Then, the nature of that order would almost compel you to develop it in a standard subdivision, not using a PD or PUD. As a result of that court order, we could have just gone ahead and developed the rest of it, then coordinated with the Newark side, which was already preapproved by now.

At that point in time, the council again had changed somewhat. [laughter] There'd been an election in between, and the new council thought that it would be much better to sit down and try and negotiate something that made sense because that didn't make a whole lot of sense. I had a legal right to do it, but it really didn't make a whole lot of sense on a planning basis and didn't correspond with what Fremont would really like to see, although we couldn't present it.

Lage: It also seems like it wasn't looking toward what was going to happen with the rest of the land.

Brooks: That's right. Of course, the court order also applied to the rest of the land.

Lage: And that could be developed?

Brooks: Yes. So the council had changed, and there were some new members and effectively what they said, but they didn't say it in these words, "It's kind of ridiculous. We've gone through this whole lawsuit and doing this whole thing. It was kind of a ridiculous process. It cost us a lot of money because the city had very substantial attorneys' fees involved in fighting this lawsuit--"

Lage: Of course they could have appealed it.

Brooks: They could have appealed it, but the nature of the court order and its legal basis would have made it a very difficult thing to turn over on appeal. I think they realized that, and I think the city attorney realized that. Just by the nature of it, it's one of those things that's very, very difficult to reverse on appeal.

So then the council said that the whole process had been ridiculous, and it didn't make a whole lot of sense, and accepting a development plan in accordance with our standard ordinances because of the unique features of that piece of land is kind of ridiculous on the face of it, and we really don't like what Newark has approved either. [laughter]

So the council then appointed a negotiating committee to contact me to see if they could negotiate something that made more sense. They appointed a councilman to that committee, Tony Azevedo. Tony Azevedo and Larry Milnes, who is now assistant city manager but I think at that time he was public works director, and city attorney Allen Sprague, and then the city manager sat in on some of the meetings, but not most of them.

So we started a process of saying, "What can we do that makes more sense? How can we negotiate a settlement of the lawsuit and at the same time do a development that makes more sense?"

Lage: Would your settlement have to be approved by the court then?

Brooks: No, we could enter into a settlement agreement between the parties. It did not require a court approval. We spent day after day in the city hall conference room.

Lage: I have noted somewhere, it must be from newspaper accounts, 350 hours. That's a lot of hours!

Brooks: I didn't keep track of the hours, but my guess would be it's in that magnitude. Probably 350 hours at meetings and another 700 hours analyzing outside the meetings. [laughter]

Lage: What a task! How did these meetings proceed?

Brooks: Well, we began to set out some objectives that the city of Fremont would like to see. First of all, they'd like to see Newark out of there. How can we annex this Newark land to Fremont? So that was one thing that had to be done. And then they said, "Well, we'd like to see a major park, not only a typical community park, but we'd like to see a major park that includes all the tree areas and the [George Washington] Patterson house, and how can we do that?" But yet if they did that, it would take almost all the land, so there wouldn't be anything left for development!

So we said, "Well, if we arrange to have that as a park, then if we can do some trading with the Patterson family for some adjacent land, then you will approve the adjacent land for development." So that involved then getting with the Pattersons and saying, "Will you do some trading with us for adjacent land?"—to accommodate the overall type of plan we were developing at the city, and the Pattersons were cooperative.

Lage: Did you have to meet with all the Pattersons or did you meet just with Don?

Brooks: I met with Don, who kind of represented his whole side of the family, and then I met with John and Sally Adams, who represented the other side of the family.

Lage: And they were all agreeable?

Brooks: Yes. And we traded back and forth. It was a very complex kind of land trade thing, and then we also had to trade Williamson Act land too, which had never been done anyplace in the state. We were going to take this piece that's in the Williamson Act and this piece that's not, and we were just going to move the Williamson Act from this piece to that piece and this over here. So the relative acreage stays the same. There was no legal precedent for that anyplace! [laughter]

Lage: Except the willingness to do it!

Brooks: Yes. No legal precedent for that. The city attorney who was involved in negotiations said, "I can't find anything that says you can do anything like that, but I can't find anything that says you can't either." [laughter]

Lage: And no one challenged it, I assume?

Brooks: So we did it and no one challenged it.

So through these complex negotiations--and I think the people involved from the city all were dealing in good faith, trying to find solutions that would implement what the council wanted--we arrived at a settlement agreement that accommodated all these things. It said you can go ahead and develop this over here, and we'll dedicate the forty-six acres of park, and we'll sell to the city the balance of the land. The city didn't have any money to buy it with, so then we developed the idea of an issue of bonds to buy it with and those bonds would be paid out from an additional building permit fee for everybody that was developing in the city.

As I recall, it added \$200 to the building permit fee for everything that occurred in the city, and those funds would then, hopefully, eventually pay off those bonds.

Lage: And would pay off Singer for property they were turning over to the city?

Brooks: Yes, and then Singer took the bonds in payment for the rest of the land. Of course there was a great deal of uncertainty about whether the bonds would ever be paid off because what was the timing on development? When would it occur? So it was a very uncertain kind of payment schedule.

Lage: How did the chamber of commerce and fellow developers feel about that aspect?

Brooks: Well, the fellow developers really weren't involved, and they weren't too concerned. It was more a matter of curiosity about how things are going! And of course, they were happy seeing a developer really doing something because a developer had never sued the city before and never had really worked out any kind of arrangement.

This was completely new to everybody. There was no real precedent for what we were doing any place in the state. There was very little law on the subject of what we were doing. We just assumed if there wasn't a law against it, then we could do it.

Lage: It sounds like your history of working closely with the city certainly helped with this.

Brooks: Yes. Well, Larry Milnes and I have always had a good relationship. He's a really tough negotiator. He doesn't give up anything for the city. I have a great deal of respect for him. He has told me he feels the same about me. I think it's a challenge to him, and it's a challenge to me to negotiate with him, and it goes both ways.

Lage: You both enjoy the process.

Brooks: Yes. So he kind of led all the negotiations on the city side. The city councilman was present and had comments, but Larry Milnes was kind of the leader on their side, and of course I was just representing myself.

Lage: One of the contentions, it seemed to me, was that the area couldn't be serviced well at that time, that that was why they put in the moratorium, because of inadequate fire service and all that.

Brooks: That was just a smoke screen.

Lage: Was it?

Brooks: It was obvious it was a smoke screen because as soon as we reached a settlement agreement, all the services were there and we could develop!

Lage: Didn't you have to put in that Paseo Padre overpass?

Brooks: Well, we were required to put in two lanes of it. That's half of the overpass. But whatever development took place there needed that traffic access, so that was never in dispute. That was never really a dispute. We knew that that was required, and you just couldn't put that many houses and people out there without a way for them to get there!

Lage: And for the fire trucks to follow them.

Brooks: Yes.

Arranging Land Swaps with Newark

Lage: So after that you had then to deal with Newark, or Fremont had to deal with Newark.

Brooks: Well, I also participated with that on the Fremont side in arranging land swaps because at that time the alignment of the BART and freeway [Highway 84] was established by the state, and that alignment isolated parts of Newark on one side and the other side of the freeway in relatively small strips which would be difficult for the city to serve. The same thing with Fremont. The way the freeway ran through it, it isolated pieces of property for both cities so that they'd have to go through the other city to serve these areas.

Brooks: That led to the logic of why not make the freeway the boundary between the two cities. Newark could serve everything on that side of the freeway and Fremont could serve everything on their side. They wouldn't have to go around the devious route to get to a little parcel within the city but disconnected from the city. So through that whole process, and the cities agreed, they'd swap land back and forth to make the freeway a common boundary between the two cities, Fremont to the north and Newark to the south.

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So that general concept got acceptance between the two cities until right near the end of the mayor of Newark said, "Wait a minute. I've been looking at this alignment and the old boundary line is here where it crosses what was called Newark Boulevard. The freeway misses that line, the center line of that street, by fifty feet. It's fifty feet further south than an exact alignment that would intersect an exact point in the middle of a street." [laughter]

Lage: So you had fifty feet of dispute.

Brooks: Yes. And he said, "I'm not going to agree to anything while that freeway's over there fifty feet." The state had already established the alignment and were well into their design, so it became a major hang-up in the negotiation. It was insignificant as far as land was concerned. He just had a personal thing that this was the old line, and the center line of the freeway should cross the center line of that old street.

Lage: Even though this really wasn't for you to decide?

Brooks: But it did seriously disturb getting the whole thing complete. It became so serious at that point I went to Sacramento and was able to convince the highway department, CALTRANS now, that it was logical for them to move it over fifty feet, which they did.

Part of the problem is they'd already acquired some right of way, so the right of way they'd acquired didn't line up with the new alignment! By that time the state had already acquired from Singer the right of way that they needed for the freeway, and that would then leave a little fifty-foot strip on one side of the freeway that was owned by Singer and would take another fifty-foot strip on the other side. So I told the state we would accept that and we would deal with that strip later on; that would not be their problem. That was an isolated strip back from the street because you couldn't get to it.

Lage: It wouldn't be of much use to anyone.

Brooks: No use to anybody, and it didn't have any access.

Brooks: Well, with that and completing the negotiation with the state, they moved the freeway over to intersect that exact point that the mayor of Newark wanted. So we put the freeway over and then the swaps took place between Newark and Fremont to resolve the problem.

Lage: That's an amazing story. Who was the mayor of Newark then?

Brooks: I think it was Balentine, Jim [James E.] Balentine.

Lage: Did both cities end up happy with the swap? Newark got more land, apparently.

Brooks: Yes, well, that was another problem. They wanted everything to come out equal, and there was no way to make it exactly equal. If I recall it, my argument at that point in time was, "It should be of equal value, not equal acreage," because they were looking at equal acreage. I said, "This land up here is more valuable than that, so Newark should get more acreage to equate the values." I got acceptance of that. There wasn't a whole lot of logic to the argument, but it was a rationalization that everybody could accept!

Lage: It made people happy.

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: Was some of that land that went to Newark also Patterson Ranch land?

Brooks: Yes, a portion. Not a whole lot, but there was a triangular piece of probably twenty acres or so that went to Newark.

Parties to the Solution: The Courts, the Community, and Singer Housing

Lage: You also went to Sacramento on a legal matter, didn't you, having to do with a law that would forbid councils from reversing themselves on these development processes?

Brooks: Well, I did a number of things of that sort in Sacramento. I served on various commissions and committees in Sacramento that dealt in this area. Also, when Governor Brown was in office, I became kind of an unofficial member of his group and advisor, so I would advise him on legislation that came from the legislature that related to this area. Also I served as chairman of the Economic Development Commission, so I did a lot of work in that area. Which particular item I don't know because I was dealing with these kinds of things on a pretty regular basis.

- Lage: Well, the thing I had heard about was that you were somewhat incensed that the city council reversed its own rules for the Patterson area after you'd purchased it, and then there was legislation that a council was bound by former agreements.
- Brooks: No, not really. That all took place in the court action. I didn't have any special legislation adopted on that at all.
- Lage: Okay. Wherever I read that or heard it, it must be wrong.
- Brooks: Well, there're all kinds of rumors of how I went about doing it. Those people who like to oppose me like to tell a story that I went to Sacramento and had the legislature pass me a special bill and the governor sign it for me, but those rumors are just not true. [laughter]
- Lage: So it was the court who said the council was acting improperly in declaring a moratorium on development in the north plain?
- Brooks: The court made the decision based upon the laws in existence at that time, and there was no change by the legislature at all.
- Lage: Okay. That's why we're doing this, to straighten out some of these things.
- Did you get some sense about the community's feeling about development in that area? Again, was it divided?
- Brooks: It was divided, but I think the majority of the community had no problems with the development of that area. I think the environmental groups, which were a minority, a very vocal minority, objected to it, and their main motivation was to get a great big park out there.
- Lage: Of course, that was sort of the height of the environmental movement then.
- Brooks: Yes. So through the negotiations and the restructuring and the de-annexations and changing the freeways and everything, we pretty much got them what they wanted.
- Lage: Did you feel that you came out with a good economic solution through that negotiation? I mean, did you give up a lot?
- Brooks: Well, I think I gave up some, but I didn't give up so much that I couldn't create an economic development.
- Lage: By that time you weren't with Singer, and hadn't the land been sold to another company?

Brooks: By the time the court action came along and subsequent to that, the settlement with the city, I had retired from Singer, but Singer had employed me as their representative and gave me full authority to negotiate, and I'd just report to them in New York from time to time what the status was. I think they had complete confidence and faith in me, so they gave me just a blank check to negotiate what I thought was appropriate. After all, I'd been the president of their operation, a multi-million-dollar operation, for a number of years. [laughter]

Lage: What was Citation Homes, then?

Brooks: Citation Homes came much later and wasn't really involved at all at this stage because Singer, after I'd retired and been gone for several years, decided to spin off their housing division, and they spun off various housing divisions around the country, and the division that was located here locally was renamed Citation, on a spin-off where the employees, through a process, eventually acquire the company. You know, you read about these things all the time. I won't go into all the details of how those things work mechanically.

Then this division was named Citation, another division in Colorado got another name, and one in Florida got another name, so there was a change in names in splitting off the nationwide operation to a series of local operations that would be acquired by employees in the future.

Lage: Did you have an association with Citation, then?

Brooks: Yes, well, then Citation also did the same thing as Singer, and of course Singer still owned Citation then. So I looked at it really as one company, and I had the same arrangement both before and after that technical spin-off kind of thing.

V CONSULTANT TO THE PATTERSON HEIRS, 1980s

City of Fremont's Pressures for Development of the North Plain

- Lage: Let's talk now about our final topic—what you've done as a consultant for the Patterson family in the eighties. That's sort of a new story, I would think.
- Brooks: The Pattersons still, after all these things we've been talking about, owned very large acreage out there. It was all in agriculture. There came a point in time when we had a particular group on the council that were pro-growth now--it goes back and forth--and they said, "We don't know why we should have any Williamson Act in the city. We've got this all planned for development; why should we reduce our revenues to the city by giving these people special breaks out there so they can hold their land and sell it at higher values in the future?"
- Lage: That's the way they saw the Williamson Act?
- Brooks: That's what they said, that it was just a holding act so they can hold their land and let the values rise without paying their fair share of taxes, and the city doesn't participate in any of that value rise, and we should consider canceling the Williamson Act for all the parcels in Fremont. It became a kind of sentiment on the council, not the total council, but at least it appeared to be a majority on the council.

Of course, that disturbed the Pattersons, and Don Patterson in particular, who was then the manager of the ranch for the family. If they were paying regular taxes, there wasn't enough farm income to even pay the taxes. It was a very substantial loss each year if they had to pay regular taxes.

So Don came to me and said, "We've got this major problem. If political forces carry out what they say they're thinking of, then we have a major problem. What can we do about it? Will you give it some thought and advise me on what my various alternatives and options are?"

Brooks: Well, I talked to some city people and I got a pretty firm feeling that they were fairly serious, that that group was fairly serious about this proposal. At that point in time the chamber of commerce had a special committee to encourage development out there. They wanted the thing fully developed. They wanted additional people; they wanted the additional business that would create, the additional taxes it would generate.

Lage: It's such a swing from just a few years earlier when they were putting a ten-year moratorium on all development.

Brooks: Almost every time there's a council election there's a swing. [laughter] Usually it only takes one and sometimes two members of the council to change the majority vote because every council had some no-growth people and some pro-growth people, and it all depends on who had three votes at any particular time, who had three out of five.

Lage: Now, did that make the developers, yourself included, get involved in these city council elections?

Brooks: Oh, certainly.

Lage: Supporting certain people?

Brooks: Yes, very much involved, very much involved.

Preparing and Promoting a Master Plan for Patterson Ranch Lands

Brooks: Getting back to the eighties, being the sentiment of the community at that point in time, it appeared that this was a very serious threat to the Patterson family. At least Don considered it a very serious threat. Because he was really representing his side of the family, he asked me to discuss the threat and the consequences of the threat with Sally and John Adams.

I made an appointment with them, went to their home, talked to them about it, and I gave them whatever background I could get, excerpts from minutes where they'd made comments like this from the city council, some copies of the chamber of commerce agendas, and, you know, various documentation to indicate what the mood of the community was.

They concluded at that time that they should take some positive actions to protect themselves and so did Don. So Don came back and said, "Will you begin to work on this thing for us? We've concluded that the only way we can protect ourselves is to prepare the property for development so that all or a portion of it could be sold if these things should occur."

Brooks: So with that I did some sketch plans of what could be done, and conferred with Don and, from time to time, with Sally and John Adams, and eventually arrived at some concepts that were acceptable to them.

Lage: So you were dealing with sort of a master plan for the area?

Brooks: Yes, the whole master plan for the whole area.

Lage: What would go in each portion?

Brooks: Yes. The whole master plan for each area, but just in freehand sketch form because I was doing it all myself. I didn't want to get anyone else involved because I didn't want anybody to know what the thinking of the family might be. The family wanted to keep what they were doing very confidential.

Lage: Did the family give you any guidelines that were essential to them for that land?

Brooks: Well, the only guideline was that they said they'd like to see some substantial portion remain in agriculture. This threat occurred if they could sell some substantial portion that would reduce their exposure, and the income from the portion they sold would help support the agricultural activities in the future.

Lage: So this generation still had a commitment to agriculture?

Brooks: Yes. They were very much committed to agriculture, and particularly John and Sally Adams. They wanted to see as much remain in agriculture as possible. So I developed a plan with about two-thirds of the land in urban development and about a third, roughly, remaining in agriculture on an indefinite basis. That did not receive a very good reception from the city or the chamber of commerce.

Lage: How did you present it to them?

Brooks: I presented it that way, and they said no.

Lage: Informally or formally?

Brooks: Informally.

Lage: You just checked around.

Brooks: Informally, with both the chamber and the political forces in the city, because the planning staff had got kind of removed at this point in time. To protect themselves, the staff had employed an outside planner and said, "Give us a series of plans that range from no development to maximum development."

Brooks: Well, that resulted in a series of twelve different plans with various intensities of development, and they just said to the city council and the planning commission, "Take your choice." [laughter] Which really led to nothing. So they didn't know what choice to make because there were just small variations over twelve plans that went from nothing all the way to maximum.

Lage: In a way, then, your master plan was competing with this official city effort?

Brooks: Yes, mine was designated a separate number. The city just inserted it into the series in the middle someplace, and said, "Well, this is another variation and take your choice." [laughter]

Lage: That's an interesting way to go about it.

Brooks: Both the chamber and the majority of the council, as I read them at that point in time, did not like my plan because at that point in time they wanted a development plan with no agriculture. They didn't want any agriculture.

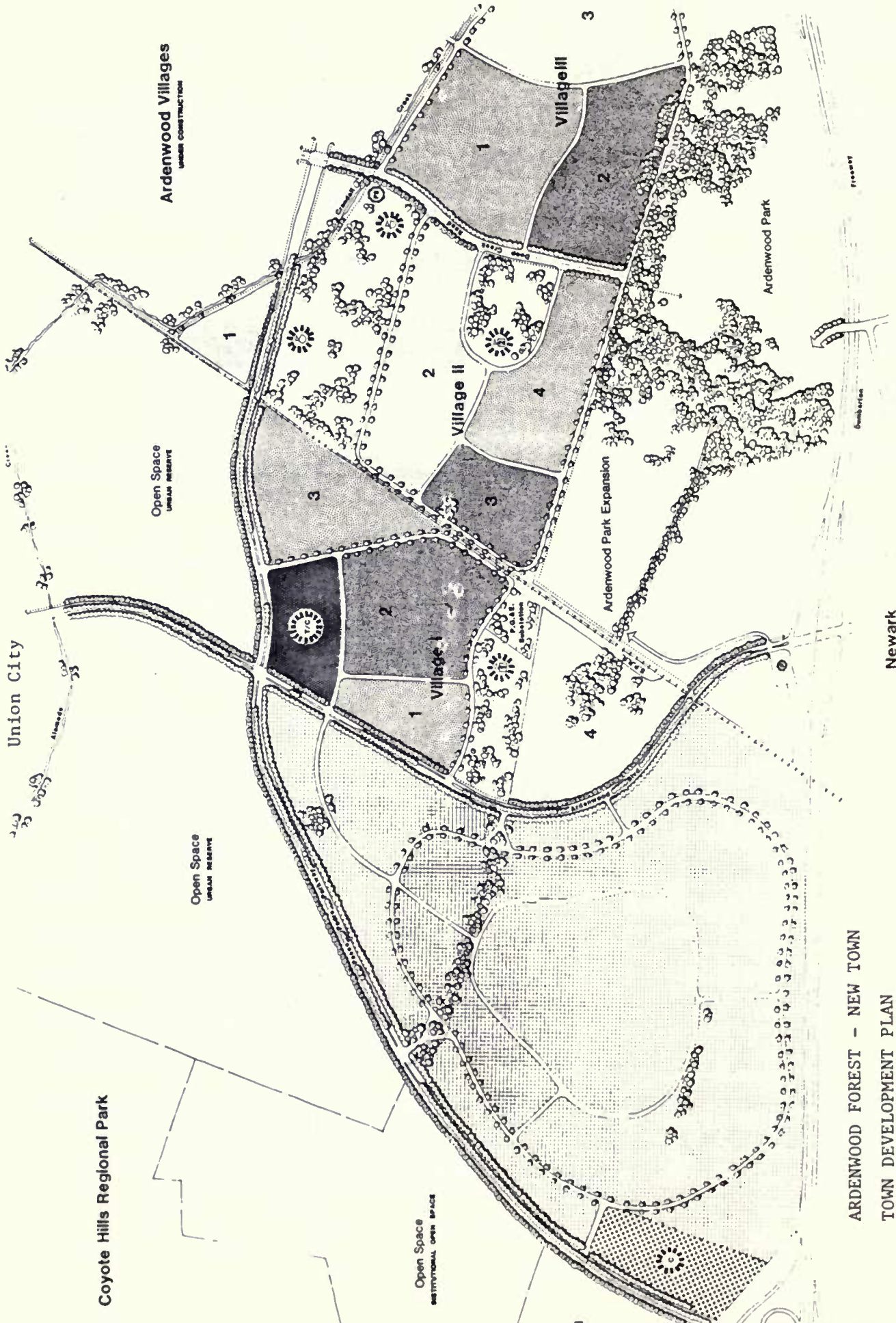
The chamber of commerce at this point in time had much more influence on the city council than they have presently. The chamber of commerce influence goes in cycles also. It's up and down depending on elections and other things. At that point they were at the high point of their cycle; they had great influence on the city council.

So through a series of meetings with the chamber, with planning staff, with some of the planning commission, some of the city council, we were finally able to convince them, "You're mainly interested in the number of people and number of houses, which are really the same thing, that will create business for the community and create a tax base for the community. Suppose we make this portion that we're going to develop more concentrated and more intensive, increase the number of people and the tax base, and then leave some land in agriculture?"

Well, I was able to then convince the chamber and some of the planning commission and the council and some of the planning staff that that was a pretty good idea. So through a whole process of meetings and negotiations, I took my plan and did some more detailed planning and showed them what could be done, and they actually came up with, "We want X number of houses out there, can you do that?" They were using a number like 4000 or 4500 houses.

Lage: And they were originally thinking of them spread out over the whole thing?

Brooks: Spread out over the whole thing.



Coyote Hills Regional Park

Union City

Ardenwood Villages
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Open Space
URBAN RESERVE

Open Space
URBAN RESERVE

Open Space
INSTITUTIONAL OPEN SPACE

Village II

Villagelli

Ardenwood Park Expansion

Ardenwood Park

Newark

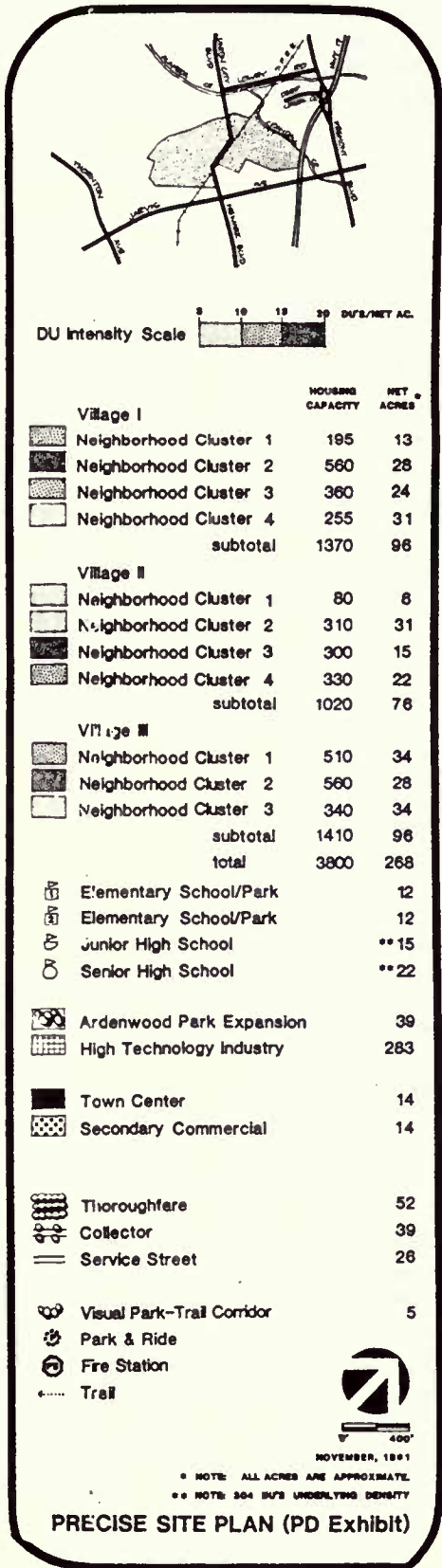
ARDENWOOD FOREST - NEW TOWN

TOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

BROOKMAT, INCORPORATED

November, 1981

Key for 1981 town development plan



Brooks: At that point everybody was exposed to what was going on. I still did my basic sketches, and then I had a professional planner come in and kind of refine them and put in pretty pictures--what I call cartoons, by the way--so that they were prepared for governmental agencies. You know, they put all the trees in and color them green.

Lage: Yes, and make it look livable.

Reaching a Consensus on the Balance between Open Space and Urban Development

Brooks: So we reached a balance between agriculture and development that was acceptable to the community forces, and not only the chamber of commerce and the city council, but the environmental groups as well because they got in the act at that point in time.

Lage: Well, I know that that's one of the ideas I've heard environmental groups put forth, that we should have increased density so as not to use up all the open space.

Brooks: Yes. I think it was the first time in my memory that even the Sierra Club endorsed this, sent letters to the city council saying they recommended the plan.

Lage: They recommended the plan you presented?

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: Did you work directly with people in the Sierra Club?

Brooks: Yes, I had some meetings with the Sierra Club staff people and explained what we were doing and the advantages of what we were doing. I assume they took it to their board, but I didn't deal with the board directly. I just dealt with a staff person from the Sierra Club.

So we seemed to have general acceptance for the first time in history from all the various elements! From all the various elements. From the real pro-growth elements, a lot of them represented on the chamber of commerce; the city council; the planning commission; the environmentalist groups; the historical groups, because we were preserving the house and the area around the house, and that's all they cared about; they didn't care what you did with the development so long as we preserved these historical things.

Brooks: The Sierra Club seemed to be pleased with the fact that the areas that remain in agriculture we provided on the lower end, adjacent to the Coyote Hills Regional Park. It's a kind of lowlands, some of it semi-marsh, an open space tied to the park, which would remain an open space in the future through an open-space easement.

Lage: And would a tax break be given on that?

Brooks: Well, it's still in the Williamson Act. So the Williamson Act remained on all the property that remained in agriculture, and the Williamson Act was taken off all the land that was to be developed. The Pattersons still have the Williamson Act on all the land that remains in agriculture. So they're able to farm that, but currently with farm prices and the rest, there's no profit in farming. You're lucky if you break even. But they still want to have land remain in agriculture, even though they may not be breaking even on that operation.

Lage: Did the city make a commitment to keep it in agriculture for a length of time?

Brooks: No, they divided the agricultural land into two classes: one that remained permanently agriculture and another class that they called urban reserve; it would remain in agriculture until such time as there was a proven need for that land to be developed for the benefit of the city and at such time as all the utilities and other things were available for that piece.

So they took a portion and said, "We can go either way on this. We'll leave it in agriculture for now, but we'll have to look at community needs in the future, and if the community needs it in development in the future, then we'll change that portion. And this portion down here will remain permanently in agriculture." So that was all part of the negotiations between these various groups.

Lage: And what happened to the twelve other plans?

Brooks: Well, the other plans kind of just disappeared. When it came time for the planning commission and the city council to review the plans, the other plans were on the wall so everybody could see them, but they were only really discussing the one plan.

The council chambers were filled with people. For the first time in my memory, not one person spoke against the plan. There was a whole parade of speakers from the various different factions within the community going up to the podium and speaking in favor of it. I sat there amazed, listening to this, and said to myself, "When they call on me to speak, I'm going to say very little because I don't want to disturb anybody." [laughter] You know, I've been known to stand at the podium in the past in the council chambers and talk for two, two and a half hours at a time.

Lage: No wonder the meetings lasted until three in the morning!

Brooks: This time I got up, and I was away from there in two or three minutes!

Lage: When was this? When did it actually come before the council? Do you know the date?

Brooks: No, I don't have that date. Probably '80, '81 or something like that.

It was a general plan change at that point that was approved. Then we followed that with a planned district that was consistent with that and began to refine it with all the other things that have to go into it, an urban development plan. We also then built in, which is not normal, the economics to implement it because it required a lot of public facilities. Major streets and sewers and that kind of thing that would not normally be an obligation of the developer. So we developed economic plans to accomplish this so we'd have a full community from the beginning, not partially completed streets.

Lage: Local improvement districts?

Brooks: And that's why we used two local improvement districts, LID 25 and 27, as the basic implementation.

Lage: I'm curious, with all the planning and all the political process, where does the market fit in the planning process? I mean, where did what you felt people would buy in terms of homes come into play? Did people want increased density?

Brooks: Well, I've been at this business thirty-five years, and it's assumed I have some expertise in what the market wants, and that was part of the planning process. You had a plan that's marketable. You know, a plan that's not marketable is no good to anybody; it's a waste of time.

Lage: How do you increase your housing density? By apartments and townhouses?

Brooks: Yes, we used basically smaller single-family lots and townhouses and apartments.

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Lage: You thought the market was ready for that kind of high-density development?

Brooks: Well, you know, it's an opinion you form, and you form it based on your experiences and your knowledge of the business. I assume my judgment was right because the development process is about five years ahead of our projected schedule right now, and so we've got good market demand. The market demand is much greater than anybody expected.

Lage: The timing was good too.

Brooks: Yes. Yes, you have to be fortunate in timing. The economics of the country have substantial impact on these things, and in the current age the world economics have impacted on the national economics, and that has direct impact locally.

Lage: Was any thought given, when you were planning where to put things, to the value of the land for agriculture? For instance, I talked to Mel Alameda earlier this week and he said that the best agricultural land was developed, and the land that was left for agriculture was the least valuable soil and water.

Brooks: Well, other things dictated that, and I think whenever you talk to a farmer, any land you take away from him is the most valuable, anything you leave him with is the least valuable, no matter which piece you take! But that seems to be the standard answer. Regardless of that, there were other planning factors and criteria that dictated where a development should be.

For example, you had the Ardenwood regional park, which we created, and the city wanted the development adjacent to that park. Putting a development here and another development over here or a park over here with an agricultural piece in the middle causes the most difficult agricultural problem because you've got this cross traffic and people. A further consideration was to put the agricultural land where it could be isolated as a unit with the least interference from urban development.

Lage: That makes sense.

Brooks: So you had all those other factors that went into making that determination.

One of the major determinants, by the way, was we felt the agricultural area should be adjacent to Coyote Hills Regional Park so that you had a natural transition. You see, the Alamedas were farming part of the regional park land also. They had a lease to farm the farmable area of the park land, and this was merely an extension of what they were already doing, a place next to this large open area. Because of the nature of the park and its design, people don't get down to this area; it's separated by the marshland and then the agricultural area.

Brooks: So it fit in the general scheme of things. The soil conditions may be a little bit better or a little bit worse as far as farming is concerned. I really don't know, but if Alameda thinks it's not quite as good, then I'll take his word for it. But I don't see a whole lot of distinctions.

Lage: And maybe there wasn't much choice, as you say.

Brooks: Yes.

Mel Belli's Representation of Dissident Patterson Family Members

Lage: Any comments you'd have on the story Bob Buck told me about the Patterson family and its problems in dealing with its own members, the lawsuit with Mel Belli?

Brooks: It's kind of a complex thing because the Patterson Ranch people look on the ranch as one piece of land. First of all, it's not one piece of land. The part that we're talking about for development was twenty-one separate parcels, all distinct, separate parcels, and it wasn't one ownership. I think there were twenty-three owner members at that point in time in the family, and those twenty-three members owned the whole thing but they owned varying interests in these various parcels. Like one owner may own ten percent of this parcel and ninety percent of this one, but another owner would own fifteen percent of this and ten percent of that. So except for being a family member, looking at the land itself, there was no common denominator of somebody that owned everything or any common interest.

Then, to complicate that even more, Will and Henry deeded out various portions of the ranch to various family members, not only to their children but their grandchildren, in direct deeding, and then also deeded out various other percentage interests to trusts and various other things. It was a very complex ownership.

Then, like any other large family, disputes occur between the various owners, and disputes occur between father and son, daughters and cousins and uncles. So two of the grandchildren of Will--they had very, very small percentage interest between them, something less than two percent--decided that they could do a better job and they should take over the whole thing. As a result of that, they employed Belli to represent them.

Well, Belli, as is a normal thing, files a lawsuit, but he not only files a lawsuit, but he goes a step further. He begins to advertise in the Wall Street Journal and other newspapers that he has this total ranch for sale. Even though he represents a couple

Brooks: of very minority owners, he is asking for offers for the sale of the ranch, and people are going in, making all kinds of proposals, and he's gathering all kinds of information, and he's convinced that he should be the developer of the ranch.

Lage: So he felt he could make more money for his clients with a different development plan? Was that what it was over?

Brooks: I don't know whether it was a different development plan. It was more an argument over who was going to control what would happen more than the development plan. I don't think it was so much a development plan because he began to send out copies of my plans to people offering it for sale!

Of course, because of the family relationships, that again got complex. Eventually it went to trial. It was scheduled to be a fairly long, complicated trial, but after about two hours of the trial, the Belli attorney asked the court for a recess and went out in the hall and said, "Can't we settle this thing?" [laughter] They saw they didn't really have a case.

Lage: I wonder why it took them so long to see that?

Brooks: Sometimes attorneys don't do as much homework as they should, I must say, and this particular guy didn't. As a rule, sometimes they don't.

One of the family members said, "What kind of a settlement would you propose?" They said, "Well, buy out the interest of these two minority owners." Right in the courthouse hall negotiations took place and an arrangement to buy them out was agreed to.

I said, "There's one other factor that we have to consider, that you've got to dismiss your complaint, but we don't want to be facing this next month again. You go to Belli's office and Belli personally has to agree to a restraining order that he'll never again interfere with the Patterson family."

Of course they said, "Well, if that becomes public, it's very damaging to his reputation." So we agreed that there'd be a restraining order and it would be sealed, held by the court, and in the event that he violated the order, it would be unsealed.

Lage: A fascinating ending! So it was actually a court order?

Brooks: Yes, a restraining order. He stipulated to it, by the way, agreed to it. There wasn't any dispute. The court said that we were requesting a restraining order, "Mr. Belli, do you want to comment on it?" and he said, "I stipulate to it, provided the order will be sealed by the court." The judge said, "Is that acceptable?" and everybody said yes, and that was the end of that!

Lage: You purchased the two dissident family members' interests, didn't you?

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: Economically, how did they come out, do you think? If they'd stayed on with the Pattersons--

Brooks: They got the fair market value and, I think, above the fair market value of the property at that time. Of course, fair market value has increased since that time. It's like any other sale; you buy it in the current fair market value and you take the risk of an increase or decrease.

Lage: Then they had to pay Belli out of that?

Brooks: Yes, they had to pay Belli a substantial portion of what they received.

Lage: It's kind of a sad tale.

Brooks: A very substantial portion of it Belli received as his fee for losing the case.

Lage: Are you still a partner, then, with the Pattersons?

Brooks: Yes.

Lage: So you're involved as an owner, not just a consultant?

Brooks: That's right.

Lage: Then, after that, the family formed a corporation to do away with these problems in the future?

Brooks: Well, the status of the ownership was impossible to deal with because you had all these separate parcels and you had all these separate owners and nobody owned any one parcel; everybody owned little percentages of each parcel, so you could not do anything without getting everybody to approve each item and sign, which is an impossible situation. They all don't live in this area. Some of them live in the East, the Midwest. They're scattered all over, and then not familiar with what's going on.

So that resulted in forming a limited partnership, which allows a general partner to take appropriate actions without getting individual approvals. So that was done, and that resolved this complex ownership thing that there didn't appear to be any solution to. The rest of the members of the family, except for the two that sold, joined as partners.

Lage: It's more rational.

Brooks: Yes. It's a logical business organization, whereas the previous status of things was an impossible kind of business organization.

Lage: Now, you're not a consultant on a regular basis at present?

Brooks: No.

Lage: Is there anything else you want to add about the processes we've talked about today that you think we've missed?

Brooks: No, I think we've covered it pretty well.

Will Patterson and the Woodpeckers

Lage: Will you tell the story you told me last time about Will Patterson?

Brooks: Well, I think you're thinking of the story of Will and the woodpeckers.

Lage: Right.

Brooks: You know, the woodpeckers had existed for many years, and Will lived in the house, and his common way of getting rid of the woodpeckers was to just put a shotgun out the window when they started pecking and shoot the gun and it would scare them away.

Lage: And he was elderly, you said, at the time.

Brooks: Well, he kept getting more and more elderly and less able to get around. He became a semi-invalid, in a wheelchair. At that point in time, you know, he began to have some problems like with the bathroom. I went over and remodeled his bathroom for him and made it an invalid kind of bathroom with all the bars and that kind of stuff.

While doing that, I learned of this procedure of getting rid of the woodpeckers because I'd hear the shotgun go off, and I'd go in and say, "Will, what are you shooting at?" [laughter] "Yeah, the damn woodpeckers; they've been around here for a hundred years, but that's my way of getting rid of them." But because of his age and inability to get around, I got very concerned about that shotgun alongside of his bed all the time. I said, "Will, we've got to get rid of the shotgun." He said, "It's the only way I can get rid of the woodpeckers."

Brooks: So I said, "Well, I'll solve that problem." So I went out and bought a big school bell and mounted it on the side of the house and I ran the wiring into the house with a button alongside of his bed so that whenever the woodpeckers began to peck, he'd just push the button, the bell would ring and scare the woodpeckers away. Then we took his shotgun away from him. [laughter]

Lage: And that was agreeable?

Brooks: Yes. In fact, he gave me the shotgun. He gave me the shotgun as a gift.

Lage: So, really, that was all he cared about having it for?

Brooks: Yes, that's the only thing he wanted the shotgun for, to scare woodpeckers away. [laughter]

Lage: That's a good tale.

Transcriber: Joyce Minick
Final Typist: Shannon Page

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THE PATTERSON FAMILY AND RANCH:
SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY IN TRANSITION

Robert B. Fisher, M.D.

History and Politics:
The Creation of Ardenwood Regional Preserve

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
in 1986



ROBERT B. FISHER, M.D.

Retirement party in the restored Clark
Hall, Irvington District, Fremont, 1984

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INTERVIEW HISTORY -- Robert B. Fisher

When Robert Fisher set up his medical practice in Niles in 1950, it was a strictly rural community with many of the area's pioneers still living and the pioneer homesteads still standing. He had brought with him from his New England upbringing an interest in history, an interest further stimulated by getting to know the area's pioneer families. Service on the Fremont Recreation Commission shortly after incorporation and involvement in the first planning for park sites intensified his awareness of the importance of the area's historic sites.

Fisher's oral history recounts his growing involvement in city affairs and his founding of the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, and briefly discusses the development of several of the city's historic sites. It concentrates on his central role in envisioning the George Washington Patterson homesite as a historic site, in working with the city and the East Bay Regional Park District to make the Ardenwood Regional Preserve a reality, and in shaping the plan that was eventually adopted for the park. It also recounts the difficulties encountered in restoring the historic mansion and the problems caused when the management of Ardenwood became entangled with personal antagonisms and city politics.

While the story of Fisher's own role in these events is primary here, he gives credit to many other local citizens for their contributions. His account illustrates the role and value of citizen action in historical preservation and planning.

Dr. Fisher was interviewed in the George Washington Patterson home at Ardenwood Regional Preserve, on September 9, 1986. After reviewing the transcript of his interview, he submitted a number of papers to further illustrate the role of the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation at Ardenwood. The Foundation's 1980 proposal for a historic preserve at Ardenwood is included as an appendix to his oral history. Other papers have been placed in The Bancroft Library.

Ann Lage
Interviewer/Editor
Project Director

September, 1988
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Robert Burns Fisher MD

Date of birth Jan 4, 1919 Place of birth Ayer, Mass.

Father's full name Harry Ernest Fisher

Birthplace Lowell Mass

Occupation Architect

Mother's full name Avis Adella Burns Fisher

Birthplace Ayer, Mass

Occupation Housewife & mother

Where did you grow up ? "Highland Park" N.E. Los Angeles

Present community Fremont, Calif.

Education UCLA 42 USC Medical School 1996

Occupation(s) Family Practitioner MD retired

Special interests or activities Washington Township (Fremont Newark University)
Local history, history of photography, historic house restoration
archeology, music

I HISTORICAL PRESERVATION IN FREMONT

[Date of Interview: September 9, 1986]##

Early Interest in History

Lage: We're going to start with some personal background, if you don't mind. Just a little bit about where you were born and raised, and primarily, how you became so interested in history.

Fisher: Okay. I was born in Ayer, Massachusetts, and came to the Los Angeles area when I was about nine months old. I took my premedical education at Los Angeles City College and UCLA. I went on to USC Medical School and had my internship at the L.A. County Hospital and Santa Fe Coastline Hospital there. During medical school I was in the army ASTP program [Army Specialized Training Program], and after graduation and internship I went into the army for two years to pay back the education. I was in New England during the army. I had asked for Europe and of course got New England. [laughter]

Lage: Give me a date.

Fisher: The graduation was 1947, and so I was in the army until '49 and stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, which is right across the Potomac from Washington, D.C. So with my New England family background and from being in New England and being interested in antique furniture and early New England stuff, it was sort of natural to like history. During our travels there, I became interested in New England history, and the villages, and the old homes.

When I finished with the army I took a residency in general practice at Bakersfield in the Kern County General Hospital, and from

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 254.

Fisher: there looked around various places to set up a practice in the Bay Area and found the Niles area. One of the doctors was ill, and I took over for a while.

Lage: Was there a particular thing in this area that attracted you? Or was it all a practical proposition?

Fisher: No, I think it was an interesting area as far as history. Remember that Alameda County really started there with the mission, Mission San Jose, the fourteenth California mission. And around it had developed a sort of a nucleus of all the different eras of history, starting with the mission, Spanish and gold rush.

As I got to know people I began to realize that there were still pioneer family descendants living here in the exact spot they had started. In my practice I saw their homes when I made house calls, because in those days in a country practice you got paid in lettuce and chickens, and I made seven or eight house calls routinely each day. They would be at these old, beautiful homes in the area.

Lage: But those days weren't really all that long ago.

Fisher: 1950 is when I arrived here and started practice.

Lage: But it was still very much of a country practice?

Fisher: It was strictly rural Alameda County. There were five little towns in this area. Niles, Warm Springs, Irvington, Centerville, Mission San Jose. And it was under Alameda County government, really. Each town had its own little town meetings, but they were very informal.

Lage: So you got to know a lot of the pioneer families?

Fisher: I got to know them personally through my practice and as friends. A good number of them were interested in their early family history-- the Overackers and the Whipples. In fact, I lived on the Whipple Ranch, which is toward Decoto, when I first came here. It was one of the early family ranches. So as I got to know them, they introduced me to their friends, and I got started looking for old homes, taking pictures of them, and tracking down artifacts and documents.

Lage: This was all on your own?

Fisher: This was in 1950, yes. At that time the Washington Township Historical Society was down to, I think, four or five elderly people, descendants of the pioneer families. Mrs. Whipple was really the matriarch of history, and I spent hours and hours talking with her.

Lage: Did you ever tape-record her?

Fisher: Yes, I have tapes of most of the early families. She was perhaps the only active member then of the historical society. I became a director of that group and in the meantime had moved to Mission San Jose where I established my practice. The Mission San Jose Chamber was not a chamber of commerce but a small promotional group that was anxious to restore the mission and save the environment of the mission. So I really became very interested in that. Out of that later developed the plan for the restoration of the Mission San Jose, and the historic districts, and so forth.

Lage: So that's a good background. You plunged right into history from the time you got here.

Fisher: Yes. It started in the 1950s, getting to know these people and getting started.

The First Recreation Commission's Vision for Fremont

Lage: You had a role on the Recreation Commission at the time of incorporation?

Fisher: Yes, in 1956. By that time I had been doing things with the local historical groups, but during incorporation I became interested in incorporation, and the hospital was also forming. We started organizing the medical staff even before the hospital was built. I wrote the policy statements, bylaws, etc., for the incorporation campaign, hospital staff organization, and Recreation Commission. I guess I became the expert on ghost writing bylaws and policy statements for various entities. Incorporation, then, set in motion, of course, an entirely different type of new city. This was a unique chance--instead of starting with an old district and working out and having area of slums develop in the original old part with their inherent problems, this city started from the outside in and actually was able to create a new civic center around the park and able to plan their recreation element. So I was interested in that aspect of it and was on the first Recreation Commission.

There were several people, Will Lamareux, Mary Goodwin, myself, who drew up--well, again, the policy statement I had worked out--and drew up a sort of a concept of a green belt on the outside which would be the hills, the bay, Niles Canyon, Alameda Creek. Then going toward the center, which would be the central park with civic center. Connecting the peripheral green belt and civic center would be linear parks that would represent right of ways--PG&E's, and the water district's, used as trails, bridle paths, etc.

Lage: I'm getting a picture of a wheel with spokes, is that correct?

Fisher: Right. That's what our wheel represents on the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation logo.

Lage: This was after incorporation?

Fisher: Yes. After incorporation on the Recreation Commission. There was a very creative Recreation Department head, Len MacViker, and we did a lot of scouting around for park sites. It became obvious then that the potential park sites were really there because of early large residences and acreages of the pioneer families. So the Shinns, the Pattersons, Gallegos, and so forth, these were areas of mature trees, large estates, and were ideal park sites. In a new city there was no money, so most of these parks would eventually come to the city by dedication. A developer would buy the area, and then, as part of their persuasion to get better density and more amenities and so forth, they would dedicate a certain acreage, taking a little bit from each lot and putting it into one single area designated as a park.

Lage: Was that the plan from the beginning? Was that worked out in the Recreation Commission?

Fisher: That's the way it sort of worked out in policy, and then in addition there were large city parks; the Hidden Valley, the Agua Caliente area, that were hill areas, and of course the central park were the citywide-type parks. Then there was an interesting network of neighborhood parks. Each grammar school had an associated playground and an associated park called a neighborhood park. Then there would be a slightly larger area at junior high schools, and then finally the high school. Each one would have a park attached to it and coordinated with the playground. This really worked out as a great system.

To our topic, it turned out, of course, that many of these parks were historic parks and were defined as such on the recreational element. So Shinn Park, for instance, was dedicated by the family as an historic park, and it became part of the system of parks.

Lage: Was that a gift of the family or did that come in through this development dedication process?

Fisher: It was suggested by the Recreation Commission and the director, frequently, that this was a way the family could gain tax advantages, and it would be a family memorial that would remain. So the Harvey House and the Shinn House came into the park system. Originally Gallegos House was going to be and didn't. So many of the early grounds were developed that way, and that was when I first had a close contact with these places.

Fisher: It was about that time that, I think, I suggested making an inventory in order to develop this plan for the parks and save the buildings. Because they were being lost. This was a new city and the urban sprawl was just hitting it. This was open country and suddenly a city, and a city had to have housing development; it had to have industry. So there was this tremendous crush to get the farming land into development.

Lage: Did the incorporation spur the development, or was it a response, a way to control what was coming?

Fisher: It was a spur, of course, because it was the last area in the bay that didn't have housing, didn't have a lot of density. At the same time a general plan was developed, uniquely, which gave an opportunity to control this. It allowed utilities, and schools, fire department, street planning, and park planning, and so forth, a chance to keep pace with it, a chance to be developed right. Or course, it got eroded, as always, as the fight between the human interest, cultural interest on one hand against the industrial, and tax, and economic interest (to make the buck) and put as many houses as you can in the number of acres.

But at least it was slowed down, and really the controversies in the city were based, as I suppose they are in all cities, on these two factors coming together. The original little group of farmers and druggists and local people that made up the city council eventually were replaced by people who were really politicians and backed by the developers and pressure groups and so forth. But it had a start.

Lage: Yes, you developed a group to defend the historical and cultural interest, which doesn't always happen.

Fisher: Yes. This was, I think, very fortunate, especially here with the tremendous wealth of historical buildings and history, and the sites in the area.

Historical Resources Commission: Earmarking Historic Sites for Preservation

Lage: You mentioned that you suggested an inventory. Was that the work of the Fremont Historical Resources Commission?

Fisher: Yes. First, the commission suggested that the Washington Township Historical Society name some places to receive plaques. I was on that committee and Mrs. Griffin was still quite active as one of those members. We did name a few; I think there were twenty or

Fisher: thirty or something like that, that eventually would have plaques. But it sort of fell through; it was made up of, as I say, people that really weren't very active and couldn't get around and see the places.

So it was redefined and a new commission appointed, made up of people who were frequently not only younger, but more aggressive and more active and able to get around and do the research necessary. We would first take an area and do research, book-wise, and oral history, and so forth, and then pin down the places as to location, and date it. So the Historical Resources Commission was formed by the Recreation Commission with approval of the council. I was the chairman of that group.

The purpose, really, was straight out to find and designate the historic features of Fremont. This would be sites, and horticulture resources such as an avenue of trees (olive trees and palm trees) as well as structural resources, sites of some famous happening, etc. We started in '65, I think. It really took about four years to complete it with revisions and so forth.

Lage: And you were chair of that commission.

Fisher: Yes. It was a changing group, but I remember some of the names here. Bernadette Esley and Juliane Howe were the two members that really hung there until the end. Juliane Howe was our amateur photographer who took pictures, originally, and became a professional. She was our photographer during those years and actually went into the photographic art and is doing well in that now. Bernadette Esley was our secretary and chased down a lot of the information. We did a lot of interviewing, unfortunately we didn't tape some of them, but we were there just at the time when a lot of these elderly pioneers were still able to help. We did get a lot of information.

The next step was to convince the city that these historical resources should be put on official city maps. This was a lobbying effort that the Recreation Commission cooperated on after quite a lot of long nights at the council. By then we were beginning to think about a permanent organization because we had been getting donations from people, and we had tapes and so forth. We divided up the historic resources, which were about three hundred, into two groups, the primary and secondary. This was based on five different criteria that we set up, such as historical significance; the architectural significance; association with an event, happening or people; visual impact, etc. So it had to be more than just an old house. These fell roughly into about a hundred and fifty primary ones. These primary resources we did get onto the maps, a separate group of five maps, with numbered designations. Then these became part of the recreation element map and, finally, part of the Fremont general plan (studies for each area of the general plan).

Lage: Was the thought that these areas should be saved?

Fisher: These then became "flags" so that as development started in that area, the city staff could be alerted, "Here's something that should be saved." Eventually we got ordinances passed that made it necessary, if they were in the path of development, to review the primary ones by an Historical Architectural Review Board, which decided whether or not they should be saved. It gave a ninety-day holding time if they were to be torn down to have the public come and either offer to move them or buy them or the city buy them-- "put up or shut up" time. But at least it was a reprieve, not an automatic permission to destroy.

Lage: How difficult was that to get through the council? Was the council development-minded at that time?

Fisher: At the time when we did it it was pretty good. These were still people that were themselves, often, pioneers, and understood the importance of saving these historical sites.

Lage: So we're still in about the mid-sixties.

Fisher: Yes. The pressure by developers and the changes in the council began at that time. But at least these were earmarked for saving.

Development of City Historic Overlay District Ordinances

Fisher: Then the other two elements of the work of the Historical Resources Commission were the ordinances--I started to say how the primary historic resources were covered. But in addition there was a study--there had been about three different studies by city urban consultants in helping to set up the city. They were extremely talented. The 701 study program* started about that time and spoke to other interesting aspects of city planning. At that point I was involved in the Mission San Jose Chamber activities that had started in the 1950s, with Don Dillon, Lois Bottenberg, the postmistress, and Don Stransky. We were all interested in saving the mission and its environment.

At that time when the 701 study was developed we had organized the plan for the Mission San Jose Historic District to the point that they actually, as part of their work up, recommended the whole outline of our suggestions. That included an historic overlay district ordinance for the Mission San Jose area. That, in addition to identifying the historic places and "small town complex," actually within a certain area made it a requirement to be reviewed by the HARB (Historical Architectural Review Board)--not just for the historic

*A planning program funded by federal grants through section 701 of the Federal Housing Act of 1954.

- Fisher: buildings but for any new building or any restoration within that area. So not only was the historic building protected, but any remodeling had to be compatible, and any new building had to be at least reasonably compatible.
- Lage: In the area?
- Fisher: In the area designated by this overlay, which is the nucleus of the old town complex.
- Lage: Was this an area surrounding the mission?
- Fisher: Surrounding the mission for a few blocks. This was sort of patterned after Santa Barbara, although there they were restricted to only Spanish architecture. Here, it could be any of the eras of history--the gold rush, and so forth--because it already was that kind of a mixture. Later, Niles received the same treatment of an historic overlay district, which kept it compatible to the small railroad town and Essanay movie activities. [the Essanay Moving Picture Company was active in Niles from 1912-1915. Charlie Chaplin was one of the stars of films produced in Niles.]
- Lage: So these are things that were successfully put through the council?
- Fisher: Yes. Fortunately, early on. The inventory, I think, was about twenty years earlier than most of the cities around. So we had a good head start.
- Lage: You've mentioned the 701 study program. I'm not clear what that was. Was that developed by one of the consultants?
- Fisher: Yes. There were several studies. There was one done by University of California City and Regional Planning Department, and the original city incorporation used a company of urban consultants in setting up the various offices and agencies. Then this 701 study was sort of frosting on the cake in giving unique areas some protection. It primarily had to do with the fact that we were dealing with five old areas that were really dying out, in competition with new people coming in and making shopping centers on land that was very low in cost. These old historic districts needed to be upgraded and compete with the new districts to survive.
- Lage: As a commercial district?
- Fisher: Yes. As a commercial district and community, or residential district. I think these programs developed partly out of that need. At any rate, that was accomplished in Mission and in Niles. Unfortunately, these plans were voted on.
- Lage: Voted on by the people in the areas?

Fisher: Individual plans were voted on in the elections. The plans for Mission and Niles got through, and the others didn't make it.

Lage: So you tried in each district?

Fisher: Yes. Irvington, for instance, which is at the Five Corners, was to be a plaza, and the highway would have bypassed it to save it; that plan didn't pass. In the mission district, part of the plan was proposed as a tunnel under the mission plaza, and the local people such as the Weeds and some of the mission people who were in opposition to the Mission Chamber--I don't know why to this day--but they opposed it. The mission district went through a whole series of hopeful proposals to save the plaza area and make it a walking mall environment. Each one was fought, and finally some of the elements were adopted, but the whole concept (mission district plan) didn't make it. Gradually bypasses became less and less reasonable. Finally, it just remained as it is. We then fought the battle of a proposed six-lane highway, which would have wiped out the historic mission environment. But I'm getting off your subject.

Designating the Patterson House as a Potential Park, 1960s

Lage: Let's focus, then, on what the Historical Resources Commission did about the Patterson house and ranch.

Fisher: All right. Like the other privately-owned large acreage estates, this was one of the obvious ones that we saw early on. So the result of having designated it on this list meant that it was shown on the maps, the general plan, recreational plan, as a potential park.

Lage: Was it a larger area than the other ones we're talking about, or has it just stayed intact longer?

Fisher: It was actually larger in acreage. The nucleus of the home sites, the two home sites [the George Washington Patterson and William Patterson homes]--I don't remember the exact figure, but it was probably around a hundred and twenty acres. So this started, then, as a potential park on that list.

Lage: That would have been back in the mid-sixties.

Fisher: That would have been 1960s, yes. Early sixties, and finalized by its being put on the official map. It was proposed during the development of the park system as a potential park as well, not only designated historically as a primary historic resource.

Lage: At that early time was any contact made with the Patterson family?

Fisher: During the early times in the sixties and late fifties I made contact with them.

##

Fisher: Don Patterson, who was the son of William D. Patterson, was actually in charge of the operational ranch and ran it from this office in the George Washington mansion. Marge Patterson, who was the descendant of Henry, Sally Adam's sister, had been married in the 1940s but had separated and had lived here sporadically. She had two or three rooms upstairs in the old part of the house. But the main house was run by a caretaker, Mr. Minges, who was a retired Fremont police officer, and his wife. He kept up the grounds and protected the house.

Lage: They were hired by the family?

Fisher: Yes. The house was controlled generally by Marge--sort of indifferently at the time she was away--and Sally Adams, legally at least, but I don't think she came over.

Lage: Was this while William Patterson was still alive?

Fisher: No. He had been dead for a number of years. So it was just the family that were scattered. I don't think they really got together much at that time. Perhaps later they have, since the regional park has brought some of these people together.

The Mission Peak Heritage Foundation

Fisher: At that time the Historical Resources Commission was finished with this job, but it became obvious that they had started something with donations and interviews and a lot of taking down of the history and so forth. I think we alerted the Recreation Commission and the council to the fact that a lot of the houses were being lost and a lot of the artifacts were being lost. We had come upon large caches of historical documents that were destroyed just before we went to get them, after a pioneer had died at a rest home for instance. So through our request, the council asked that a group be formed to help preserve the houses, preserve the artifacts, and keep record of, actually, the city history and archival material. Those that were named had shown interest; Maurice Marks had done a lot of taping of the oral history of the city's incorporation as a member of our group. I can't remember all the different names;

Fisher: there were Mary Lou Ruth; Dave Bentham; Mr. Ward Blanchart, an Ohlone College librarian; and Lila Hunt, our secretary, who was the head of the history section of the Washington Township Woman's Club.

They asked me to organize it, and they sent letters to five or six people that had shown interest at the council meetings. The historic resources group--society, or whatever, we didn't really have a name at that time other than the Fremont Historic Resources Commission--was formed. This was in 1971. It was later realized by the group that it wasn't only Fremont, but Washington Township, that had to be studied and the records kept, because Newark and Union City and Fremont areas all overlapped in the original history. So it was broadened to include the tri-city area, and it became, eventually, within the first six months, I suppose, known as Mission Peak Heritage Foundation. We tried not to interfere with the name of the other groups.

The original plan was simply a consortium of interested groups. It had representatives from libraries, from colleges, from the historical societies, from schools. There were representatives from each one of these sources forming this new group, all of which had the same purpose of saving artifacts and preserving houses and keeping the history and publicizing the history.

Lage: It wasn't public in any way? It was a private foundation?

Fisher: Well, we used good judgment, I now know. Originally, there was a suggestion that it might be a group appointed to by the city. We saw trouble ahead with that politically and later found out this to be true on the Ardenwood project. So we remained completely autonomous as a private group and formed a non-profit corporation and kept it that way. I'm glad we did.

The same people that had been interested in the historic resources went on with their interest here and were instrumental in babysitting houses like the Harvey House and cabin. When the developer bought it, we were able to put caretakers in there and were able to keep it going until it became dedicated as an historic park.

Lage: Did you have a role working with the developers?

Fisher: Yes. In this particular case, that's how we became friendly with Jack Brooks of the Singer organization. Brooks himself was a person who recognized these values and helped us. They paid for a fence to be put around Harvey House, and they tried to save the barn for us. They cooperated.

Lage: Brooks was the developer in that area?

Fisher: He was the developer and understood that it was important to try and get these places into the ownership of the city as parks, and he was very cooperative in that.

When it came time to do the same here at Ardenwood--he had bought, I think four hundred acres here, including the house--by then he knew us, and we had a pretty good rapport. He drew his plans incorporating the saving of the house with a very small area, about six acres around the immediate house. Then he made linear parks throughout the development which would keep some of the planted areas. So that totaled about forty acres.

Lage: Do we have enough of a picture of the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation? One thing--just to be blunt about it--was this an organization that had a lot of active workers? Or did you end up doing most of it?

Fisher: No. At the beginning we had a lot of passionately involved, concerned people who were willing to fight the battle, and a lot of us burned out later maybe, but originally we had to be at the council until 2 a.m. to fight the attorneys and the developers to save these places. It meant dirty fingernails, work on restoration, and getting out there and actually taking down a barn and saving it, and doing the nitty-gritty.

Lage: So you did a lot of varied work, political things, restoration--

Fisher: Political, lobbying, restoration, a lot of collecting and chasing down of archival stuff, a lot of research.

Lage: Did you have a site, a library?

Fisher: No. We met at various places. We met at St. Mary's of the Palms for a while; we met at the library. We didn't have any headquarters. We eventually were recognized by council resolution as being the official historical organization by Fremont, Newark, and Union City. That helped us, because we were able to get given to us, for a dollar a year, the storage area at the Fremont city corporation yard, and we began to collect and protect this material. For instance, at Patterson there was a beautiful doctor's buggy that we rescued; it was being ruined in the garage. And a lot of the furniture that was donated. So, yes, there were a lot of people that were doing active work, very dedicated people.

Lage: Would you mention two or three of the places that you restored? You mentioned the Harvey House.

Fisher: Well, at that time, of course, a lot of these came up quickly because of the tremendous urgency to get housing in here. It was at a time when there were single family tracts developing, and then suddenly it burgeoned into apartment complexes and took more of the land. So I could mention a few, Dusterberry House which is on Central Avenue, the Hawes House which is in Centerville, the Salz House in Centerville. These places we fought and lost. There were the four Walton Avenue houses, where there was a street that was abandoned from the central old district of Centerville. The city actually owned those buildings, and we fought to have the city keep them. This was at the time where we were beginning to get other priorities from the council that weren't favorable for preservation. The city actually knocked down three of these buildings themselves. Others saved the J.J. Vallejo adobe, Bunting House, and Chadbourne carriage house.

The Freitas-Bunting Estate on Thornton Avenue had a series of "unfortunate" fires and "errors" in tree demolition. Of course, in the meantime the Galindo-Higuera adobe was endangered. Before the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation was formed, the Historical Resources Commission got a group of volunteers including city workers, PG&E, and telephone company to put up a false roof over the Higuera adobe by putting up telephone poles around it. For about four years successively we did that to save it because it was in private ownership. Developers kept starting to buy the property and then they would go broke or something, and the owner didn't care. So we saved it.

Mission Peak Heritage Foundation proposed and coordinated the restoration of the Shinn House on a four-acre historical park and continues to open it to the public. The list goes on. The Mission San Jose, in the meantime, of course, had a restoration committee we had formed. God, I don't know how we did all these committees!

Lage: [laughter] Think of all the meetings you had.

Fisher: I was on HARB, I was the chairman of HARB, the recreation commission, Mission San Jose Chamber. . .

Lage: Were you still practicing all this time? You were still an active physician?

Fisher: Yes, I continued my practice. Also, the Committee for the "Restoration of the Mission San Jose" was formed about that time, and we started a campaign to raise funds to restore that. Somewhat later the SPCRR [Society for the Preservation of Carter Railroad Resource], which is the South Pacific Coast Railroad Organization (local narrow gauge railroad company which started the town of Newark), became a subsidiary, sort of, of the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation. Bruce MacGregor, the author, had found an original railroad car that was built by Carter Brothers in Newark. The

Fisher: Mission Peak Heritage Foundation bought it and had to leave it at its site in a distant desert town. So the SPCRR organization was started to bring the car back and restore it and publicize Newark's history.

Lage: This isn't the car in use now at Ardenwood, is it?

Fisher: No, but the original car is back on the grounds. They've drawn up plans from it and will make a reproduction. At any rate, the historic horse-drawn railroad originally proposed by MPHF for Ardenwood is included in the park. Did you want to know more about Mission Peak?

Lage: No, I think that gives us a good picture of what Mission Peak's other interests were and how it got started.

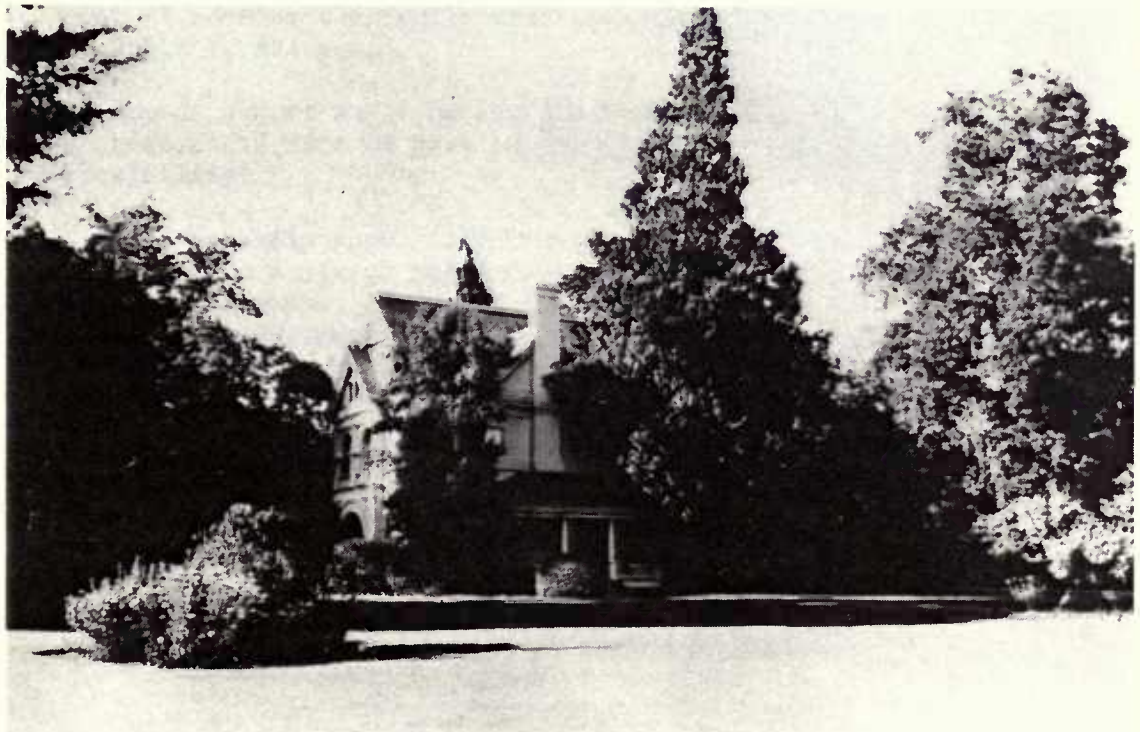


Left: Entry hall of restored
G. W. Patterson house

Photo by Larry Milnes

Below: Ardenwood grounds and
G. W. Patterson house, 1968

Photo by Robert Fisher, M.D.



II PRESERVATION OF THE PATTERSON MANSION AND CREATION OF
ARDENWOOD PARK, 1971-1981

The Patterson Family, Singer Housing, and the Preservationists

- Fisher: Getting down specifically to Ardenwood, at that time there was a lot of instability. There was a chance that this place would be lost. First, the burning of the William Patterson home in 1962 had scared us to death because we recognized that the family had carried out the commitment made by the will in destroying the other William Patterson home. But they also had a lack of interest in saving this building [George Washington Patterson mansion].
- Lage: Was there any indication of why it was stipulated in William Patterson's will that the house would be burned if the family didn't live in it?
- Fisher: It was explained to me that they felt that it was a personal house and that it should always be in the family. It was written in a way that if none of the family came back to actually live in it, then it would be destroyed.
- Lage: It sounds almost as if he saw the possibility that it might become a historical site or have another use, a public use. Is that a possibility?
- Fisher: I don't honestly know. I've never been able to explain that. While there wasn't a direct statement by the family that they would destroy this home, there was the sort of intimation that the same thing should happen here. If they couldn't use it and have it in the family, then it should be wiped out. No one else should--
- Lage: I want to say here that we're in the George Washington Patterson house now. So when we say "here" that's what we're talking about.

Fisher: Here, right. So let's say either a lack of interest, other activities that they were doing or, perhaps, pressure by other members of family, I don't know. At any rate there was the state of flux that was dangerous to saving the house. There was controversy as far as the development around it. There was controversy between Newark and Fremont as to boundaries. The developer [Singer Housing Company] had bought, I believe, the four hundred acres of the 3,000-acre Patterson Ranch, including the house, in 1971.

Lage: There was also the negotiation between the city and the developer, in which the saving of the home and creation of the park figured heavily. You were aware of all that?

Fisher: Yes, but it takes time to do that. In the negotiation we knew that things were cooking. The caretakers were changing over, the Mingeses brought in the Hathorns, who were their in-laws. It was obvious that this place might be lost.

I have a letter here that I wrote to Mrs. [John] Adams in, I think it was as early as '71, I believe, asking permission to inventory the house and the attic. We knew that the attic was filled with stuff, and the garages and so forth. The house itself still contained some of the original furniture, as well as artifacts.

So after some delay she granted us the privilege of coming in, sorting over the stuff, copying photographs, and whatnot. And taking pictures of the interior so we would have a record, inventoring the furniture, listing it. So that we would know what was there because, again, there was danger of pieces going out and being separated.

We found the attic to be a shambles. The roof was leaking, the bees were destroying the paper material, and there were rats. It was really in dangerous condition, so we got permission to remove the delicate stuff, the documents and photographs and things, to the city corporation yard. (By then we had an official storage area in the corporation yard.) We suggested that she start thinking about the furniture. We did get that permission and moved the business records and photographs for safe keeping. It took about another several letters and communication back and forth, and then around 1973 she agreed that the stuff should be kept together. We got the final donation officially signed in '74.

Lage: This was after the house had been sold?

Fisher: Yes, this was after the house was sold. It then was not even owned by her.

Lage: But the furniture wasn't sold along with it, was it?

Fisher: Yes. Sure. The whole thing was sold. Brooks [and Singer Housing] could have taken all the furniture. They owned the house.

Lage: You think when they bought the house, they also got everything in it.

Fisher: Sure. There was no separate agreement. Except for what we had set aside. That was, of course, the reason we did it. So fortunately, it was set aside, and it was donated to Mission Peak, and so Brooks recognized by letters that it belonged to the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation. Archival material was moved to storage. The more important furniture pieces--the bedroom, living room, and so forth--was moved to Shinn House, which by that time had been restored by Mission Peak Heritage Foundation. It was used over there. So the main pieces were saved and kept together; the other pieces were kept here at the Patterson House. Some of it got lost in the shuffle. Relatives had come in and removed it. Some of the caretakers had, supposedly, been given pieces, which we couldn't prove to the contrary. At any rate, basically most of the material was saved, with Brooks's cooperation.

Lage: Was there some controversy involving that, with Sally Adams?

Fisher: Only later. So, the only controversy was later, I guess two or three years ago, with the other historical organization, the Washington Township Historical Society, which has always been on our necks. This is during the time that they were sort of influential with the council members. There was a majority of three on the council that were political buddies with this group. The Weeds--and several people in that category--stirred up things about Mission Peak Heritage Foundation's use of the corporation yard, the fact that our organization had that and was the officially designated historical organization. They stirred up the question of whether or not this was the same organization that had been given the corporation yard [laughter] because our name was in the process of being changed (during its formation). They stirred up the ownership of the Patterson family furniture and artifacts, all of which was thoroughly documented in all the records. But it took about two or three months of my time to go through step by step, show all the documentation, and prove it because the city staff were put on the spot and the question was raised with the city staff and it had to be proven. It was proven. But it just took energy and time, and I could have been doing other things.

So, no, it was never controversial originally. The family thoroughly understood. But the recent letter written in response to the Weeds was written to Sally Adams from the staff in such a way that it said, "The furniture is yours; please sign if you agree." She probably had lost, by then, the original donation slips. We had to show her again. Everyone knows the facts now, have from the beginning. At any rate, what the hell's the difference? They're back here and they're where they're supposed to be--safe and together.

- Lage: So the things that were in the Shinn House have now been moved back to Ardenwood?
- Fisher: That was the original idea, of course, to keep it together until things had settled down, and the house had an ownership. Finally, when the city did own it, then it became obvious that it would be saved. When the restoration took place, it was brought back to Ardenwood. And we had to replace these pieces at Shinn House.
- Lage: Then you had to find something for the Shinn House?
- Fisher: Yes. [laughter]
- Lage: Is there more to say about working with Jack Brooks on the particular site?
- Fisher: He is an extremely intelligent and creative developer. He is certainly a power in the city of Fremont and owns a good share of land and was always on the side of the developer. In the council, I would say, cleverly and intelligently and properly, as a developer he supported all sides. He contributed money to all the campaigns, so no matter who was in power in the council he was a backer.
- Lage: He wasn't identified with just one faction?
- Fisher: He wasn't, as some of the others were. So he has diplomatically wielded his power as a heavy developer in the area, I think. But at the same time he's been a gentleman and has shown understanding for the cultural things and supported the cultural activities of the area. He doesn't suck all the land dry. That's my impression. I've seen him in action over a period of years. So when it came to a cultural activity in an area, he was cooperative.

Lawsuits and Negotiations: Background to the Establishment of Ardenwood

- Lage: There was quite a controversy about this development, the surrounding development here. It seemed to go on for several years and involved lawsuits.
- Fisher: That was part of the instability that worried us. Basically the problem was--and this is oversimplifying somewhat--that fact that development was outstripping the facilities to support it. In the North Gate area schools had not been developed; there would need to be, suddenly, schools built to support the large area of housing that was to be built on the only remaining flat land. The water department, sanitary district, fire department, all these had just simply not caught up with that.

Lage: In this northern plains area?

Fisher: In the "North Gate," or north plain, area. The cities recognized this; it was really part of Fremont, the whole strip that goes down to the Dumbarton Bridge. So Fremont actually put a hold on all development in this area.

Lage: After Jack Brooks and Singer had purchased it?

Fisher: After Jack had bought this. As a result, it stopped his development cold, and my memory is that he was bringing suit against the city to release that. Everyone recognized the facts and knew that this was what was happening, that development was outstripping facilities in this area. Part of the settlement between Brooks and the city of Fremont, as I understand it, was that the city would buy the Patterson house nucleus for a park, that Jack would withdraw his suit as one of the leverages, and the development of the other parts of Brooks's land would be able to proceed.

At the same time, the ownership of the potential park area was still mixed. In the first place, the strip of ranch land parallel to the new Dumbarton freeway--maybe, oh, a thousand feet wide at one point, then narrowing down to three or four hundred feet--was part of Newark.

Lage: Do you know anything about why, during incorporation, the Patterson Ranch got split like that? Is there a story behind that?

Fisher: I don't know. I think it used the natural boundaries. Somehow Fremont got a corridor of land down to the point which was to be the Coyote Hills recreation center at the slough. The same thing has happened up in the Niles area; there, part of Union City is up in the Niles Canyon hills. That's probably to do with the political voting areas, also. Because it was voted in, in opposition to annexation by Hayward.

The dividing line between Newark and Fremont was through the south portion of the Patterson property, on the Patterson side of Jarvis Road. There's always been a hassle between Newark and Fremont, but the Dumbarton freeway was the straw that broke the camel's back. Putting in the freeway changed the line, because it was coming right across the dividing line, really right parallel to it. It isolated Newark from this park which by that time was being considered as a tri-city regional area.

Newark felt a need to be included in the freeway access and wasn't. So they fought for the Lake Avenue overpass. Although it went nowhere [laughter], it did give an access to the park, for one thing, but, of course, there was access also at Newark Boulevard. That was one of the controversies.

Fisher: The family itself had divided up the property so that it wasn't all in one ownership. I'm not sure of the details, except that, eventually, a corporate unit of all member of family was formed.*

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Fisher: During the state of flux with the cities, there was also reorganization, as I understand, in ownership of the three thousand acres that was remaining of the Patterson property. They had been given, apparently, by the various wills, to various groups of the family. Marge, as I remember, had something like forty acres. Don owned some. The Adams owned part, and I think there were even smaller chunks. So at the time that the city was interested, I think it was 160 acres that actually could be bought directly from Brooks. The rest of it had to be negotiated with the different groups of family members to coordinate it and develop a 200-acre park.

Lage: And eventually there was a trade of lands between Newark and Fremont also.

Fisher: Apparently there was eventually a settlement of the suit by Brooks, so that the city was able to buy a consolidated piece of property through negotiations with the family group itself, as well as the Singer outfit. Brooks, by that time; I think had been coordinating with the family and had become a financial adviser, or at least part of the corporate entity. So they worked it out together.

I think there was a moratorium of about two or three years on the housing development. When it finally did open up, then Brooks went ahead with his development toward the Coyote Hills and the North Gate area. The land that is now Ardenwood Park was bought by the city.

Developing a Proposal for a Multipurpose Historical Park

Fisher: Do you want to get into the regional park aspect?

Lage: Yes, I thought that would be the next topic to cover. How did the East Bay Regional Park District [EBRPD] become involved?

Fisher: The regional park district, which had been buying up large tracts of land for the future--not for immediate use but realizing that it had to be kept open ground--was in the process of, each year, sizing up the potential park sites, usually large properties on the ridges and so forth. In 1970, or '71, because they had become owners

*See interviews with Leon Campbell, Robert Buck, and Jack Brooks in this series.

Fisher: of Garin Regional Park and a couple of others that were really oriented toward historical parks, old farms, old ranches, and so forth, they proposed a new category, which was to be Historic Regional Parks. At that time, they sent around notices to the cities and to the various historical societies, requesting these groups to nominate potential park sites that might fall into this category. The Mission Peak Heritage Foundation received one of these notices and studied it, and I think suggested five possibilities, including the Niles Canyon, Higuero adobe, Morrisson Canyon, Patterson Ranch, and Hidden Valley area in Warm Springs.

Lage: Did you look favorably on the thought of having the regional park district take over some of these instead of the city?

Fisher: Yes. Because they had proved themselves to be really creative, and it was publicly supported, tax supported, and it took it out of the local hassle for development. So it sounded like a great idea, especially since this particular park was our prime one, of course, that we were really pushing to be saved and developed. It's like making a budget, you put in a lot of things that you know might not make it, but you hope to get at least the important ones.

From the very beginning it was obvious that this was really the nucleus of a historical park, because it had everything going for it. It was the remnant of a ranch and family mansion with its old farm buildings and old equipment. It was the nucleus of the "Rancho Potrero de los Cerritos," the grant which was Alviso's Mexican rancho, formerly the old pasture of the mission. It had all these important things surrounding it immediately and associating with it: the salt industry, the narrow gauge railroad, the town of Newark, the town of Union City--site of the 1853 Alameda County seat of government--all within a mile. And the ranch had remained intact--three thousand acres.

Lage: And the Indian connection.

Fisher: Yes, the Ohlone Indian history, at the Coyote Hills portion of the ranch, was already part of EBRPD. So it had all these things going for it that could be incorporated. In promoting this, we drew up a plan in cooperation with the city. Larry Milnes [assistant city manager of Fremont] was very cooperative and interested. He was one of the few people who recognized the potential, and he had heard us so often that he knew where we were coming from and actually was beginning to be interested himself, a lot, in the history. He had done some work on the Vallejo adobe with us.

So the city, through Larry, actually helped us. They accepted our proposal, printed a map, and we had an outline of a proposal. Our idea was a multiphasic, multipurpose historic park, but it incorporated all these aspects of history and the various ethnic interpretive sites.

Lage: So from the beginning you had this broad concept.

Fisher: From the beginning the whole thing was a hundred and sixty acres, I think, or a hundred acres, maybe, basic. The basic concept was an old farm, a Victorian ranch. The periphery was an area to show city people how things grow with relatively modern equipment, leased out to farmers and growing cauliflower, and so forth, as they have on the ranch for so long. The central nucleus, hidden by the trees, hopefully, still, would show the original nucleus of the ranch using horse-drawn equipment. It would include a symbolic horse-drawn narrow gauge railroad car that at one time ran between Centerville and Newark. It would have an area for a "non-archaeological" Ohlone Indian center. (The Patterson mounds at Coyote Hills are an archeological site.) At the ranch would be created the Ohlones' own idea of a campsite around the Willows, which is the little lake that remained here and is historically important.

Lage: Did you have Ohlone descendants working with you on this?

Fisher: Oh, yes. Phil Galvin is the heir apparent chief. His grandfather was the last chief of the Ohlone. We brought him in on it. Instead of a scientist from UC telling the Ohlone how they lived, it was a chance for them to grow their herbs, demonstrate their skills, and show their life as it really was.

Lage: Had they retained a tie to that life?

Fisher: By oral history; they had no written history, but by word of mouth, their tradition had been handed down, and still is, but they were scattered.

Lage: They hadn't intermarried?

Fisher: Yes. But there were maybe two or three full-blooded Ohlone. There were a lot of people like Phil, who were a quarter Ohlone, a mix of the various tribes, family members. So this was a chance for their own interpretation.

We thought that equestrian activities were important because nowhere else in the area could you connect the bridle path along the creek with Coyote Hills, and this could be a stopping point. You get on your horse, bring it here, leave it, and wander through. I would have to look up all the ideas and plans that we had.

Lage: You had the idea of a historical town?

Fisher: Oh, yes. We had found that many of the historical houses in the area couldn't be saved, but some could be moved. If someone would pay for their removal, they would be saved. So, especially Dave

Fisher: Bentham and myself felt that these were "historic orphans" that could be moved someplace. We had seen Bakersfield do it with a pioneer village and other places. At the cost of moving, which was tax-deductible, you could get the building saved. The idea was to make a little village, I think we called it Washington Village, a little town of rehab-ed houses that had been moved. But not just have them a movie set, actually have them functioning. Recycled into use by concessionaires, or people that wanted to make a print shop or a hotel, or whatever. But private enterprise on a public-maintained area. It had all the elements there. It would have a school, a church, etc.

Lage: Now, is there land enough for that?

Fisher: Yes. This was to be where the William Patterson place was, because that was where there was a center of mature trees, there was a natural village green in the middle of it. Then the field on the other side would be a place to put the railroad activities--the car barns, and the shop to work on the cars, the Carter Brothers railroading museum and restoration shop.

Lage: Did you envision the historical farming area, with the blacksmith and so on?

Fisher: Yes. The central part was strictly Victorian. It was suggested as only horse-drawn. Nobody could see the outside, with the shield of eucalyptus trees, and you could maintain the image of a Victorian place, with no tractors in the place. I'm forgetting some of the elements that are on the list. [See appendix for Mission Peak Heritage Foundation's proposal for Ardenwood.]

Lobbying for East Bay Regional Park District Involvement

Fisher: Anyway, the idea was there, and we felt so strongly that we gave tours to promote this. We presented it to the recreation commission, to the council, and really were pushing for this new category of historical parks. In the meantime, East Bay Regional Parks hired the Overview firm, a commercial professional group, like the urban design group hired by the city.

Lage: I understand it was Stewart Udall's consulting organization.

Fisher: Yes, I believe you're probably right. At any rate, they were hired by the regional park to, I suppose, investigate the sites and develop this possibility of a historical category. In the process they did a lot of investigation. They went through and rated the various nominations, as to the land size and the property values and the essentials. I'm not quite sure of this, but my understanding is

Fisher: that they formed a citizens' group, and Larry Milnes was the chairman of the citizens' group, and it was from, I believe, Bay Area people. Of course, everyone wanted to get in on this; all the historical societies in Walnut Creek and Hayward and so forth had their nominations and were fighting to get those categories.

The citizens' group took a tour of the main nominations [1973]. These had been sort of narrowed down. We went as Mission Peak Heritage Foundation representatives. Dave Bentham of MPHF and I went with the group and showed them our nominations--Morrisson Canyon and Higuera adobe and so forth, and especially Ardenwood. We had one of our docents posted in each room and took them through the house and grounds. We have photos of that tour.

Lage: How large a group did you take through?

Fisher: Oh, gosh, I don't know, there must have been twenty or thirty. Twenty-five, maybe.

Lage: And were there any directors of the district?

Fisher: There were directors. I remember Mary Jefferds was here; there were several people that were from various areas of the park district and favored their own area, of course. We wanted to have them see the balance of this place. I think we convinced quite a few just on sight, because you just can't overlook this place, that this would be great.

As a result of it, there was quite a lot of enthusiasm, but suddenly, I guess, the historical park category collapsed. The reason, as I understand it, had to do with the actual policies of East Bay Regional Park District. It was spelled out, and shown to us later, that they, by policy, cannot be responsible for restoration. Obviously, this involved restoration of the mansion, and the barns, etc.

Lage: So their whole historical category was abolished?

Fisher: Yes. In the past, I guess Garin Ranch, for instance, I believe, was handled by other people, but the district leased the park. Now that specific category of historical regional park was dropped. The land and the potential for the park site at Ardenwood was kept on the master plan. Eventually the idea of a "Historic Preserve"--which got them off the hook on restoration but still preserved the concept of a historic area--was developed and went through the process of review involving the local citizens, the recreation commissions, the councils, and so forth. I think the basic concept was followed from our Mission Peak Heritage Foundation plan because it came out looking the same.

Lage: Were there particular people in the park district staff that you worked with in these early years who seemed most interested?

Fisher: I'm not very good at this kind of bigger politics, so I didn't get too involved, but I made several presentations when they came up at the park district board meetings. I really don't know the players here very well because there were certain people that were not favorable to the historic aspect of regional parks, and some that were. I think I had better leave it off because I'm not sure of my facts on that. I can't remember the general manager's name at the time.

Lage: Trudeau?

Fisher: Richard Trudeau. Trudeau was very favorable and very cooperative and liked the concept, and we worked closely with him. And there were supporters of his plans. I think that, really, he started the idea of historic preserve and got it going, if I'm not mistaken. Also Howard Cogswell.

Lage: They needed more parks in southern Alameda County, didn't they, to balance the district with more parks in this area?

Fisher: Yes, I think there had been a preponderance of East Bay Regional Parks in the northern part of the bay.

Lage: Contra Costa.

Fisher: Contra Costa, and up in Tilden. Sunol was beginning, but not involved. So the political balance made it favorable to now get in a large park here to balance the acreage. So that worked out.

When the plans first came out they were not including some of the multiphasic or multipurpose elements. They didn't, for instance, favor a wilderness area, which is, to us, very important. A deer park that had been here historically from the beginning of Ardenwood, and a primitive area that was at the Willows--the old "suzal" or marsh--goes back to Spanish times; that is the area down here next to the ice house. That was a very primitive area; it was heavily wooded with very old trees. It was a deer park, and ecologically it was an environment which we felt strongly about saving as a primitive area, not manicuring it.

Lage: Had it never been managed by the Pattersons?

Fisher: It never had been. It had been kept as a wild preserve and family camp area.

Lage: So it wasn't an area that had just been neglected over the years.

Fisher: No. It was a preserve maintained by the family as a deer park, with all the birds and small animals that go with it.

Lage: The park district didn't want to retain that?

Fisher: The park district saw it in a more practical manner, I suppose. They saw a danger to people, I suppose liability, poison oak, and fires, that type of thing. So that was one of the first things that they eliminated in their plan. They were concerned, incorrectly, speaking as a doctor, with the idea that people would get diseases from deer. Of course, they're talking about tick fever and various things that are endemic to certain areas only. But they, I think, didn't want to take responsibility for deer. So they eliminated that aspect. They eliminated teaching areas of wilderness, which was what we had in mind. You go in there with classes and show them a real ecological environment that was intact. They eliminated the pioneer village, but in place of it thought there would be a need for a learning center, a horticultural, agricultural learning center that college students and classes could be invited to, and stay overnight, and be instructed. That was a good idea.

I think somewhere along the line we started convincing them, why not combine that concept with the pioneer village. Use that for your teaching center. So they asked me to show them buildings that might be moved here, and we took--I don't remember the year--we took a tour of all the potential ones such as the Mowry Landing School, and Newark's Lincoln School, and some of the buildings on Patterson Ranch Road. There were some in Irvington and Union City. We took them all around. Some of them, at that time, were just ripe for moving, because they were going to be destroyed or were subject to loss. So the idea, I think, finally caught hold that these buildings would be moved, and they would be restored, and they could be recycled to a functional use.

Lage: Is this an idea that's still current?

Fisher: The idea is still there, and somewhere along the line East Bay Regional Park District has accepted some responsibility in restoration [laughter], which they denied first. The large barn has been restored. As the thing moved along, it was obvious that the mansion itself is in danger structurally. So we started a campaign to get some basic structural restoration of the George Washington Patterson House, a Fremont city responsibility. We worked with the city to get a share of the new grants which were then being designated for each city toward historic restoration. Part of that money was divided between a roof for this house and for the Shinn House. Then Fremont city and the corporate entity, I think, of the Patterson family group, shared the cost of paint. The Patterson House still, of course, needs more structural work, on the foundation.

Lage: I don't think we've got on the tape the final arrangement, whereby the house itself is not part of the East Bay Park.

Fisher: Okay. As the thing developed, a management agreement was developing in the LUD, land use development process, which is a preliminary investigation, deciding how the land was to be used, and what the park was to represent, what the concepts were. This involved the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation and various public contributions toward the ideas. The preliminary idea was that, since Mission Peak had been involved since the 1960s, they would continue the interpretive docent program aspect of the house; they would continue the coordination of the restoration of the house that they had already been sponsoring and fighting for. And the city would be responsible for the structural integrity and maintenance, fire protection and security, utilities, external maintenance and restoration. The MPHF would be responsible for interior restoration and furnishing.

At that time there was a horticultural organization, Saratoga Horticultural Foundation, which made an offer to develop a concession that would have taken care of the garden, the lawn area, "concourse" as we called it then (which, incidentally, was the other aspect of the original proposal. The Victorian concerts and art festivals that we started could be continued.) So this organization would develop and keep up the grounds and help in the teaching and would actually grow saleable products, horticultural products--orchids, flowers, plants, etc. They would lease, I think it was twenty-five acres, something like that, for this purpose. Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, for a dollar a year, would lease the house itself, and run the interpretive program and the restoration program. The East Bay Regional Park would be responsible for the farming portion.

Lage: The modern farming portion or the horse-drawn farming?

Fisher: The historic farming as well as the modern crop products, sales from leased peripheral acreage. This of course got into the confrontation of things cultural versus commercial. How do you run a two hundred-acre park with public funds and try and contribute money for upkeep from something that's happening on the ranch? That's what prompted ideas of selling crops and firewood and creating a general store at the gate. Later, gate receipts should be adequate.

III ARDENWOOD MANAGEMENT: PLANS, POLITICS, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Importance of Citizen Action

Fisher: Unfortunately, eucalyptus wood sales also began to be seen as a source of funds. They were cut, I think, for more than just liability problems and perhaps disease loss of trees.

Lage: You mean, there was pressure to log trees that perhaps weren't damaged?

Fisher: Right. They were thinned out, and once they thinned out they began to suffer from wind. That's my personal opinion. There were others that saw the thing as it was originally with a thick, dense forest that made a screen. It was a landmark historically and protected the visitor from intrusion by the outside world. I object to landmark trees being harvested commercially.

Lage: So the eucalyptus I see here are not as thick as they were.

Fisher: By one half at least. Do you want me to describe the way that management agreement changed? I've been on the other end of this thing, and I realize that there's really a strong need for somebody to present the real picture. Because when you get into organizations like East Bay Regional Park and Fremont city, a lot of people are covering their tails, and a lot of people are needing to get credit for things in order to save their job or to promote their job, and history gets rewritten. When it does get rewritten it leaves out the grass-roots element of people getting together and having an idea and going for it and fighting the government--fighting the city, fighting all these people to get it. Then when you read the little work-ups from regional park, for instance, or the city, it doesn't matter, you know, it's all the same kind of bureaucracy. They tend to omit the importance of citizen commitments.

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Lage: Well, that's what we should be focusing on. Not to try to get the whole, official history, but to fill in, even if it's not completely chronological.

Fisher: I feel so strongly about this because, when you get an organization like East Bay Regional Parks and the city, you're moving ahead by staff very rapidly, and you're packaging things and then presenting them to citizen commission groups and say, "Is this okay?" You bypass the citizens' input, unless it's slowed down and at the meetings you bring up their ideas, incorporate them. In the case of this park, a lot of people got bypassed. From Union City especially, and Newark; Fremont did have its input a great deal--largely because of what we [MPHF] were doing, because we were so involved originally that we got other people involved.

Here's a for instance of actual history being rewritten by East Bay Regional Park District staff. I think it should be noted that, say, when there was an interview on TV with one of the staff, Dave Lewton, who says, "I came through and saw food on the table, a deserted place, and moved in." No way. This place had been babysat for ten or twelve years by MPHF members. As a matter of fact, what happened was that the caretakers had left in a huff because the city had failed to grant them a right to keep a trailer on the park. (When they went on vacation they wanted their in-laws to be able to stay and protect the place.) MPHF wrote a letter trying to help them to get that as a temporary measure. The city refused it, and they left. They left the house unattended. We found out about it two weeks later and came over and got our camper over there and stayed here for some weeks until Dave Lewton moved in as caretaker for the regional park. The city allowed him to stay here. But for that interval MPHF members were watching this place.

Lage: When was this date?

Fisher: This was about '79 or '80. I would have to confirm the date.

Lage: Just prior to East Bay taking it over.

Fisher: Yes, it was actually before they had signed the papers, I think, and were in the process of negotiations. The caretakers (Hathorns) had left, and EBRPD-Fremont got Dave Lewton to bring his family here and be the caretakers until things had been settled. But there was an interval in between where we were still, as we had been for years, watching, protecting the house and furnishings.

Lage: Were the caretakers paid by the city by this time?

Fisher: No, the Minges and subsequently the Hathorns were not paid. It was not a very good arrangement for the caretakers, except you lived rent-free in a beautiful house, and they had Christmas and weddings

Fisher: and so forth here. My memory was that the Hathorns had to pay for the utilities, and they didn't like that because they had to keep the grounds flooded with lights. The water was free because they had the well. But they earned their keep protecting the house and kept up the grounds very well. A lot of work. Later, of course, Dave Lewton was employed by EBRPD but lived there rent-free. It wasn't a congenial thing; when the city took over, the caretakers were pretty unhappy because they really weren't getting a fair shake, I think, for the amount of work involved.

I bring that up as an example of rewritten history. When you read the East Bay Regional Park's summary of the history of Ardenwood--there is no mention of prior MPHf and citizen involvement.

Lage: It's manicured.

Fisher: It's manicured, yes.

The Washington Township Historical Society Steps In

Lage: We were talking about the development of the management plan.

Fisher: The plan was perhaps in the first draft. Everyone had had meetings, and the principals had met, MPHf had met with them, the horticultural group, and the city, and East Bay Regional Parks. It was pretty well thrashed out. Trudeau was pretty much on top of it, and Milnes was really negotiating the city part of it and doing a good job. It was pretty settled. Everybody agreed. Suddenly the Washington Township Historical Society [WTHS] and politics jumped in. I don't remember whether perhaps this was an election coming up or something that stirred up the controversy, but the end result was that the other group [WTHS] complained that they were not being involved with Ardenwood. Well, frankly, they had not even been on the place and weren't involved.

Lage; Had that organization become more active?

Fisher: Yes, in the meantime they had built up their membership, and there was no controversy other than the principals involved--the Weeds, who were in control of it. There was no controversy between the organizations; we had members in both organizations. People liked to go to both meetings. They were entirely different kinds of groups. They were the group that had maintained sort of a silver-service tea approach. They gave programs. We [MPHF] were the dirty fingernails, and fight-'em-at-council meeting, running Shinn House with docents, and things like that.

Lage: Were they more pioneer family-oriented?

Fisher: Originally in the forties and fifties, but by that time there weren't that many pioneer family members left. They had originated the Washington Township Historical Society, and as I said, I was director when there were some of the older people of the original group still involved. They were started by the Washington Township Country Club, which is a women's club. It was the women's club which wrote the History of Washington Township, in spite of the fact that the historical society claimed to have written it.* At any rate, I don't want to get into controversy because it's strictly a personal thing between the Weeds and myself. Apparently, they resented the fact that we started a new group at the request of the council, in spite of the fact that they were there at our invitation at MPHf's beginning. Now they wanted to be in on Ardenwood in spite of the fact that there had been no previous involvement or concern. MPHf had protected it, given tours, held annual art festivals, and initiated park plans.

So this began to get sticky as far as the council was concerned, because the council was dominated by the same group of political backers. So it was obvious that something had to change, and rather than lose the momentum that we had, I asked that a meeting be called of our two groups. We met, and I presented a compromise that basically became a mixed advisory board--instead of being Mission Peak Board of Directors who would control the use of Patterson House, we suggested a group made up of representatives from Washington Township Historical Society, Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, the Recreational Commission, a Patterson family representative, and the remainder appointed at large.

Lage: This was your idea?

Fisher: This was our proposal to compromise and not let the thing get stalled on political issues. So the advisory board did get passed with that composition.

Lage: Now that's the Patterson House Advisory Board [PHAB]?

Fisher: Well, we worked on both aspects, the advisory board for the whole park, ARPHC, and for the house, PHAB. Incidentally, to begin with it was the city of Fremont that was really taking over and not

*Country Club of Washington Township Research Committee, History of Washington Township, published 1904-1965.

Fisher: involving this as an East Bay regional park. They were controlling it, and they were leaving out Union City and Newark. I think the public meetings helped bring that back into focus with the proper balance. So when the composition was made for the advisory committee for the whole preserve [ARPAC], then it did include representatives from all cities, fortunately. That brought into it representation from the railroad people and other groups.

By that time the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation pulled out. I can't remember why; probably they saw it getting too complicated with too much political pressure, and they weren't going to have a free hand in the proposals that they had made. So the EBRPD took over that aspect of it. They took over the leasing of the entire ranch, and then the East Bay Park District was responsible for the farming part as well and gardens and concourse.

Lage: Now, does East Bay Regional Parks have the immediate grounds here? Are they in charge of the immediate grounds?

Fisher: As far as I know now, the whole acreage--200 acres, I think--is leased, with the exception of the Patterson house, by East Bay Regional Park District. The city owns and controls the house.

Operation of Citizen Advisory Committees

Lage: How did the Patterson House Advisory Board work out?

Fisher: The Patterson House Advisory Board was started. Joanne, my wife, and I were appointed from MPHF when it started.

Lage: But it does more than give advice, doesn't it? What about the work of guiding tours of the house?

Fisher: Well, that's a long story. I'll get into it just a little bit, but it was obvious from the beginning that this would be a problem because in changing the composition of the advisory board, we got into a requirement that there would be two from each group, WTHS and MPHF, and one from the city recreation commission, one from Patterson family, and three at large. It was divisive, and it was obvious that there would not be a composition based on interest in the project, but based on political appointments. So from the beginning, appointments were made politically. Three were made from the people at large, which weren't supposed to be on either of the WTHS or MPHF groups; they were made, however, from the same group [WTHS]. So at one time there were five or six people from Washington

Fisher: Township Historical Society that had been nominated by the Weeds and had been passed because the mayor was their political compatriot. It was almost impossible to get anything done.

I wrote a policy statement, which was finally accepted, to outline the way we would agree to use the house; that is, a living museum approach, and not to have recreational events in the house and food in the house and all the things that had ruined the Moss House in Oakland and the Meek House in Hayward. The Moss House and so many others had been ruined by holding receptions and weddings inside. And the Grau House in our city, Fremont, had been just literally torn apart by insensitive usage, recreational wise.

So from the very beginning the chair dominated, and the two people that were from Mission Peak, my wife Joanne and myself, were easily outvoted. In fact, MPHf nominated people, and the people MPHf nominated weren't even put on by the mayor. We [the two historical groups] were supposed to each give nominations, and they would okay them or not, and they didn't.

It became obvious that this was going to be a tough fight to make progress because it wasn't an interest in the mansion, it was interest politically--making points and so forth, and just lack of attendance. We went through a phase where we weren't even notified of the meetings and missed some. After we had finally got the policy statement and a few things accomplished, we quit in frustration.

As replacements were made, some semblance of reality began to develop. But all this time had been lost and the opening of the house and park was coming up. I would have to look back, but I think once they got the agreement organized and everybody signed it, I think there was something like a year to get ready, and they had set a date of July 27, 1985, I believe, for the opening. The PHAB stalled and really accomplished nothing in the way of restoration. Their duties were to set up the docent program and do the restoration; they were to raise funds.

Lage: And they had no staff?

Fisher: No staff, no secretary, no materials. They had to write their own letters; they had to buy their own letterheads; they had to have one of the members type up the minutes.

Lage: That's a tall order even if everyone is working well together.

Fisher: It was a low priority thing; the city council and city staff really didn't give a damn about it at first. This was a project that they could have cared less for. Larry Milnes was probably the sole staff person who carried it through the city. So there was a year nothing

Fisher: was done, and then suddenly, when it became obvious the park was going to open and be a success, it was the American flag, motherhood, and apple pie, and nobody could fight it. Everybody agreed it was great; it had no political opponents and no deterrents, with the exception of this advisory board apathy. So it suddenly became a safe campaign issue, and everybody wanted to get on the band wagon. The Rotary club came out and worked; they had work days, and the politicians made their speeches about how great it was, and how they were the benefactors, and they didn't even know where the place was, most of them.

The city had been asked for funds and wouldn't give any. When I say funds, I'm talking about restoration, or anything to do with the board activities. Finally, it came down to, I think it was about three weeks, four weeks, before the opening. Everybody was panicking; the East Bay Regional Park hadn't completed their work. Nothing had been done to the house with the exception of what Dave Lewton himself had finagled. To his credit, he really understood the need to care for the house, and had lived here, and understood the importance of it. But in starting some interior restoration, there was no research done as to what were really the original conditions, color, etc. There were some really stopgap measures that had to be done--the leaks, septic tank, electrical repair, and house settling; lord knows what else. Dave simply diverted funds from the East Bay Regional Park District and had people come in from his organization; he got help from court cases and youth groups and so forth, to literally do the jobs that were the city's responsibility. The city did very little.

In the process, some restoration things got done incorrectly. A lot of things got done that were needed (maintenance), but some restoration attempts merely had to be done over again, such as taking off all the paint on the old bedroom woodwork panels that were never unpainted. Walls were replaced there.

Lage: In this room, the woodwork?

Fisher: Yes, this room also. The woodwork was of utility redwood that was put in in the 1880s when they did the new house and converted this old parlor to a dining room. It was painted wood from the very beginning, and Dave brought in staff people from the East Bay Regional Park and took hours taking off the paint to get down to the redwood which wasn't supposed to be exposed. I don't want to be critical because he's the only one that showed interest, and he was doing a job that was the city's job through the PHAB, using East Bay Regional Park help and funds. Nothing would have been done at all, had that not been.

Fisher: But at the last three weeks the board panicked, and they knew nothing was being done, and Dave suggested that they hire me as a combination restoration and docent coordinator temporarily until it opened.

By that time also the East Bay Regional Park naturalist at Coyote Hills had been brought in again by different department heads, all overlapping and confused in the bureaucracy. They had done a great job of researching and had started some training courses for docents. Up until now, when the house was shown, MPHF had always used its own docents and had not regular days but had given at least several tours per year and had put on three "Annual Ardenwood Festivals," the first of which was started by Don Patterson. Don Patterson brought a chamber music group from Palo Alto in 1980, and they gave a concert on the concourse. It was a huge success, and they had wine and cheese.

Lage: Was it a fundraiser?

Fisher: It was just a nice time. The first one. Everyone had wine and cheese and sat on a blanket on the lawn, and it was just a pleasant afternoon. So we really liked the idea, and the next year we put it on. We had an art festival and wine tasting, and that one we used to raise funds for the restoration. And three successive times-- we had a musical the next time, and then finally, at the third one, we reproduced the original play As You Like It that was put on by the Patterson's children's senior class and gave the name to Ardenwood from forest of Arden in Shakespeare's As You Like It. So that was a thing that we had started.

Lage: You had developed docent programs?

Fisher: Well, we had an active docent program at Shinn House. It was open twice a month regularly and then by appointment for groups, for more than twelve years. So we had a docent program, and whenever we opened this house we used our docents here. But once the park had to do it--of course, we're talking about a tremendous difference; we're talking about thousands of people coming through. In a place like this, you have to have at least a minimum of eight or twelve people just to cover the house. Or else you get things lifted and damaged, and people bring food in and so forth. This meant a quick training program for a large contingent of docents.

Lage: This is the last three weeks they're calling on you to do this?

Fisher: Yes. Fortunately, the docent training had already gotten started with the naturalists, but it was a crash program also, and I think they had had one class, and then they brought me in, and I was going to take over. But it was obvious that they were on the right

Historical farm ready for visitors

By Connie Rusk
Staff writer

FREMONT — If everyone who had a role in the story of Ardenwood Historic Farm could be there this weekend, it would be crowded with Indians, Spanish settlers and Victorian-era farmers — and more recently, city officials, park planners and volunteers.

It was once the site of an Ohlone Indian village, then a Spanish land grant ranch. It was George Washington Patterson's 6,000-acre pride and joy in the last half of the 19th century.

Now it's going to be a public attraction where visitors can ride a hay wagon and a vintage train, tour the Patterson mansion, and eventually live for a weekend or longer to experience the old-time farming life.

The grand opening culminates 10 years of efforts to establish the park.

Ardenwood Supervisor Dave Lewton credits Dr. Bob Fisher of the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation with the idea of the park.

"He drew up plans for the park, and about two-thirds of them are in place now. (Fisher's here right now painting rooms," Lewton said last week.

Officials of Fremont, Newark, the East Bay Regional Park District, private citizens, area service clubs, 4-H Club, Scouts and the Society for the Preservation of Carter Railroad Resources all contributed.

In the early 1970s, the Patterson fam-

ily sold the site to a housing developer. But local history buffs and the park district already had their eyes on the site and the City of Fremont blocked housing plans, which led to lawsuits.

Out-of-court settlements resulted in a gift of 46 acres, including the George Patterson House, to the city, and 122 acres were bought for park purposes. The final 39 acres were deeded as a condition of development of the Ardenwood Forest-New Town development.

About \$1.3 million in state and federal grants has gone into the park, plus \$73,800 in matching park district funds, said park district spokesman Ned MacKay.

The land and house are owned by the City of Fremont and Fremont Park Facilities Corp. The East Bay Regional Park District has leased the site for 25 years, with an option for renewal.

Guiding the creation of the park has been the Ardenwood Regional Preserve Advisory Committee, which is responsible to both the park district and the City of Fremont.

Committee members are appointed by the cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City and by the park district.

County

It isn't Knott's Berry Farm

FREMONT — Don't expect Knott's Berry Farm when visiting Ardenwood Historic Farm. There won't be cavorting cartoon characters, scream-inducing flume rides or blue cotton candy.

Walk to the park if you live nearby, because most folks didn't have horseless carriages in the late 1800s when George Washington Patterson farmed the fertile ground north and east of Willow Marsh.

Most of all, slow down when you visit the park and find out how Southern Alameda County used to live.

Ardenwood, named after a forested area of England, will be a place to pitch hay, saw wood and ride a farm wagon that might have taken Patterson's produce to waiting barges

at Anderson's Landing to the north.

Visitors can see turn-of-the-century farm implements in action and operate some of the tools themselves.

The Oakland Museum plans to lend the park its circa 1904 Best steam traction engine, adding to a collection of tractors, horse-drawn balers, wheat threshing machines and corn huskers.

Pumpkins, vegetables, nuts, corn and fruit will be sold from a fruit stand once the farm's first harvest comes in.

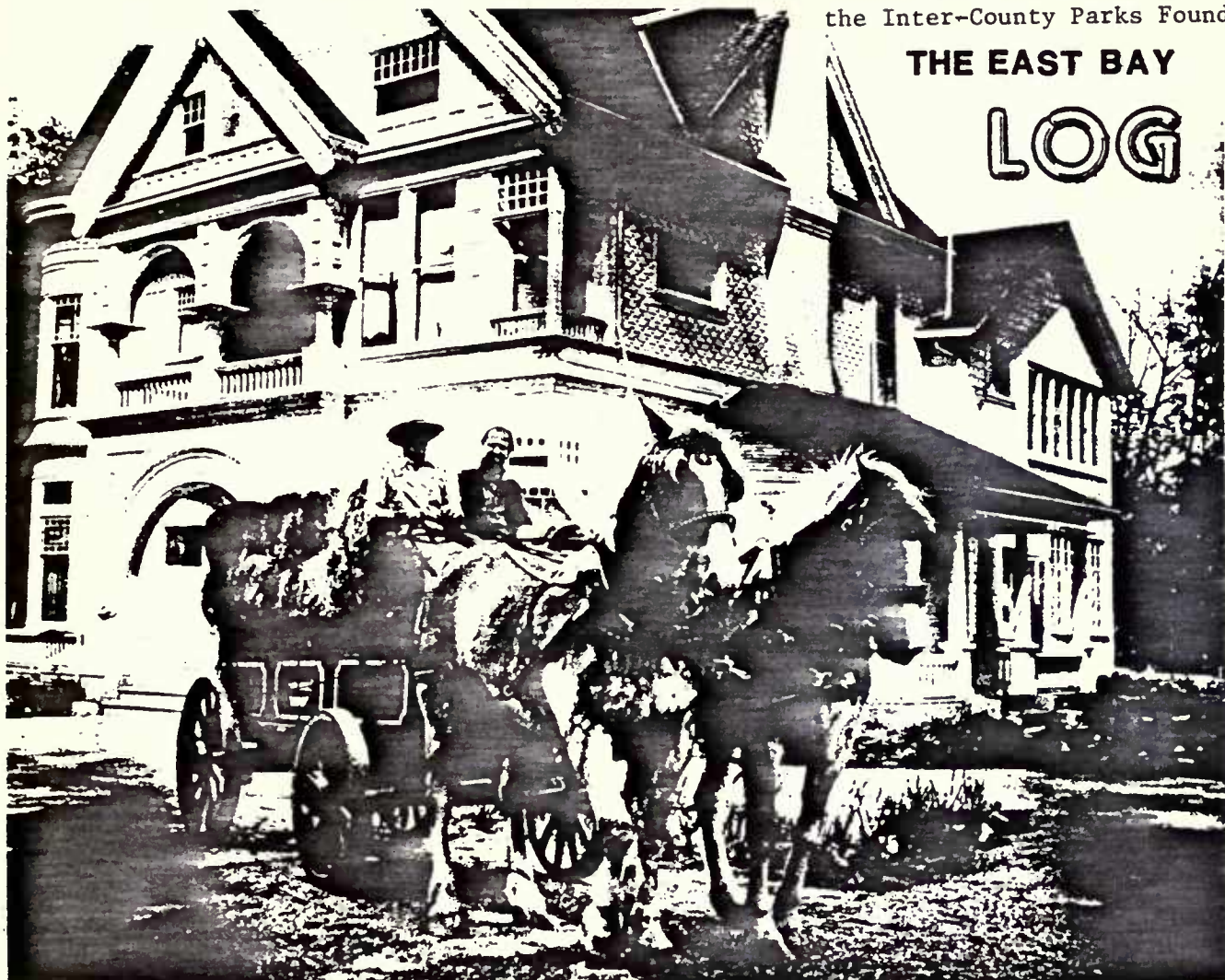
Artisans will demonstrate some of the farming and homemaking skills used in Patterson's day. Visitors watch as bread is baked, saddles are made, tools are crafted by a blacksmith and porcelain and glass is painted.

JULY, 1985

A monthly publication of
the Inter-County Parks Foundation

THE EAST BAY

LOG



Ardenwood Historic Farm Opens July 28

Ardenwood Historic Preserve, the park district's beautiful new facility recreating life in 19th Century California, will have its grand opening for the public on Sunday, July 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This unique regional park is being developed as a living history farm, allowing visitors to see and experience a prosperous estate of the 1880s.

At the grand opening, visitors will take a trip into California's colorful past. They will see draft horses at work in a wheat field, and a blacksmith hammering at his forge. Rides will be offered on a hay wagon or on a unique horse-drawn rail car.

Visitors will be able to join in a square dance or try their hands at goat milking and wielding old farm tools.

There will also be tours of the historic Patterson Mansion, set amid handsomely landscaped

grounds, which is being restored to its 1880s prime. Ardenwood was established by California pioneer George Patterson, a gold seeker who found his fortune in farming instead.

The public is encouraged to bring picnic lunches, and dress in 1880s costumes if desired. There is an admission fee.

Road construction is causing changes to the entrance directions for Ardenwood during July and August of 1985. There are two entrances to Ardenwood: the south entrance from Lake Boulevard, which crosses the Decoto Road/Dumbarton Bridge Freeway; and the west entrance from Ardenwood Boulevard (currently called Newark Blvd.) north of the Dumbarton Bridge Freeway. Visitors will need to watch changing road signs and look for the Ardenwood Regional Preserve entrance signs. The park is very distinctive also because of its towering eucalyptus groves.

Fisher: track, and so they used my help in training. I helped them with their identifications of the rooms, furnishing, etc., and the tours, and so forth, until I knew that things were started. Then Frank Jahns was hired as naturalist at Ardenwood and took over the organizing of the docent training and scheduling, and did a good job. I was freed up to do the restoration only, except teaching on the docent program.

So it was now down to three weeks when I was asked to step in and get PHA Board's approval and presented a proposal that the board approved: the concept and the specific way of restoring it. In the meantime, I had been cheating; anticipating the need, I had been doing some research on the building interiors and finding out the paint colors, and the original paint surfaces, and things that you have to do before you can get going on actual restoration work. So I was sort of thinking that if they didn't ask me I would do it alone. Anyway, they did ask.

This was a hard step, because the PHAB was controlled by Washington Township Historical Society, and they were against my doing it. And the council was going along with them. But to Harry McLane's credit, by that time, he had seen the intrigue and was not going along with the disruption from the Weeds. He had serious concern for the docent and restoration program; he resigned from WTHS.

Lage: Now who is Harry McLane?

Fisher: Harry McLane by then was the chairman of the board. The people that had been controlling it had dropped out and appointees had changed, so that those that were on the advisory board were at least indifferent; they weren't antagonistic, and he was able to, at the last minute, after about three requests from the city, get some funds. That, again, was I think, four weeks before opening. The council voted an emergency \$22,000 for restoration and for hiring a coordinator of docent and restoration to get things moving.

Lage: Doesn't give you much time to get ready to open the house.

Fisher: No. So in those three weeks, by then, everybody recognized you couldn't open the park without the house. Before that time the East Bay Regional Park really, except for Dave, didn't recognize how important the house was, that this was the focal point, and how important it was to people coming. They wanted to see the house. So it all came together, and we worked with EBRPD staff transferred from other other parks, and volunteers. We worked seven days a week, twelve hours a day on restoration and gradually got it into shape so that it opened with, I think, six rooms. Not necessarily all

- Fisher: complete, but the basics--the paint, the floors, and ceilings. The original Patterson furniture in MPHF storage and in use at Shinn House was finally able to be brought back to its original location in the house for opening day!
- Lage: That's impressive that that kind of work got done at the last minute.
- Fisher: I think it was to the credit of everyone who worked really endlessly on it. This is tough work; this is the dirty fingernail work. This is the scrubbing, painting, cleaning, etc.
- Lage: It also is to your credit that you had done the research, so you knew what to tell people to do.
- Fisher: Well, I had to keep one step ahead because I had done enough to start with, but by the time we finished that, I had to match and order the next paint. Incidentally, I bought all the materials, and then got reimbursed later. There was no time for bureaucratic purchase orders. So anyway, the house did open up and was enjoyed, and from that time on we rested awhile, and then we came back and did more.
- Lage: Has the response to it within the community helped any with getting further funds?
- Fisher: No, not funds, but once we opened and people came through, it was presented very factually, that this historic house was in the process of being restored, and we welcomed help, and we welcomed donation of furniture and artifacts, and we showed them the thing in progress. As well as some of the completed rooms, we had to go through some of the rooms that weren't finished.
- So this encouraged help, it encouraged the docent program volunteers, and we began to build up that program. By then Frank Jahns was fully involved in a good training program. They started, I think, with about fifteen, and the next group was about thirty. So it's gradually blossomed out, with a very dedicated bunch of people. Incidentally, as far as I know, none of the WTHS members were involved with either restoration or the docent program.
- Lage: Did you have people who were here every weekend giving tours?
- Fisher: I don't think people realize the numbers of visitors that come through this place. It starts Thursday and goes through Sunday. I know from Shinn House experience that to carry on a docent program over months and years is really tough. People have their own activities; getting commitments to these hours is difficult. Not many people are willing to do that, to be pinned down for two hours on Sunday.

Lage: That's right, for weeks on end.

Fisher: Right. So it's a difficult program, and they are responding to it. But it's a program with a lot of turnover.

Lage: You have to continually recruit new docents.

Fisher: And continue to educate them. The people come in not knowing any history of the family or the area, and they have to learn the art of interpretation.

Lage: They have to learn to judge people, too, learn who to watch, and how to relate to their questions.

Fisher: Yes. We started with people that would talk to the tour group for an hour before they let them in the house, backing up the crowds.
[laughter]

Political and Personal Complications for Ardenwood Management##

Lage: Perhaps you can clarify something that wasn't clear to me. I don't see why an operation like this, a historical park, would become a political plum.

Fisher: There are two aspects of it. In the initial part where nobody's interested, political appointments are made as favors and as rewards for campaigns, political favors, and so forth. Appointments serve as stepping stones, from minor boards and commissions to council and planning commission; lots of people want to put on their credit list, "I was on such and such board and commission for the city." During the time of no interest--and I mean literally no interest in Ardenwood--the fight to preserve Ardenwood was going on but without help from city or other historical groups.

Once the East Bay Regional Park District historic preserve proposal was publicized in the papers, that it would be this great Bay Area facility, which would be noncontroversial, it would be a plum in anybody's pie that had been connected with it. It was recognized as a safe, positive, political accomplishment--especially since it came right at the election time. So those people who had, as I say, not even known where it was, let alone been involved, were getting in on so-called volunteer days. They held VIP picnics, and they had various ceremonies connected with publicizing the park. The Rotary Club that had never known the place before became involved. Politicians, of course, were visible members. They saw the value,

Fisher: and not only that, they were interested in service. So it was legitimate interest, as well as a chance to publicize their contributions and involvement.

But, of course, the speeches were made, and the people that really did the early work were forgotten along the line. So I don't think any of the original grass-roots organizations that were involved getting it started or with the work, none of these people were recognized in speeches or publicity blurbs. I'm not talking about myself; I'm talking about when people were recognized it was the heads of the service clubs, mayor, councilmen, etc. that had done the corrals on "FUN" days (volunteer workdays), and not the people that had for years protected it. But that's the way it works. Those were the usual two phases of such projects and now there's a certain balance that has developed.

Recent Changes in Leadership

Lage: Are you back on the advisory board?

Fisher: No. Officially I am hired by the board. I wish I had never done it, but I accepted a stipend that came with the docent and restoration coordinator position plus reimbursement of what I spent on restoration materials. As I say, I wish I had not done it, because I was perfectly happy volunteering for twenty years. The stipend wasn't that much, and not worth the embarrassment of asking to be reimbursed. At any rate, it's been a problem since I'm still owed from three months back.

Anyway, I think the balance now is there. Harry McLane is chairman of the board, and although there are not a lot of intensely interested people on it, there are probably none that are actually antagonistic. The Washington Township Historical Society hasn't even shown up for volunteers or during the ceremonies; in other words, they have been completely uninvolved and have gone back to where they originally were before all the disruption.

Lage: That makes it a lot easier.

Fisher: Yes. The workable balance is, I think, there now. But the concern now is how much will the public influence what they want here and how much will be controlled by staff people of East Bay Regional Park and city. As long as Larry Milnes is watchdogging it, there will be support and proper balance from the city. Fortunately, the election changed the situation on the council so there's now a

Fisher: supportive mayor and council majority, and that is beginning to loosen up funds and grants and so forth. The East Bay Regional Park District has had a tremendous turnover, and everybody is running scared, and I'm a little worried about the new administration's attitude toward Ardenwood, with Dave Lewton out of the picture.

Lage: He is out of the picture now?

Fisher: Yes. As of a week ago.

Lage: He had done so much in bringing it all together.

Fisher: He had done a tremendous lot to get the historic farm organized, a sometimes controversial action, but he has used his own judgment, and he's stuck his neck out. That made a lot of enemies.

Lage: Was he an East Bay park employee from the beginning?

Fisher: He was supervisor of the seven area parks to begin with and then was brought here solely as the development coordinator for Ardenwood. So he was brought in for this project alone to get it started.

Lage: Then he was a park employee before coming to Ardenwood?

Fisher: He had been a park employee for a long time, ten or fifteen years, I think.

Lage: Is he out of the park district altogether now?

Fisher: No, he's at the EBRPD headquarters now, but the project has been taken out of his hands, and now Bruce Gillespie is in charge. He served as manager of the grounds under Lewton and, when Lewton left, moved into the Patterson House with his wife as caretakers.

Lage: Well, is the change in management a philosophical change? Has there been a change in the way the park is run?

Fisher: That's what worries me most because Dave has a keen interest in the historical angle. He's also a very astute manager. Management involves, sometimes, as I said, economic (commercial) aspects to make it work; that can interfere with the pure historically oriented interpretation and amenities.

So I don't know, honestly, how it will be carried on. The district management now is not--I would have to guess, but the management is not necessarily oriented in the same direction as Dave was, whereas before, he got the backing and support of the higher echelon in the East Bay Regional Parks District, and I don't think

Fisher: that support is there anymore. It remains to be seen how it carries through. It can gradually be converted into a recreational activity park instead of the concept of historical interpretation.

Lage: But they did have the master plan.

Fisher: They had a master plan and a management agreement with city, and it's protected, basically, with the concept if they continue to follow it. Hopefully they will.

Lage: So it's up in the air now whether their plans for the farming center at the old William Patterson house site will go forth?

Fisher: No, I think that's written into the overall schedule there. All these things are scheduled for certain dates, and I think those will move forward. I think it's a matter of degree, more, how consistently they stick to an illusion of a Victorian farm, and how much they intrude utility and modern stuff in order to keep it economically feasible--for instance, eucalyptus tree harvesting.

Lage: From the actual farming that's being done on park lands, is there still a hope of selling the crop?

Fisher: They're actually doing that now; they're selling corn and pumpkins--

Lage: Who does that farming? Is that a concession?

Fisher: These are concessions. In fact, that's what it was all about before the Pattersons sold the land anyway. Patterson leased the farming operation to the L.S. Williams farming people and the walnut crop to others.

Lage: Who is leasing it now; are they the area farmers?

Fisher: I think the same L.S. Williams Company, I believe, leases the major fields.*

Lage: The ones that are using the modern methods?

Fisher: In the periphery, yes. I believe, I'm not sure about this, but I've seen discussions with smaller leasers growing the corn and pumpkins, for instance, for sale in smaller areas, demonstration areas. Then, of course, East Bay runs the demonstrations with concessionaires--the wagon pulling; the railroad is by the SPCRR group; and there are the food concessions and whatnot.

*See interview with Mel Alameda in this series.

Lage: Do you know if it's an expensive park for the East Bay Regional Park District to actually run?

Fisher: According to Dave, East Bay has spent more than the entire rest of the East Bay Regional Park funds getting this preserve started. That is part of the controversy. Probably the new management in the regional park administration feels too much has gone into this project. And yet I think everyone agreed, it's so unique that the benefits to the East Bay, or to the entire Bay Area communities are worth it.

Lage: It's very striking to me that such a short time ago there was an actual working farm, and now, already, we're treating it like a museum.

Fisher: That's the whole idea. Eventually there won't be any farming, and this is the only patch, I believe, that's left. Now maybe there are some specialized concentrated types--gladiolus, a "high yield" different kind of farming--but none of the row crop farming anymore. So this is the last, and it's the last place anybody will be able to see the process as it was. High tax, land prices, and urban sprawl have driven the farmers to rural areas. So it is a unique type of preserve and park.

Lage: So we're ending with not a real conclusion because there isn't a conclusion for this story.

Fisher: Well, I think it has enough of a start so that the momentum will keep it rolling and if the citizens' committees can speak their mind and have their input, I think the right things will continue, and it will be here for the future.

Transcriber: Alexandra Walter
Final Typist: Elizabeth Eshleman

TAPE GUIDE - Robert Fisher

Date of Interview: September 9, 1986
tape 1, side A
tape 1, side B

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221

To: Fremont City Council
From: Mission Peak Heritage Foundation
Re: Ardenwood and its future use

September 1980

On August 13, 1980, a meeting was held by Larry Milnes of the City staff with interested organizations and agencies to discuss the future use of "Ardenwood", the George W. Patterson Estate. In answer to his request, the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation is happy to forward the attached proposal first made in 1972 and re-evaluated by this report.

BACKGROUND:

In 1960, the Historic Resources Commission developed an inventory of historic sites, structures, and horticulture within the City of Fremont. The Primary Historic Resource lists and maps were officially adopted by the City Council and designated on the Recreation, Area, and General Plan maps of the city. It was clear that Ardenwood was second only to the Mission San Jose in its historic community significance and potential for future generation's enjoyment. To this end, this unique area and its resources have been protected and sponsored by members of the Historic Resources Commission and subsequently by the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation for the past 20 years. When the William Patterson Mansion, also on the grounds, was destroyed at the request of the family, the Foundation helped to prevent a similar fate for the G.W. Patterson House until acquisition by the Singer organization. That organization coordinated with the Foundation and Recreation Department to incorporate the important historic elements into the park dedication of their development. Meanwhile, the furnishings, archives, and equipment of Ardenwood were donated by the family to the Foundation for preservation.

In 1972, when the East Bay Regional Park District initiated a new park category called "Historic Regional Park", the Foundation proposal for the development of a multiphasic, cultural-recreational complex was given a high priority by the city, EBRPD, the Citizen Task Force and Overview consultants.

The new category did not survive, but Ardenwood was placed on EBRPD Master Plan for possible future acquisition. Fremont's concern with the North Plain urban development outgrowing its facilities for sewer, fire protection, and school services, deferred the Singer Housing development at Ardenwood. Through a series of negotiations, 165 acres of Ardenwood are now under control or ownership of Fremont. Newark and Union City are aware of Ardenwood's value as a leisure resource and favor development of a regional use facility.

The MPHf proposal for "Ardenwood Historical Regional Park" has been seen by the tri-city and EBRPD staffs. Hundreds of citizens have expressed enthusiasm for the potential of the proposal during guided tours of the estate by the Foundation. For those newly elected to council and appointed to commissions, we welcome the opportunity to review the attached elements and maps of the proposal, as presented in 1972-3, and to re-evaluate its feasibility in light of recent developments. Some of these developments which have an impact on Ardenwood will be discussed and are briefly listed.

1. Single ownership and control of 165 acres of Ardenwood property (City of Fremont)
2. Continued and alarming loss of structural and horticultural historic resources
3. Development of Coyote Hills Regional Park and SF Bay Wildlife Refuge and Alameda Creek Trail System.
4. Increased vandalism and difficulty of proper security
5. East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan for park acquisition favoring 200 acre "Model Farm" but disinterest in the house and other historical elements
6. Saratoga Horticultural Foundation Proposal and UC Berkeley and Alameda School Districts Interests
7. Increasing problems of usable water
8. Restoration of G.W. Patterson House, the barn and SPC combination car #47

First, let it be clearly stated. The basis of the MPHF proposal rests on the fact that Ardenwood has an unique quality and potential. The attributes of large "open space" with mature horticulture, identifiable landmark trees adjacent to three cities and two major freeways, alone, would qualify this area for a city park, let alone regional recreational usage. But its unique and potential value lies in the fact that this nucleus of the old Rancho Potrero del los Cerritos, itself filled with historic resources, has the close proximity and historic relationship with the following:

1. Ohlone village site and the original Mission San Jose embarcadaro at Coyote Hills
2. Early town and Alameda County seat origins at Alvarado on Alameda Creek
3. Early salt industry and commercial landings along the "sloughs"
4. Nearby sites of the adobe homes of Alviso and Pacheco, Rancho grantees whose boundary ditch runs through the property.
5. The South Pacific Coast narrow gauge RR origin of Newark town, Paddle-wheeler "Newark" at Dumbarton Point
6. A surviving rural Alameda County farm operation

Here then at Ardenwood is the unique opportunity to demonstrate and interpret within a park complex the whole panorama of Alameda County and California heritage. This legacy for future generations can only be preserved by recognition of its significance and the gradual development, through sensitive coordination of its components and adjacent facilities. (Coyote Regional Park, S.F. Bay Refuge, Alameda Creek Trail System) Single ownership by Fremont should simplify development of the 165 acre complex, but places the heavy burden of responsibility for preservation and proper utilization for the benefit of all Bay area citizens, squarely upon the property's present custodians—the Fremont City Council.

The MPHf strongly advises the preservation of this unique resource intact, but sees no objection, indeed some cost-saving advantage to the use and development of its individual components through private enterprise ie: Saratoga Horticultural Foundation, concessionaires in transportation and Washington Village, agencies, ie: EBRPD - Model Farm, UC agricultural research and volunteer labor and funds, as well as grants ie: Ethnic and historical groups. This could be accomplished properly coordinated by its legal owners and custodians according to an acceptable time schedule and over-all plan.

The Foundation foresees, in the not too distant future, the "Model Farm" element of this proposal as the last remaining vestige of Alameda County's agricultural heritage. This operation could be leased to EBRPD for development or simply remain in its present relation of city to local farmers, modified to a small degree for agricultural experimentation via UC and school district participation with work-educational programs. Likewise, there is a growing need to secure and protect "primitive" areas of ecological and environmental importance (ie: eucalyptus grove and deer park) intact and uncontaminated by man except for restricted study.

It is important to understand and perpetuate the culture (philosophy, crafts, and traditions) of ethnic groups which reflect the heritage of Washington Township - ie: The IDES Halls, the Buddhist Temples, the Spanish-Mexican haciendas, the Japanese schools - proudly highlighted within Washington Village area. For the Ohlone a living cultural center, not a reduplication of the excellent archeological center at Coyote Regional Park. The Ohlones, themselves, need a place where they interpret and demonstrate their rich heritage. The "Willows" "recycled" lake, as proposed, makes an ideal environment for the Ohlone center and is said by Saratoga Foundation to be desirable for fire protection and reservoir use.

There is a healthy and growing trend to put historic building to a functional and self-supporting use as in Old Sacramento and San Jose. The "Historic Village" concept which inspired the MPHf's "Washington Village" is well tested by other cities. It gives rebirth and functional life to relocated and restored "historic orphans" — buildings threatened by, or inappropriate to certain areas of urban development. The individual units are usually "free for the moving" which is done in the case of Bakersfield by use of tax exemption benefit for services. They can be stored in "moth balled" state on location until private or agency restoration.

The MPHf sees the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation proposal as a compatible use of the 40 acre nucleus of Ardenwood. It was, after all, the original use of Patterson Ranch and offers greater and more consistent security and maintenance. Possible garden restoration, open air amphitheatre are interesting bonuses to consider. Compromise between public and Saratoga Foundation use for the G.W. Patterson House and lawn concourse areas, and coordination of house tours and public outdoor activities through the MPHf can be outlined in lease agreement to serve both interests.

The equestrian area designated is not essential to the MPHf proposal although limitation of motorized vehicles in favor of horse-drawn vehicles lends to the vintage aura. Visitor transportation via a recreated horse-car railroad following a mutually agreeable alignment through the Saratoga project but connecting with Coyote Regional Park and eventually the Alameda Creek Trail System remains an exciting and compatible idea. The large barn we now feel would more appropriately serve as an agricultural and SPC railroad museum. An outdoor amphitheatre probably in the swimming pool area with public restroom facilities would be useful for public concerts and theatre as well as Saratoga Foundation seminars. MPHf shares the Saratoga Foundation's concern in regards to fire hazard of overnight camping and suggests deleting this element in favor of daytime play and picnic areas, especially on "Washington Village" green. The old farm houses could easily be recycled to barracks use for employees and class participants.

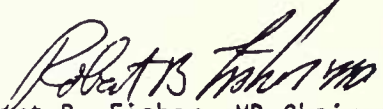
At the EBRPD Board meeting of September 2, 1980, there was unanimous agreement among its members that Ardenwood, with the addition of 40 acres for protective buffer, should be preserved intact to function as a regional park. In addition to their original interest in the circa 1900 model farm, other historic elements of the Mission Peak Heritage Foundation proposal are now being discussed as having significant interpretive and educational value ie: demonstration of rural crafts, agricultural equipment museum, etc. The natural outgrowth of a regional park that is historically oriented will eventually need to provide such facilities as overnight accommodations, food services and a transportation system. To be consistent with the historical theme, we refer to those suggestions made by Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, providing these facilities in Washington Village and by use of the horsecar railroad.

The preliminary concepts outlined at this meeting suggest the sub-leasing of the George W. Patterson house to Mission Peak Heritage Foundation with activities such as tours and concerts to be continued. Under this arrangement, continued security could be provided by an EBRPD superintendent, or other employee's residence in the house, in place of the present caretaker system.

CONCLUSIONS:

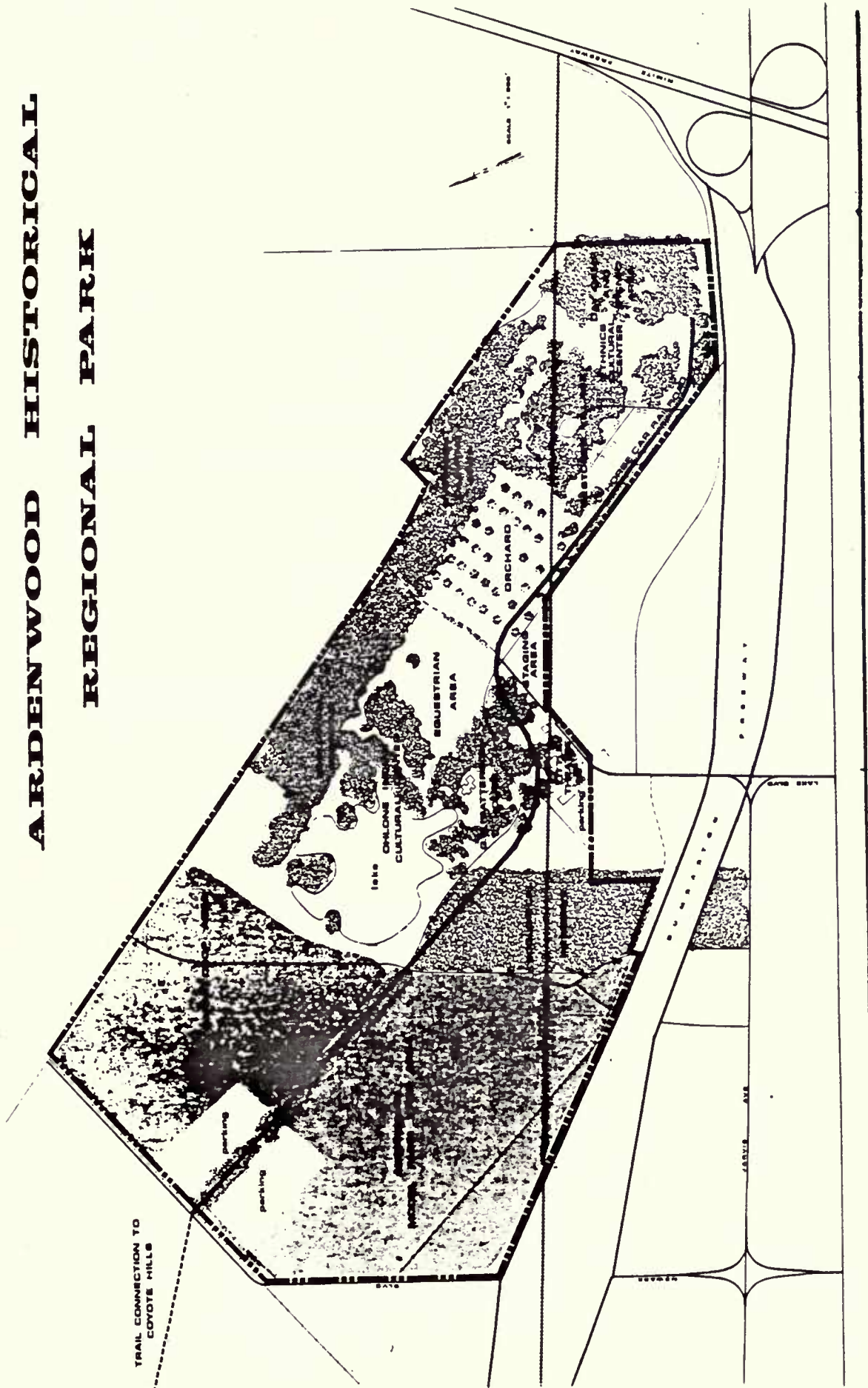
The Mission Peak Heritage Foundation again proposed that Ardenwood be developed to its unique potential in affordable phases as an integrated complex of historically oriented components with Alameda County heritage as the underlying theme, coordinated by its legal custodian, with advice and support of Mission Peak Heritage Foundation and other interested organizations. That it utilize compatible private enterprise, agencies, and ethnic groups to develop its functional and self-supporting elements for the recreational, cultural, and educational enjoyment of the tri-city and entire bay area. Further, that this complex be integrated and connected to Coyote Hills Regional Park and Alameda Creek Recreational areas by trail and a recreated horsecar railway transportation system.

The responsibility for preservation and proper utilization of Ardenwood's potential lies with the City of Fremont. It should be Fremont's mission to act as coordinators of these functions or to guarantee that coordination by transferring this responsibility to the appropriate agency. The Mission Peak Heritage Foundation favors the placement of the entire 165-200 acres in the capable and experienced hands of the EBRPD for overall future planning and management, and pledges its continued cooperation and support.



Robert B. Fisher, MD Chairman
Mission Peak Heritage Foundation

ARDENWOOD HISTORICAL REGIONAL PARK



APPENDIX A

Laurence W. Milnes

"Ardenwood Regional Preserve and the City of Fremont"

a selection from

THE MASTER PLAN, THE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AND THE
GROWTH OF THE PARK DISTRICT IN THE SOUTH COUNTY

an interview with Laurence W.
Milnes conducted in 1982 by
Carole Hicke of Oral History
Associates for the East Bay
Regional Park District



LAURENCE W. MILNES

1988

INTERVIEW HISTORY--Laurence W. Milnes

Larry Milnes, as assistant manager of the City of Fremont, was a key figure in the negotiations which led to the creation of Ardenwood Regional Preserve. The following excerpt from his 1982 interview for an oral history project on the East Bay Regional Park District gives the story of those negotiations and of the community effort to plan, prepare, and manage the Ardenwood site as a historic preserve. It has been included in this volume with the permission of Mr. Milnes and the East Bay Regional Park District as a complement to the interviews of John Brooks and Robert Fisher. Following is the preface to the 1982 interview:

PREFACE

The idea for an oral history of the East Bay Regional Park District was born at the District's 45th Birthday Party in the summer of 1979. Several of the guests, Park founders and longtime Park supporters, recalled events leading up to the formation of the District, and it was decided that it was important to capture the variety and richness of their recollections. Shortly thereafter the District's Board of Directors authorized an oral history project, and in early 1980 a program was launched to interview Park District founders, supporters, employees, and Directors.

Mr. Milnes is the Assistant City Manager for the city of Fremont, and has worked diligently to provide parks and recreation for the city. For the East Bay Regional Park District, he chaired the Public Agency Advisory Committee which advised the District on its Master Plan. He also served as Chairman of the Park Advisory Committee, which evolved out of the citizens' role in the Master Plan.

Mr. Milnes was interviewed in his office in Fremont on December 7, 1982. He carefully reviewed and corrected the transcript of the tape-recorded interview.

The oral history project was conducted by Mimi Stein, President of Oral History Associates, a firm specializing in oral and written histories.

Ardenwood Regional Preserve and the City of Fremont

Hicke: Okay. Since we're on these parks, perhaps you can tell me the story of Ardenwood Regional Preserve. That's part of it.

Milnes: This is a long story. Ardenwood is conceived in the Master Plan as an opportunity to develop an historical farm park. Ardenwood consists of prime agricultural land and has been farmed for years as a major producer of truck crops, feeding Bay Area families. It has long been recognized as being in the path of development.

The initial view the city had in its Master Plan was that the significant tree stands would be preserved as a part of a park of some sort. When the Park District Master Plan came along the Ardenwood area was seen as possibly preserved on a larger scale as a regional facility. Thus it was designated in the Master Plan. The Park District gave little attention to the acquisition of this land in its early acquisition days. Back in about the time that the Park District Master Plan was being developed, these lands were acquired by Singer Housing Company with the expectation of developing it into homes.

The Fremont City Council, on recommendation by its Planning Commission, adopted a motion indicating the North Plain area of Fremont, of which Ardenwood is a part, should be preserved in agriculture for a period of at least 10 years. The feeling on the part of the Planning Commission and Council was the area was not really ready to

Milnes: develop -- the city was not in a position to provide services to it at that time. The more orderly planning of the city would be to develop on an in-fill basis where its infrastructure could be used more efficiently.

Singer Housing Company and other property owners filed a number of lawsuits against the city because of this intended action the Council had indicated. The lawsuits tied everything up for a number of years. Singer Housing Company and the city had made a number of attempts at settling the lawsuits between the two parties. They had all been unsuccessful. In 1976, the President of Singer Housing Company approached the City Council and proposed that John Brooks, former President of Singer Housing Company serving as an independent consultant in the housing field, along with his other activities, represent Singer Housing Company in negotiation. He further proposed that the City Council designate one of its council members to meet with Mr. Brooks for the two individuals to attempt to negotiate a settlement.

The council asked its newest and just-elected council member, Tony Azevedo, to represent the city. The council's reasons for selecting Councilman Azevedo were that he was a new face on the council, had not been involved in any of the prior council actions, and thus might be able to bring a new and fresh look to the negotiations. Councilman Azevedo agreed to accept the assignment on the condition I would be made available to serve with him and to assist him in those negotiations.

My position with the city at that time was as Assistant City Manager with a daily working responsibility of community/economic development manager. Thus, I had managerial responsibility for public works, planning, and economic development, all three of which were really central to the settlement issue.

A great number of lengthy meetings were held by the three parties. Out of those meetings evolved some common goals. The Singer Housing Company objective was to subdivide land and build houses. The city's concern included the preservation of the Patterson house and significant

Milnes: parts of the Patterson Ranch. These concerns interfaced with the Park District's goal of establishing Ardenwood Park as an historical farm park. The central problem was unsolvable in a sense, insofar as Singer Housing Company's subdivision of the Patterson Ranch was prevented by the city's inability to provide services to the Ranch in its then-condition and location.

Fire protection was a primary concern. The Dumbarton Freeway was to be built. The fire department by policy does not operate its fire fighting equipment on freeways for the reason that there is too great a potential for freeway blockage. The fire equipment then could be stopped in the middle of a traffic jam and not be able to get to the fire. Another access had to be built across the freeway.

All of these concerns then fitted into a very logical and potentially workable solution: Singer owned some other lands. The Patterson family owned other lands which, if they were in the hands of Singer, could be served by the city with certain corrective measures being taken. One of these corrective measures included building a new bridge across the Nimitz Freeway for the Paseo Padre Parkway. Mr. Brooks had a close relationship with the Pattersons, approached them, and proposed a land exchange where the Pattersons would trade land in this area, which could potentially be developed, for lands which Singer owned and Singer had previously purchased from Patterson. Patterson's goal was to continue farming.

After a great deal of analysis by Patterson and Singer and by the city, a settlement agreement evolved whereby Patterson and Singer exchanged land. Singer then gave to the city of Fremont 46 acres of land, which included the Patterson Queen Anne Victorian house and the significant groves of trees. One Hundred Seventy Eight acres of land was to finally evolve under city ownership or control; 46 acres of land was a direct gift by Singer. The remaining 122 acres was to be purchased from Singer Housing Company by the Fremont Park Facilities Corporation, a nonprofit corporation.

Milnes: It was agreed the purchase price would be at fair market value, not to exceed the sum of \$22,000 per acre. The \$22,000 per acre figure was arrived at by John Brooks on the basis of his valuation and knowledge of land values as a reasonable and fair price at the time of the negotiation, when this plan had evolved. It turned out that the fair market value of the land was \$28,000 for the land then in the city of Fremont and about \$42,000 for the land involved which was then in the city of Newark. So the \$22,000 was an extremely fair and reasonable price.

It was agreed in the settlement agreement that Singer Housing Company would accept the bonds from the nonprofit corporation. The bonds were to be paid out over a period of 20 years. The interest rate was to be 1/2 percent below the market interest rate for tax-free bonds; it was further stipulated in the agreement the principal and interest would be paid strictly from proceeds to the city collected as a \$200 per dwelling unit construction tax on each new dwelling constructed in the city during the ensuing 20-year period.

A further provision was that if all the bonds were not paid for at the end of that 20-year period, that is if there were insufficient funds flowing during the 20-year period, through house building permits, to pay the principal and interest, then at the end of the 20-year period the bonds would all expire and there would be no further obligation on the part of the city or the corporation to pay off the bonds.

The settlement agreed on was approved by the City Council and by Singer and has in fact been put into action. So the city now owns 46 acres of that land and has a long-term lease on the balance. It was agreed in all of the documents the city could transfer its interest by lease to another public agency such as the Park District. It was specified that one of the purposes of the city's acquiring the land was for Park use and historical preservation. It was contemplated all the way through that the land ultimately would come under Park District domain as a regional park. That has in fact now come to pass.

Hicke: Was the Park District involved in the negotiations?

Milnes: The Park District was involved to a minor extent only. One of the solutions searched for in the settlement process was to try to develop a feasible plan whereby the Park District might be able to buy the land instead of the city buying it. There was interest on the part of the Park District to do so but it was advised not to by Jack Rogers, as special counsel to the District in land acquisition, for the reason that there was litigation pending between Singer and the city of Fremont. He was concerned that if the Park District involved itself in any way in negotiations, the Park District through some means or other might be brought into the lawsuit. So the Park District dropped any involvement, but certainly continued to maintain its interest in Ardenwood Park ultimately becoming a part of the Park District system.

Hicke: I know they're all very excited about it.

Milnes: It's a tremendous opportunity. It's going to be the one place in the Park District, and really in the Bay Area, where there will be this much prime agricultural land used as a working farm. And it's assured that it's going to be there for future generations. It's a place where young people and not-so-young people in the Bay Area can come and see actual working demonstrations of farming as it was done, in an historical sense as well as a modern sense. They can see real produce grown. People can see a real live cow.

Hicke: Not made of plastic.

Milnes: That's right. They can see a real live cow, see where milk really comes from and see real live horses tilling the soil. They can also see blacksmithing demonstrations.

Hicke: You mentioned the historic eucalyptus grove. Are they some of the first trees planted in the Bay Area, or why are they historical?

Milnes: I'm not certain they were the first eucalyptus trees planted, but I wouldn't be surprised if they were. The seeds were brought over from Australia.

Hicke: For those actual trees?

Milnes: Yes. You see, Australia is really the home of the eucalyptus tree, and the seeds were brought over from Australia for the purpose of planting eucalyptus trees to be used for furniture making, as a source of wood for furniture. That did not prove to be feasible because eucalyptus is simply not that stable. So that experiment was not successful, but they did then continue to exist as a rather significant land form and windbreak. It is really quite visible right here from the office. If you look right out here where you see the six light standards at the football field at the high school, beyond it you'll see this distinct land form of tall eucalyptus trees. That is Ardenwood Park.

Hicke: I see it very clearly.

Milnes: The tree form has been identified in the city's general plan for some time. One of the goals in the North Plain area is to retain that tree form. And there will be trouble for anyone who wants to destroy it and not replace it in some significant way.

Hicke: The wind brings parts of them crashing down but they always spring up again.

Milnes: The Park District views them as a distinct liability, although they seem a real asset in an historical sense as a land form and windbreak. But from the standpoint of bringing people in, the District staff says that it's a distinct liability. The Park District staff refers to them as "widow makers." Some of them do have the potential of branches breaking off in the heat of the summer as well as the high winds of the winter.

Another feature of the management agreement was the public hearings on the resource analysis and land use development plans to be jointly conducted by the Park District staff and the Fremont Recreation Commission. A by-product of that process has been a stimulation of interest in Ardenwood Park by two members of the commission:

Milnes: one is John Baker, who is a past chairman of the commission, and another is Commissioner Robert Pitcher.

It's fortuitous perhaps that this year, 1982-'83, each of these two people serves independently as president of two of the area's service clubs. John Baker is President of the Fremont Kiwanis Club; Robert Pitcher is President of the Niles Rotary Club. Through their interest along with that of another resident, Keith Medeiros, who is President of the Fremont Rotary Club -- and Keith's particular interest in historical preservation -- the idea has evolved to develop a tri-city service club work day at Ardenwood Park.

Planning is going on right now. The expectation is that on May 14, 1983 there will be one work day in Ardenwood Park where the service clubs of the tri-city area will come together. Each of them will be working on separate projects. Each of the clubs will have made varying amounts of financial contribution: buying materials, perhaps renting equipment if necessary for their particular project. There will be this one giant work day with perhaps 200-300 community leaders who are in the Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist, Rotary, and Soroptomist Clubs of these three cities working on grassroots projects to start to put the park into a condition where the Park District can then carry it on to completion.

This will be a one-year, one-day project, but it can very well and likely will lead to subsequent projects either by individual clubs or simply by participation on some sort of voluntary basis by individual members of the community who are stimulated by the potential of Ardenwood Park. This club project is seen as not only a great opportunity for the Park District to launch its improvement of Ardenwood Park with community efforts but also to build in an immediate constituency of supporters for the park.

Milnes: It is anticipated that the media will be involved; the press will be there, television stations will be reporting on this massive community service project. The clubs will obviously get benefit from it in that they will be able to have some publicity for what the individual clubs have done and what they have done as a collective effort.

Hicke: What about Alameda Creek Quarries?

Milnes: Alameda Creek Quarries has been another interesting evolution. When I came to Fremont in 1959, the quarry companies were hard at work mining that very valuable ore with no end in sight as to when the effort would be exhausted and terminated. Nonetheless, the city's general plan provided for the area to be an open space recreational area of some sort at some time; thus the reason for including the quarry lakes in the Park District Master Plan. It was seen as an opportunity for an inland water recreational area.

I think that even then no one anticipated that the quarrying would stop very soon and the area come under public ownership. Well, it has evolved, as I indicated, through the suggestion by one of the Citizens Task Force members. The District has now acquired close to 500 acres of land.

The next task is to get a Land Use Development Plan prepared for it. The Park District has been slow about getting that done. Again it comes back to a major deficiency that this area suffers. The area does not have a "cadre of little old ladies in tennis shoes" to be "squeaking" before the Board. So the Park District has done virtually nothing about making that the jewel it can be in the Park District system.

Out of fairness to the Park District, I shouldn't say that they've done nothing. They have a lease with the Alameda County Water District for the Shinn Pond and a lease with the City of Fremont for part of Fremont's Niles Community Park. It has developed some fishing piers and facilities in the Shinn Pond. It also has the Kaiser Pit under its wing. But that's a minor part of the potential of Alameda Creek Quarries.

Milnes: I've expressed to the District staff and to the Director from this ward the importance of getting on with the Land Use Development Plan. Fremont Central Park has evolved over a period of 23 years. The first acquisition was made in 1959: 13 acres in the Central Park. Through a combination of actions of leasing land from the flood control district, passing bond issues, and incremental improvement, it has now developed to where it's probably two-thirds improved. The same thing can happen at Alameda Creek Quarries, but a Land Use Development Plan must be adopted first. Through the Park District's Master Plan and work done by Overview and the committees, a park planning process has evolved which is second to none. It works. It's very thorough. It ensures public input. It ensures a full evaluation of resources and the bringing together of all these into a meaningful Land Use Development Plan. With a Land Use Development Plan, park improvement and development can proceed on an orderly basis through private efforts, through public efforts, through grants.

End Tape 2, Side A

Begin Tape 2, Side B

Milnes: The Park District staff has not seen fit to place a sufficiently high priority on developing a Land Use Development Plan for the Quarries for them to have undertaken this item of work. The tri-cities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City perhaps have been either negligent or ineffective in convincing the Park District this needs to be given a higher priority. Hopefully we will see some changes in that direction in future months.

The success of and extreme popularity of Fremont Central Park, a park totally owned and developed and operated by Fremont, demonstrates the need and value of another aquatic oriented park in the regional park system in this area. The Alameda Creek Quarries has the potential and the purpose of serving that role. Meanwhile, in the absence of the Park District carrying out its

Milnes: responsibilities at the quarry lakes, the city of Fremont is finding itself in the position of providing a regional facility, in effect, doing what the Park District should be doing.

Here is another example of this area not getting its fair share of Park District resources. The Park District has made good strides in this area. I don't want to sound like they have been totally negligent, but I'm afraid the absence of the cadre of people constantly bringing this area before the Park District means the area is suffering and falling behind some of the other areas: Claremont Canyon is an example of major District expenditure under pressure of a local constituency.

Hicke: I think that the Park District at least recognizes this, because Mr. Trudeau mentioned how much the people of the city of Fremont had done in contributing to the park system particularly in respect to Ardenwood. You mentioned this just briefly and actually alluded to it earlier: the requirement for different kinds of parks for each area, such as recreation, wilderness, that sort of thing. How are we coming as far as Fremont? Would Alameda Creek Quarries be the recreational one?

Milnes: Yes. Alameda Creek Quarries would be in the regional recreation category.

Hicke: So that would be the most highly developed of these. What about Mission Peak?

Milnes: Mission Peak is a regional preserve. It is strictly a regional preserve, a pristine part of the Park District system. People are certainly encouraged to use it but not abuse it. There will be no significant development.

Hicke: Ardenwood would be similar to Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve?

Milnes: Ardenwood would be in a category of its own, in the sense that Ardenwood is not foreseen as an intensive, active, recreational area. It's more of a passive learning experience. Certainly there would be recreational facilities; I've encouraged in the Land Use Development Plan for that park

Milnes: that they recreate the kinds of recreational facilities that the Pattersons had. As an example, there is a drawing of the Patterson Ranch in the 1868 Alameda County Atlas which shows a very, very tall swing in the garden. So I would hope that kind of swing could be replicated.

Hicke: That's a marvelous idea.

Milnes: I want to see picnic facilities in there, not so that it becomes a park where large groups go to have a picnic as they do here at Central Park, but where a family can go for a family outing. They can take their lunch. There can be play facilities, so that the youngsters who may not really be interested in watching blacksmithing can play in a sandbox, on a swingset, or on a slide. They can have their picnic and really make a day of the farm experience.

Hicke: They should have sarsaparilla instead of Coca Cola.

Milnes: Right. So that's really what I conceive for Ardenwood Park. I think we have done a very wise thing here at Ardenwood Park with the management agreement with the Park District. We have provided for two separate advisory bodies: one is the Patterson House Advisory Board. The city retains the ownership of the Patterson House. The Park District does not want it. The Patterson House Advisory Board has a Park District representative as a member. This Board will be responsible for the restoration and operation of the house. The house can be used in the interpretive department of the Park District through arrangements with the Board.

The other is an Ardenwood Park Advisory Committee. That committee will have four representatives appointed by the city of Fremont and one each by the city of Newark, the city of Union City, and the Park District. The Park District representative would be the District Director representing this area. The purpose of this committee is to work as an advisory group to the Park District in carrying out the Land Use Development Plan, carrying out the operation

Milnes: and reporting to the city of Fremont on what's happening. And it is also to serve as a cadre of advocates to keep the Ardenwood Park in the forefront of the minds of the District people. The District will be constantly reminded it has this facility, has responsibility for it, and should carry out the development.

One other point that should be recorded in terms of Ardenwood Park is the primary stimulus which led to the negotiation and adoption of the management agreement with the Park District. There was an interest expressed by Saratoga Horticultural Foundation in finding a new site. In their search, they looked at Fremont, heard of Ardenwood Park, and were quite impressed with Ardenwood Park. They expressed a real interest in leasing some or all of Ardenwood Park from the city for the Foundation's use.

The city owned Ardenwood Park, and there was a need to get on with doing something about and with it. The Park District was concerned with other problems and really was not getting around to a serious negotiation for the park. With Saratoga's interest, then, the Park District's interest was elevated to a new level. There was a sense of urgency. There was a series of meetings, and out of it all came the conclusion by Saratoga that joint occupancy by Saratoga and the Park District would not work out to Saratoga's interest. They then backed away from it. Good purposes had been served, however. The Park District's attention had been directed to it, and we were able to proceed in developing an appropriate management agreement.

end of excerpt on Ardenwood

APPENDIX B

William D. Patterson

THE ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT, 1914-1955

an interview conducted in
1955 by John Caswell for the
Alameda County Water District



William D. Patterson

1940s

INTRODUCTION

In July 1955 the writer was commissioned to write a history of the Alameda County Water District, the oldest county water district in California. Only one member of the original Board that was organized in 1914 remained. That member was William D. Patterson. He had served continuously since 1914, and had been President of the Board from 1932 to 1955. During his presidency he was the actual administrative head of the organization, conducting most negotiations regarding policy or involving other organizations personally. He was also first president of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, an organization created in 1949 under entirely different legislative authority. At the time of the interviews he was president of the Flood Control District and a director of the Alameda Water District.

The first interview was conducted at his home on Rancho Potrero de Los Cerritos; the second interview was conducted at the writer's home in Palo Alto. Mr. Patterson had had the opportunity to refresh his memory by reference to abstracts of the Minutes prepared by the writer, except for the five years after August 1949. Page references in the second interview refer to these abstracts, a copy of which is filed in the office of the District.

Mr. Patterson displayed a memory for the significant features of a host of transactions that a man twenty years his junior might well envy. Not a few questions were trivial in themselves, but designed to help the writer grasp the whole picture. Mr. Patterson answered the small as well as the great.

The interviews were recorded on a Webcor tape recorder. In transcribing, the questioner's interjections were normally omitted, as were false starts. The transcript was then gone over by both parties, Mr. Patterson adding clarifying detail at a number of points.

John E. Caswell

Palo Alto, California
August 20, 1955

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THE ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By W. D. Patterson, Member of the original Board
of Directors, as told to John E. Caswell.
Interview I, August 4, 1955.

Formation of the District

Q. Here is a copy of the letter I wrote you, and a copy of my abstract of the Minutes. What about picking out some of the questions you would like to talk about that I asked in the letter, and then thumb through the outline of the Minutes and see what seems worthy of comment. Perhaps first, what about telling me what eras you see in the history of the District.

A. There was of course the first era, when the main problem was struggling to get the Spring Valley Water Co. to put sufficient water down into the gravel strata underlying the surface. These strata form our great storage reservoir for conserving otherwise waste flood waters of Alameda Creek.

Q. And then there was a time when you started undertaking some pumping. Later on you bought distribution works [note correction to this idea], finally you bought the Alvarado pumping plant and started pumping yourselves. I haven't gone through all the periods when you made some major development in the operation. What ones would you think were the major steps?

A. I think that in order to get a complete picture one would have to start back in 1910 or 1911 before the formation of the District, because the formation of the District was the result of what Mr. Runckel saw was coming about because of conditions that were growing up at that time. My brother and I forewaw that coming also, because of our farming operations near the Bay. We discussed this

for a number of years when we heard that the Spring Valley was going to put up the Calaveras Dam, and what it would mean to have the water shut off from our ranch. We had started about 1900 to put in levees around an area of about 200 acres of salt marsh, first to keep out the tide water and secondly to check the floods which spilled out of Alameda Creek and over the country in times of high flood and were building up the soil as a delta near the Bay shore.

This water went out through a gap in the Coyote hills, and by putting a levee around this area, we hoped to check the flow of water and thus allow the sediment to settle and build up the soil. We had noticed this was happening naturally, and we were trying to speed up the process. When the project of putting up the Calaveras Dam came up, we saw that it would take away a large part of the flow of Alameda Creek. Even though the water were released, the special benefits would be lost to us, for the sediment would settle in the reservoir. We consulted our attorney for some time and decided to take action when the first measures were taken to build the dam. I think it was in 1911, when the Spring Valley had shown that it intended to go ahead building the dam. We sent a warning notice to them saying that we would object to the diversion of the flow.

Mr. Chris Runckel, who was editor of the Washington Press, was a very forward-looking, broad minded sort of a person. He had been agitating in his paper, as well as talking personally to a number of the interested landowners, of the danger to the territory as a whole that he foresaw. He got the idea of forming a protective district, and he got a number of the landowners of the area to get together voluntarily and attempt to form a protective district. He

personally got action through the Legislature in 1913 for the formation of a new type of district which would have the powers necessary to defend the rights of the community. That went under the name of the County Water District Act.

Immediately after the Legislature passed that bill, he got this Committee, which had been formed, to go ahead and organize under this County Water District Act. That became the first County Water District of the State. It was named the Alameda County Water District. That caused a lot of confusion because it is assumed that it is a water district under the control of the county. It happened that it was named for Alameda Creek. It would be more accurate, except that it is so cumbersome, to call it the Alameda Creek Watershed County Water District.

That Committee was composed of six members. There were to be five directors under the County Water District Act. One of the committee members was interested in a gravel works at Niles, and was also engaged in some litigation [with the Spring Valley Water Company] already. We thought that there might be some conflict of interests, so the other five were elected as the first formal directors of the District in the spring of 1914.

Why Runckel was not a Director

Q. How was it that Runckel was not made one of the Directors?

A. That is quite a long story. It was realized that he was being persecuted by special interests. That brings in a political angle. He was very unpopular with the vested interests, because he was attacking them. He was almost a radical. He was very liberal. He was even too liberal-minded for some of us, but it was necessary

to have a man like that or nothing would ever have been done. He was an agitator and kept things going. He was persecuted all the way through.

Q. Do you know why the County gang picked him to be an editor when he turned against them so quickly?

A. I think it was to try to win him over. They figured that he would be susceptible to influence, but he was one of these rugged individualists that gave in to no one or to any influence. They tried to starve him out. He stuck it out and in so doing practically starved for a while. He was supported by contributions of many people in the area. He lived through it, and finally saw the result of his work. He was, I think, the one who was responsible for the success of the District. He was persecuted, but was strong enough to stand up to it and become the real spark plug of the organization.

Shinn, the first Board President

Q. What sort of a man was Mr. Shinn?

A. He was a very conscientious man. He had interests in Alameda Creek in that the Shinns had large properties bordering the creek. His father had been compelled like other riparian owners to sell out their riparian ownership rights. The Spring Valley had the right of eminent domain, and threatened them with condemnation. The riparian owners from Niles Canyon to the Bay had finally to take the price offered by the Spring Valley, and it was mostly through private arrangement. I think there were no suits carried through to a conclusion, but it was known that they would lose in a condemnation suit, so they got the best price they could and their riparian rights were lost.

Riparian rights extinguished

Q. In view of the price level at that time, was the settlement reasonably fair, or was it a pretty tough settlement?

A. It was reasonably fair, I would think. That was a little before my time. As to actual riparian rights, they were fair enough as of that time. The landowners didn't know, of course, that the water table would be sinking and that they would get into such a condition as they are now.

From surplus to shortage

In a good many cases, such as ours down here and all around Alvarado, the lowering of the water table was making the land. It was a problem of getting rid of excess water. The land around here was swampy. There were many ditches dug to lead the water off, so this lower country had no reason to oppose the cutting off of the water from up above, and was glad to get a little money and to get rid of the water, as well....

In the 1890s, I would say that the condition was one of too much water in this lower country. There was some need for irrigation around Niles, inasmuch as there was the "Washington-Murray Township Ditch Association," a local organization formed many years before to distribute water. That was a condition of about balance of water supply. After 1900 there began to be indications that water would be needed. Then from 1910 on was the period of lowering water tables. Irrigation had begun, by that time, because we were going from the hay and grain era into that of vegetables, starting with sugar beets. With alfalfa and other crops coming in, there was a growing demand for water for surface irrigation. Also, the lowering of the water table, which had shown at Niles, had drawn water away from the roots

of the orchards, which before that had not needed more than they had got from natural percolation.

Q. Were quite a few orchards lost?

A. No, as far as I know, there was a loss of production and deterioration of trees, but no actual loss of orchards.

Q. Between 1910 and the present, has the orchard area grown or diminished?

A. The orchard area has grown with the development of irrigation. The irrigation has been increased by means of pumping. The pumping has caused further lowering of the water table, but land-owners have followed that down with deeper pumps.

[The Shinn family had the first nursery in the area, on a property adjoining the California Nursery Company.]

Further identification of the Board members

Mr. Trenouth was an orchardist from Irvington. He had a walnut orchard and other property. Stevenson had large properties near Centerville. He raised grain and sugar beets. He was a farmer, the same as we here, and our products were a good deal the same, except that we have never been in the orchard business. We have kept in the more diversified farming on this ranch. Emanuel George was mostly orchardist from the Alviso district. The Directors were scattered so as to cover the territory better. Mr. William Ford of the original group dropped out because his interests might become adverse to the District. He was about to sue the Spring Valley Company because the stopping of the floods would prevent the renewal of the gravel deposits on his property and that was entirely outside the interests of the District as a whole.

The Early Staff

I knew Judge Nourse at Stanford. He was a class ahead of me. We played football together. I was '04. He may have been '02 and taking graduate work. The Directors accepted my recommendation and asked him to serve as attorney. I think he felt it would have to be temporary, and he finally did feel that it was necessary for him to withdraw as he was appointed Superior Judge in San Francisco.

When he withdrew, Chris Runckel knew George Clark very favorably. He was a partner of Congressman Elston, and he had had considerable experience and interest in water matters. He became attorney from then on until recently, when his health failed after long and able service.

Cyril Williams, Jr., became engineer for the district. He had done some work for us [Pattersons] in preparing material for our impending suit. The Water District took him as their engineer also, because there were probably going to be the two parallel suits, and we wanted to merge the interests for mutual efficiency and economy.

Suits against Spring Valley Water Company

In the meantime we had made a formal complaint and that grew into a suit, Patterson vs. Spring Valley Water Company, in which the District joined. The District was not interested in the "flood water phase" of our suit so the two had to be kept separated. The suit came to a head in 1916, after a lot of legal formalities.

In 1916 the Spring Valley Company approached us and the Water District for an arbitration agreement. After considerable negotiation we agreed to go into it, using the personnel of the State Water Commission. The Water Commission did not want to act officially, and

it was agreed that they should be arbitrators as a group. That was the beginning of the attempt at compromise.

Q. In the dry years immediately after the award was made, it was felt that the Bailey Formula was quite unfair to the District. Looking back on it over the entire period that it has been in force, do you think that the Bailey formula worked out fairly well?

A. I think it worked out fairly well as far as its intent is concerned. We found out that during the dry years the District got the advantage, while in the wet years the advantage was with the Company. That was the conclusion we came to, but that was not the complaint of the Water District at all.

The verdict took the attitude that all that was required of an appropriating concern--water user--was that it not interfere with present conditions. The conditions as of that time were such that there was a limited amount of water from each winter's runoff from the watershed that was absorbed into the gravels....The Bailey Formula was very complicated, but it took into consideration the actual storm periods of the winter. It took into consideration such things as temperature. When temperature is high, water flows more freely through gravel. If a storm occurred during a time of high temperature, we would get a larger allotment....It was a very fine-spun idea, but quite correct, I think. But the point was that it didn't allow for the controlling works that we were starting to put in to get additional water. The decision was that we were entitled to get this surplus water that belonged to no one, but it did not take into consideration the fact that the Spring Valley had all of the storage reservoir areas under their ownership. That shut us out and gave them the power to shut off practically all of the flow of Alameda

Creek. We thought we were entitled to future use as well, and to a proportion of that surplus water.

Q. In other words, in building Calaveras Dam, they had appropriated all future use.

A. Yes. And also had bought the reservoir sites on other tributaries, so there was nothing left that had economic value.

Q. Has the City of San Francisco insisted on maintaining all the legal rights of the old Spring Valley Company?

A. They have not given up any of the legal rights, but they have been very friendly and very liberal in their interpretation of those rights. They have been generous with us and we have cooperated with them. When they have been in a jam we have given them water to be repaid, and when they repaid, they repaid it with a lot more than they took, so we have no complaint against the past actions of San Francisco....

Alvarado Annexed

Q. I have noted that Alvarado was at first left out of the district and later taken in.

A. Yes. That was because Mr. Williams, who was a very careful engineer, didn't want to lay claim to any greater percolation area than he could prove in court. He had not had time to make a thorough study of the Alvarado area then. When he extended his study to that area, he found unquestioned proof that that was affected very directly. In fact, he found that the gravels were affected by the shutting off of the flow about ten miles farther north, as far as San Leandro. There is a slight effect from the next creek north, but primarily in the upper gravels. The deep gravels are affected most by Alameda Creek and secondarily by Coyote Creek. He almost proved that Coyote

Creek gravels mingle with Alameda Creek gravels at great depth, and also with gravels across the Bay around Palo Alto. Studies show that they are connected in some way.

Salt Water Intrusion

Q. After the water situation began to improve somewhat, around 1920, did that enable the farmers to go in more for row crops--vegetables?

A. I think it must have had some effect. I think the effect as to row crops was more the increasing market for them. You could always get water if you went deep enough. We have never been out of water, but it became more expensive to get. The losses that have occurred in the way of lack of water, or lack of usable water--the salt sea water intrusion from the Bay...has put out of use hundreds of wells in the area. Some of them could not be replaced because they did not have deeper underlying gravel strata to go after.

Q. Roughly what proportion of the area of the district is at present affected by salt water intrusion?

A. The intrusion has come up to very roughly the line of Highway 17, Alvarado-Centerville-Irvington, with the addition of local intrusion around Centerville.

Q. That would be close to 2/3 of the district, wouldn't it?

A. Well, if you include the salt marshes, yes. But it wouldn't be quite half the area of the producing land. But that is not a total loss, because in many of these areas that are lost to salt intrusion in the shallow gravels you can go through the shallow gravels and cement them off and go down to the deeper gravels. In this area from Highway 17 down, as a rough rule of thumb you can

figure there is a clay stratum between the shallow and next deeper gravels of nearly 100 feet, and that clay is impervious, practically. There are a few cases where the water does get through in sandy lenses and more particularly through old-time wells that have rusted through and are transferring salt water to lower levels.

Q. Now if you go from the first gravels at perhaps forty feet to a hundred feet farther on, don't you about triple your electric bill for pumping?

A. No, because the water table is the same for the different gravel strata. They have the same pressure head. They merge toward the head of the Cone. Around Niles you get practically no clay, so the head is about the same regardless of the depth of the wells. The lowering of the general water table is what counts.

People's Water Company

Q. Do you recall the old People's Water Company? Do you recall what areas they sold to?

A. They sold to Alvarado and the Mt. Eden area, both of which were on their main. They had a 30" main, I think it was, running from Alvarado in to Oakland, and through their ownership of another company they were also serving Newark through a well system. I think it was the old United Properties Company. That old company was broken up at the time of the first World War. They went into bankruptcy-- were all broken up, anyway.

United Properties Company

Q. Was United Properties mainly a development scheme for industrial or agricultural property?

A. It was a combination of Tevis, Hanford and "Borax" Smith interests to develop the whole belt of country between Oakland and

San Jose, and they had started buying properties along the line of an electric railway that they were going to put in. The United Properties Company part of it was buying large tracts of land that would benefit by the development.

Q. Was Tevis an eastern firm?

A. No. that was Lloyd Tevis, a San Francisco capitalist, and "Borax" Smith, the old Twenty Mule Team borax man. They were wealthy families. Hanford and Tevia were interested in the San Joaquin Valley, too. They had big tracts there. The Henry Miller estate and the Hanford-Tevis group were rivals in the San Joaquin.

Q. Did the electric railroad get down here, or did the World War stop it?

A. It stopped it. The financing which was going on actively at that time was stopped immediately by the outbreak of the War, and the firms were committed to such an extent that they were broken up and took great losses, and gave up these schemes that were being started.

Local Water Companies

Q. I have noticed that almost every little town at one point had a water company in it. Were these tied together by a syndicate, or were they financed by local men?

A. They were local men, all of them, I think, except these I speak about. . . .

Calaveras Dam Collapse

Q. What happened when the Calaveras Dam collapsed? Did it do a good bit of damage to the district, or was there not enough water behind it?

A. It was just a fortunate circumstance that the dam slid out through having an improper core, a core of mud which didn't solidify and that it slid on the upstream face of the dam, leaving a downstream shell that held the water. If it had slid downstream it probably would have been quite a catastrophe. . . .

Q. That didn't materially affect the plans of the Water District, then, did it?

A. It didn't affect them that way, but it did stir people up and there was considerably more interest because there was risk of its going out at some other time, and particularly because it was known to have been built on an earthquake fault.

Arbitration, 1920

Q. Were there any political aspects to the decision against the District by the Water Commission? [Sitting unofficially as a Board of Arbitration, the decision was rendered in 1920.]

A. At the risk of being considered a disgruntled loser in a lawsuit, I still think there were political aspects.

Q. But there was nothing one could really pin down?

A. No, there is nothing you can pin down, because it was finally affirmed by the State Supreme Court. But we feel that there was a lot of influence improperly used in various ways....there were some discrepancies that I think an open-minded court would have considered and ordered a new trial or a reversal.

Q. There is one think that I have not looked into, and perhaps you know offhand. Has the decision of the court and the pattern of the arbitration set precedents throughout California for later decisions?

A. Well, that is another thing. Judge Olney, who was Supreme Court Justice for a while--in fact he was the Chief Justice--

Q. Was this the Olney who was attorney for the Spring Valley Water Company, or was this his father?

A. No, this was the same man, Warren Olney, Jr. He was in the Supreme Court later. In the first place, he appeared to argue this case. Then he became Supreme Court Justice, and later argued a case in the San Joaquin Valley in which he took the opposite stand from what he did in our case. Our case got no publicity at all, although it practically overturned the Herminghaus Case. Then there was the case that came up in the San Joaquin Valley and Judge Olney took exactly the opposite point of view when he was retained by an interest that was opposed to this decision, and the litigants were successful in their argument to sustain the Herminghaus Case.

Citizens Support Board

Q. One thing that I picked out from the Washington Press was that Chris Runckel had virtually promised that there would presumably be no tax after the first couple of years, and only 10¢ on the \$100 then. Was there any criticism when the District didn't just shrivel up and die on the vine after the first couple of years?

A. No. I think that there was no opposition to speak of. None that we knew of. The people were with us right along. But there was criticism when we bought up the East Bay Municipal works at Alvarado. There was a faction that claimed we got hoodwinked in that case and that we paid too much for it. We paid a quarter of a million dollars for it, but there are two sides to that story. The

group who criticized were mostly the remains of the old time political gang that were for the private utilities (remains of Hiram Johnson's "S.P. gang").

Q. That brings us back to another of Runckel's articles which he published in 1912 or 1913. He published some quite unsavory information about the tieup between the county political gang and the Spring Valley Water Company as it affected the Pleasanton area. Did this tieup affect the Alameda County Water District?

A. Yes, it was the same group. It was what we called the county gang. It was the Southern Pacific up to the time of Hiram Johnson, and then the Spring Valley. There was a very close connection there.

Foshay Company at Niles

Q. This is just an item of interest. What kind of a water service did Foshay Company operate at Niles?

A. They acquired the Niles Water Company, which was a local concern. It was run largely by Mr. Shinn and some people in Niles. The Foshay Company came in with ideas of expansion. I think the thing was overcapitalized, and they combined with a local bank and had all sorts of financial difficulties. They were bidding for the East Bay's Alvarado pumping plant, and there was a deadline we had to meet to avoid the Foshay Company getting the Alvarado properties, which we figured would be disastrous. That was the reason we moved so quickly: in order to head them off. We got the thing tied up, through an agreement with ex-Governor Pardee, acting for Oakland.

Water distribution systems

Q. One thing that I couldn't find in the Minutes was the reference to the time when the distribution systems of Alvarado, Newark and Mount Eden were taken over.

A. They were taken over with the purchase of the water rights and pumping property at Alvarado. We tried to get Oakland to keep the two systems. We didn't want them. They were a losing proposition, and we didn't want to get drawn into the water distribution problem of this area, because we represented such a large area compared with these two local distribution systems that were not paying costs. We were forced into the water distribution business and that is what has developed into this present system.

Q. You certainly made it profitable shortly, as I recall.

A. It is profitable in that it has developed the country into a very prosperous and fast-growing area. But it is not yet profitable as such, because we are having to put so much money into large distribution mains running through only partly inhabited territory in order to get to and tie together these towns where it would otherwise pay. But it is knitting the area together, so that in a few years it should be very profitable. That would be reflected, of course, in lower water rates and taxes and such as that. We look forward to prosperity, but it has been pretty hard sledding the last twenty years.

Future Subdivisions

Q. Do you anticipate that a good bit of the area will be subdivided?

A. Oh, yes, we consider that it is inevitable unless there is a big slump. You can't travel around the area without running into real estate promoters.

....

Q. I imagine the north end of the district, around San Leandro, Hayward and San Lorenzo will develop first.

A. The flood control problem is the one factor around the north end. There is a big area toward Alvarado that cannot be developed before the flood control problem is solved, and it may be five to ten years before growth can start in that area.

Not a flood control district

Q. The water district is a conservation district also, isn't it?

A. Yes, it is a conservation district that has been drawn into distribution obligations against its will.

Q. And you also have jurisdiction over flood control?

A. No, the Flood Control Commission is a subsidiary of the Alameda County Supervisors, while the Water District is a State organization and not subject to the County. We cooperate very closely with the Flood Control District. . . .

In a good part of the area the problem is not flood control, but surface drainage to take care of the accumulated flow from built-up areas. It is hard to make a good many people who are a considerable distance from Alameda Creek see why they should support a flood control measure, but the fact is that they cannot build unless something is done to take care of the surface runoff. The Planning Commission will not let them build unless they have the facilities for drainage....

Engineering Department abolished

Q. I noted that Williams was finally released, apparently because he was so slow in getting some action taken in regard to repairing a main that was carrying East Bay Municipal Utilities District water down toward Alvarado.

A. The cost of the Engineering Department was at the bottom of that. He had an assistant who was getting rather arrogant--Nunes. He was a bad influence, and Williams wouldn't give him up. It got to be a hot-headed dispute, and one of the Directors suddenly said, "I move we abolish the Engineering Department." Someone said, "I second the motion." The motion was put to a vote and carried.

Q. I suppose you did save money over a few years. Was Richmond, Williams' successor as manager, an engineer?

A. No, he had been in charge of the Alvarado pumping plant, which was a big-scale steam pumping plant, ever since he was a young man. He was very efficient as a practical man, but with no engineering training. At that time we were laying pipe and he was very good at that. He served with us for a great many years and spent his whole life in water affairs and was a great asset to the Water District.

Agricultural Statistics

[A portion not recorded introduced the question of agricultural statistics for Washington Township and where they might be obtained.]

Q. Do you recall what year Senator Sheridan Downey and Senator Kerr held this hearing on agricultural produce?

A. I don't recall, but I have it in my records.

Q. Was this an agriculture committee hearing?

A. No, this was a committee to urge the importation of water into this area from outside sources. It was centered largely at that time on the advisability of Bay barriers to impound fresh water and get it into this area.

Q. Was it about 1948 or 1950?

A. Yes.

Q. If I can't get a printed copy of the Congressional hearing, do you have any idea of anybody who would have a report embodying those figures?

A. It was one of those hearings that was carried on under the auspices of the Army engineers and with the State Water Commission(?).

THE ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
1914 - 1955

By W. D. Patterson, Member of the original Board
of Directors, as told to John E. Caswell

Interview II

August 15, 1955

Q. What I have done today, Mr. Patterson, is to make out a list of questions with page references to the abstract of the Minutes. That may simplify things a bit. On page 39 [May 21, 1932] is the first one. You will note a reference to the legislation concerning a State Water Plan, and some reasons for opposing the Plan. Were there phases of the Plan that were believed to be adverse to the District's interest?

A. The reason for that was that the Plan as originally advanced was to carry the water down the San Joaquin Valley, which of course would have been of no benefit to us. We felt that if the State was going to have a Water Development Plan, all the areas of the State that were in need of water should be considered. We felt that it was being monopolized by the San Joaquin Valley.

Q. On page 40 [June 4, 1932] there is a reference to power costs. The P. G. and E. representative told the Board that there was a hearing coming up. Was anything done about lowering the rates? This was 1932.

A. No, there was nothing done. It was not carried through. One of the Directors, George Lowrie, had had considerable argument with the P. G. and E. over their rates. It was the desire of certain ones, including Mr. Runckel, to get power wholesale

and distribute it by means of the District. That seemed a little out of our line, so we discouraged it.

Q. On June 25, 1932 [p. 40], there is a reference to the tax budget. Is there any sort of a summary that given figures year by year on the distribution system and conservation work of the District?

A. Nothing that I know of except what shows in the Minutes.

Q. Do you think that the Auditor's reports are in such a shape that they could be tabulated quickly, and if so, would it be worth while putting the figures into the history?

A. That information isn't in the Minute Book, is it?

Q. There is information similar to that on page 40 of the Abstract, with details on such matters as salary. Then, on occasional years something was done about putting down information on the gross revenues and profits of the distribution system--after 1930 of course. Do you think it would be a good thing to arrange a statement of income?

A. Yes, if you could get hold of it. I just don't know if it is available.

Q. On page 42 [May 6, 1933] there is a reference to legislation--Senate bill no. 80, requiring that county water districts buy out private water companies. I wonder who was behind that.

A. I don't know who it was. It was some member of the legislature.

Q. It wasn't any concerted move, then, of any particular group?

A. No, not in our district.

Q. On page 45 [March 31, 1934] we come to the time when

the terms of the Directors were split, and two were elected at one time, and three two years later.

A. Yes.

Q. Was that some new requirement of the state law?

A. Yes,...

Q. Do you think it was an improvement?

A. I think probably.

Q. On the next page [p. 46, May 5, 1934] there is a reference to a Mr. Crozier wanting the District to buy out the Centerville Water Co. A little earlier Cyril Williams, Jr., had proposed the same thing. What was behind their move?

A. Mr. Williams was our former engineer. He felt free to make this deal on the outside with Mr. Crozier, who owned the Centerville Water Company. I was at that time in favor of getting away from the water distribution end of it. The other directors were not, and I was overruled. I think perhaps it was just as well, because that has become a major influence in the development of our area. I guess they were better grounded than I was.

Q. At that time, as I recall, the District did not buy the company.

A.. Not at that time. Later it grew into a purchase.

Q. On page 48 [Feb. 12, 1935] in reference to water released by San Francisco, it appeared that 25% of the water that was being released went into the gravels above the fault where but 5% of the land of the district lay. Was there some good engineering or agricultural reason for giving them about five times as much water as the ratio of the rest of the district?

A. Yes, there was. There were several reasons. In the first place the Niles gravel basin was quite limited in depth. It was underlaid by bed rock, and after the water table got down to a certain depth a good many of the pumps couldn't get any water at all. Also, the main reason why it was advisable was that if the small basin above the fault was over-supplied with water, it leaked over the barrier of the Niles fault, and so the lower part of the district got the surplus anyway. We were sure it was better to keep their level up, and then we would get the water we needed anyway.

Q. It assured them a supply, and you didn't suffer.

A. Yes.

Q. I'm not clear about two things: the 36" Spring Valley main and the 30" Spring Valley main. They were both originally built by Spring Valley, were they not? Or was one built by San Francisco? This is on page 49 [May 4, 1935].

A. They were built by the Spring Valley.

Q. The 30" was abandoned at least by 1940 or 1941?

A. Yes. That was what they called their Alameda line, and that was the original line. It was deteriorating so that they had to give it up, before it crossed the Bay. No, that was the 36" line. The 30" line, unless I'm mistaken, was the line of the East Bay Company, leading from Alvarado to Oakland, and we bought that line as far as San Lorenzo with our purchase of the water supply at Alvarado.

Q. Is that the one that was taken up during the war?

A. Yes. We took up that part of it that was above the surface of the ground and sold it for pipe or junk metal.

Q. Is there any of the old 36" line sections operating in the district? That is, the Spring Valley lines?

A. Yes, it's still operating. It was in very good shape from the Niles Reservoir down to and through Centerville to the cannery just below Centerville, and that is still used both to supply the free water rights along its course and to carry water when it is available from release, down to the Western Pacific pit. We took some of the 30" line and laid it to connect the lower part of this 36" Spring Valley line to the Western Pacific pit, which was about half a mile out in a field.

Q. On page 51 [Dec. 7, 1935], in reference to the District's reply to Cahill's letter, what had been done by the District to capture a much larger amount of the Sunol water in 1936 than in the summer of 1935? In 1935 and 1936 apparently you were making preparations for the summer of 1936.

A. I think that that followed the clearing out of the channel, the stirring up of the sediment that was deposited on the gravels of the creek channel by bulldozer work, and loosening them up. We had a pump which was spoken about, I think it was at this time, too, that pumped from the channel of the creek into the other end of the Western Pacific pit, from that where the pipe line is.

Q. [P. 52, April 14, 1936] In your agreement regarding your releases from the obligations of the water rights, was the District to assume them permanently if it failed to return the advanced water to San Francisco within 15 years?

A. The free water rights were to be assumed permanently, yes. This phrase about the 15 years, I don't know about. I

don't remember that, and I intended to look it up to see just what it did mean. It was something new to me.

Q. My impression was that, if they had demanded the water back within the 15-year period, presumably it would have been their initiative, then your obligations would have been extinguished.

A. If they had canceled their obligation under this agreement, I think that would be so; but it may also mean that if they kept up for 15 years, that was not to end our obligation. We understood, when we made this agreement, that we were to take over these obligations for free water service permanently, and our only recourse was to buy the rights out or condemn them, which we have gradually been doing.

Q. What proportion of the original free rights were actually active when you bought it, and are still active?

A. The main right, which was that of the California Nursery Company, is still active and we are continuing to serve that through water which we pump, and which is also supplied by the City of San Francisco as long as they have the water flowing down Alameda creek for whatever reason. They keep the Nursery pipe full of water and available to them, and if they should find it impossible to continue that, there would be some legal question about whether we would still be required to serve the Nursery.

In the original contract under which the Nursery gave up their riparian rights there was a provision that required San Francisco to supply them with water, but only so long as there was water in the "Stone Chute," which is an old Spanish diverting

dam, once serving a ditch leading to the Vallejo flour mill at Niles. When water was not flowing at that point, the Spring Valley Company was not obligated to supply the nursery. It is quite a complicated legal matter, but there was that limitation, and it would probably have to be determined by the courts as to just what was meant by that contract. It was a very long and obscure type of contract. None of the attorneys have been able to work it out to their satisfaction.

Q. Now you have to supply water to the Nursery. Do you have to do it fairly constantly?

A. Every year they take their 50 million gallons of water.

Q. Part of that comes from the creek, am I right?

A. Part of it is a substitute for the water that would otherwise flow down the creek, and that is supplied by the City of San Francisco.

Q. Then that whole 50 million gallons doesn't come from you?

A. No, but we are under obligation to see that it is delivered to the Nursery.

Q. On page 52b [Sept. 5, 1936] there is a note about the 10 percent federal contribution from the WPA. Is that in addition to the WPA labor supply?

A. That was 10 percent of the cost of the materials. All the labor and 10 percent of the material was furnished by the WPA.

Q. On page 54 [Oct. 2, 1936], why did Cahill refuse the permit to build the San Antonio Creek dam?

A. That was because San Francisco would not give up a prior right to whatever was needed by San Francisco in an

emergency, and they were to define the emergency. If we had built the dam and there was surplus water stored by the dam, we could have it so long as San Francisco didn't need it. He refused to give it under any other circumstances.

Q. In reference to the Hayward pipe connection [page 55, Feb. 17, 1938], what is the present source of Hayward's water? Does it have any large wells except at Mt. Eden?

A. It has the old wells at Mt. Eden and other wells between Mt. Eden and Hayward. The other source of supply at the present time is a twenty or thirty inch line running from the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct which crosses the road between Niles and Mission San Jose.

Q. Hayward still gets some water from underneath the District, then, I would presume.

A. Yes, that is what we have been quarreling over for a number of years, trying to settle their exact rights.

Q. On page 53 [Sept. 7, 1940], just a small item of interest: the Minutes speak of Corey fire hydrants and another type whose name I forget. One seemed to have been used in cities, and the other in rural areas. What were the particular virtues of each one?

A. It was the Wharf hydrant that was used in rural areas. That was a simple valve, like a garden hydrant, only of large size. It was not a very good type. There were a great many mechanical features it did not have, and where there was a chance of much use the Corey type of hydrant was considered by the Fire Underwriters to be the more acceptable type.

Q. [Page 64, Jan. 4, 1941.] In reference to the service at Sunol, was it the Raker Act that prevented the District from

taking over?

A. No, we had the power to take it over; it was a question of expediency. The City of San Francisco had the distribution system at Sunol, and they were uncertain whether they wanted to keep it or not. It was Espy's own idea that for a well rounded system we should have the Sunol town system with ours, and relieve San Francisco of any country service.

Q. Oh! I had assumed that it referred to the Sunol gravel beds, filters and so forth.

Q. [Page 64, Feb. 1, 1941] Did you ever get the office building built by WPA?

A. No. It was designed by a man who was working in the WPA office, who had some training as an architect. WPA was about over, and we didn't feel it necessary to go on.

Q. [Page 65, June 7, 1941.] In reference to the Niles subdivision, what was to be the source of the water for that? And was there danger of contamination? That seems to have been higher up than most of your water system....You will note that the water was to be delivered "as is," which I thought meant that it might not be fit for domestic consumption.

A. No, that was the mechanical service and the lack of pressure that would be there. It was one of the first subdivisions and was located at the entrance to Niles Canyon, and at a high elevation. We could not supply satisfactory pressure, but we told him he could take it as it was then, which he did to start with.

Q. How did you cure that? Put in a standpipe and pump?

A. We put in a booster pump at the reservoir, which was at the Niles Canyon outlet and which was only a few hundred feet

from this development and almost at the same level, so that the pressure without booster would have been unsatisfactory.

Q. [Page 66, Sept. 6, 1941.] Emanuel George passed away and Louis Amaral was appointed in his stead. What area and interest did Mr. Amaral represent?

A. He was a small farmer and lived very close to Emanuel George. He was a close friend of the family and had agricultural and irrigating experience, so we thought he would do very well as a substitute.

Q. [Page 68, Feb. 6, 1943.] It was reported in the Minutes for 1943 that the building of Camp Parks near Pleasanton required a large amount of water. What effect did the construction of Camp Parks have on the District's water supply?

A. It didn't have much effect as far as we could make out, because the water that was used, except for evaporation, was returned to the Pleasanton gravels, and so made its way down to our District. We also had a quarrel with them over the pollution of the water. In case their septic tanks didn't operate or overflowed. But Mr. Clark told us we couldn't do anything about it. It was a wartime operation, and it was almost impossible to bring a successful suit against the government. You had to trust to the rulings of the Health Department to keep it in order.

Q. So far as you were able to discover, did they actually contaminate the waters?

A. Not by any analysis that we got. The point where the contamination would occur was about ten miles upstream from us. The water ran over the gravels and we didn't pin down such contamination as appeared to be occurring to come from Camp Parks. There were too many other sources.

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Q. Did Camp Parks put in standard sewage equipment?

A. Yes, but there were several reports from neighbors that there was raw sewage coming through at times.

Q. [Page 70, Sept. 16, 1944.] I note that Frank Dusterberry passed away in early September. He had been the customary representative at the Irrigation Districts Association meetings. Did Dusterberry make any distinctive contribution to the Board that should be mentioned in the history?

A. He did a very good job at attending the various conventions. He was a retired banker and went to practically all the water conventions and did a great deal of good in keeping the District well informed as to what was going on. His advice in financial matters was very good, of course.

Q. I should ask the same question about Emanuel George.

A. He was a very sound thinker, a practical man; a good farmer and orchardist. On practical matters he was very well considered by the whole community.

Q. [Page 71, Nov. 4, 1944.] The Board proceeded to hold an election to replace Frank Dusterberry and the Board split, Grimmer and Patterson on one side, and Bernardo and Amaral on the other. What was the basis of the split that balked an election...?

A. We didn't consider that the opposition's candidate had sufficient grounding for the post. He had practically no experience in water matters. His ownership of real estate in the District was very minor, and we split on the advisability of the type of man.

Q. What did the people who supported him have in his favor?

A. The two directors felt that he had sufficient knowledge of water matters, and he was a union official at Newark.

Q. [Page 71, March 3, 1945.] In regard to the Ellsworth water right, Dr. Grimmer was authorized to offer \$10,000 for the water right. Later on I discovered that Ellsworth had no intention of selling because there was hardpan under his land and he couldn't get any water by drilling. Was the Ellsworth tract all in one piece at that time?

A. Yes. [It was later subdivided, and the District had great trouble with its divided water rights.]

Q. [Page 72, Oct. 13, 1945.] In regard to the annual appropriation, new language was used. Why did the County Auditor now notify the District as to what its appropriation was to be?

A. I think it was that the County Auditor set the rate that we should have in order to produce the amount set forth in our budget.

Q. So he didn't determine the amount, simply the tax rate?

A. Yes.

Q. [Page 72, Oct. 13, 1945.] Was a well drilled in the Shinn subdivision in order to get water for the California Nursery?

A. Because of the obscure language in the contract between the Spring Valley Water Company and the Nursery, the lawyers had very much trouble with interpretation. We decided it would be better to have a well next to the Nursery at the point of delivery, so that in any case we would have a water supply which could be substituted for that called for under the contract. So we bought a lot adjoining the Nursery at the proper point on their

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border and drilled a well that would be entirely sufficient to supply the 50 million gallons a year. We hold that in reserve.

Q. You don't ordinarily pump from that, simply in an emergency?

A. In an emergency we could put a pump in and substitute for the water they would otherwise get out of the flow in Alameda Creek.

Q. [Page 76, Sept. 13, 1947, and elsewhere.] There are references to the fault having been cut by Pacific Coast Aggregates Company. Has water ever flowed over the cut in sufficient quantities to affect the water table above it?

A. Yes, I think it has. I think there was a lowering of the water table above the fault by several feet. I forget just how many....That was partly corrected by later work on the fault... We uncovered the place where this cut had been made and did some work in an attempt to seal it.

Q. [Page 78, May 8, 1948.] You and the Secretary testified before the Dickie Underground Water Pollution Committee. What was the Committee seeking to determine?

A. They were trying to find out the causes and possibilities of preventing the pollution of the fresh water by the salt water, not only in our case but in some other cases where salt water was intruding.

Q. [Page 78, July 10, 1948.] In regard to pit purchases, was the land that was to be purchased from Pacific Coast Aggregates adjacent to that leased from Mrs. Shinn?

A. The property was adjacent and formed a series of pits which could be used and is used for percolation.

Q. Are they called collectively the Shinn pits now?

A. No, they are separate.

Q. [Page 79, Feb. 12, 1949.] To what extent do the duties of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District overlap those of the Water District? And how have the conflicts in jurisdiction been resolved?

A. The Flood Control District, as we call it for short, has not been formed very long, and as I was the chairman of both Boards, I recommended to both Boards that we attempt to prevent any unnecessary overlapping of jurisdiction of the two. I personally was in favor of eventually having the percolation part taken over as much as possible by the Flood Control District, inasmuch as they were attempting to get Alameda Creek straightened and widened, exposing a great deal of gravel which could be used for percolation purposes. I thought there was no purpose in having both bodies covering the one project and that we should separate the duties and obligations of the two.

Q. Has the Flood Control District been able to take over much of that work?

A. Not as yet, because they have just this year had passed a bond issue of about 4 million dollars, which is to go into the reconstruction of Alameda Creek. The finishing of the project has to wait on the Army Engineers, which may take five or ten years to complete, because it has to have the approval of Congress and an appropriation by Congress. So that is only partly taken care of.

Q. Is any part of this four million dollars going to be spent before Congress comes through?

A. Yes, they will start, I believe, this winter. They are going to work with the Army Engineers, and the Army Engineers have just received an appropriation of \$15,000 for a preliminary survey of the project.

Q. I suppose this is to include channel straightening. Will it also include additional percolation pits?

A. Only incidentally. The straightening and widening of the channel will expose large areas of gravel, which will automatically become percolation areas. That is why I think cooperation between the two bodies is essential. The channel is something less than a hundred feet wide on the average. They are making it about 600 feet wide in the final plans, and that will make an immense difference in the percolation of the flood waters.

Q. Will any check dams be built along the channel?

A. That remains for the future to determine. The increase in percolation will be so great that I think it will be tried out first without check dams.

Q. How much is being asked of Congress for the flood control work?

A. Lets see, about five million dollars, I think it is.

Q. Making a total of about nine millions available.

A. Yes. It'll be a major project for our country.

Q. I suppose that will save considerable loss from floods, as well as assuring a better ground water supply?

A. Yes. The floods occasionally are very destructive.

Q. Do you have any rough notion of how many million dollars worth of damage they've done in the last ten years?

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A. Mr. Crowle, the Chief Engineer of the Flood Control Commission, has all of that matter available. So if you want you can get it from him.

Q. Do you think that it's essential to go into that in any length?

A. I don't think so--a lot of detail.

Q. [Page 80, April 9, 1949] Why did the U. S. Engineers suddenly start surveying the Arroyo del Valle?

A. They, I think, had been reached by Senator Sheridan Downey who was very much interested in our problem here, and he wanted to get a report from the U. S. Engineers about the possibility of supplemental water out of the Alameda Creek watershed, to try to cure the salt infiltration by filling the gravels with fresh water and forcing the salt water out.

Q. In forcing the salt water out, suppose you were able to flood the upper gravels very heavily, where would the salt water depart from? One of your first things, I presume, would be to plug the wells which now permit intrusion.

A. That has pretty well been done, now, and the forcing of fresh water into the upper gravel which is the contaminated one would, we hope, force the salt water out through the old spring areas in the tidal flats, which used to carry fresh water out into the Bay. This action was reversed when the water table dropped low enough. They formed channels to bring the salt water in. Well, we hope to force another reversal. But the problem there is whether we can force salt water out with fresh, because the salt water is heavier and it lies on the bottom--the fresh water might go right over the top. But in such a

case we intended to put big pumps in and actually pump the salt water out over the surface into the Bay, and then it would be replaced with fresh water.

Q. Do you contemplate doing anything with that in the immediate future?

A. If we can get a supply of fresh water, yes. We intend to do that as soon as possible, because it's a very serious matter.

Q. Would the fact that more and more subdivisions are coming in and requiring water of perhaps greater purity than is being pumped--is that going to affect the situation?

A. Yes, we feel that it already is speeding up the intrusion of salt water, and we are using a considerable amount of Hetch Hetchy water so as to reduce the draught on the underground supply.

Q. So the result of bringing in the subdivisions is to increase the pumping?

A. Yes.

Q. Both for the subdivisions and that which is required for agriculture?

A. Yes, the old rule was that a housing settlement took about the same amount of water as agriculture did, which no doubt was true 30 or 40 years ago. But (chuckle) people take so many more baths now than they did then, and they have lawns, so that in the Water District's experience the water demand has doubled per capita, so that they're using about twice as much as they did when we started.

Q. So the capita demand has gone up sharply, as well as the number of heads?

A. Yes.

Q. That would mean that your acre demand, when land was converted from agriculture to subdivision, would go up perhaps ten times, wouldn't it?

A. Yes. Yes, it could.

Q. [Page 80, May 14, 1948] Why did the State start investigating this Livermore-Pleasanton area at the same moment the Engineers started surveying the Arroyo del Valle?

A. That was an investigation that was asked by the Pleasanton-Livermore people, to see what could be done about getting a water supply for their area. And we got the State to extend that to cover our area, too. The Livermore and Pleasanton people were ahead of us in that case.

Q. Is Binkley able to make good use of those figures in his present survey? [District's consulting engineer, T. C. Binkley of Palo Alto]

A. Oh, yes, they are cooperating closely with the State authorities and exchange figures with them, and the State is very cooperative.

Q. [Page 81, August 13, 1949] What was the Flood Conditions of Alameda Creek Case that Senator Downey had arranged to reopen? It sounded as if this was litigation and this was being reopened by act of Congress.

A. That was not litigation. It was the investigation and the bringing to life again of the original inquiry into the possibility of getting water into Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Benito Counties.

Q. Do you recall how long before the original authority had expired?

A. I don't know.

Q. The original investigation, then, was some time before that?

A. Yes, it was several years before that, but it had just died down. It was still somewhat active, and Senator Downey held a number of meetings in San Jose and Alameda County--even up in Contra Costa County, learning the facts of the salt water intrusion and the lack of fresh water, and he was trying to get congressional action on an emergency basis to speed it up.

Q. An aside, a note on the next page referring to the Flood Control District! You were first on the advisory committee, and then I gather you were the first chairman of the board of the Flood Control District. Is that right? Are you still the chairman?

A. Of the Flood Control?

Q. Yes.

A. Yes, I'm chairman of that.

Q. You were the chairman since it was first created about 1949, I gather?

A. Yes.

Q. [Page 84, December 20, 1950] With reference to the water supply, after acute concern with drought in 1947 and continued concern in 1949, did 1950 actually mark a considerable improvement in the water supply?

A. When was that?

Q. 1950. I had noted along--this was at the very end of the year, the very bottom note. When did the water situation start to look up as far as the gravels were concerned?

A. I think that was in the flood of 1950. We had a heavy flood then. Another one, not long afterwards, came in 1951. The two of them had a very marked effect on the water table.

Q. Has the water table wasted away again to about what it was before?

A. Yes. It's back to an alarming situation now.

Q. Probably because of much heavier pumping, I presume?

A. That is it.

Q. As far as irrigation goes, is the most efficient means of irrigation to pump it in at one end of the valley and pump it out wherever required?

A. Yes. That has been determined by the engineers. The cost of distributing either by ditches or pipes would be prohibitive because you would more or less have to follow the contour, and in doing so you would cut through all sorts of private property. The values have gone now to \$3000 to \$5000 an acre, and it would just cost too much to distribute it that way.

Q. I see. That's a very interesting point.

A. And you get away from evaporation, too, when you store it underground. Evaporation is quite high. It amounts to about four feet per year in our area. Loss over the entire surface, well it would be four acre feet per acre. And that's a lot of water.

Q. Of course you store it to a considerable depth in a reservoir. How many acre feet do the crops over there average in consumption?

A. I think that taking the upper area which is much more porous than down toward the Bay you would have perhaps one and

a half acre feet of use.

Q. Do you think the District's records of the amount of water pumped from the gravels is reasonably complete and accurate, so that figures on percolated and pumped water would be really meaningful?

A. Yes. The Engineers use those figures as a basis for their conclusions.

Q. [Page 86, November 14, 1951] There are several references to rain making. Although the Board is quite interested in rain making possibilities, why has it never actually experimented with it?

A. We investigated several sources of rain making--the personnel and the companies promoting them--and there was a good deal of fear among the directors that we might be involved in litigation. If we promoted rain making over an area that really needed it, it could overlap into the vegetable area where an unseasonal rain will ruin a whole crop. It could run into very high damages. I think that was what scared them off.

Q. [Page 89, December 16, 1952] Why was the use of Stivers Tule Pond for percolation first considered and then dropped?

A. That was partly because the Stivers family didn't want the land flooded. They wanted to raise crops on it. Partly from the difficulty of getting the water from Alameda Creek to the Stivers farm, which was perhaps a mile away. And partly just because it died for lack of promotion. It was too uncertain

Q. Could they have gotten water from Mission Creek in there?

A. Mission Creek does flow through the Stivers Pond but the bottom of the pond is almost impervious. It would have to be combined with works to divert the water into the gravels, which would be about 40 feet deep in that area. We have put a well down in which we are experimenting to see if it's practical to put more wells or a big pit in order to conserve that water that runs out of the Stivers Pond to the Bay.

Q. That brings up the question of drain wells. Is there sufficient water saved by the drain wells to make any substantial contribution to the District?

Q. We don't think so, and it's too dangerous because of the chance of pollution from housing areas and also because the drain wells, if they use untreated water, will gradually clog up through the growth of algae. It would be necessary to chlorinate the water before it was put in, and it just doesn't seem practical. The Water District has forbidden any drain wells being put in that will be permanent. It is just an emergency to get by the period before the Flood Control ditches go in, which will take care of the drainage.

Q. Another five years will possibly see the elimination of those?

A. I think so.

Q. [Page 91, April 27, 1953] Was the lease of the 36" pipe line from San Francisco ever consummated?

A. We long considered purchasing the 36" pipe line and San Francisco was not willing to give it up. Then we talked with Mr. Percy and Mr. Espy, who had the greatest knowledge of the needs of San Francisco in that respect. They suggested

that we offer to take a lease on the pipe line, and that is still under consideration.

Q. I gather you're not too keen on the lease?

A. No, because if we got it, we would want to put considerable capital into making it available for the purposes that we foresaw. We wouldn't want to give it up on a lease basis if we went into the planning of our pipe line system--the sizes and so on, and then have an important part of it good for only a few years' time.

Q. [Page 93, February 24, 1954] In reference to a retirement plan, was one finally adopted--one that affiliates the District either with the State or the Alameda County Retirement Systems?

A. We are still studying that problem, and other things have come up that have put it off. We have a plan partly worked out for the purpose.

Q. Would that take care of men like Richmond who have long since retired?

A. It would do so, because although he and Mr. Harrold have retired, we had an arrangement by which they are on call, you might say, as advisers in lines that they covered, and they are still in that category. The attorneys are trying to arrange a plan that will include them.

Q. That would save you from having to put up the money that now goes for their semi-retirement.

A. Yes.

Q. [Page 97, July 9, 1954] Why did Messrs. Amaral and Grimmer feel the District should abandon underground pumping?

A. The basis of that, if I understand it, is that the underground water should be conserved for the purposes of agriculture. Dr. Grimmer also believed that the Hetch Hetchy water was much superior from a health point of view. He was an advocate of the use of the Hetch Hetchy water, so that he got it in Irvington, which was his town, and reported very favorably on its use, so it was left in there. Amaral, being a farmer, was against any pumping for other purposes than farming. But right now, just at the last meeting, Dr. Grimmer has reversed himself and demands that the Hetch Hetchy be given up, so it's a little peculiar situation.

Q. Is it now a matter of price that's affecting him?

A. Yes, and at this time he was willing to pay the price because he said the benefits were so great, and the saving of soap was one of his arguments. Soft water saves so much soap, he said it would pay its own way, but he has quite violently turned the other way now.

Q. Why the violence?

A. Well--you'd better ask him.

Q. [Page 98, November 10, 1954] In reference to the Soito well. Has the Soito well been used during this past summer, 1955? And if so, have there been any complaints by the neighbors?

A. It's being used steadily, and I've been by there several times recently and the neighbors are pumping lots of water. So they are not complaining, naturally. Their claims were entirely unfounded.

Q. [Page 100, January 6, 1955] Did I ask you a moment ago how long it would take the Flood Control District's pro-

proposed developments to eliminate the need for drain wells?

A. I think that it will be a matter of only a few years before that is taken care of. They will first take those areas that are thickly built up and eliminate the drainage problem. That is mostly in the area between Newark and Centerville, and one of the first drain ditches, I think, will go through that area and then those wells will have to be plugged.

Q. [Page 101, March 2 and 9, 1955] In reference to the Tri-County Authority, what is the importation scheme that the Tri-County Authority would principally back?

A. They have specifically said that they are not backing any particular scheme. Their first duty is to study all projects and make up their minds as to what is the best.

Q. Does the District favor a scheme that is probably not the same scheme that San Benito and Santa Clara Counties would favor?

A. Not unless they should attempt to bring water in by way of Pacheco Pass. In that case Alameda County feels it can bring the water in by itself cheaper than to bring it clear up north from the Pacheco Pass. They are in a position to put in their own pumping plant and to bring it into our valley and to the Livermore-Pleasanton area to greater advantage, I think.

Q. Would it be an equally good route, so far as the lower Santa Clara Valley and San Benito County are concerned?

A. So far, the engineers who have been working on it, both local and state, say that that is advisable for all of them, with the possible exception of San Benito County. It will be better to carry it in through the Altamont Hills somewhere into the Livermore Valley and carry it on at an elevation

of about 500 feet, through the Santa Clara and San Benito areas. But of course there hasn't been a final full study made, and it could change.

Q. What proportion of the underground storage is lost by the upper gravels being salty?

A. I don't think that that can be determined. I don't think that it is sufficiently open to observation. It would require endless computations and analyses of water in wells to see just what was going on underground. But the mass of salt water that is flowing gradually into this upper gravel has destroyed the usability of the water in the upper gravel, and what is happening to the lower gravels is simply beyond anyone's guess. The action of salt water, as it spills through or rather over the impervious stratum of clay, in the area towards Niles, may be that it is dropping, because of its higher specific gravity, clear to the bottom of our basin, which is of unknown depth. It is probably beyond a thousand feet. I don't know of any well that has gone deeper than a thousand feet, but they haven't struck hard rock in the middle of the valley. So salt water may be accumulating and rising from the bottom, and if so it's a very bad situation. But we can't compute it at all.

Q. Do you foresee a possibility of sealing off and flushing the upper gravels?

A. I think so.

Q. Is the water that's now intruding past Newark of about the same specific gravity as sea water? Or is it well diluted?

A. It becomes more and more diluted as it progresses farther into the valley. There are wells that have analyzed nearly sea water concentration. Others are on the margin between usable and non-usable water for irrigation purposes.

Q. About how far from Niles to Centerville is that line now?

A. It is just barely past the outskirts of Centerville to the east, and it doesn't seem to be advancing as a line. But over the years it's increasing in salt content, which makes me feel that maybe this salt water is dropping down to the lower gravels.

Q. As agricultural use diminishes and domestic use increases, may it be possible that Alameda Creek waters will remain sufficient to care for agricultural needs and imported water be used as a primary source of domestic water?

A. The two could be separated quite easily. We have our present main reservoir at the mouth of Niles Canyon, and as the importation of domestic water under the present plan would come in at about the 500-foot level, it would be very easy to drop that water both into that reservoir and into several others that we are planning to build. It would be entirely feasible to do so, and so leave all the water that comes down Alameda Creek for percolation for agricultural use.

Q. Is the Niles reservoir right in the creek?

A. No, it is at an elevation of, I suppose, about 50 feet above the creek.

Q. An artificial reservoir entirely, then?

A. Yes. It's in conjunction with a San Francisco reservoir of about 5 million gallons, and this is 100,000 gallons that we constructed on San Francisco ground with their cooperation.

Q. Is there a little dam across the creek still?

A. Yes, there is the old stone chute dam, which was built in old Spanish days to grind meal out of wheat at Niles--the old Vallejo Mill. The foundation is still there, and this stone chute threw the water into a ditch and flume and carried it at a slight elevation to where it turned the mill wheel. That is the stone chute that enters into the documents of the area today, for it is still there.

Q. Is there any diversion work where you divert water into the Shinn Pits?

A. Yes. We built a battery of pipes into a concrete foundation and a concrete stepping down of the flow of the water into the Shinn Pit, which was very much deeper than Alameda Creek itself.

Q. You didn't have to construct a dam across the creek itself?

A. No. It flows in because of the head of water in flood time through these pipes into the Shinn Pit.

Q. Have you built any reservoirs in the southern part of the District?

A. No, except at Mission San Jose, where there is a 100,000 gallon reservoir on the old Witherly Ranch, at an elevation of about 500 feet. That was put in in order to have a water supply for Mission San Jose. It is pumped from our mains up into this reservoir just to have storage at that elevation.

Q. I suppose that the two reservoirs together are at about the same elevation and are the principal source of your pressure?

A. No, the reason for the booster pump is that the Niles reservoir is about 180-some feet, while the Mission reservoir, I think, is nearly 500 feet, and so we took out the water from the main at Irvington, for this reservoir at the Mission, and pumped it with a booster pump to get that elevation; and also there was a spring above that reservoir that flowed a considerable quantity of water, and the surplus that was not used by Mr. Witherly flowed into this tank. So it was an advantage to have it at that point.

Q. Well, I think I've just about run out of questions.

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