

Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley

Oral History Center
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

East Bay Regional Park District Oral History Project

Judi Bank:
East Bay Regional Park District Parkland Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Shanna Farrell
in 2017

Copyright © 2019 by The Regents of the University of California

Interview sponsored by the East Bay Regional Park District

Since 1954 the Oral History Center of the Bancroft Library, formerly 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 method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is bound with photographs and illustrative materials and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in 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.

All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between The Regents of the University of California and Judi Bank dated December 14, 2017. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Excerpts up to 1000 words from this interview may be quoted for publication without seeking permission as long as the use is non-commercial and properly cited.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to The Bancroft Library, Head of Public Services, Mail Code 6000, University of California, Berkeley, 94720-6000, and should follow instructions available online at <http://ucblib.link/OHC-rights>.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Judi Bank, "Judi Bank: East Bay Regional Park District Parkland Oral History Project" conducted by Shanna Farrell in 2017, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2019.



Judi Bank, 2017
Photo by Shanna Farrell



Judi Bank

Photo courtesy of the East Bay Regional Park District



Judi Bank

Photo courtesy of the East Bay Regional Park District

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Oral History Center would like to thank the East Bay Regional Park District for their generous support of this oral history project.

The Parkland Oral History Project is funded by the Interpretive and Recreation Services Department of the East Bay Regional Park District, coordinated by Beverly R. Ortiz, Ph.D., EBRPD Cultural Services Coordinator, and supported by staff at all levels of the Park District.

Judi Bank is an equestrian who volunteered with the East Bay Regional Park District in many capacities between the 1970s and 2018. In addition to managing equestrian events in the parks, Judi was regarded as a reliable resource for representing the equestrian community in public policy negotiations. As a longtime officer in the Metropolitan Horsemen's Association, based in Joaquin Miller Park in the city of Oakland, Judi organized horse shows and events there, in the Sequoia Arena. She also managed events in the Hunt Field, in Redwood Regional Park. She was born and raised in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where she grew up riding horses, before moving to the East Bay in the 1960s. In this interview, she discusses her early life, developing an interest in horses and learning to ride, her education, moving West, and work with the EBRPD to coordinate show events, as well as the community of equestrians who rode in the parks.

Table of Contents—Judi Bank

Project History

Interview 1: December 14, 2017

Hour 1

1

Born and raised in 1936 in West Chester, Pennsylvania — Horseback riding and cycling around the town — Thinking of riding as “galloping over rolling hills” in the East Coast — Became involved in horse shows as a young girl — Graduated from Westtown in 1954 — Being a part of the riding program at Penn State — Recruited to be in exclusive girls’ riding camp — Bought a horse and named it Buccaneer — Took a college shop course and built a horse trailer with her boyfriend — Being innovative and creating a removable hitch for her car — Living in Mobile, Alabama post-graduation — Moving to California with her college roommate — Organized and competed in Wofford Cup in San Francisco — Hundred-mile trail from Tahoe City to Auburn — Practice riding with Mary Lou Reese, the DC for Contra Costa Pony Club — Birth of first son at Buckeye Ranch — Moving to the East Bay and Redwood Park in 1969 — Received a conditional use permit to build a barn — History of the Hunt Field — Bob Lorimer as owner of the Oakland Riding Academy — Arrangements with the East Bay Regional Park and Pony Club parents to repair the hunting field — Sponsored by Metropolitan Horsemen’s Association for an event at the Hunt Field — Worked with the EBRP to ensure jumps were safe — Support from the U.S Combined Training Association

Hour 2

15

415 Society contribution to enlarging Sequoia Arena — Eucalyptus poles used for jumps on cross-country courses — Support from the Trudeau Center in running events — Appointed to the PAC — Judi Martin becoming concessionaire at Skyline Ranch — Renamed the Hunt Field arena “Redwood Arena” — Change of park use lead to creation of a resource protection area — Impact of the ending of horse trials in 1980 felt mostly by local people — Recalling memorable experience on the Hunt Field, and Sequoia Arena — Involvement with dressage since 1980, runs three dressage shows annually at Sequoia Arena — Empowering being involved with the Park District — Horse community’s influence in Oakland Measure K, an environmental measure passed in 1990 — Hopes to get more young people involve throughout the horse community — Reflecting on how “horses are special creatures”

The East Bay Regional Park District Oral History Project

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is a special regional district that stretches across both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. First established in 1934 by Alameda County voters, the EBRPD slowly expanded to Contra Costa in 1964 and has continued to grow and preserve the East Bay's most scenic and historically significant parklands. The EBRPD's core mission is to acquire, develop, and maintain diverse and interconnected parklands in order to provide the public with usable natural spaces and to preserve the region's natural and cultural resources.

This oral history project—The East Bay Regional Park District Oral History Project—records and preserves the voices and experiences of formative, retired EBRPD field staff, individuals associated with land use of EBRPD parklands prior to district acquisition, and individuals who continue to use parklands for agriculture and ranching.

The Oral History Center (OHC) of The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley first engaged in conversations with the EBRPD in the fall of 2016 about the possibility of restarting an oral history project on the parklands. The OHC, previously the Regional Oral History Office, had conducted interviews with EBRPD board members, supervisors and individuals historically associated with the parklands throughout the 1970s and early 2000s. After the completion of a successful pilot project in late 2016, the EBRPD and OHC began a more robust partnership in early 2017 that has resulted in an expansive collection of interviews.

The interviews in this collection reflect the diverse yet interconnected ecology of individuals and places that have helped shape and define the East Bay Regional Park District and East Bay local history.

Interview 1: December 14, 2017

01-00:00:01

Farrell: Okay, this is Shanna Farrell, with Judi Bank, on Thursday, December 14, 2017. This is an interview for the East Bay Regional Park District Oral History Project, and we are in Oakland, California. Judi, can you start by telling me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early life?

01-00:00:20

Bank: Okay. I was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, which is southeastern Pennsylvania. It's about twenty-five miles west of Philadelphia, and about fifteen miles north of Wilmington, Delaware, and it is right in the middle of what I would call hunt country. When you go west of West Chester, they're all small farms, mostly dairy farms, and there are a number of hunts. We had two hunts: one was registered, and the other one was a farmers' pack. If you got in your car and wanted to drive within forty-five minutes or so, you could go hunting with a number of other foxhunting packs. I was born in 1936, in West Chester, and was adopted by Dr. Joseph Scattergood, and his wife Eleanor Scattergood, and several years later they adopted my brother Joe. West Chester was a small town, such that I could get on my bicycle when I was a little older and ride from my house to the other side of town, where I could go horseback riding.

Let's see. I started riding probably when I was about nine or ten, and several friends of my parents had horses that were stabled at Mike Doyle's stable, where you had a full-service type of setup, where the horses were cared for, they were groomed, your tack was cleaned, the horses were exercised. All you had to do was get dressed up on Saturday and come to the stable and get on your horse and take off. To exercise the horses, they would ride one and lead one. What they did was they put me on the horse that was being led, and they had no formal instruction of how to teach a kid how to ride, so it was just, "Okay, now we're going to trot." You go up and down. I figured it out. That was sort of my education. Later, they also got a pony. Well, she was 14.3, a very solid, small horse, that I was able to ride out in the country, and to go hunting on. I used to ride her bareback a lot. My father did buy her for me, and we shared her with another family. When I was young my parents used to send me to summer camp, and so for several years I went to a camp called Happy Valley, which was in Maryland, which was primarily a riding camp. I got a lot of chances to ride and to jump, and they thought it was great because I was one of these little monkeys that could stay on no matter what the horse did. I got to jump and do lots of things that some of the other kids didn't get to do, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I was absolutely horse crazy.

01-00:04:12

Farrell: What had initially sparked your interest in horseback riding?

01-00:04:16

Bank: Horses. [laughs]

01-00:04:17

Farrell: Yeah? Was it because you lived near farms?

01-00:04:21

Bank: No.

01-00:04:21

Farrell: Okay.

01-00:04:22

Bank: I lived in town. I lived in town. I don't know. I was just horse crazy from probably first or second grade on.

01-00:04:33

Farrell: When you were going to the full-service stable where the horse would be tacked up already, all you basically had to do was show up, was that something that you enjoyed, or did you want to spend more time grooming horses and kind of bonding with them in that way?

01-00:04:50

Bank: Yes, that was not fulfilling for my way of thinking. I wanted to really be involved with them.

01-00:05:01

Farrell: Is that something you got to do when you were at summer camp, more the grooming and taking care of them?

01-00:05:05

Bank: Not really. Not really. Summer camp was mostly riding.

01-00:05:11

Farrell: Okay. But it wasn't a full-service stable at summer camp?

01-00:05:17

Bank: No, they had people there who took care of the horses.

01-00:05:20

Farrell: Oh, okay. What was it like for you to start riding and to start jumping and, you know, if you're horse crazy?

01-00:05:31

Bank: Oh, I loved it. [laughs] I loved it. When I think of riding now, I think of riding on the East Coast, where you're galloping over rolling hills, grassy hills, jumping natural fences, and going through the woods. To me, the area that I grew up in, I think of as God's country. I go back there whenever I can. It's changing an awful lot. It's being developed, so the hunts are all moving out, or disbanding. I grew up at a very wonderful time for me to be able to enjoy all these things as a youngster.

01-00:06:22

Farrell: What was it like sharing your horse with another family?

01-00:06:27

Bank:

I had no contact with them. They would come Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, and I would go Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and Saturday was the hunt day. The horse got out just about every day, and I got to enjoy her. I would exercise her bareback, and I had a buddy, and we would go riding together during the week, and then on Saturdays. In the fall, through the spring, we would go with the hunt. Now, in the summer, in that area you turn your hunter out to pasture, so every summer she would be out in pasture, and I'd either have to bicycle or get my mother to take me out to see her. Summer was totally different from winter. Fall and winter we got to ride, and we rode in all weather. The snow had to be about a foot to eighteen inches deep before it wasn't safe to ride, even when we were hunting and jumping.

01-00:07:46

Farrell:

Wow.

01-00:07:47

Bank:

You had special shoes that you put on your horse so that they could stand up on the hard road, and on ice, and actually be able to get a grip so they could jump the fences.

01-00:08:03

Farrell:

Were there a lot of other kids in your community that were riding?

01-00:08:07

Bank:

No. Just a handful of us, because it wasn't really a riding program. It was kids who knew people and could either borrow horses, or one of my friends had her own horse, which she kept at home. She had to take care of it. Mine was still at the stable. I would ride over, meet up with her.

01-00:08:36

Farrell:

How long was the bike ride for you?

01-00:08:42

Bank:

I don't know, maybe twenty minutes.

01-00:08:44

Farrell:

Oh, that's not bad at all.

01-00:08:45

Bank:

No, no, but you had to ride in traffic. [laughter]

01-00:08:51

Farrell:

So you started showing at a certain point. Can you tell me about how you became involved with horse shows?

01-00:08:59

Bank:

Well, the little horse that my father bought for me did not appreciate horse shows. She said no. She said, "I will follow any horse over any fence, but I will not just go out and jump for the fun of it." I didn't show her at that time. When I was in tenth grade I went to boarding school, Westtown, which was

about fifteen miles east of Westchester, and got to go out occasionally and ride, but not that much. I got to sit in the study hall and see the hunt go by. [laughs] After I graduated from Westtown in 1954 I went to Penn State. At Penn State they had a riding program, so I took the riding program so that I could be part of their show group, because we had a competition with two girls' schools, so there were three horse shows that we got to go to, and Bill Brodnack had brought combined training, or three-day eventing, to Penn State, and he had built a course. We got to exercise and condition horses to do the three-day eventing. That's how I got introduced to and involved in three-day eventing.

01-00:10:45

Farrell:

Just for people who may not be familiar, can you explain what three-day eventing is?

01-00:10:50

Bank:

Originally it was the test of a military horse, and there are three phases. One is dressage, which is fine control of your horse, and that would demonstrate that you could control your horse in a parade and in other maneuvers. Then the big part of it was cross-country, where you would go across rough terrain, you would jump strange fences, to show that the horse was bold and brave and fast, and would be a good field horse. You finished up on the same horse in the ring with knockdown fences, and that would show that the horse could represent this country in horse shows. Your whole score is compiled from the three phases, to get to the horse that had done the best overall. When I was at Penn State, Stewart Treveranis was starting to—he was a Canadian Olympic rider, and he had moved to Virginia, and so he wanted to start combined training in the United States, and we were at the point where we were switching over from it being a military event to being a civilian event. There was a really interesting time there where not that many people were doing it, and most of the people who would do it would be people who basically were fox hunters, because their horses were used to going cross-country and jumping fences, and then you would do a little dressage with them, and you'd practice a little jumping, and away you go with your hunter. It became very popular in Virginia, so that's where I had to go to compete.

Now, when I was at Penn State, one summer a friend of mine and I and a few others were recruited to be stable hands at a very exclusive girls' riding camp, and at that time we decided that we wanted to get our own horses. When we got back to Penn State with some money in our jeans, which were burning a hole in our pockets, we found a farmhouse that had an abandoned barn right outside of the campus, and so we arranged to have that, and then we went looking for our horses. I thought I had one from a horse dealer, so I had rented a trailer to go over there, and I had the money in my pocket, which was just burning a hole. I got there, and the horse that I thought I was going to get wasn't available. I look around. What does he have? He has a couple scraggly looking horses and some mules. I saw this funny looking kind of pinkish

white horse with very long hair over behind the manure pile, so I checked him out. All my common sense said no, but for some reason I decided I had to buy this horse, so I did, and everybody made a lot of fun of me, because this horse was very thin. Through his thick coat you could see the ribs. His confirmation wasn't great. I don't know what possessed me to buy him, but I did. I decided I was going to make him a three-day horse.

01-00:14:49

Farrell:

What was his name?

01-00:14:50

Bank:

His name was Buccaneer, Bucky for short. When he shed out in the spring, he turned out to be a golden buckskin, and turned out to be a very pretty horse. He wasn't terribly big; he was about 15.2 hands tall. But I discovered certain things that were going to challenge me to make him a three-day horse: one, he was a pacer, and had other gaits, like a running walk and that sort of stuff; and two, he couldn't gallop very fast, and so that wasn't good; and three, he had no idea how to jump, and a pacer doesn't jump. So, fortunately, I had the facilities of the Penn State Riding School, so I was able to teach him to trot. I was able to teach him to jump, using cavaletti, and then to teach him to run I would pick a horse that was just a little bit faster than he, and I'd get them to race with me until we got him to the point where he could really run. He was my three-day horse.

01-00:16:07

Farrell:

Can you explain what cavaletti is?

01-00:16:10

Bank:

Cavaletti is a series of poles on the ground, usually about three feet apart, and a horse can walk through them, and they can trot through them, but they can't pace through them. If you set up these series of poles before a jump, you can teach a horse how to judge where to take off for a jump. If you set up a series of jumps, about twenty-four feet apart, then the horse learns how to jump a series of jumps, and it helps them with their coordination, and it helps them with their judgment of where they should take off. That's how I brought this little horse around. Now, when I first bought him I didn't know what to do with him in the summertime, so I thought, well, I'll take him home. Turns out it would cost about \$50 for me to hire somebody to take him from Penn State down to West Chester, and in those days minimum wage was \$1, so that was kind of an expensive way to do it. I thought, I'm studying agriculture, and I had a boyfriend who was very handy, so I decided I would take the hundred dollars and I'd build myself a horse trailer. We took one of those shop courses where you learn to use power tools, and then you're supposed to build a project, so our project was a horse trailer. My boyfriend could weld, so that was very helpful. We did a couple of things with this: we didn't have an axle on this trailer. We made a rectangle that went down like this, was welded to the side of the trailer, and then it went down, and then we put the wheel on it—I guess it was up—because that made the trailer much more stable. But, of

course, a trailer that's a single-axle trailer has a tendency to tip, so we had to figure out how to put in the bar, and where the horses would have to go, because [laughs] if it tips up and it lifts the back of your car off the ground, you have no traction; when you'd go down, that's too hard on the car. I just had a little 1950 Chevrolet Coupe with a power slip type of drive. That was an innovation. The other innovation that we developed was to make a removable hitch, so that I could put it under my car. I'm very sorry we didn't get a patent for it, because that's how most hitches are now, but in 1956 nobody had that sort of thing. But that's what we did with this trailer.

01-00:19:24

Farrell: How did you end up balancing it out?

01-00:19:27

Bank: Basically, well, we had a chest board, [laughs] and then we had a pipe, and it went through another pipe to separate the horses, and then it came back to the tailgate, where we had a floor flange, and you'd screw it in.

01-00:19:46

Farrell: Oh, interesting.

01-00:19:48

Bank: We had a chain, so we could adjust where the horses would stand.

01-00:19:52

Farrell: Okay, okay. That's really innovative. [laughter]

01-00:19:56

Bank: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I've got a picture of it here. I actually used that trailer for probably four or five years, three years at college and then after I graduated I hauled horses up and down the East Coast and went to all my horse shows in it, where everybody [laughs] marveled at my trailer. But it worked very well for me, with my little horse. I went to a lot of the events that were now being run by Stewart in Virginia, where they would do it in one day. You would do everything in one day. You would have the dressage, and then you'd have a cross-country, and then you would have the stadium jumping, and it was all over in one day. Some of the other, bigger events, of course, were run over three days, and I did compete in some of those. But since I was an early starter in these events, as the criteria for who could enter what class, I always ended up in the top class, which meant that in several years I now had to compete with the Olympic riders. That was moderately successful, [laughs] because they were riding thoroughbreds. They were very well trained. They were schooled. The horses were schooled. The riders were very proficient. I was coming in with my little hunter. It was a time when you could do that. You can't do that now.

Now, you really do need a horse that is suitable for this kind of work, and usually it's a thoroughbred or thoroughbred cross. But my little horse used to turn in fast cross-country, and nobody could believe it, because he was the

kind of horse that—it was a gaited horse, and then he ran like this. [laughs] After I graduated from college I kind of bummed around for a while, and then I lived for a year in the South. I lived in Mobile, Alabama, where I thought I was going to get a dressage trainer to improve my dressage, which was pretty grim. I took two horses down there in the trailer, and that kind of worked out and kind of didn't. I was going over to Columbus, Georgia on the weekends to go foxhunting with the Midland Hounds. Ben Hardaway had hounds, and he had a stable, and so at some point he convinced me to come on over and help him by helping the trainer that he had there with his stable. At this point I had these fantasies that I wanted to ride in the Olympics. Well, Olympics are amateur, so you can't get paid for riding or training, so I got paid as a secretary over there. To backtrack a little bit, when I was in Alabama I found a job with the CDC as a lab technician, and so with that behind me, when I did move back to West Chester, PA, after about a year, I was able to get a job as a lab technician in a hospital. They trained me for all that. When I moved back to Pennsylvania, I found a barn that wasn't being used and arranged to keep my horses there. I was able to ride there, and ride out in that country, and go foxhunting. That worked out very well.

01-00:24:53

Farrell:

I was going to ask you if you liked dressage, because I know sometimes going from going fast and being bold and being brave in a field, and doing hunts like that, moving to no jumps, being super refined, trying to basically train your horse to do ballet with dressage—did you like that? Was that something—?

01-00:25:18

Bank:

That was my weakest. With this particular horse that was a little challenging, because inevitably if you tried to get him to pull himself together, and he'd start to resist, then he would break into a pace. [laughter] He always did it when we were going across the dressage court, so that the judge could see that he was pacing and not trotting. That was our weakest. If I could survive in the dressage, then I could do okay with the other two. But I did not have that much dressage training, and so I was kind of doing it all wrong.

01-00:26:14

Farrell:

Was it just more something you had to do because you wanted to participate in the three-day events?

01-00:26:18

Bank:

Pretty much. Pretty much.

01-00:26:20

Farrell:

I understand that. Yeah, so you come back from your year in the South, and then you move to California in the early sixties. What prompted that move out West?

01-00:26:36

Bank:

Well, in the years that they didn't have one of the international events the Wofford Cup was offered, and that was a full three-day event. I did go to one

up in the Boston area with this little horse and another horse that I had. The Wofford Cup was coming up in California, at Pebble Beach. Life was just kind of humming along, and I wasn't going anywhere, so I talked to my college roommate, Diane, the one that I had bought horses with, and her life was kind of humming along, not going anywhere. I said, "Do you want to go to California?" She said, "Yeah." We bought a pickup truck and a two-person camper, and my mother took one look at my homemade trailer and said, "I don't want you to go, but I'm not going to let you drive over the Rocky Mountains with a trailer with no brakes." She found a used commercial trailer that had brakes and everything. In I guess it was beginning of July of 1962, Diane and I packed all our bags and all our belongings and put them in the trailer with the horse, and I had a dog at that time, so he ended up finally in the trailer, as well. We took off. It took us about a month to get out to California. We would drive for two days, stopping overnight, camping out, putting the horse wherever we could, and then we would layover for a day, and then we'd go two more days. We visited all kinds of interesting places. We went through Yellowstone, and the Tetons. We went through the Badlands. We took a day and went up to Banff and Lake Louise, and we ended up in Seattle at the time of the World's Fair there, so we spent a couple days there. I was able to put my horse with a Pony Club family there. We drove down the coast. Our first impression was the Pacific is green, not grey, like the Atlantic. Our next surprise was its cold. It's cold all year round. Atlantic coast, the Atlantic Ocean is warm in the summertime. People go to the beach. They swim in the water. That was something that we had done in the summertime. That was kind of a disappointment, but we drove down the coast and got to Pebble Beach, and in Pacific Grove, which is just outside of the Pebble Beach area, there was a stable. Across the street from the stable was a trailer park. We were able to park our truck there, and we lived in that. I was able to keep the horse at the stable, and they had access to the Pebble Beach area. I proceeded to ride in there, and to get my horse conditioned, because he'd been in the trailer for a month, and do some training over there. I was not too successful in that competition, because my horse really didn't get back to full form in the month that I had to work on him, but staying at Pebble Beach were Michael Plum and Michael Page, and some of the good horses that they rode. And, of course, Pebble Beach has a very fine stable, and they also run an event every year. But this was the big one; this was the Wofford Cup. After I'd done the Wofford Cup, we moved up to San Francisco, got an apartment, and figured, well, we'll stay here for a year and see what happens. It was sort of an adventure.

01-00:31:45

Farrell:

Yeah. Were you living in San Francisco proper?

01-00:31:48

Bank:

Yeah.

01-00:31:49

Farrell:

Where were you boarding your horse?

01-00:31:51

Bank:

First at Pacific Grove, and then, after a couple of months, I couldn't afford the apartment, because I had gotten a job as a lab tech in the doctor's office, which paid zilch. [laughs] I had a dog, a horse, a car, and myself to support. It just wasn't doing it. My friend, who had studied home economics, was able to get a job in a cafeteria, so she got to eat. She never brought any home for me, but— But there was a stable in San Francisco, and it was out on 48th and Judah. You would never know it was there, because it was behind very tall doors, but there was a little stable there, and it had maybe ten horses, if that. I was able to rent a hovel across the street. I mean a hovel. [laughter] No heat. That area is pretty cold. But I could ride two blocks to Golden Gate Park, and I could ride one block and ride on the beach. When I got out there somebody that I was riding on the beach and I got into this debate about which is better, English horses or Western horses. I said, "My horse can do anything yours can do except rope a cow, because I don't have a saddle horn." He said, "Well, can he go a hundred miles?" "Sure, my horse can go a hundred miles." He said, "Well, there's this hundred-mile trail ride from Tahoe City to Auburn." "Oh, okay." I found out more about it, and I wanted to ride this trail before I did it in competition, and he put me in touch with some people that had a summer home up there. We arranged that they would ride with me down the trail. Well, when I got there they had unexpected guests. So, going from the East Coast, assuming that you know [laughs] a lot of things, I said, "Well, is the trail marked?" "Oh, yes." I took off from—let's see— I'll think of it in a minute. Squaw Valley, where they had a stable and I'd park the horse. I headed up over the hill, off to follow the trail. It was reasonably marked, enough so that if I went for a time and I didn't see one of the trail markers I'd go back to where I saw the last one. But you go over some very interesting terrain, like Cougar Rock, which is a rock face that the horse clamors up over. You go through two very deep canyons, and you come out in a little settlement called Michigan Bluff. Between Michigan Bluff and Forest Hill supposedly there was a hotel and a corral where I could put my horse—that was my goal—and if I was there later than ten o'clock they were going to call, and then they'd go out and look for me. Well, I got between Michigan Bluff and Forest Hill and it got dark and it was okay because you could find the trail, but then I got out into a meadow and there's no trail. So I take my flashlight and I look all around. Oh, there's some powerlines. If I follow the powerlines, I will get to someplace. So I did, and I got to Forest Hill. They were not expecting me. There was no place to put the horse, but we did manage to put him in somebody's backyard. That was my big introduction to— [laughter]

01-00:36:40

Farrell:

West Coast riding.

01-00:36:41

Bank:

West Coast riding.

01-00:36:43

Farrell: Wow, that's quite an introduction.

01-00:36:46

Bank: Yeah. So I did ride. I started probably five or six times with the Tevis Cup. Bucky did get a buckle. The first time I overestimated his condition and we got pulled, but the second time we got through. After that I met—I knew I should've remembered these names—Rex Moyle, who had horses that he kept on a range out in Idaho, and they would bring their horses in and put shoes on them and ride them for a week, take them down to the Tevis Cup, and come in in the top ten. He basically developed strains of horses and cattle and mink and hound dogs. His Moyle horses were, he said, the Mormon Pony Express horses, not thoroughbreds, and he introduced Roten horses to them, which were Morgan, Arab, and mustang horses. I decided I wanted to go get one of these Roten horses, because supposedly when you ran them into a corral they would jump out over the fence. A-ha! [laughs] So I did ultimately get one of the Rotens, and it turned out to be a very interesting horse.

01-00:38:42

Farrell: What was that horse's name?

01-00:38:44

Bank: I named her Pegasus, Peggy.

01-00:38:45

Farrell: Pegasus, okay. Did you still have Bucky at the same time?

01-00:38:49

Bank: Oh, yeah. Oh, no, I wouldn't get rid of Bucky! [laughter] But it turned out that the ground out here was very hard in the summertime, and so it didn't take very long before he started having sidebones, and it was very difficult to condition him here, although I did take him to the events that were around here. There was one in Fresno, where they had a nice, open outside course, and then the Pebble Beach had an event, and the cross-country was there, through the golf course. Concord Mt. Diablo had an event, and they ran their cross-country course through the woods. But you had to go there, and you had to spend two or three days. As a working person, that was not viable. I said, "You know, we really should have a one-day event. I should show them what a one-day event was." Meanwhile, I had hooked up with Mary Lou Reese, who was the DC for the Contra Costa Pony Club, and we used to practice out at Buckeye Ranch, which is now part of Briones Park. He had horses that the kids could rent, so we could do lessons and that sort of stuff, and then they did regional rally. While I was there I had my first son, Mike, who got to go for a ride with me on the hundred-mile trail ride. [laughs] He was born December of that year. Two years later I was pregnant again and rode on the trail ride, and had twins. Well, having one baby, I could still work with the Pony Club. Having three, it didn't quite work. But that was the year that we had to do the regional rally. A regional rally for a Pony Club includes five tests: they have the dressage, the cross-country, and the stadium jumping; they have to

demonstrate that they can take care of their horses with no outside help; and they have to take a written test. The logical place to have it was at the Hunt Field. I can give you a little bit of history of the Hunt Field.

01-00:42:06

Farrell:

Yes, I would like that, but just to clarify real quick: at this point had you moved from San Francisco to the East Bay?

01-00:42:17

Bank:

We moved to the East Bay probably after a couple of years. We lived out in El Sobrante for a while, and then we decided that we wanted to move someplace where we could keep our horses at home. El Sobrante, we had them out in a pasture with a whole bunch of other horses, and it was owned by a developer, so you never knew when they would tell you to get the horses off. I had been trailering over to Redwood Park to ride with some friends, and really liked this area. I started looking for places along Skyline Boulevard in Oakland, basically, where I could have horses. In June of 1969 we bought this place on Fernhoff Road. It did not have a stable, but it had a back hill, and it's amazing what you can do with a bulldozer. [laughs] We got a conditional use permit, and built a little three-stall barn. Of course, by that time I had accumulated horses. I bought Peggy from Moyle. Then I went back and I bought one of the crossbreds, which I called Orion. After we had built a stable here we bought a second crossbred from him, which we called Auriga. They were all stars. Roten/Mormon Pony Express.

We had more than what we were supposed to have back there, because I bred Peggy to a thoroughbred. [laughs] We ultimately had Bucky and Peggy and Orion and Auriga, and then Peggy's foal, Ecos arrived shortly after my twins. We had a little population explosion. But the range horses were interesting, because I tried training them the way we had on the East Coast, and when Moyle brought Peggy down, because she was pretty wild, and I said, "If you can catch her, halt her, break her, and bring her down, I'll buy her." I was living in El Sobrante at that time. He brought her, and he said, "I don't know." [laughter] This horse has some siblings, shall we say, that had turned out to be pretty hard to train, and so I decided a different approach with Peggy. I had a cowboy friend who had horses in the next pasture, and so instead of using the regular way of breaking her or training her or taming her, we snubbed her to his saddle so she couldn't get her head down, until we got to the point where I felt she was okay and wasn't going to buck me off, ha-ha. She did. She would. If I did something she didn't like, she would dump me right there, in front of the instructor, or in front of my father-in-law, or in front of— [laughter] But I rode Peggy for quite a few years, and she was a wonderful little horse. Turns out she didn't like adults. Ultimately, she ended up going to Lynn Preoveles, who used her in her program, because she loved little girls about ten years old. They made a fuss over her, and so she would just pack them. She'd pack them around a jump course. Aim her at the fence, "Oh, I'm supposed to do that,"

and she would do that. She introduced a lot of young people to eventing, but if the mom or an adult got on her, no way.

01-00:47:00

Farrell: So interesting.

01-00:47:01

Bank: Yeah.

01-00:47:02

Farrell: So, so interesting.

01-00:47:03

Bank: She was interesting, but the other two horses turned out to be wonderful backyard horses. We used them on the trail ride. I got buckles for finishing on Bucky, Peggy, Orion, and Auriga, not Ecos. I didn't dare take him on a trail ride. We did the trail ride for quite a few years, but then at some point it was just too difficult.

01-00:47:32

Farrell: Were you at this point using trails within the East Bay Park District?

01-00:47:37

Bank: Yeah.

01-00:47:37

Farrell: Okay, which trails did you like? Which trails were you going on?

01-00:47:41

Bank: Well, the nice thing about the East Bay Regional Park is that certainly where we live we have Redwood Park and we have Chabot Park. In those days they used to take a road scraper in the spring to even out the trails. They would grade it into the hill, which means that the slough would form a nice little soft pad along the edge of the trail, so you could actually walk, trot, and canter, and the park wasn't that heavily used, so you could actually get out there and really trot, canter in some places, and you had a soft shoulder, basically, to ride on. More recently, because I guess they had too many trails to grade, they changed the way they graded trails, and so now they grade them so it slopes out. What happens then is that during the summer the trails become dusty. In the winter, all the dust sloughs off. Now many of the trails are down to bedrock, which is okay for bicycling, and it's okay for hiking, but it's not good for trotting and cantering horses. Again, I lucked out. I was here at the right time.

01-00:49:15

Farrell: Yeah. You were starting to tell me a little bit about the history of the Hunt Field. Do you mind sharing that with me?

01-00:49:24

Bank:

Sure. In the early '60s—I'm not too sure what the date—Bob Lorimer had the Oakland Riding Academy, and he had people boarding there who wanted a jump course. He had some sort of arrangement with East Bay Regional Park, because I'm sure he didn't have the equipment, but they basically went to the hill behind the Oakland Riding Academy and they graded, and they graded the top off a little knoll, and they graded a ring cut into the hill, and then they graded two more pads, which actually if they were square could be a large dressage court and a small dressage court. But they were dug in, and then they had two parallel trails cut around the side of the hill. They did extensive masonry work. They built banks. They built all kinds of jumps that you could jump up on and off of. They built a stone wall. But they used rock, and they cemented it in. I did go to a horse show up there once that Bob had and rode that course in that condition. Now, as a horse person, if your horse makes a mistake and drags a leg, or bangs a leg on rock, you can cause serious damage to the horse's leg. You may even make him so lame he's no longer useful. Bob kept that facility. He had a fence around it, and if you wanted to go up and school you would go to the Oakland Riding Academy. You'd sign a release. You'd pay him ten dollars. He'd give you the key, and you could go up there and practice, which I did. Shortly after that, his wife and all the people who wanted to ride up there went somewhere else, and so he didn't need it anymore. After a period of time the Hunt Field was opened. Some of the fence started falling down and they didn't repair it.

It was about that time that we needed a facility for this regional rally. We made arrangements with East Bay Regional Park to use it for a week, and we went up there with the Pony Club parents, and we kind of cleaned up some of the fences. It was a D and C rally, so these kids are sort of beginner and intermediate rallies. We made a couple of courses up there for them. We had the ring. I'm not sure where we got the jumps, but since these Pony Club teams—they come in teams: they're three or four riders, and they have a fifth person who's the stable manager, who doesn't ride, or who could ride one of the horses if something happened, the rider got sick or something. The top three scores on your team count, so you need at least three people, but if you have four then, you know you can take the top three. We brought in portable stalls that come in units of twenty, ten stalls on either side, and we put two of them on the longer court, and we put one out on the shorter court, so we were able to handle as many as thirty horses. There's no water up there, so Mary Lou Reese's son Chris Bearden was able to drive at that time, and so he took a water truck, and he would fill up the water truck, and then we'd park the water truck down on the pad so that there was water down there. We did—I've just looked it up—the D riders first, and they would come in on Monday and set up, and then they'd do the dressage and cross-country on Tuesday, and then Wednesday they would do the stadium jumping, and then they would clean up and pack out, get their awards, and then the C teams would move in. They'd move in Wednesday, and then they would do their cross-country and dressage on Thursday, and the stadium on Friday, and pack up and leave. I thought,

gee, this would be a great opportunity to do a one-day event here, which was a new concept. I went to the Metropolitan Horsemen's Association, and I said, "Would you be willing to sponsor me, or back me, if I run a three-day event at the Hunt Field?" They said yes. Of course, that includes the insurance; it includes the use of their equipment, which we were able to put on a trailer and bring down; and some of their member volunteers. One of the challenges is that it's now an open facility, so you don't want to have anything up there that people will school over and get hurt. All of the sort of flimsy—because we used eucalyptus poles, mostly, and the ring had railroad ties and eucalyptus poles all around it. A lot of our jumps were eucalyptus poles. But at the same time, I worked with East Bay Regional Park to make the jumps safe. I found telephone poles. I found railroad ties. We capped all of these stone structures either with a railroad tie or the telephone poles, and the wall we couldn't do much about, so we made that an oxer, which means that we put a rail in front of it and a rail behind it so that the horse would jump the rails and not the wall. There was a nice variety of jumps up there. I mean, we had steps going up. We had ditches. We had water jump. We had post and rail. We had banks. It was a great, fun place.

01-00:57:24

Farrell:

It sounds like a really diverse set of jumps, too, for the course.

01-00:57:27

Bank:

Yeah, we had a little bit of everything, and even in some of the areas when they had bulldozed to make the big and the little plateau down below, you could make a slide. Down at the bottom there was a trench, which was a drainage ditch, which we fixed up and made a ditch jump. What we would do is I would design the course. My friend Kay Hitch, who boarded at Skyline Ranch, would round up about forty people from Skyline Ranch, to be fence judges and other judges, and do all the things that we needed to run the event. On Saturday we would dash out there, and we'd put up all the jumps. I always had a registered event; I always did a training class division so that I could get the support of the United States Combined Training Association, and all their type of support. We had to have technical delegate. We had an ambulance.

At that time Bob's ambulance would come to a lot of our shows and just sort of camp out. We had Bob's ambulance there. Technical delegate, judges. Mary Lou Reese was used to timing ski events, so she had all that equipment. She was our timer. It was really a big project. It caught on like wildfire. The first time we did it was kind of hokey, but the next time we probably had thirty or forty, and then we had forty or fifty. One time we had seventy; that was too much. That was too much, because if you do it all in one day, you do the dressage, and while the people who are waiting to do the dressage get to walk across country, and then they do the dressage, and the people who did the dressage got to walk across country, and the dressage in both courts, because we used the main ring and we used the longer court, had to be done, because the cross-country course ran right through the lower dressage court.

They would do that, and when we had enough that it would be dark if everybody went in order, then some of the riders had to ride their stadium before their cross-country. But ultimately it worked out very well. The challenge, really, is the property is on serpentine, and serpentine is very slick when it's wet, and it's very hard when it's dry. I had to pray to the rain gods every year that if we'd had a rainy season that the rain would stop on Thursday and if we hadn't please have it rain on Thursday. Nine out of ten times we were okay. [laughter] But it was sort of the end of March that we had to do it, and it was good because it was a warmup for the Fresno event. The only time it didn't, it was too dry, and it was really hard. At that point I'm not sure who I dealt with, but the idea was that around the jumps we would bring some horse manure and shavings up to soften right around the jumps.

01-01:01:52

Farrell:

Oh, okay. That makes sense.

01-01:01:54

Bank:

But turns out the person at Skyline Ranch got overenthusiastic and put it other places, as well, and Harlan Kessel went out and he just about had a fit, because here was his serpentine prairie with all this garbage on it. That had to be removed. But so that was one of our big errors. In 1980, Melvin Cox came to MHA and said he wanted to do this big deal Oakland horse trial, and he wanted to do grand prix jumping, and he wanted to do a three-day event, and he wanted to do all sorts of things. Well, our Sequoia Arena wasn't big enough for grand prix jumping, so Jeanne Hovewitz decided that if we take the plateau that had been already scraped off at the one end of the Hunt Field and filled in some more there, that we could get a big enough area. One of my neighbors was building his house, and he was hauling out truckload after truckload after truckload of this dirt. Jeanne got in touch with him and had him dump on that field. We filled in a fairly good-sized area. Of course, we covered up about three fences jumps in doing this. The park district got the proper grass seeding. One of the problems was it wasn't properly compacted. We hooked up to a fire lettlethdrant. We tried to grow grass on this area. Well, of course, the local stables thought that was fun, and they would go across it and everything. At some point we realized that the ground was not suitable for jumping, and so Jeanie got her 415 Society and they enlarged Sequoia Arena so that they could have the jumping up there. Meanwhile, I worked with East Bay Regional Park to do the cross-country jumping out on West Ridge Trail. That was really kind of exciting, because we found an old fire trail, and so I rode with the guy on the bulldozer, and we cleared the trail, and then we used I think it's now the CCC—it's the young people that come out and work on the park. I don't know if it's CCC [California Conservation Corps].

01-01:05:10

Farrell:

We can check on that.

01-01:05:10

Bank:

Conservation Corps? It probably had a different name then, but, you know, young people who are getting their GEDs and who are getting training by the park to do projects. We cut eucalyptus poles, and we made a whole bunch of jumps, and created a cross-country jumping field out there. Well, Melvin didn't get his funding, so it turned out to be a big mess. About that time the combined training association told me that I had to have my course ready six weeks ahead of time. I said, "I can't do that." They also told me that I had to go at a different time of year. I said, "I can't do that." That pretty much concluded—1980 was the last time that we had an event there, because it was just getting too complicated.

01-01:06:21

Farrell:

I have several follow-up questions on a lot of what you just told me. I guess I kind of want to start with the eucalyptus poles. I grew up riding, and they were always wooden poles. Can you tell me what the difference between the eucalyptus poles and the wooden rails are?

01-01:06:39

Bank:

Well, eucalyptus was imported from Australia. Somebody thought that they were going to make a ton of money, because they grow tall and they grow straight—at least the younger ones do—and that they would be a great addition. They planted eucalyptus all over the place. Now, the saplings are nice. They're about right. A few years old, they're about, you know, three to four inches, and you can get a good twelve-foot sapling that goes from, say, four to three inches. The park district had a number of these sort of plantations, and young saplings, and they were very happy to have us come and use them. The problem with them is that after they dry out they're terribly hard. They're so hard you can't drive a nail through them, so you have to drill your nail hole first. We would get the green ones. The park would supply green eucalyptus poles for us to maintain the fence around the arena, and to do our jumps.

01-01:08:02

Farrell:

Were you using them for just fences, or were you using them for jump rails, as well?

01-01:08:06

Bank:

Jump rails, as well, yeah.

01-01:08:07

Farrell:

Are they lighter, as well?

01-01:08:10

Bank:

Not necessarily. But, you see, the jump rails are fixed. A cross-country course.

01-01:08:17

Farrell:

Oh, this is for cross-country. I'm thinking stadium a little bit. Okay, so cross-country.

01-01:08:21

Bank: Oh, no, no, we used regular show jumps for stadium.

01-01:08:23

Farrell: That makes sense. Okay, okay, all right, I just wanted to clarify that. So when you were originally starting to set up the events, who from the Park District were you working with?

01-01:08:41

Bank: Usually Jerry Kent and the Supervisor of Redwood Park (1970-1980).

01-01:08:42

Farrell: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about what your impressions of him were, and his support of the event?

01-01:08:50

Bank: He was always very supportive, very supportive. Jeanie Horowitz was in there seeing him all the time. [laughs] She was able to probably get more cooperation than the average person, because she was in there all the time, and at that time they were up at the Trudeau Center. It was right there, and Jerry had a portable office out in back of the Trudeau Center. I would go in there every year, and arrange with them to use the Hunt Field for that weekend when we set up, and when we had the event, and then the understanding was that when an event was over we'd take the fences down. It's an open facility, and it's safe. Jerry was very supportive. I can't think of his name right now, but the supervisor of Redwood Park was also very, very supportive. I mean, he was very happy to go out and cut eucalyptus poles. "How many do you want?", you know. But at that time we didn't have dogs in the park. We didn't have bicycles in the park. You had mostly hikers and horseback riders in the park. It was a totally different time than now. I mean, now, Redwood Park is a very popular park. There's bicycles. There's dogs. There's dogwalkers who have six dogs each, off-leash—yikes—a pack, and if you have an assistant, then you can have twelve, six a person. So that is a change. And at some point, probably twenty years later, I was appointed to the PAC. But we continued to maintain the arena for many years. We maintained the fence. It was an open, public arena. At that time there were a lot of people who had horses at home, and they would ride down the bridle trail down the center of Skyline Boulevard and go up there and ride, and maybe jump some of the jumps that were still there. It wasn't until probably ten years later that we started to get some people on our board that were interested in doing it again. This time when we went out with the park they discovered that in our absence a rare and endangered plant only found in San Francisco, the Presidio, had made home on our Hunt Field. Where they made their home was in the slough where there had been a cut and the serpentine was exposed. The slough from the serpentine was where this *Clarkia Presidio* decided to reside, and where it decided to reside there was really no way we could—because it did it on one of our jump trails, and it did it on the larger dressage pad, and there was just no way that we could coexist with it. Jerry Kent tried to find another place in

East Bay Regional Park where we could have a Hunt Field, but you need enough people in the area that are willing to maintain it, and if you have an event you need enough volunteers, so we just never found a place that was suitable. So that was it. Judi Martin became the concessionaire at Skyline Ranch, and she decided she wanted the Hunt Field arena, so she got it. She's renamed it Redwood Arena, or they've renamed it Redwood Arena, but there is a sign still up there that says Hunt Field.

01-01:13:42

Farrell:

When you were working with the Park District to set this event up, and you were coordinating forty volunteers, what was that like to manage all of those moving parts?

01-01:13:57

Bank:

Oh, it was a three-ring circus. [laughter] Kay Hitch got the volunteers, so that was a big part of it. We had some people that would go out and help me build the fence. The day of the event either my husband or somebody else would sit in a trailer and do all the scorekeeping. It was; it was a three-ring circus. When we got done, we had a spaghetti feed at my house [laughs] for everyone who'd helped. But it was fun, and the time was right, and I really enjoyed doing it. It was a challenge. It was a challenge.

01-01:14:57

Farrell:

What was the entry fee for people who entered?

01-01:15:01

Bank:

I think about twenty-five dollars.

01-01:15:03

Farrell:

Did it ever become a money-making event?

01-01:15:06

Bank:

Well, yeah.

01-01:15:07

Farrell:

Yeah, okay. I didn't know if the goal was to break even, or if it did end up being profitable.

01-01:15:12

Bank:

No, no, I'm sure we made money, because if you have forty people, or fifty people, at twenty-five dollars each, that definitely would cover your expenses plus.

01-01:15:30

Farrell:

Okay. Do you know if anybody from the Park District was also riding or entering the event?

01-01:15:40

Bank:

I don't know, but the office people used to come out and watch it. They'd come out on Sunday and watch it. During the time that we were just doing the

arena, and when Judi Martin took over, the people who had dogs, who really needed a dog park, found a Hunt Field. I have a picture here of before all this activity took place. On the top of the Hunt Field, where the soil was very thin, there was a whole mat of yellow flowers that would come up in the spring. The native grasses we really never touched, because most of them were on the side of the hill. But people were riding through there then, so we kind of had a trail through those yellow flowers. The dog people came, and they would sort of stand on a nice sort of semi-level spot. There was a nice, big tree there. They would throw balls for their dogs and everything. At some point the facility was really trashed, as far as plants. The park decided that they would make it a resource protection area, and put up the fencing. Now it is a resource protection area.

01-01:17:24

Farrell:

How did that impact the equestrian community?

01-01:17:28

Bank:

I think by that time— Well, one of the challenges is if you ride out from Skyline Ranch, go across the road, and go either on the Dunn Trail or up over the hill past the park headquarters, there's a place on the Dunn Trail where people who are walking their dogs park their cars, and they open the door, and they let the dogs out and the dogs would run down on the trail and attack the horses. So that impact was not necessarily for the Hunt Field, but was from the change in park use. And then, of course, we had the bicycle challenge with bicycles riding everywhere. When I was doing all this, the park was really used by hikers and horseback people. I could take a young horse out on the trail and train him. Now you need to have a horse that's been desensitized to dogs and bicycles, baby carriages, and everything. You really can't take a young, green horse out. The other thing that has happened is that when I first moved up here there were a lot of people who had horses in their backyard, and so for a long time they used the Hunt Field and the Hunt Field arena, and would come to MHA shows, and we had a pretty big membership. But as their daughters graduated and went off to college and didn't want the horse anymore, or couldn't have the horse anymore, a lot of these places were sold, and they were sold to people who didn't have horses. Now we don't have very many people up here that have horses. The lots were laid out by some MHA presidents and MHA people who speculated that, you know, they could develop this area and sell lots, and that's what they did. The lots were all an acre or more, and you could put a horse setup on it at that time. That's how we ended up here. Now you can put a horse setup on your property if your house is placed in the right place, and you can put your barn and your corrals forty feet from your house and forty feet from your property line, and a number of other criteria. You can still do that, and there are a lot of horse setups up here in the hills that are kind of hidden behind people's houses, and you wouldn't know that I have a horse setup. [laughs]

01-01:20:41

Farrell:

No, no.

01-01:20:42

Bank: I'll show it to you later.

01-01:20:44

Farrell: When the horse trials ended and you stopped doing the three-day event, and then the one-day event, as well—so in 1980, when this stopped—how did that impact the equestrian community?

01-01:21:01

Bank: Well, by that time eventing had gotten to be much more formalized. There were trainers who were training horses and students to do this type of thing. There was a big, beautiful course set up over near Stanford, at Woodside, and there were other courses around. People had moved on. I don't know how much longer they would've— They might've come, just because it's a one-day event, but people had moved on, and the sport had gotten much bigger, and more expensive, because you had to have a good horse, you had to have a trainer, and usually you had to go somewhere for two or three days. The people that we had impacted were probably mostly local people. After that, I said, well, I guess I'll do something easier. I'll do dressage shows for MHA. Since 1980 I've been doing the dressage shows up at Sequoia Arena. [laughs]

01-01:22:17

Farrell: Oh, funny. Can you tell me about some of, I guess, maybe your most memorable experiences relating to riding on the Hunt Field?

01-01:22:31

Bank: Well, I didn't get to ride in any of the events because I was running them.

01-01:22:35

Farrell: You were working them.

01-01:22:35

Bank: We had to take the fences down. [laughter] But yeah, I went up there occasionally, and I did use the arena, because riding over to Sequoia Arena would take you probably forty-five minutes to an hour, and Huntfield was twenty minutes away. We used the arena, and a lot of the local people did. Kathy Sibley and her daughter Chelsea had horses at home, and they used the Hunt Field arena, and they helped us maintain it for a number of years. And then at some point they moved their horses down to City Stables, which had opened at that time, by that time. That would've been early 1990s. And then Judi came in and she took over.

01-01:23:35

Farrell: Okay. Speaking of people, you've mentioned a few people who are definitely notable in the field. Was there anybody else who became notable, or was notable, that either entered or participated in some way in the event?

01-01:23:52

Bank: Not that I'm aware of. Yeah, and it was quite a while ago. [laughter] Yeah, I found a box with old programs and courses, and it was really interesting. I was

looking at the names of some of the people, because this was the program. It has all the people that entered, and what they entered in, and all that type of thing, and you're certainly welcome to take that.

01-01:24:15

Farrell: Yeah. Did you have any favorite horses that would enter the event? Did you get to know any of them when you were running?

01-01:24:26

Bank: Not really.

01-01:24:26

Farrell: Okay. Was there, I mean, a memorable show, or a memorable year that happened, or sort of incidents worth noting?

01-01:24:42

Bank: Well, I guess the year we tried to run seventy entries. [laughs] We had to put a dressage court up on top of the hill. We had three dressage courts running, and we said no, never again. But Chan Turnley [Howard "Chan" Turnley] and Kay Hitch and Inez Fort and I used to ride as an Oakland team at some of the other events, you know, at Pebble Beach and Fresno. I got to do that. It's quite different from the East Coast.

01-01:25:23

Farrell: Yeah. Can you actually tell me a little bit about the differences between the East Coast and the West Coast?

01-01:25:28

Bank: Well, in the East Coast it's all private property. There's no public land, so to speak. If there's a hunt in that area, they usually make arrangements with the farmers to be able to ride across their land. When you rode in the East Coast, you had to be aware of the farmer and the farmer's need. You don't ride across his crops; you ride around the edge. If you open the gate, you shut it. If you jump into a field where he has cattle or horses and you break the fence, you fix it. It's riding on private land. The footing is much better, because they have rain all year round, so if they don't have rain for two weeks they think they have a drought. The footing is good. In the wintertime it's freezing. [laughter] A drag. Out here it's all trail riding, because the terrain doesn't lend itself, at least not in this area, to being able to ride cross-country. The trails are bulldozed into the side of the hill, and so therefore if you have a horse like I had to run away with me, it got kind of dangerous for me to ride him on these trails. Also, if you have a horse that tends to spook, that can be a little hazardous, too. But the other horses that I had turned out to be pretty stable horses, so we were able to ride them.

I had to retire Bucky because he would run away with me, and then he got the sidebones from the hard ground. He was retired for a long time, and I would put him out to pasture in the summer and bring him in in the winter. Here, because we lived here East Bay Regional Park, we have access, or I have

access, I can ride out from my house, go down the center of Skyline Boulevard, I can go to Redwood Park, I can go down the other direction, and I can go to Anthony Chabot Park and ride in those trails. Most of the horses now are at the various boarding stables, and East Bay Regional Park owns three of the five boarding stables: Anthony Chabot Equestrian Center in Anthony Chabot Park, down near Keller; they own Skyline Ranch, which is Skyline and Redwood; they own Piedmont Stables, which is further down Redwood Road; across from Skyline there's a privately-owned barn.

In 1990 we joined forces with Harlan Kessel and various other people to pass Measure K, which was an open space and park and recreation bond measure. I think it was sixty million. With that money we purchased the City Stables, and we also had some money for improvements at Skyline Ranch. That's the five stables that we have up here now. Earlier, there were many. Many. When I was here there were a couple down at the end of Joaquin Miller Road. There was Green Barn and White Barn, and they would ride up through Joaquin Miller Park. But those all got developed.

01-01:29:42

Farrell:

I see, yeah.

01-01:29:43

Bank:

Yeah. Amelia Marshall has written a book about the Redwood Hills. She has two books out now. One is *Oakland's Equestrian Heritage "About The Horsemen"*, which goes up to about 1970, and then a new one that is just published is *Redwood Hills*, and there's a little chapter in there about the barns. ["Oakland's Equestrian Heritage" 2008, "East Bay Hills" 2017.]

01-01:30:11

Farrell:

I'm going to check that out. How does it feel now when you look across the landscape and instead of seeing jumps you see restored serpentine prairie?

01-01:30:23

Bank:

Well, they demolished the jumps. They took out all the trees.

01-01:30:27

Farrell:

Yeah, so instead of seeing jumps you're seeing the prairie.

01-01:30:30

Bank:

The prairie. I don't know. I kind of wish that I'd taken more pictures of what we had, because we really didn't, or if we did it was before [laughs] digital pictures, so they're buried somewhere. Yeah, I wish we had taken more pictures. It was a fun segment of my life, sort of from working and then getting a family.

01-01:31:12

Farrell:

Did your husband and kids ride?

01-01:31:17

Bank: I got him on a horse. He did the trail ride with me, the hundred-mile trail ride. With the kids, riding out from here was kind of difficult because I felt I had to ride with them, because we had to ride up to Skyline and then into the park. They all learned to ride, but none of them really took it on. Now, if I'd had girls that might've been different, [laughter] but I had boys.

01-01:31:49

Farrell: Can you tell me about—since 1980 you've been involved more with dressage?

01-01:31:59

Bank: Yeah.

01-01:31:59

Farrell: Okay. Are you still involved with that?

01-01:32:02

Bank: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I run three dressage shows up at Sequoia Arena every year. I'm kind of in charge of maintenance at Sequoia Arena, because we lease that area from the City, and we get a fairly good rate because we maintain it.

01-01:32:27

Farrell: Yeah. I want to ask you a few reflective questions now. What was the significance of being involved with the event, the coordination, the Park District, the equestrian community here?

01-01:32:41

Bank: With Measure K, it was empowering in that as a group of people, you know, we could actually pull something like this off. The horse community also was very active in Measure K, and, again, that was a very empowering experience because there was just a handful of people, and the group put the ballot measure together, got the City Council to okay it, and with grassroots work, not a lot of money, we were able to get it passed, and it had to have two-thirds vote to pass. It was the only environmental measure that passed in 1990. Again, that taught me that a dedicated small group of people can do amazing things. Never underestimate a small group of dedicated people.

01-01:33:59

Farrell: What are your hopes for the future of the equestrian community here?

01-01:34:04

Bank: Oh, boy. That's one that MHA is trying to figure out. Right now, most of the young people take lessons at the stables. Many take lessons on school horses, so they really can't take them out on the trails. Up here on the hill we have some real limitations. MHA is trying to figure out how we can get young people involved. They do have a Pony Club up at Skyline Ranch, but it's different. MHA used to have a junior club with an advisor, and the kids did a whole bunch of things together, but that was when we had a lot of kids up

here, and there wasn't a lot of formal instruction, and most of the people who were up here were trail riders, or they were big show people and trained for that. Kids nowadays don't do that much trail riding. MHA used to have several trail rides, but the community is just not into it anymore. Sort of tagging on that, again, I was very fortunate: I got appointed to the PAC, the Park Advisory Committee, by the Alameda County Mayors in 2002. That was the year that the park decided to create a policy regarding dogs and bicycles. I got to be a part of creating the policy for bicycle use and dogs in the park. That committee was staff and several PAC members, and I guess Carol Severin was our board member on it. We developed a trail matrix for deciding what trails were safe for multi-use. I think it was Doug Siden was the board member that we worked with on the dog issue, because at that time the dog issue was that the people in Alameda wanted a dog park at Crown Beach, and so then we developed criteria for dog parks and dog use, because we were beginning to get a lot of people out in the park bringing their dogs, some of which should be allowed off leash and some shouldn't. I was with the PAC for I think about twelve years.

01-01:37:19

Farrell:

Oh, wow.

01-01:37:20

Bank:

But at that point they had put in time limits, and so after the Alameda County Mayors' time ran out John Sutter sponsored me for the—or appointed me to the PAC.

01-01:37:41

Farrell:

What are your hopes for the future of riding within the Park District? I know you talked about it a little bit, but I just wanted to ask you that more specifically.

01-01:37:49

Bank:

Well, Piedmont Stables is mainly a trail riding facility, and most of the people there ride in the park. Most of the people out at Equestrian Center also use the trails. With our interconnected trails there's a lot of good riding. Of course, once you get over the hill then you get into areas where people can keep horses more readily. Some of those areas are very active. I think at one point, Contra Costa County had the most concentrated number of horses [laughs] in the state, or something like that. At least, that's what they said. As you get over the hill there's a lot of park use, a lot of park use. But it's all trail riding. It's all trail riding.

01-01:39:02

Farrell:

Is there anything else that you want to add?

01-01:39:09

Bank:

I don't know. Horses are very special creatures. There's a saying that the outside of the horse is good for the inside of the man. Horses are used for therapeutic use. Horses are wonderful animals for young people to learn how

to take care of them, to groom them, to learn how to ride. Hopefully now that City Stables has opened and we have a concessionaire there who is really into, shall we say, more alternative uses of horses than just horse shows—so she's into all kinds of therapeutic programs with disadvantaged youth, with disadvantaged young adults, veterans, and those kinds of things—those are some of the programs that she's getting started. Horses are magical animals. They look sturdy, but they aren't. They're destructive, and they're self-destructive, and if you have them at home you spend more time repairing all the damage that they cause to your facility, and their legs are very susceptible to all kinds of injuries, and a three-legged horse isn't much use. Also they have a digestive system which is very sensitive, and so if they get the wrong feed they can get sick. Since they don't have muscles to be able to throw up, then you have to get the vet in to pump the stomach out, and then they have what's called colic, and a horse that colics can recover but sometimes they don't. Horses really turn out to be a fairly delicate animal to take care of. They all have personalities, and they're all different, and they're just wonderful creatures.

01-01:41:37

Farrell: Well, thank you so much. I appreciate this.

[End of Interview]