









California Horticulture Oral History Series

Edward S. Carman

PACIFIC COAST NURSERYMAN, AWARD-WINNING HORTICULTURALIST, AND HISTORIAN

With an Introduction by  
Angel Guerzon

Interviews Conducted by  
Suzanne B. Riess  
in 1997

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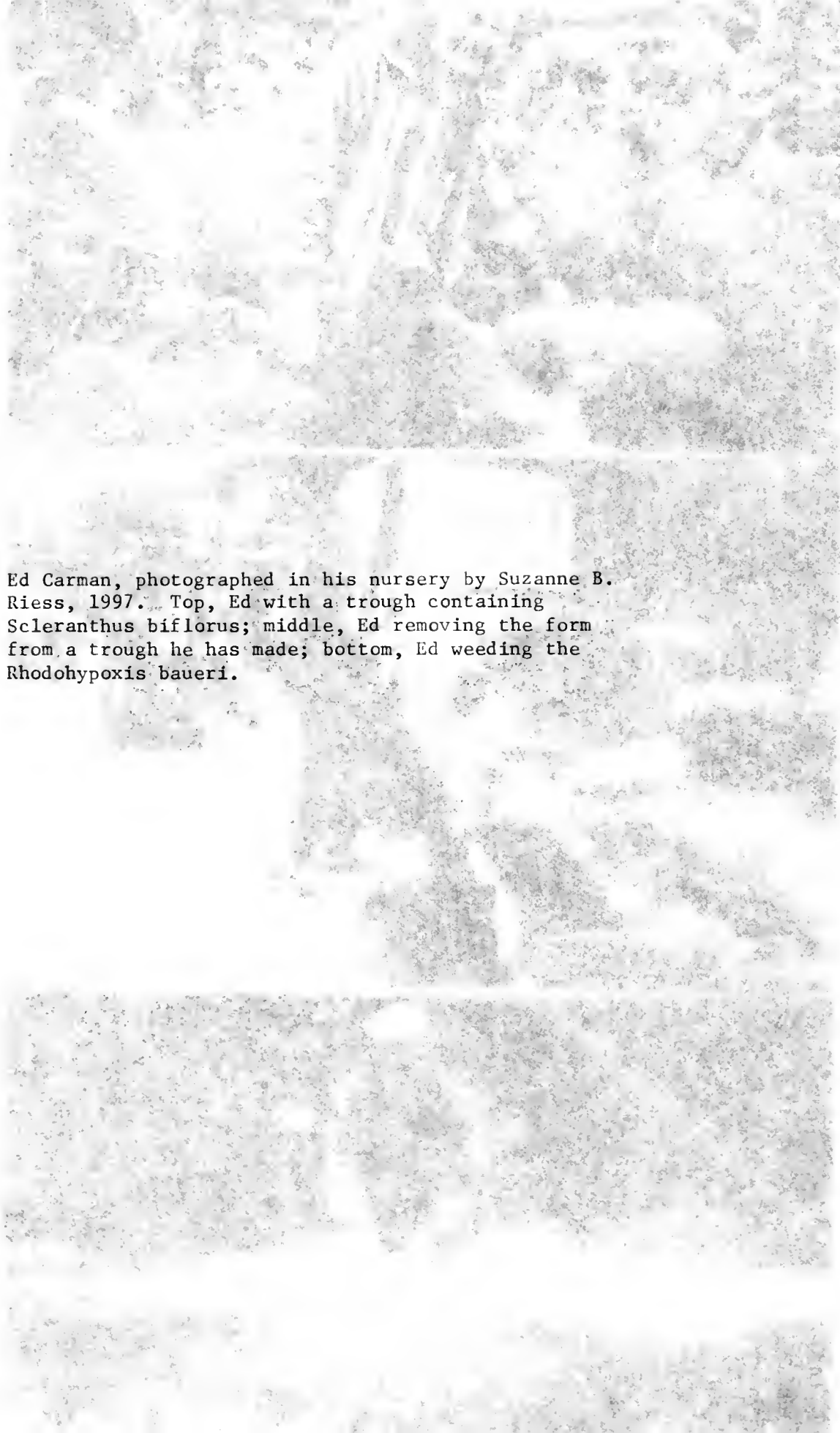
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Ed Carman, photographed in his nursery by Suzanne B. Riess, 1997. Top, Ed with a trough containing *Scleranthus biflorus*; middle, Ed removing the form from a trough he has made; bottom, Ed weeding the *Rhodohypoxis baueri*.

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Ed Garman, photographed in his nursery by Suzanne B. Riess, 1957. Top, Ed with a trough containing *Scleranthus biflorus*; middle, Ed removing the form from a trough he has made; bottom, Ed weeding the *Rhodophoxiabaueri*.

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Introduction by Angel Guerzon, UC Santa Cruz Arboretum.

Interviewed 1997 by Suzanne B. Riess for the California Horticulture Oral History Series. Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



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Western Horticultural Society  
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Wayne Roderick



TABLE OF CONTENTS--Edward S. Carman

INTRODUCTION by Angel Guerzon	1
INTERVIEW HISTORY	iii
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION	vi
I CARMAN FAMILY HISTORY, LOS GATOS AND EARLIER	1
II CARMAN'S NURSERY, 1937-WARTIME	
Peninsula Nursery History	6
Wartime, Tomatoes	8
Cans, Pots, Stone Sinks	10
Advisors, Organizations, Customers	12
III ED'S MOTHER, AND ED'S EDUCATION	15
Childhood Memories of Hayward	16
Lexington School, and Time out for Fishing	17
Los Gatos High School	20
IV WORLD WAR II	
80th Division Headquarters	22
Photographing War's Destruction	24
V CARMAN'S NURSERY, 1946-1970	
In Boom Times, and Since	27
Specialization, Kiwi Vines	31
Fungicides, Labor	33
Ethnicity in the Nursery Business	35
C.A.N.	37
VI KIWI AND OTHER INTRODUCTIONS	41
Trevor Davies, New Zealand	41
Shipping Arrangements	44
Creating a Market	45
First Kiwi Shipment, 1968	47
Into Production, 1970s	51
A Trip to New Zealand in 1972, and Returning with Rhodohypoxis	55
Other Imports	58
English Connections, and Further Afield, 1975	61
VII THOUGHTS ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS	
Plantsmen and Businessmen	66
The Unusual, Micropropagation, "Disposability"	68
Catalogs, Perennials, Cycles	69
Wisteria Mysteries	71
VIII HORTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND PEOPLE	
Western Horticultural Society	78
Times Change	80

Promoting New Plant Materials	81
Saratoga Horticultural Foundation	83
UC Davis	85
Cal Hort, Awards, Journal	87
Lester Hawkins	89
Rock Garden Society, Bonsai	90
Kiwi Growers' Association, and Photographing Plants	93
Royal Horticultural Society, and English Gardens	95
Saratoga Horticultural Foundation Directors	96
International Plant Propagators Society	98
Santa Cruz Arboretum	98
Alpine Garden Society	100
The Herb Society, the NCCP in England, Gene Pools	102
A Review of the Route from Grower to Retailer	103
Conserving Gardens	106
Victor Reiter	107
"You Can't Control Things After You're Gone"	109
IX THE VIEW FROM LOS GATOS	
Jean Carman	111
Staying on in Los Gatos	112
The Other Fellows in the Business	114
The Vanishing Experts	115
Community Volunteer Since 1946	116
School Board	118
Moving Houses Around	119
More on Writing the Peninsula C.A.N. History	121
The Future of Small Nurseries	122
Continuous Arrival of New Plants	123
"Choose Horticulture"?	124
Victor Reiter's Rule of Three	126
Fanatics and Novices	127
X WALKING THROUGH THE NURSERY WITH ED CARMAN	129
TAPE GUIDE	142
APPENDIX	
A Biographical sheet provided by Ed Carman	143
B "Carman's Nursery", by Marshall Olbrich, <i>Pacific Horticulture</i> , Winter 1991	148
C "Perennials for Western Gardens", by Ed Carman, <i>Pacific Horticulture</i> , Summer 1994	152
D "Ed Carman's award caps 49 years in nursery trade", by Joan Jackson, <i>San Jose Mercury News</i> , September 21, 1995	156
E "The First 25 Years, 1950-1975," by Charles Burr, Peninsula Chapter, California Association of Nurserymen	158
F "2nd Time Around, 1950-1986," by Charles Burr, Peninsula Chapter, California Association of Nurserymen	171
HORTICULTURE, BOTANY, AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN ORAL HISTORY SERIES LIST	188
INDEX	192



## INTRODUCTION by Angel Guerzon

I first encountered Ed Carman sometime in the late sixties while I was at San Jose State. I was looking for an elusive herb requested by the mother of a close friend. An acquaintance working the reference desk at the college library suggested that I try Carman's Nursery in Campbell. I remember walking in out of the parking lot, and the first thing I saw was a small table holding some little pots of *Armeria maritima*, *Arabis sturri* and *Erodium reichardii*. I asked a very serious man if he had any comfrey, and he showed me where and what it was. I bought a plant and left. Mrs. Blake was very pleased to get it. But I was doomed. I went back the following week and bought some of those little plants on the table.

I went to Carman's almost once a week thereafter. Eventually I got to know Ed Carman better. He was and still is a quiet, reserved and shrewd man. He is an observant and assessing individual who prefers not to waste his time and attention on anything he deems unimportant. What is important to Ed are his wife, Jean, their three children and his plants. Ed has become legendary amongst his customers for not selling plants to them. Here and there (often but not always near the NOT FOR SALE sign) are some one and onlys, perhaps the last of a batch needed to reproduce the next crop, or some pet plant that hasn't yet rooted permanently into the ground. The potential purchaser elated by finding such an uncommon gem has their bubble burst at the cash register.

But if Ed jealously guards some of his rare treasures, he is also generous with the plants he has worked hard to introduce into the nursery trade. About twenty years ago I asked him if I could purchase his kiwi plants to sell at a small garden center I managed in Gilroy. At the time Ed's nursery was the only place I knew of where kiwis were available outside of mail order catalogs. Ed consented and some people in the Gilroy area became very happy. Another time after *Otatea acuminata aztecorum* (Mexican weeping bamboo) had bloomed and died I was asked to pick up a flat of seedlings to give to fellow nurseryman, Mike Smith, owner of Wintergreen Nursery. Ed really is more than willing to share his horticultural wealth.

He is an active member of his chapter of the California Association of Nurserymen, volunteering both his time and effort. I would see him working at the NorCal Trade show in San Mateo nearly every year. He is also active in the Western Horticultural Society, again donating his time. He would phone me on Western Hort's behalf to sell the organization's publications. He would regularly go to the monthly meetings of the California Horticultural Society in San Francisco and often display some wonderful new plant(s) that he was growing.

In the 1991 winter issue of *Pacific Horticulture* magazine, Marshall Olbrich wrote an article about Ed and his nursery. Marshall and his partner and bete noire, Lester Hawkins, were the creators of Western Hills, the horticultural heaven in Sonoma County. Marshall was a cynical and bitter man with the broken heart of a romantic. Yet with all that spite and spleen he was kind, generous and honest, although he was more honest behind one's back. In his article, being aware of his own limitations, he offered in contrast a list of the "Saints" of horticulture: Nova Leach, Ray and Rose Williams, Gerda Isenberg, and Ed and Jean Carman. These were and are unpretentious people quietly fulfilling their mission in life, all possessed with the passion for plants and passing it along to others. (Of course Marshall was and will always be a patron saint of horticulture to most of us.)

Any mention of Ed would not be complete without a word about Jean. They are incomplete without each other. They complement each other perfectly. Jean is irrepressibly cheerful and optimistic in contrast to the more austere Ed. In the face of chronic health problems Jean perseveres and manages to enjoy life and look forward to each day.

Ed once made a rock garden in front of his home. I remember at least a couple of *Raoulia* species, maybe some tiny-leaved matting thymes and some mounding member of the caryophyllaceae. It was extremely spare, subtle, elegant and evocative of something far larger. There was an understated Zen-like element to it. But it also suggested the bare windswept Scottish moors of the movies and National Geographic magazine. I never asked Ed what inspired it. I just believe it is an expression of who and what he is.

Angel Guerzon  
Horticultural Consultant  
San Lorenzo Garden Center

April 27, 1998  
Santa Cruz, California

## INTERVIEW HISTORY--Edward S. Carman

The evidence, from all the awards and testimonies, is that Ed Carman is the nurseryman's nurseryman. But that is not to say he is solely a nurseryman. He is also in the best sense a joiner and a doer in the larger horticultural world, and his acquaintance in that world is wide. It was not until 1996 that the Regional Oral History Office asked him to consider doing an oral memoir--he seemed too young to be reminiscing--but long before that he had been recommended for an oral history by friends and peers. Predecessor interviewees in the office's California Horticulture Oral History series, as well as old friends from the garden world, were happy to learn that we were taping Ed's story. To the extent that it's an honor to be interviewed for The Bancroft Library, Ed's world wanted to see Ed honored for what he has done for his profession, and because as a nurseryman he has been exceptionally generous in the rare and best tradition of sharing what he has created.

Ed Carman earns the natural appellation of nurseryman, but in him that is redefined to mean pillar of the community, organization man, teacher, mentor, family man. In all these roles he gives as fully as he can. Probably he would think it grandiose to say that the "nursery" he is tending is humanity, but to walk through the Carman nursery, out behind the house Ed and his wife Jean share in Los Gatos, and to see with what indulgent understanding he bestows a touch on his little plants, rescues the straggler from suffocating weeds, one can easily imagine what it was like to be a daughter, or a Boy Scout, or a young member of the profession coming to Ed for advice.

I first met Ed when I was raising funds to do an oral history memoir with Hayward nurseryman Toichi Domoto. They are friends and peers--Ed co-chaired the Committee for the Domoto Oral History. Oral history meshed, for Ed, with his project to document nursery history on the Peninsula, a subject he discusses in the following interviews. How the many start-up nurseries served the burgeoning post-war Peninsula population, from what different backgrounds their owners and operators came, and which nurseries survived and made significant contributions to the diversity of materials available, these are topics that engage Ed. As well as compiling Peninsula nursery history, Ed has an ear for the history of the world in which he and his family have become "old family," and the interviews are rich in Los Gatos recollections.

Having described the wide scope of Ed's interests, it is necessary to make clear for the reader the relatively modest style of the operation that is Ed's nursery. In the *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 23, 1995, there was an article, including information on location and hours, on Peninsula "horticultural hot spots". They included Filoli, "a Georgian-style mansion surrounded by sixteen acres of formal gardens," the Elizabeth S. Gamble Garden Center, "an old-fashioned Edwardian garden

filled with roses, wisteria, and cherry trees," seven other nurseries and gardens, and Ed Carman's Nursery.

Here is the description of Carman's Nursery:

"In nearby Los Gatos is Carman's Nursery. This backyard nursery, started in 1937, has been in business here for twenty-five years, attracting collectors looking for something different in perennials, grasses, vines and rock garden plants.

"It's a great place to get plants with dramatic leaves--gunneras, rogersias, tetrapanax, and a host of hostas and hellebores. Here you'll find *Iris pallida*, with white striped leaves, variegated ivy and variegated hydrangeas.

"Here are one-gallon blooming lapagerias, Chilean vines with big waxy bells in white, rose and carmine that are rarely seen outside of botanical gardens. There is also a connoisseur's collection of named wisteria, including *W. longissima*, with four-foot racemes of blue flowers, a double-flowered lavender one propagated from plants at Filoli, and the large-flowered, white *W. venusta*.

"But this is a nursery that demands the patience of a treasure-seeker, since plants are not arranged in any order and most are unlabeled. Fortunately, proprietor Ed Carman and his daughter Nancy are on site and happy to help out with names, provenance and information on plant care.

Does this "backyard nursery" sound like Orchard Supply, or Home Depot, or whatever other generic nursery has cropped up in the local mall? Far from it. Yet it is places like Carman's Nursery, and Domoto's in Hayward, that make the Filolis possible. They are the "hot spots" for the knowledgeable garden-lovers, and men like Ed and Toichi friends of the heart and suppliers to the great gardeners and landscape architects, all of which is to say that the rewards are more than monetary.

To be monetarily rewarded in the nursery business usually means more business than nursery. Yet for Ed Carman there are the rewards of plant propagation, hybridization, and bringing the remarkable new creation to gatherings like the California Horticultural Society, and winning the Cultural Award, or the Award of Merit. In 1978 Ed received Cal Hort's Special Award for the "knowledge, skill and dedication [he brings] to the introduction, propagation and distribution of unusual plants. His nursery in Los Gatos, California, is Mecca for adventurous gardeners in search of rare and beautiful plants." Mecca in Los Gatos--the horticultural world has a tremendous reach, as Ed makes clear when he talks about the trips that he and Jean have taken, visits to countries that have old and interesting cultures and important museums, but most of all for Ed, countries that have fellow plantsmen, nurserymen who will

drop everything to walk through their gardens or their growing grounds to share that excitement, and that culture, with a knowledgeable peer.

Ed Carman and I began interviewing in March 1997, and we quickly established a pleasant Monday pattern for the four interview sessions. We sat at the dining room table of the Carman house in Los Gatos. There was a hum of life in the background: a sister would stop by, Ed's wife Jean would look in, daughter Nancy might interrupt in order to satisfy a customer's question. After two hours of interviewing we would adjourn to the kitchen where the very adept Ed would quickly assemble a lunch for Jean, himself, Nancy--the daughter working at the nursery--and myself. Lunch had several basic components: peanut butter, jelly, homemade bread, cheese, leftovers from the weekend's fare, and an interesting preserve or concoction made by Jean.

It's tempting to romanticize the Carman's Nursery experience, because I found there a family working well together, and a man who is the matrix of his various communities. But then Ed would walk me out to the car when lunch was over, and I would murmur some admiring comment about kiwi vines strung out along the drive--"an awful lot of pruning"--and I would hark to the charming chatter of the mockingbirds--"they'll drive you crazy, they're at it morning, noon and night"--and I would inquire into the elements of the rock garden--"haven't had time for that." In other words, I had to be reminded that while I revelled in the richness of the "scene," it was just plain a lot of work to sustain.

When it came to editing the oral history, Ed read the transcript as I had edited it, but he didn't make changes, except where I asked him to clarify a few names. Any such fussing wouldn't be how he would spend his time, and I appreciated that Ed was taking time from the nursery, in doing the oral history. It was spring when we interviewed, he had been in the nursery for hours before I arrived, everything was growing--out there the fussing was necessary. As with Domoto's nursery, the Carman nursery is a one-man show the likes of which won't be seen again.

I hope this oral history, and the fine appreciative introduction by horticultural consultant Angel Guerzon, give some feeling of the man, the time and the place. Other Regional Oral History Office interviews in horticulture, botany, and landscape design, are listed at the end of this volume. The Regional Oral History Office, a division of The Bancroft Library, was established in 1954 to record the lives of persons who have contributed significantly to the history of California and the West.

Suzanne B. Riess, Senior Editor  
Regional Oral History Office

May 10, 1998  
Berkeley, California



Regional Oral History Office  
Room 486 The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Edward Stuart Carman  
 Date of birth 28 JUNE 1922 Birthplace For Lotos Calif.  
 Father's full name Hugh Carman  
 Occupation Nursery man Birthplace Winnipeg CANADA  
 Mother's full name Louise Marie Welty  
 Occupation Home maker Birthplace Alameda Calif  
 Your spouse Eleanor Jean Campbell  
 Occupation Bookkeeper Home maker Birthplace Alameda Calif  
 Your children Patricia Marie Work, Diane alias Chamber  
Nancy Louise Schwan  
 Where did you grow up? Tepungton area 2 mi S of For Lotos  
 Present community For Lotos  
 Education Tepungton school 8<sup>th</sup> grade For Lotos High  
class of 1941, San Jose State 2 yrs +  
 Occupation(s) Nurseryman

Areas of expertise \_\_\_\_\_

Other interests or activities photography fishing

Organizations in which you are active Western Hort Society  
Cal Hort Society Peninsula Chapter C.A.S.  
American Rock Garden Society





## I CARMAN FAMILY HISTORY, LOS GATOS AND EARLIER

[Interview 1: March 24, 1997] ##<sup>1</sup>

Riess: Let's begin at the beginning with your family history.

Carman: My grandfather--we think he might have been born in New Brunswick, but we're not sure. Otherwise he was born in New York and went to New Brunswick. My grandmother was from Prince Edward Island. She was a Stuart, and that line my sister's traced back to Bonnie Prince, I think. They married in P.E.I.--Prince Edward Island--and then he was an editor or a publisher.

They started moving west, my father was born in Winnipeg, and they were there for several years, and he [grandfather] edited a farmer's almanac type of thing, in which he had all sorts of stories about settling the great plains of Canada, and some priceless illustrations of farm equipment, and steamer sailings and everything like this for immigrants, for people coming into Canada. I have a bound copy of it--my sister has it right now.

I guess they moved next to Oregon, and he was on the Oregonian, either as a writer or an editor or something. Then they moved I think to San Francisco. You never talk to your parents much about stuff like this, so I never got the full story [chuckles]. But anyway, they were in San Francisco for a while--I'm not sure if they were there during the quake--and then moved to Zayante, which is over by Santa Cruz up in the Boulder Creek area.

Riess: They wanted to get out of the city.

Carman: I guess they did. You know, I'm not sure. I have one cousin who's older and I'm not sure if he knows. He said he neglected to

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<sup>1##</sup> This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. A guide to the tapes follows the transcript.

ask his dad about a lot of this stuff, and so nobody really can tell now why they did this moving.

Then I guess my grandfather kind of disappeared for a while or something--I don't know what happened. So after that my father moved here to the valley, before the war, in 1910 or 1912, something like that, I guess. He actually rented a little cabin down at the end of Mozart, down by the creek here, and worked for people who had land in the area. There's a big ranch that used to be over here [gestures] and another big ranch over here, and this was Cilker's, and that was Johnson's. Cilker's was actually across Bascom.

Riess: Do you know how much education your father had?

Carman: [laughs] He said that when he got to the sixth or seventh grade he was teaching the other kids then. You know, like they did, the older kids teaching the younger ones, and I guess that's about as much education he had.

Riess: It's interesting, if his father was a publisher.

Carman: I think my grandmother was quite well-educated, and our neighbor here, Mrs. Evans, remembers having her up to tea or going down to see her for tea when she would visit my father down here at the cabin. My cousin remembers her, but I don't remember her at all; she passed away before I was born, I think, actually. Maybe not, I'm not sure about that.

Riess: Your father was doing farm work?

Carman: He was working on the farms and pruning and stuff like that, and working in the dry-yards.

Riess: Dry-yards?

Carman: Yes, where apricots were sundried after being treated with sulphur. Also prunes which were dipped in large kettles of lye.

Riess: You never asked him about this?

Carman: I was thinking about this the last couple of weeks, and I should have asked him how he ever got interested in growing plants.

When I was born we lived right over here on National Avenue, and then I think we moved up by the Lexington Reservoir for a short time. Then we moved to San Jose, and I know he leased a nursery in San Jose at that time. That would have been about '24 or '25, I guess. Then he got a job as a manager of a ranch up in

Hayward, right next to the mausoleum which was being built at that time on Mission Boulevard. We stayed there until 1930, when I guess the Depression hit and he was let go.

Then we moved back up by Lexington, my mother's home place. My mother's father was still alive, and he was by himself, so we moved up there and took care of him. Then my dad started working in gardens in Saratoga as gardener and growing plants at the home place up there, at the ranch. I really didn't pay much attention then, either--I was in grade school, and I know I did some spading for the garden.

I remember Hayward, because I know my mother was growing pansies in raised beds, and they would dig them up in bloom and put them in these wood veneer fruitbaskets and sell them at the florist's. Somewhere I have a picture of a wicker basket with a handle, full of big pansies and a ribbon. She had won a prize at one of the fairs up in Hayward, a flower show or something.

Riess: Was she working with him everywhere he worked?

Carman: Pretty much, I would guess. She was born in Alma and grew up in the Lexington area. They were French--both the grandmother and grandfather on her side were French--and so they had big gardens, and she always worked in the garden. My aunt worked in a big estate up there [the Tevis Estate, on Bear Creek Road], and some of the uncles did too--there were thirteen in the family, so they always had a big garden and grew a lot of their own food.

Riess: There were many big estates around here?

Carman: That was a Dr. [Harry] Tevis. He was up by Alma. It was quite a show place at one time. I know several of my uncles, my Uncle Vic, and my aunt used to take care of the dahlia garden. He [Tevis] was a very prominent doctor in San Francisco. He also had a place in Fresno, I believe. It was a great big summer home.

He [Tevis] had a staff up there of cooks and maids, and one of my uncles was a chauffeur for him for a while and would drive him up to the city. I have a tape of him [my uncle] talking about driving the help over to Santa Cruz on their day off in this great big seven-passenger touring car. It [Tevis Estate] was quite the place, actually. It did a lot for the area up there, of course. And then it was sold to the Jesuits.

Los Gatos had a Jesuit school, used to be--now it's a retirement place--a novitiate. They used to walk through the ranch, I can remember, on their way up to the school up there at the Tevis place. It wasn't on their direct route, but I'd see

these young fellows walking through with their beige pants, all dressed in the same color.

Riess: It's an interesting part of the world, isn't it?

Carman: Oh, yes. There's a thing at the museum in Los Gatos right now about George Dennisen and Frank Ingerson, who were two artists. They were doing tiles and paintings and textiles and all sorts of things like that, way ahead of their time.

Riess: And The Cats.

Carman: Yes. There was just an article--the paper in Los Gatos, a weekly that comes out, John Baggerly is an old-timer who does a reminiscing article in there. There were several pieces about The Cats, and so then I wrote and told him about Evelyn Paine Ratcliff in Berkeley: she's the daughter of Paine, who did the cat sculptures. So he got that in the paper, but he got it a little mixed up. He had Paine as her grandfather [laughs], and he was only her father.

Riess: I would have expected it would have been Japanese or Italians who would be working in the big gardens then.

Carman: At the Tevis place?

Riess: Yes.

Carman: No, it was all local people I think he hired. I think that came afterwards, actually, because this would have been in the twenties--Tevis left there probably in the mid-thirties, so it would have been the late twenties to the mid-thirties, that ten or fifteen years in there, I guess. I think they would have hired just local people.

Riess: Do you have the feeling that your father loved what he was doing?

Carman: Oh, I'm sure he must have, because he never made much money on it. We don't make any money either [laughter], so you've got to love it. He was mostly happy when he was out there working on the plants. He didn't like to wait on customers too much [chuckles].

Riess: Going into business on his own meant that he had to wait on customers more.

Carman: Yes.

Riess: What's the transition from working for Dr. Tevis to getting his own place?

Carman: He didn't work for Dr. Tevis, that was the other side of the family.

No, my father was working in gardens around the Saratoga area, gardening and raising plants. So when my grandfather passed away, then we had to move, I guess, because the family wanted to rent the place up there, and we didn't have any money to rent. So we found a place down at the corner of Union Avenue, 2640 South San Jose-Los Gatos Road, which is now Bascom Avenue. It was about an acre, with an old house.

We moved there in '37, and that's when they started the nursery. He was still gardening, but then he started growing plants, bedding plants, and worked up to shrubs. He put up a little store, lath, and like everybody else, we were in business: some of these places I've been getting the history of [see explanation in chapter following] started with a twelve-by-fourteen-foot sales store, and put up sun lath, and started a nursery--it's interesting to see how they started.



## II CARMAN'S NURSERY, 1937-WARTIME

### Peninsula Nursery History

Riess: Let's include here what you are doing to collect histories of Peninsula nurserymen.

Carman: The first history [of the Peninsula Chapter, California Association of Nurserymen] that Charlie Burr did came out in '75. It was called "The First 25 Years, 1950-1975." Then the next one came out ten years later, and it was called "2nd Time Around, 1950-1986." It went up to '86, but it still didn't include many more nurseries. I'm trying to get all--even though they weren't in the association--all the nurseries that were around the valley.

Riess: Why are you doing this?

Carman: Well, there are so many young people in the nursery industry now, and most of them can't remember more than ten years. They don't know anything except the places that we have now: Woolworth's, and the big garden centers, Orchard Supply and places like that. They're good nurseries, they have a lot of good material, but the people running them--the managers of them--aren't really nursery people. They're getting certified nursery people and things like that, but the people working for them are just out of college, or they're retreads from electronics who got tired of that and want to do something else. There's a lot of that going on now, too.

I think they should know about what's gone on before, because some of it is really interesting. What I'd like to get in there is the story written by Leonard Coates, who was the man who founded Leonard Coates Nurseries. He started up in Santa Rosa. John Coulter, I think it was, sent me a copy of that and it's four sides, legal size, and very fine type, telling about his starting in the nursery business, starting his nursery. I don't know if I can get that all into it or not, it's a lot of pages.

Riess: The reason they don't know about this earlier history of nurseries is because they don't get it from the horticulture classes?

Carman: There's nothing in history, I think. They're not looking back, they're trying to look forward, so they're teaching them the newest things, and salesmanship and stuff like that.

Most of these are individual people who--sometimes they had an interest in one thing and they'd grow that, and sell a few things besides, or they'd sell little tiny pots. There were just hole in the wall [operations], in San Jose, several of them.

Riess: One of the things that keeps the nursery business together seems to be the organizations. Is that their role, keeping the history of the profession?

Carman: The Nurserymen's Association has fairly good membership, and they do have a program now where they're trying to improve the knowledge of the people working in the nurseries. They call it the California Certified Nurserymen. They have classes and things like this, and so they can keep getting more knowledge, about turf and bugs and diseases. That's working out pretty good, but there are a lot of people that aren't involved in that.

Most of the big places like Woolworth's and Home Depot, they're getting their people certified too now, but the Nurserymen's Association in California is having kind of a rough time right now because there's some infighting, I think, factions that don't think the C.A.N. [California Association of Nurserymen] is doing what it should.

Riess: When you get out the third and updated and more complete edition of this history of C.A.N., how will it be made available?

Carman: I think the Peninsula Chapter's going to print the first I don't know how many copies. I'm going to have to find out what the cost is going to be. And then we're going to use it as a fundraiser, I think, and sell it. We'll probably copyright it and give the copyright to the Nurserymen's Association, and then keep publishing it. I think we'll do it in these plastic binder-type things. Western Hort just did a vine book in that manner, Vines for the Peninsula.

Riess: How much space are you giving to the Ed Carman story?

Carman: Oh, I don't know, maybe a little bit more than what's in here now. I'm going to cut some of this out probably, although what I was thinking of doing is to put this entire section in and then have the section before that and after that. I don't know how it's



going to work out yet. I've got to talk to the young lady who did Western Hort's book--she did the computer work on it, and I think she did some of the layout.

I may get Elaine Levine, who is a--she and her husband used to publish some of these weekly papers around the valley, and they still have interest in one in Milpitas, I think. She was editor of the Western Hort books. I don't know how it's going to work. It's one of those things.

Riess: Those early nurserymen, do you think they were propagating material from estates where they were working?

Carman: No, most of them--because there were wholesale growers available--they would grow some things that were easy to grow, probably, but they would buy and sell mostly, I think, as far as I could find out. None of them did a great deal of propagating, unless they were growing on a wholesale level--then they would, of course, propagate everything to sell. But they were not propagating from where they were working; they were propagating from other stock plants or buying cuttings and things like that.

Riess: This is '37, just pre-war.

### Wartime, Tomatoes

Carman: Yes. And then in 1941 the war started. Then my father went into --they were rationing everything and there was not much, and so he went into--he knew one of the men who worked for CPC--California Packing Company--in San Jose, one of the big canneries around there. The people that were growing the tomatoes were the Japanese, and they were all put in concentration camps.

Then my dad converted the nursery into growing tomatoes for the canneries. He put up these beds with kind of a tent-like structure, and we got linen sheeting--that's what it was, I think --from one of the big department stores. The beds were forty feet long, I guess, so we had this cloth that would go over the bed to protect the tomatoes from frost. We had to put those on at night and take them off in the day. In fact, I've still got one. Then the tomatoes, they would get about that big [gestures] in the beds.

Riess: "That big" being a foot and a half?

Carman: Yes, a foot and a half. And they'd pull them up and put them in mud in fruit boxes. Remember the deep fruit boxes?

Riess: No.

Carman: They were about that long [gestures], that wide, and about that deep. They were strong wooden fruit boxes holding forty to fifty pounds of fresh fruit.

They'd just stand them [tomato plants] in there, and they'd count them in and they'd buy 1,000 or 10,000 or whatever they needed for the fields.

Riess: They would plant them out in the fields when they were that big?

Carman: Yes. Then what they do is they furrow them in and they set them down--say if a plant is that big, they set them down until there's only that much [gestures] sticking out of the ground.

Riess: Only about eight to ten inches.

Carman: Yes. The stem that's buried makes more roots. That's the way you should plant your tomatoes too. Bury them down to about three or four leaves on top.

Riess: But when people buy tomatoes now, seedling plants, they're soft little plants that are only about seven inches tall anyway.

Carman: Still bury half of it, though. It makes more roots.

Riess: What variety?

Carman: Oh, they were growing some special ones. They would bring the seed, because they had these special hybrids that they were growing for canning. I don't know what it was now.

Riess: You mentioned frost. So you're in an area where you do get frost.

Carman: Oh, yes. We had twenty-two [degrees] this year for two days. And in the big freeze in '90 we had sixteen [degrees] for five days.

Then he would hire the--there was a school right across the street from the nursery, so he would hire the kids there. Mostly girls, actually, to transplant the tomatoes in these beds. We've still got some of the old timecards on the kids [chuckles].

Riess: This is the kind of thing that you're saving?

Carman: Yes. Talk about stuff!

Riess: That box of plants sounds unwieldy.

Carman: They would pick them up then with a truck and take them to their field growers, and then they'd go out with their machines and plant them. Yes, they were fairly heavy, because the stems were about that thick [gestures].

Riess: In your lifetime--you're probably writing about this in your piece for the Peninsula Chapter of C.A.N.--you must have watched new equipment being developed to follow needs. You used an old fruit box to put the tomato plants in. But the means of picking the boxes up. Were there new devices?

Carman: Well, we didn't have any. They probably had forklifts when they were handling the tomatoes themselves, but they were still picking the fruit in individual boxes, they didn't have these big four-by-four containers then. And it was all by hand; there wasn't any machine picking at that time. That didn't come in until the fifties at least, I would guess--maybe later than that.

### Cans, Pots, Stone Sinks

Carman: American Nurseryman magazine came out in one issue with a timeline of when things first appeared--plastic, things like that. I kept that one, and I've got to write to them and get permission to use some of those things in there [C.A.N. publication]. Because, see, when we were in the nursery business then, in the forties, everything was grown in clay pots, before the war. After the war, then the tin cans started coming in.

There was a place in Santa Clara that would pick up the used tin cans from the canneries. (They would can the pineapple in Hawaii or someplace, bring it over here in gallon cans, cut them open to make fruit salad, and then the cans would be discarded.) This man collected and had a machine that crimped and tapered them so they would stack like pots. That place is still in existence over in Santa Clara, but they converted to plastic now.

But that was a big thing, because then the cans would stack and you could get 500 in something like this--whereas if you had 500 before they were just loose. We used to buy cans from a man who did the same thing up in Hayward, but he would dip them, and they were all, of course, dipped in either black or green paint. Then we got to collecting them from a cannery in Campbell and doing our own dipping.

Riess: The little incremental technological steps.

Carman: After plastic started coming in, then they started making or selling plastic pots. Of course, that's all plastic now.

Riess: And now they make plastic clay pots.

Carman: Right [laughing], they sure look like it.

Riess: And you're making your troughs, your stone sinks. This is going way off the subject, but we are talking about containers--I guess that's the subject. What is the tradition of the troughs?

Carman: Supposedly it's simulating the stone sinks from England.

Riess: Which were created, or just hollowed-out stone?

Carman: Just hollowed-out stone. They were chiseled-out stone, but they were perfectly square and everything, and they were used as sinks at one time in England. Then as new plumbing came in, of course, they were discarded and then they were used as containers for alpine plants mostly, or miniature plants. They were very popular. Authentic ones, I guess, are very difficult to find now. You hear about somebody who has a real sink, but most of the time they're made.

That's even changed: when we first started them we had to put a chicken-wire frame in the middle of it, get it in the center of that piece, and that was a terrible job. Now they have this plastic mesh, with little pieces of plastic--it looks like fiberglass but is plastic. You mix that in the concrete, and it reinforces, so you don't have to use wire anymore. That simplifies it a great deal. But when you get done with the trough, then you have to take a butane torch and burn it because it's got little hairs sticking out all over it, from the plastic. It looks like a wet dog or something [chuckles].

Riess: I think you must have been unique in dipping your pots and making your sinks.

Carman: No, a lot of nurseries did it at that time.

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Carman: They used asphalt-based water-soluble paint, I think it was. And they would set up a drain--generally galvanized tin or something--draining back to the main dipping. You'd dip the can, put it up on this thing, push it up, and the excess paint would roll down

and come into your dipping can again. So a lot of nurseries did that at that time.

Riess: And it was water soluble?

Carman: Well, I can't remember now--I guess it was. But when it dried, it wouldn't come off the can for a year or so. By that time the can was rusted out anyway. But I've saved a couple of cans [laughs].

Riess: You would! What kind of a relationship did your father have with the tomato grower, the Japanese family?

Carman: There was no relationship at all. The Japanese got moved out to the concentration camps, so there was nobody left to grow the seedlings for the canneries. My dad knew this buyer for the cannery, Will What's-his-name, I guess he knew him maybe from working on the ranches and stuff, because he used to work over here at Roger's Packing House, owned by Mrs. Rogers, where they packed fresh and dried fruit, too, before he got married. Anyway, the Japanese were moved out and then they had to get somebody to grow the seedling tomatoes, and that's what Dad was doing, he was growing the seedling tomatoes. The cannery brought us the seed, he'd grow the tomatoes, then they'd buy the plants back.

Riess: The seedling growing operation had been abandoned? Nobody would have bought it from the Japanese family that had been doing it?

Carman: No, because they could make more money working in a defense plant someplace, probably. You could go on up to Hendy's Iron Works and Foundry in Sunnyvale or someplace like that.

Riess: There are lots of stories--you probably are coming across them--people taking over the businesses of the Japanese.

Carman: There weren't any big operations--I think it was probably just small, like Dad's. They'd have a half acre or something like that, and they'd be growing 100,000 or 200,000 a year for them. So it was just small operations, I'm sure.

That continued until '45, I guess. Some of the beds were still there, I guess, in '45 after the war.

#### Advisors, Organizations, Customers

Riess: Growing seedling tomatoes--were there crises of wilt and mildew?

Carman: The only thing that we really were worried about was freezing. I still have some of the lanterns. We had these old kerosene lanterns. We'd hang these in the beds and light them and keep the frost off of the plants. They were being grown--they would be putting them out right about now [late March] I would guess. They'd have to be started quite a bit earlier than that to get them big enough.

Riess: If there had been problems, was the agricultural extension system, or the co-op, was that set up so that your father could call someplace for advice?

Carman: There wasn't anything available. Bordeaux was the only thing available, Volk oil was available. That was about it. And Black Leaf 40. Those three things were about all that was available at that time, I guess.

Riess: Volk oil?

Carman: That was mainly for fruit trees and things, scale and stuff.

Riess: Was your father part of the larger community of nurserymen, like you are?

Carman: There wasn't anything at that time. There wasn't any nursery association until after the war, actually, and then there was a group in San Jose, kind of a bunch that started to get together because some of the gas stations started to sell plants at a cut-rate price. I think that's what started it, I'm not sure. The association started in '50, so it would have been between '46 and '50, I guess, that this group met at different places around town and talked about prices and stuff like that.

They didn't have any real organization to it; it was just a group of people meeting and discussing stuff. The Nurserymen's Association started around '50, and we joined in '54, I think, when the chapter was formed. Dad liked to go to those meetings. There were a lot of people the same age that he was.

Riess: Did your father go back and get any more education?

Carman: He read Argosy magazines [laughs]. He was a very avid reader. He read everything. And he remembered a lot of stuff. He bought a couple of sets of encyclopedias, some of them with one volume missing, from used book stores. He read those. And of course all the seed catalogs and stuff like that he would read. The seed people--the A. H. Modena Seed Company in San Francisco he used to get seed from, and Hallawell's Seed Company--that was an old seed company.

Riess: They're still around, aren't they?

Carman: I'm not sure if there's any Hallawell's left or not. Nurserymen's Exchange, of course--I remember when Pearlstein used to come around and sell his plants and bulbs.

Riess: Not as organized as it is now. The history of the profession is so recent. And the passion, for instance, for native plants, that's probably nothing that he would have known about.

Carman: No, that didn't start until way after that. Well, there was a native plant grower in San Jose, actually. I have a couple of old directories of people that held licenses to sell nursery stock in California--one from '34 and one from '37, I think--and there was one nursery in San Jose that was native plants, I think, but I don't remember that one. The ones that I knew mostly were the ones that we were selling to during the forties.

Before the war we were growing bedding plants in wooden flats, and so I would be delivering sometimes to those nurseries, Navalet's and F. H. Cornell, and there were several other small places, like floral shops around town, that we would deliver a flat of bedding plants or something like that to.

Riess: And he probably worked with gardeners from estates?

Carman: Yes, there would be some coming in, and some of the owners were coming in--he used to work for Mr. Maurice Ranken, who was a lawyer in San Jose, and he would come in after we were down there. And Father Riker from Holy City would come in [laughs]. He formed sort of a cult at Holy City on the road to Santa Cruz above Alma.

Riess: Why do you laugh?

Carman: Well, he would come and sit there and honk his horn to get somebody to wait on him.

A lot of customers around the area were not big estates, but they were regular customers. But then we were growing, like I say, bedding plants and delivering around town a little bit. That's why I got to know some of these places more than others.





### III ED'S MOTHER, AND ED'S EDUCATION

Riess: Had your mother's education gotten a little further along than your father's?

Carman: Probably sixth grade, I would guess, because she was about the third or fourth oldest. She was helping at home and working out at different places--Dennisen and Ingerson I mentioned before, they were living quite close to them at one time, and she was keeping house for them, I guess, part time. And then my mother's family moved down to Lexington, and there was another summer resort up the road a mile or so and she was working up there. I just found the man who owns it now, and he says he's rebuilt the cottages, so I've got to go up--it was called the Wake Robin Inn.

Riess: Charming.

Carman: It's up on Black Road.

Riess: When did your parents marry? And how many children were in the family?

Carman: I guess it would be 1921. I was born in '22. I have three sisters: Marie, Marge, and Dorothy is the younger. Marie lives over on the east side of San Jose, Marge lives by Valley Fair, and Dorothy just moved to Arizona. Her husband was in the navy, retired, and moved to Prescott, Arizona.

Then on my mother's side, of course, I think there were thirty cousins, twenty-four or twenty-five still living, and we have a family reunion once a year up here in Los Gatos Park, and we can get 150 at the reunions sometimes.

My mother was a Weltz [spells]. They're getting spread out now; a lot of them have gone to the Seattle area, and up in the valley. Most of them are fairly close, actually. There are only about five or six up north, one or two down south. Most of them

are in central California. And then the next generation, I don't know how many of those there are. I'd have to look at the list.

We have four grandchildren: one is here in Sunnyvale, and three of them are up in the Sierra, up on Highway 70 by the little town of Portola, above Quincy. The oldest one is a junior in college at the University of Nevada right now.

### Childhood Memories of Hayward

Riess: What are some of your early memories?

Carman: I have a poor memory. I can remember being up at what they called the Walker place. That was a place up above the ranch in the Lexington area. All I can remember is being outside, and I think my cousin said they were having a turkey shoot for the Foreign Legion or something. There were a lot of brass spent shell cases out there, and I can remember picking them up. That's the only thing I can remember there.

In Hayward I was a little bit older, I started school in Hayward. I remember Dad had charge of this apricot orchard and peach orchard, and there was a cow out there which he hated [laughter] because he had to come home on Sunday night to milk the cow, unless he could get Manuel to do it, the hired help.

Riess: Wait--just Sunday night? This was a cow that you only milked once a week [laughs]?

Carman: No. He would like to come down here to see the folks, I guess, at the ranch over the weekend, and he'd have to go back early Sunday to milk the stupid cow.

But there I remember my mother growing the pansies in the bed. And they were building the mausoleum right next door on the property across the little creek, so Dad got a lot of scrap lumber. I had one little seed flat that he built at that time out there [in the nursery]. I remember we had a little tin trough about that deep, about maybe two by four feet, set up by the fence, and my cousin and I would play with little wooden toy boats in there. We had a rock for an island and stuff.

I guess my cousin had a .22 at that time, and we hiked over in the back--it was just hills up there with eucalyptus--and down a little gully, and he would shoot at the squirrels up there.

I remember picking peaches with my cousin in the orchard--to eat, not to pick. He [my cousin] didn't do too much work there either, I don't think. Well, he might have cut 'cots there, because I remember he talked about his mother and he coming up there to cut 'cots. Maybe they did. I don't remember that. As I say I have a poor memory for all this.

And I think my father used to drive Mrs. Gory, the owner of the ranch, around--I believe G-o-r-y is the way it was spelled. I talked to Mr. [Toichi] Domoto about it and he said he could remember the name, but I drove past it, and there wasn't one single thing. There's a road that's cut through now and goes right up the hill. There's a university up on the hill there [Cal State Hayward]. It goes right through where they had a big row of big palm trees on this property. The property looks so much smaller, I can't believe it's the same property.

Riess: The land that Mr. Domoto's nursery is on was apricot land too.

Carman: Yes. That was all orchards there.

I remember there was a fish farm between us and Hayward on the west side of the road there. They used to sell goldfish. They had big ponds out there and they raised goldfish. They'd take a net and scoop them out. Just like Bay Shore Fisheries up by Moffett Field. I've got some of his old fish cans that he built to ship the fish all around the country. Galvanized tin cans. [laughs] Talk about "stuff!"

Riess: Did you always kind of expect to be in the business yourself?

Carman: Not really, no. Like I say, I started school there, went one year to first grade, I guess, moved down to Lexington and went to school there, at Alma.

### Lexington School, Time out for Fishing

Riess: You've referred to Lexington. It's the Lexington Reservoir?

Carman: Yes. Well, there was a little town of Lexington there. Have you been over Highway 17? As you get to the reservoir there's a pond on the right-hand side of the freeway. Have you ever noticed that? That pond was my grandfather's ranch, actually. And so the road goes almost--oh, it's a ways from the house, anyway. [Lake Canyon Road, where a large pond is created between Montevena Road and Black Road, which winds up the hills to Skyline Road.]

It's easy to say Lexington because that's the closest. There was a little settlement of Lexington too, just a mile up the road. Then there was Alma, which is where the school was. It was the Lexington School at Alma, and so that's where we went to school then. I went to the rest of my grade school there, a two-room school with four grades in each room.

Riess: Do you remember anything especially inspiring about any teachers?

Carman: Well, Mamie McDonald, of course. She was a great gal. She taught there up until the fifties, I think, and then moved down to Los Gatos, to town, and taught even longer there, I believe. She was just a little short thing, too. Somebody was in the other day, one of the people we knew up there, and she said our class of five boys from the fifth to the eighth grade, this gal said that we were always Mamie's favorites. She lived in Los Gatos and drove up there every day.

We had a visiting shop teacher, a singing teacher, which most of the boys didn't care for, and once in a while we had a dance teacher. McClendon was her name. She's still teaching dance--she's eighty-something.

And we had movies. They would get a Friday afternoon movie. We would pull the shades down, have a projector and a screen, and you were really in the upper echelon when you got to thread the projector and run that. We had a little library that was about six by eight, connecting between the two rooms. And you could ring the bell once in a while--we had one of those handbells--to get the kids in to school.

We had a bunch of what we thought at the time were big rocks, and we were climbing all over them. I went up there before the school moved, and those rocks had shrunk. They were just so small [chuckles]. We had a big rope swing--which would never go now--on that tree down below. My sister fell off one time and sprained her arm. And we had these other things, like a merry-go-round: you'd run on it and jump on it, and it would keep going around. Stuff like that which certainly wouldn't be allowed these days [chuckles].

I only have one picture of those days, too. I can't figure out--I had a picture of about the third or fourth grade, and it's the only picture I have of that school. I don't know why we didn't have more pictures.

Riess: Do you have reunions?

Carman: Not from there. We have high school reunions. They had one up there, I guess, but I didn't hear about it or something. In fact, one of the girls a couple of years behind us wrote a story about the town of Alma because her grandfather was Mr. Osmer, he had Osmer's Store there. It was a little general store with a gas pump. At that time, that was the main road to Santa Cruz. Then they built the three-lane freeway above, and that was our Sunday afternoon entertainment: we'd walk out to the road and sit there and watch the cars coming back from Santa Cruz.

And we'd fish. And fishing during the fishing season, it opened on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and sometimes that landed in the middle of the week--now it's on a Saturday. At that time, when it fell in the middle of the week, Mamie would say, "You can go fishing, but you've got to get here by noon so they can count you as being present," so they'd get their ADA, see [chuckles]. So a lot of the kids would get back by noon, and some of them would never get back.

Riess: Trout streams?

Carman: Trout, yes. At that time, I think the limit was twenty-five. Once I was fishing with my uncle there, and he put on two hooks and he caught two fish at one time. I still see him pulling those fish out!

Riess: It does sound like the land of plenty.

Carman: Oh, it was great at that time. We had a stream run through the ranch. We fished on that stream, too. It wasn't very big. In the summertime when it was real dry the water would dry up between pools. There would be a pool here, and then there would be gravel and then another pool down here. My uncles and cousins, we'd all get buckets and we'd bail out all the water, throw it down the creek, and then get the fish that were left in the pool. [laughs] They were going to die anyway.

Riess: And you ate the fish.

Carman: Oh, yes, we ate them. It was in the thirties, anything you could get to eat, you ate. My uncles, we hunted rabbits and quail. I remember once my mother made stuffed quail for Thanksgiving. Can you imagine a quail about that big [gestures] stuffed? She was a great cook. My sisters take after her.

When we got really modern we had a school bus, a four-door Model A Ford to take us to the school in Lexington, because we were about a mile from school. We'd walk out to the highway, and two or three of my cousins lived on the same property in the house

above us, so they would walk out. Then I and my sisters. So we would fill the bus; there would be six of us in the bus for one trip [chuckles]. I don't remember how we got to school before the bus--I know we walked sometimes, but I can't remember walking in the rain. My sister remembers good. She's two years younger, she has a good memory, I'll have to ask her about that.

Riess: Did your father have a car?

Carman: Oh, yes. He had a Model T Ford pickup, I think. And they had a '34 Dodge hardtop touring car. We might have had another one, because then we moved down to the other place in '37, and in '38-- I think we had it still into '39 or '40 maybe.

I remember my sister and I were going to a show in San Jose, and we were looking for a parking place. We were driving down the street, and some guy came down a cross street and hit us in the back end and tipped the car over on its side. The tow people took it down to the garage, and we went down there the next day, and they put some oil in it and we drove it home [laughter]. It was an all-metal body, and so it had a dent on a couple of fenders, but it went fine for another year or two, I guess.

### Los Gatos High School

Riess: When did you come back down?

Carman: We moved down to Union in '37.

Riess: Was Los Gatos High School a rude shock? Was that very big or very different?

Carman: Well, I guess it was maybe 600 in the school. It was quite a difference because they were changing classes, and all that sort of thing, which we didn't do up in Alma--you sat at your same desk all the time. And they had a cafeteria.

We were actually in the Campbell school district, but at that time you could go to any school you wanted to. I knew everybody up here, so I went to Los Gatos. There was a Peerless bus that came by, so we could buy bus tickets, and sometimes the school even gave you a discount on tickets to get you to come to school, because they wanted the attendance too. My sisters started in Cambrian, but they transferred within a year or two, I guess, and then they both went to Los Gatos High too.

Cambrian was right across the street from the nursery. That was the one Cambrian school at that time; now they have three, still active--they had seven at one time, but they closed them down because of declining enrollment. Now it's going up again, so I don't know what they'll do.

Riess: What kind of ambitions did you have for yourself when you were in high school?

Carman: In high school I guess I really didn't think too much about it. I liked shop, though. Like I say, we had a shop teacher who came up to Lexington, and we'd make a couple of end tables or something. And when I got to Los Gatos High there was a shop teacher there. So then I was thinking I was going to be an industrial arts major and teach shop.

Riess: That would have required that you go to college.

Carman: Yes. I took college prep courses. I graduated from there in June of '41, and then of course December was Pearl Harbor. In the fall of '41 I had already started [San Jose] State. I went a year, up to '42. Then during that summer of '42 I went to work in the shipyards in Richmond. My brother-in-law, Jean's brother Alvin, was working for the SP [Southern Pacific] as an accountant in San Francisco, but then he started to work for the shipyards because it was better money. I went up and stayed in a rooming house with him in San Francisco, and we'd take the bus over to Richmond to work in the Kaiser Shipyards, building liberty ships.

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## IV WORLD WAR II

80th Division Headquarters ##

Carman: I had joined the ASTP--Army Specialized Training Program--which they had started because they needed engineers. So you could stay in school until they called you up, and then you would go to engineering school and be graduated and be in the army. I found a letter, going through this stuff--in '43 I got some sort of an exemption to finish school, I guess, or something. I don't know what it was.

Anyway, in '43 I was called up, and we ended up in Fort Benning, Georgia, for our basic training there. That was six weeks or something like that. It was a modified officers' training course. Then I went to Jonesboro, Arkansas, to school. That would have been in the late fall, I guess, and by the wintertime I had flunked out of there as the math got more and more over my head [laughs]. I got sent to the 80<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Yuma, Arizona. They were on desert maneuvers at that time. Another young fellow and I got sent there--he had flunked out about the same time.

At the interview, when we got into division headquarters, I could type, so they put me in the judge advocate's office to be a clerk-typist there. (The other fellow got sent down to one of the infantry companies.) That was a real fortunate break there, because then I stayed in that office, in division headquarters, the rest of the time.

In June, we were sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, and got on the *Queen Mary* and went to England. I stayed in that office while we were in England, and just before we left England to go to France I got changed up to the general's office because they needed another flunkie in the general's office, so this staff

sergeant or master sergeant thought. So that was even better. I stayed with that division headquarters, in that general's office, through the rest of the war.

I went into France on "D+30" [thirty days after D-Day], I think, and we went across France and just into Germany. We went into the Bulge to rescue Bastogne. Then we went in through Germany, almost to Berlin, and were called back because the Russians were supposed to take Berlin. I ended up in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, which is in Bavaria. That's a beautiful place there.

We went from there over to Braunau, which was Hitler's home right at the edge of Austria, and back to Kaufbeuren, which is on the edge of the southwestern corner of Germany. We were there in occupation for a while. Then we went to Czechoslovakia, and we were there in occupation until Christmas of '45, and came back through France and back to England. We came home on the *Queen Mary* too. First-class all the way. Of course, there were 20,000 other troops on the ships; you didn't have a stateroom to yourself.

It was the spring of '46 when I got out. I went back to school for a couple of semesters, and then I thought, Well, I didn't want to spend four years in school. I decided I would go into work with my father, so I went into the nursery business at that time.

Riess: How do you feel about that war experience now? Lucky?

Carman: Oh, very lucky.

Riess: And at the time?

Carman: Oh, I felt lucky then. And I was riding--I didn't walk one mile anyplace, I rode everyplace!

Division headquarters was about as good as you could get, unless you were at army headquarters, and then you were in England. No, I guess army headquarters would have been another twenty miles back. But we were generally about five to eight miles back of the lines where the actual fighting was going on. You could hear the guns. We got shelled one time when we were moving headquarters--we were in a convoy.

Photographing War's Destruction

Carman: I felt very lucky. A friend of mine used to work for Popular Mechanics, and we got together and set up photo developing, got all the trays and chemicals. His wife and my wife sent stuff over there, and so we could develop our own films and print stuff if we could find the paper. I've got I don't know how many thousands negatives I haven't even printed since then.

Riess: Stuff relating to the war?

Carman: Oh, yes, it was pictures of war. Destruction. I mean, we'd go through towns and there would be nothing but a couple of chimneys left. We'd take pictures of everything. You could take pictures of anything you wanted. You couldn't send it home because there was censorship. But I've got all kinds of pictures of some of the Holocaust camps, the death camps.

Riess: You moved, you were following the line?

Carman: Yes. The front line was, say, five to seven miles ahead of us, so we were five miles back.

Riess: Why did you decide to make that record?

Carman: The pictures?

Riess: That wasn't your assignment.

Carman: No, no. It was just private. Just another fellow and I taking pictures. I've always taken pictures. I've got lots of pictures I took up at the ranch. I've got one of me holding a prize fish that's about that long [gestures]. I had a little camera about that big, and I took pictures about like that.

Riess: Two by three?

Carman: No, no, smaller than that. Really little ones. I've got a lot of small photos kicking around.

But now I can't remember where the pictures were taken, I don't think. I didn't keep a really good record of where I took them. We do have a fairly good record of where our command posts moved. Every time we moved we'd have a new town or something, and I can remember some of those. But even that I don't think is really complete to the very end.

I was very lucky. One of my school chums that graduated a year ahead of me, he was a company commander down in the regiments, and he got wounded. I visited him in Nancy when he was in the hospital there. He's up in Paradise [California] now. His wife was in our class, and he was in the class ahead of us.

Riess: You haven't done anything with these pictures?

Carman: No.

For a while, you know, like everybody else, we printed our own Christmas cards, the kids growing up, the kids by the tree and all the presents. We printed those until the kids got too old to get dressed up. Then for some reason I just didn't get around to it.

Riess: The pictures that you took going into the concentration camps after the war, what do they show?

Carman: Just bodies laying all over. Just like the pictures you saw on TV of the Holocaust.

I should dig them out and look through them at least and see what's there. Nancy and her husband were going to set up a darkroom, but now they're getting going on getting their house finished, and so there's no convenient place to print them.

Riess: You've printed them all though, haven't you?

Carman: No, I've developed the negatives, but I haven't printed them. I've got a stack of negatives about that high. They're all in glassine envelopes.

My aunt gave me a camera to take, a folding camera. I think I still have that, I brought it back. And then this buddy of mine found a little Retina which he took pictures with. But it was 35mm, so he had to have an enlarger for that, so it wasn't very practical.

Riess: I think I had one of those. It had a little bellows.

Carman: Yes. It was a hard case, you pulled it open, and it would come out just a short distance. I got another Retina when I came back after the war, and I still have it. It's a really good camera. And I got a Nikkormat later on to take closeups. It's seen a lot of miles. [See further discussion, p. 172]

Riess: Earlier, when you were stationed in Yuma, Arizona, and Arkansas-- were you interested in plant materials that you saw?

Carman: There was no time. In Yuma, we didn't even get off the base. The colonel wanted to go down to Mexico one day, so we drove down across the border into some little town, and I guess they got some liquor or something, and I just went along for the ride.

But in Kaufbeuren, the thing I really regret now is that there was a nursery that I used to walk by when we were going down to the park, and I never did stop in and talk to them. It's one of those things, when you're eighteen or nineteen years old and you think, "Oh, I'll do it next week." [laughs] I never did.

Riess: Did you write home to your dad and tell him what you were seeing?

Carman: No. I don't think so. Anyway, Jean threw all the letters away. I wrote one every day, too. I remember the colonel--one night I was writing a letter, and he said something about having a girlfriend, and I said, Yeah, I was married. He opened his eyes-- "Oh!"



## V CARMAN'S NURSERY, 1946-1970

In Boom Times, and Since

Riess: After the war did you come back and finish college?

Carman: I got out in '46. Jean and I had married just before I went overseas, and by the time I got back I guess I went to one quarter or something, and then I figured it was going to take too long, I had three or four years to go, and I wasn't so all fired hot about the teaching at that time.

So then I decided I would go into landscaping and work with my father in nurseries. I took a couple of courses in botany and things like that. I took one correspondence course in landscaping. I was going to do landscaping first, and I did some of that for a while. Then we decided I'd go into partnership with my dad, and we built up the nursery, and we then had a small, general nursery from then until '70.

Riess: What about this location?

Carman: We moved here in '70. After my father and mother passed away-- that was in an estate, like. The only way we could divide the estate was to sell the property.

Riess: Tell me the address of the first nursery again.

Carman: It was 2640 South San Jose-Los Gatos Road. That's the first address. Then the name changed to Bascom Avenue, and it's still Bascom Avenue. Our original nursery was about a mile away.

Riess: The history of freeways in San Jose! [laughs]

Carman: Yes, the name changes.

Riess: How much of your father's business was landscaping?

Carman: None. Well, we did a little bit of it. Cambrian Park was going in at that time, so I went down and landscaped some of his model homes. We sold plants for people to do their own landscaping.

But I really wasn't that ambitious, I guess, like some of the other people, to go out and get after that. I think I was kind of lazy, really, looking back at it.

Riess: What would you have done?

Carman: Go out and make plans for people like other people were doing.

Riess: Because you had taken the correspondence course.

Carman: Yes, I had taken the course, so I knew all the basic stuff and plants. I was just lazy, I guess.

Riess: Through what institution did you do the landscape correspondence course?

Carman: I think I've got it out in the garage [chuckles]. It was the National Landscape Institute, or something like that. They were giving nationwide courses. It was just a basic landscape course; it didn't lead to much except they'd send you out a problem and you'd have to do it and send it back, and stuff like that.

Riess: Did they teach you plant materials?

Carman: Yes, they had lists. I've got plant lists.

Riess: And how about structural things, like drainage?

Carman: Yes, I think that was included too. It was so long ago that it was one of those things I forgot.

Riess: There were big changes in the landscape business after the war, and I guess in the nursery business too. How would you characterize the changes?

Carman: After the war? Probably the biggest change was the multiplication of nurseries. Between '45 and '50 there were probably fifteen nurseries within five or ten miles of San Jose that opened up.

I recently talked to a big one over there. He says they started out with a tin-roofed salesroom that leaked in the rain. The other one had a ten-by-twelve salesroom. Most all of them were a family thing, just a man and wife starting, probably



starting with borrowed money. I don't know where they got the money to start with or buy the land. One of them bought one acre over there.

A couple came out here to visit from Cleveland, and she said when they hit Pasadena and saw all this fruit and stuff there her husband said, "This is it!" He had a friend up here, and they never back went for twenty-five or thirty years. Never went back to Cleveland. He stayed here. He went back to visit once and came back. They have a son now who has the nursery over on Sunnyvale Road.

Riess: And they all were making a living.

Carman: Yes. Of course, I think a living was easier to make in those days. A dollar went farther--well, things cost in relation too, I suppose. They probably weren't living so high like everybody wants to do now.

Riess: Is it like the difference between the 160-acre farm and the corporate farms? Is size everything?

Carman: Around here size wasn't that important because it was on a retail basis. On a wholesale basis, then you have to have space to grow all the plants to supply the retailers. There were a couple of wholesalers, though--there was Leonard Coates, and they had a growing ground in Morgan Hill and another one in Santa Cruz. And their fruit tree operation was at Brentwood. They grew fruit trees and ornamentals. So they were one of the big suppliers.

Another one started hauling plants up from Los Angeles, brokering. And Pacific Nurseries up in Colma--they expanded. And California Nursery was big in the forties too, up there in Niles.

Also, too, we have to remember that at that time there was an expanding market. The valley up until '45, probably, was pretty much all orchards. Then the city of San Jose expanded all over the place, annexing people and putting in tracts, 600 homes at a time.

Springdale was a garden center down in the south part of the town, and they operated from '60 to '85, I guess. They expanded down there; they had the top garden center in the county at that time, probably. And then in '85 when the expansion and the houses stopped, they just closed it up because they had made money and they had bought property around, and the land was worth more to sell than continue the nursery.

Now there's infilling, and it's commercial, and so the need for these small places [nurseries] has disappeared. So all the small places have disappeared, for one thing. In the second place, the generations have turned over. The second generation is not interested, they can't afford to do it. They don't want to work seven days a week. I know one there who's trying to decide-- his kids are working at five-day jobs, they get more money, and they don't have to worry, they can close the door and go home at the end of the day.

Riess: Probably also like in farming, the farm can support one child, but not all of the next generation.

Carman: There are three or four I can think of offhand where the second generation is taking over. Either a relation or a family member is taking over.

Riess: I don't know whether you're analyzing your data as to what makes it work and what doesn't. Of the sixteen you interviewed, let's say, were all of them inspired nurserymen? Some of them must have been just merchants.

Carman: Yes, a lot of them were, although they were interested in plants. But like I say, when the business started falling off there was nothing for them to do; you couldn't create business if it wasn't there. And there was other competition coming in, Woolworth's and Orchard Supply and things like that. That made a difference too.

Riess: But for some maybe they specialized, maybe they started propagating. Maybe the pressure on them was creative.

Carman: The ones that succeeded, I guess, are the ones that have grown and specialized. They've taken a more aggressive attitude with their advertising or something like this, so they've built up a customer base that looks to them for their knowledge and plant material rather than the discount houses most of the young gardeners are drawn to because of the big ads.

Some of them probably will learn after a while, you know, that they've got to be really careful how they buy at some of the places. They're getting plants almost as good as some of the other places, and from the same source sometimes. But within two or three days, when they stick it under a shelf, it starts going downhill very quickly, and so then the plant is not going to perform like the other places that really take care of their material. The ones that I think are succeeding are upgrading into really quality plants and knowledgeable people and service.

Riess: Did you need to follow what the magazines were pushing? Like Sunset. Make stuff that wrote about available?

Carman: Sunset, I think, did a great job, except that sometimes they would publicize something that wasn't very widely available. This made a lot of nurserymen very unhappy [laughs]. They really didn't like that at all. So a lot of them got upset sometimes when they'd put a special plant in the magazine, and then people'd come in and ask for it and they didn't have it because it was hard to get. They were pushing new and unusual things.

Riess: Was Dick Dunmire on the garden end there?

Carman: He was a writer. He didn't do the pushing, I don't think, it was some of the editors that did the pushing. He would do the articles.

He [Dunmire] was really the brains at Sunset. He's a remarkable young man--not young now, but remarkable, one of these guys that's got a photographic memory. He can recall stuff from a description that you can't believe. He's still active. In fact, he just rewrote their orchid book for Sunset, on a contract.

### Specialization, Kiwi Vines

Riess: How did you and your father share the business? How was it structured?

Carman: He did most of the growing, and I was doing most of the selling at the nursery and buying hard goods and going out and getting plants that we didn't grow. I would go out and pick up plants at wholesale growers.

Riess: By "growing" you mean that he was propagating then?

Carman: Yes, he had been propagating all the time. Up at the ranch he was propagating then--from seed, I guess. Like I say, I just didn't pay any attention.

Riess: Was he particularly gifted, do you think?

Carman: He was very good. Mostly it was seeds and cuttings; he didn't do any grafting. I started grafting some conifers when we were down there, but he didn't do any of that. It was mostly seeds and cuttings.

Riess: What was unique about Carman's Nursery in those years, between '46 and '70?

Carman: Well, in the forties, after the war, there was a nursery up in Stanford on Page Mill Road. It was called Page Mill Nursery. And [Peggy] Stebbins and [Margaret] Truax, two ladies ran that nursery who were graduates of a gardening school or a nursery school in Stanford. They were contemporary with Elsa Uppman Knoll.

Anyway, they were doing ground covers and perennials. They closed up not too long after that, so then I thought we should do some of that. We started doing that: we would grow ground covers and things like that, and we would sell them to some of the wholesalers. I think we were one of the first ones to grow herbs in little pots and sell them, five kinds, five of each one in a flat, so you'd have a collection of herbs.

Riess: Sort of windowsill planting?

Carman: No, these were for resale. For wholesalers. There was a man up in the Mountain View area who had a nursery, and he would sell to different places. We would sell those to him at wholesale rate, and then he would resell them. And Nielson Nursery up in Hayward, we used to sell to him ground covers and some odd shrubs that we would grow quantities of. So we gradually got into the more unusual and perennial plant material.

Then in '68 we got into the kiwi vines. We were one of the first ones to bring those into the county, actually. We had become friends with Trevor Davies in New Zealand--in '67, I think, he was here. (That was Duncan and Davies in New Zealand, and they were exporting at that time, and they were exporting mostly to growers who were putting them out in the fields, to Chico and that area. They were doing a lot of that up there.) So we got in a shipment of those and we started growing them from that shipment, and we continued to grow them from then on.

Riess: This was a major introduction. [See further discussion in Chapter VI]

Carman: For this part of the valley it was, yes. Then we were doing mail order for quite a while. After we moved up here we were mail ordering.

Riess: How come Davies contacted you?

Carman: I met him as a nursery meeting and brought him up here to our house--he was going to stay in Los Gatos, I guess--and we talked about it then.

Then in '68 the New Zealand nurserymen as a group came here and toured California. This friend of mine, George Martin, who used to work with Tommy [Thomas D.] Church, was their California guide. He was on the bus and took them all around the state. We met him [Trevor Davies] several times and finally decided that we would get some and start selling them. We should have put out a couple of acres at that time because that would have been a profitable crop [laughs]. Again, I was too lazy.

Anyway, we got them and just kept growing them from then on, it just kept multiplying. Some of the plants out there [on the grounds of the Carman nursery] are some of the original ones from New Zealand.

Riess: You've said two or three times now that you were too lazy.

Carman: Well, in talking to all these other people who have retired and done so well, I just realized after all this time that I was just too lazy [chuckles].

Too well off, I guess. I didn't have any really heavy payments to make or anything. When we built the house on the nursery property down there my father deeded me a piece of property so I could have a separate lot to put the house on. Then we built the house piecemeal: that section [indicating a portion of the house] was the first square. That wasn't on it, and that wasn't on it. It was a like a little mystery house.

Anyway, we built the house and we kept adding to it. We were making payments on the property down there, but that came out of the business. We never did make a great fortune off this business. It was just too easy to get by, I guess, the way I was doing it.

Riess: I don't understand about this house being there.

Carman: Oh. This is the house we moved with. We moved this house.

### Fungicides, Labor ##

Riess: Would you tell me again about the fungicides that you mentioned using. What was Volk oil?

Carman: I guess they just called it Bluestone. It was copper sulfate, which was a powder which you could mix up in water. And then they would add Volk oil to that to make it stick to the tree, and they

would spray this on the apricot trees and peaches to keep the borers and the fungus off of them. That would be done when it was dormant so there were no leaves on the trees. Otherwise it would burn the leaves, with the oil.

Riess: We still use that combination, don't we?

Carman: Yes, it's Microcop now, and it doesn't have nearly the oil nor the copper in it, I don't think. I think it's Microcop. They've taken so much off the market that it's hard to tell what's still available.

Riess: And actual people had to spray this? [laughs]

Carman: Real people. They'd have a tractor pulling a spray rig which had its own engine on it, and that would build up the pressure, and there would be two men with long hoses and they would get about four rows of trees on each side of the rig and go down through the orchards.

Riess: Would they be migrant labor?

Carman: No, I think they would be probably permanent labor. Migrant labor was mostly used to harvest. They could have been people living on the farms: sometimes they would have a house where the people would live on the farm and work year round.

Riess: But it might have been Mexican labor?

Carman: It could have been, yes.

Riess: Were these chemicals regulated at all?

Carman: No, you could buy them by the ton if you wanted to.

Riess: They were used because they solved the problem.

Carman: That's right.

Riess: Toichi Domoto talked about using nicotine in the greenhouse and he said you would get almost high on the fumes.

Carman: Oh, those are fumigation canisters which you would put in and let them burn in the glass houses to kill all the insects in the glass house, the bugs and the aphids. Yes, if you inhaled that, why, you were inhaling pure nicotine smoke. You're not supposed to be inhaling it, really. You were supposed to be out of there when that was burning.

Riess: And then Black Leaf 40?

Carman: Black Leaf 40 was a concentrated nicotine sulfate, I guess they called it. You would use a teaspoon to a gallon, something like that, and then spray. That would get all aphids and that sort of soft-bodied insects.

Riess: These early retail nursery people, where did they get the learning so that they could tell people what they needed in terms of sprays or problem solving?

Carman: Most of them when they started, they weren't selling sprays. They were just selling plants. Then you would have distributors who were starting to package these things in small packages. Like the Pacific Guano people came out with small packages of one-pound and sometimes half-pound packages of guano.

The salesmen would tell the nursery owners what the stuff was used for and how to use it and how to sell it, so they'd have an education program, which the salespeople still do. If somebody is selling chemicals, they come around with a brochure and tell the people how it can be used and how it should be used. They're still doing that. But as things became available then these hard-goods people would bring them around and start selling them. So that's where they got the knowledge.

Riess: And that was your part. You took care of that end of things in your business with your father.

Carman: Yes. I did all the buying of that sort of material.

Riess: When did agricultural extension--county, university, and so on, get themselves involved? They were doing inspections?

Carman: In '54, from then on, they really became active. The county agricultural commissioner was doing plant inspections. They were inspecting plants, but they weren't doing anything else as far as enforcing things, except cleanliness. So if you had certain kind of bugs, they would put a tape around it and you couldn't sell it until you sprayed it and cleaned it up.

### Ethnicity in the Nursery Business

Riess: And for Mr. Domoto, a Japanese-American nurseryman, there were political and other aspects in dealing with the nursery inspectors. I mean, there was prejudice.

Carman: Oh, yes, there was quite a bit. I don't know if he told you, but he told me about going to deliver stuff down in Los Angeles and putting it outside and leaving before they opened up. He'd unload in the dark and leave, because there were feelings against him.

Riess: To go back to the histories of the retail nurseries, were a certain percentage Japanese?

Carman: About 90 percent.

Riess: Ninety percent Japanese?

Carman: Of course, this was after the war. Before the war it was the other way around. There was only three or four: S. Onishi, Kitazawa Nursery, Japanese Nursery, S. H. Jio, T. Tanaka Nursery. Yeah, it had been the other way around before the war.

Riess: And we are talking about the Los Gatos area?

Carman: The Santa Clara Valley is what we're talking about, this side of Sunnyvale, and this way.

Riess: That sounds like a success story that's due to the war, and yet there's something kind of twisted about that view.

Carman: It seems like it is. As I've gone around and found out--and when you ask that question, I realized there's only three or four that I can think of offhand that are not Japanese.

Riess: What makes your whole answer even more interesting is that it's not until you're thinking about it now that you realize it. So that means that for you it's just been so much of the nursery world that--is this possible that you don't actually see the Japanese as a different group?

Carman: Like I say, I hadn't thought about it until you asked me that. I realize that the real success stories are all Japanese. Maybe it's their work ethic paying off [chuckles].

A lot of them are very active in the association. Some of them have gone to be A.A.N. presidents and C.A.N. presidents. They can be as active and go as far as they want, actually. And some of them have.

Riess: But that's all within your lifetime.

Carman: Yes.

Riess: Your father would have had no prejudice?



Carman: No, because What's-his-name down here, Sam Oka, he used to farm right next to Mozart on the creek there, and Dad was good friends with his father. I knew his son. Of course, we had Japanese in school. Some were on our basketball team, Onishi and a couple of other ones. My sister had a real good friend, a Japanese, Mae Kawauchi.

Riess: Mr. Domoto--I don't know whether he's typical, but I found him a profound person to be around, deeply principled. But I'd hate to just generalize. Can you generalize?

Carman: He's a different generation, really, than most of them in the business now. The ones that are active now are actually the second generation. The first generation I would think would probably be similar to his feelings and his thoughts. The second ones, I think, are becoming more Americanized, if you will. They're a lot more business-oriented, where he was probably more plant-oriented. I can see that difference there.

Riess: Not wanting to disturb some sort of sense of harmony that was important to him. I don't think you can have that and have a big business at the same time.

Which kind of a nurseryman are you?

Carman: Definitely plant-oriented.

C.A.N. ##

Riess: We started these interviews with your telling me that you were bringing up to date the history of the Peninsula Chapter of C.A.N.. Would you tell me more about that organization and how it functions for the members?<sup>1</sup>

Carman: The California Association of Nurserymen is a statewide organization. There are eighteen chapters--our local one is the Peninsula Chapter and it includes everything from San Francisco to Gilroy. We meet once a month and have a speaker on some topic related to the nursery.

Riess: It [Peninsula Chapter] was formed in 1950. Were you a founder? Or your father?

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<sup>1</sup>This portion of the interview was conducted through correspondence dated October 22, 1997.

- Carman: Not really. The Peninsula Chapter was split off the Central Chapter which covers the East Bay. There were several C.A.N. members in the peninsula area, so more were asked to join to make a chapter. We joined at that time as charter members.
- Riess: How much did you participate?
- Carman: I was on the Board of Directors for about ten years, I think, at different times. I was president in 1964 and 1971. Also I was treasurer for about five years but Jean did all the work [chuckles].
- Riess: You have spoken some about the different kinds of people who came out to the area and started nursery businesses. How did the organization serve those people from such different backgrounds? Was there any special effort to educate them about the business that the chapter would have done?
- Carman: The chapter meeting usually has a speaker on something educational. Subjects like new rose varieties or fruit trees. Or pests and diseases, or health insurance. In the early years we had a new plant presentation as a short part of the meeting. Then C.A.N. started the C.C.N. program that has written tests on plant identification, landscaping, insects, lawns--this is for all of the sales people.
- Riess: Do you have a population that includes women members now? And African-Americans?
- Carman: I think we have five nurseries in the Peninsula Chapter that are owned by women. One I know is the daughter of the founder. There are many women managers, buyers, designers, and sales people.
- Riess: What is the J. H. Wilson award, which you received in 1988 from the Peninsula Chapter of C.A.N.? And for what service or activity or what is it given? And in 1988 they gave you the Chapter Nursery Service Award, and in 1992 the Outstanding Achievement Award.
- Carman: The J. H. Wilson Award was named for Jim Wilson, owner of Peters & Wilson Nursery in Millbrae, which was started in the 1930s. Jim was the Peninsula Chapter's first president, served two terms, '50 and '51. Jim passed away about two years ago I think. This award is given for service to the chapter, and for horticulture. Jim was the first recipient in 1986. That 1988 award was actually the J. H. Wilson Award. I'm not sure what the 1992 award was really for.

- Riess: You have received so many awards. Which have meant the most to you?
- Carman: I can't say any one means more than any other. They were different times and different groups. Each one means a great deal to me.
- Riess: In 1978 Cal Hort presented you with what is called their Special Award. The wording from *Pacific Horticulture* is, "The award recognizes the knowledge, skill, and dedication Mr. Carman brings to the introduction, propagation, and distribution of unusual plants. His nursery in Los Gatos, California, is Mecca for adventurous gardeners in search of rare and beautiful plants."
- Carman: Yes. This is the Cal Hort Annual Award. You should see the list of recipients. It's like a Who's Who in Horticulture in the Bay Area.
- Riess: That year you received a cultural award for *Syzygium paniculatum* "Variegatum." [laughs] I think you deserve an award for being able to pronounce the name of the plant. What is it?
- Carman: That's a mouthful--it's the botanical name for what used to be called *Eugenia paniculata*. It is a special form with green, white, and pink on the leaves. Ours was killed in the freeze of '90. Victor Reiter had the parent plant, but I'm not sure if it is still alive.
- Riess: I guess the most recent award--and perhaps the top award--was the Pacific Coast Nurseryman of the Year award from C.A.N., in 1995. The C.A.N. award says you're really best known for helping your customers, perhaps to the detriment of your own business! Oh dear!
- Carman: Yes, it is really the top. When you see the list of P.C.N. recipients from all over the state and all they have done it is very humbling.
- Riess: You were a C.A.N. director in 1965-1967, and again in 1972-1974. What were the most crucial issues that you dealt with in those years?
- Carman: That was so long ago--I doubt there were any really crucial items to deal with.
- Riess: It's very interesting to me to think of how the three groups differ. How would you characterize the difference, and the reason for being, between the local C.A.N. chapter, the California Horticultural Society, and the statewide organization?

Carman: The Peninsula Chapter is nursery business oriented. Meetings usually have a speaker relating to nurseries--hard goods or plants. These are dinner meetings, so it is a social gathering where you meet other nursery workers in your general area. I guess the basic purpose is to educate the sales people so they may better help the customers.

The Hort Society's meetings generally have a speaker, and a plant discussion show and tell, and a plant raffle. So those meetings are plant or garden related. Some nursery people attend the Hort meeting, but it is mostly home gardeners, designers and individuals who have an intense interest in plants--many experts on all sorts of plants. Cal Hort has had some very interesting weekend tours over the years.

The statewide group, C.A.N., has a staff of about ten in the Sacramento headquarters. They coordinate the meetings of over twenty committees of volunteers from nurseries all across the state. These groups meet during the year to establish policy on insurance, scholarships, standards, education, and everything else pertaining to the nursery industry.

Riess: What has your work been with each of them?

Carman: I have been involved in the Hort groups with plant material mostly: at Cal Hort I have shown new or interesting plants for many years, and served on the board and on the awards committee for several years. At Western Hort I have led the plant discussion for too many years, and served on the board and as president.

In the Peninsula Chapter [of C.A.N.] it has been service on the board--office holder and work on project committees. It has been mostly time devoted to the chapter. And as for C.A.N., I have done very little. I just could not give the time and travel that is required.

## VI KIWI AND OTHER INTRODUCTIONS

[Interview 2: March 31, 1997] ##

Carman: [talking about what becomes of gardens] People have a new house, they get it all landscaped the way they like it, and they sell it. They move away, but then in four or five years they might come back, go back to see it, and the place is a shambles. It's completely different. In fact, there was a couple in the other day, and they had been away for a long time, and they couldn't even find the house where they used to live, and I know they haven't torn it down. What they had done is remodeled the house, and so these people didn't even recognize where they lived. It was only a few blocks from here.

It's the same way with plants: you sell the plants, and some people come back and tell you how well they've done, and that pleases you, but you try to sell them good plants. One of the best compliments I ever had was from a young lady up here in Palo Alto, a very knowledgeable person, really knew her plants, and very good at designing. She came in one time and was getting some plant material, and she said that none of the plants she had ever gotten from me had died--and she would get all kinds of unusual plants. That was the greatest compliment I think I've had from one of those people.

They buy these plants in four-inch pots--the way it's commercially done--and plunk them in, and if you're not really careful with it you're going to have quite a bit of loss, some loss at least.

Trevor Davies, New Zealand

Riess: Today would you tell the whole Ed Carman and the kiwi story?

Carman: Do you want any other stories in the same vein, or plant material introductions today?

Riess: Well, we might call it the New Zealand story. Would that make it a bigger story?

Carman: Yes, there would be two basic plants that have come from New Zealand that are, as far as I'm concerned, major. The kiwi, of course, Actinidia, was the first one. This came about, I guess, by meeting Trevor Davies from Duncan and Davies in, I think, 1965, at a C.A.N. board meeting in Monterey. I was past president, so I was a state director.

I met Trevor there, and he talked a little bit about New Zealand, I think, at the board meeting. Then I brought him back to Los Gatos because he was supposed to be staying in Los Gatos for a couple of days. I hadn't remembered this, but Jean said that she had asked him, when he got to the house, if his nursery was very big. We were kind of floored when he said it was a thousand acres, or something like this. It was the biggest nursery in New Zealand [chuckles].

Riess: Why was he visiting in this country?

Carman: He was probably on a selling trip, because he was a worldwide salesman for Duncan and Davies. It may have been the first time he had been up here. I'm not sure.

I took him up to a motel in Los Gatos where he was staying, and then I think his other friend, George Martin, who was an architect and worked with Tommy Church for many years, he picked him up and took him over to his home near Saratoga and put him up there, but I'm not sure if it was that night or the next day. We talked a little bit about it, and then--

Riess: Talked about what?

Carman: About kiwis. Then in '66 I got some things from them. The correspondence starts in '66 with Trevor. [looking at documents]

Yes, it was in 1966 that we got the first plants from New Zealand. It wasn't kiwis though, it was some other ornamental things which I think George Martin had suggested, because he had been to New Zealand previous to that and spent two or three months touring New Zealand with his family. It was some ornamental things that we got in from Duncan and Davies at that time. Then we kept corresponding and kept getting the different plants.

Riess: These were plant materials totally unknown to Californians?

Carman: They might not have been totally unknown, but they weren't in the trade around here.

Coprosma prostrata<sup>1</sup>, Golden Monterey cypress, and Alectryon excelsum, which was a tree. We have one planted [Alectryon] out by the house out here, but in 1990 it froze to the ground. There are some in one experimental plantation that Saratoga Hort put out--I'm not sure if some of these went to Saratoga or not.

That was one of the first groups of plants that we brought in. Then we got other things, I think, in '67.

Riess: These were native to New Zealand, not brought by the British?

Carman: No, no. These were all New Zealand natives.

There are some other Corokias we got in 1966 also, and those are all hybrids or selected forms of it. And the flaxes--we got one flax at that time. And Lophomyrtus, we still have some of those outside on the ground.

Riess: Was flax not being used in landscaping here until you brought this in?

Carman: Yes, but they were the really large ones--just the green and the purple ones. This was probably one of the variegated.

Riess: What's the common name for Corokia virgata?

Carman: There isn't any. They have small leaves, and some of them have purple leaves and some have green leaves and yellow flowers, and then some have yellow berries and red berries. That's where they get these names: Bronze Knight and Bronze Lady and Red Wonder and so on. Nurserymen give these fancy names to plants--these all came out of their catalog.

I guess that's why we imported them. We have all their catalogs down there, and so that's probably where we got the names of them. And then I think Trevor probably suggested some of these

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<sup>1</sup>C. prostrata and C. kirkii are about the same. C. kirkii is the one that was being grown, still being grown; prostrata has never been widely grown--there are some still over in the Campbell Water Company pumping station in Campbell. I've got to get some cuttings back of that. [E.C.]

things. I know George tried them, because he was very interested in getting things in for the landscape trade.

And we were sending them things at the same time.

Riess: But you were a small nursery. He's a great big nursery.

Carman: Yes, but they were things that weren't in New Zealand at that time, so they were getting new things. We sent them some different rosemarys in '66 that they didn't have at that time.

### Shipping Arrangements

Riess: Was this the first time that you had to deal with shipping things overseas?

Carman: It probably was, yes.

Riess: Did you do that yourself, or did you have some service?

Carman: No, we did it ourselves. You can't have somebody ship plants--you lose control [laughs]. Most people don't know how to ship plants, including some of the botanic gardens and nurseries [laughs]. I hear tales of how they get plants in the mail.

Riess: Had you already been shipping to southern California, so this was not different, or what?

Carman: No, we hadn't been shipping much of anything, I don't think, because in '66 we were still down at the other place. It was just something new to do. Something we just started doing.

Riess: Did you make your own packing materials and crates and so on?

Carman: No, and mostly it was all small things. The parcel would be only as big as a shoebox or smaller, the smallest you can ship because the shipping expenses were quite high. Here he gives me explicit directions [referring to the correspondence], because the cubic costs more than the weight sometimes. So a big package is going to cost more than a small, heavy package.

Riess: The rosemary--they were just little slips?

Carman: Yes, just rooted cuttings. They put a new name on them when they got them down there, "Bluelake" or something like that. It's in their catalog.



Riess: This was by ship or by air?

Carman: It was all air. Either airmail or air freight. In fact, I've got a bundle that thick [gestures] of packages that got lost for a month after arriving here in California. I had one just this year get lost for two weeks. The postal service sometimes can pull some real boners; I don't know how they do it [laughter].

We've finally come to the conclusion that air freight is the best way, because you have a bill of lading and you can trace it exactly. They can tell you exactly. FedEx or UPS would be the way to do it now. That way they would take it to customs, pick it up at customs, and deliver it back to your door, I believe. I haven't checked into them, but I've got to find out about that.

Riess: In the beginning, just a few little things from him and he gets a few little things from you, there's not a lot of money involved.

Carman: No. These were mostly no charge at all. We'd ship them plants and they'd ship us plants, and there was no charge to it at all. After a while they wanted some special things from back east, and we had to buy them, and so they paid for that. But it was just at our cost, actually.

Riess: You acted as their agent.

Carman: Yes, to obtain the things and ship them. We never made any money off of it, actually--nor did they. The stuff that they charged us for like kiwis, why, they were so reasonable--of course, the exchange rate was pretty low anyway. Their dollar was worth our fifty cents or something like that. So we never made any money off it.

### Creating a Market

Riess: That's interesting. Money wasn't the issue here.

Carman: No, the plant was the thing. Even to get them to ship the plant in small quantities--it's more bother to do that. And then, of course, to ship them plants was the same thing: it's a lot of bother. You'd have to root the cutting so you have a small rooted cutting, and that would take maybe six months before you'd have the plants ready to ship. They appreciated that, and so did we appreciate getting stuff that we didn't have here. The time and effort probably offset on both sides.

Then you've got the plant, and if the plant sells good then you can make money off your propagation of it and sales of it. That's where you get the idea of doing it. Last year I got some wisterias--Trevor Davies sent me a little package, and I got forty-eight plants out of that one little package of grafts. In two or three years they'll be saleable, and so I'll make some money off of that. He still sent it to me for nothing.

- Riess: When you started with the small things with him you didn't even know what they were going to look like necessarily.
- Carman: No. Except George, I think, might have seen them down there. He is a very good friend. He lived in Los Gatos, and he was very interested in getting new plants and helping us.
- Riess: What was his relationship to Tommy Church?
- Carman: He was foreman for Tommy Church for many years. He'd run the landscape crews, before he went out on his own. He graduated from Berkeley as a landscape architect. I'm not sure what year that was.
- Riess: In that case you didn't have to promote the materials, because there was already a user waiting at the other end.
- Carman: Well, not really, because these were new things, and they never did get accepted in the trade at that time. Now they're being grown. Other nurseries have made a second introduction. At least one of the Corokias is on the market now.
- Riess: Why did that happen? Why didn't they get accepted?
- Carman: Because I didn't promote them, I guess. It's very hard to get new plants introduced, because unless it's seen someplace, unless an architect knows it and can put it in a garden, why, there's no demand for it. So if there's no demand, nobody grows it because it won't sell.

Some of these things aren't that showy, which a lot of people demand. It's difficult. Now, like I say, they can get these color pictures in the wholesale catalogs, and they can sell all 50,000 in one year because they sell them all across the country.

- Riess: I can see why the organizations and garden clubs tie in here. They can be part of the larger promotion.

Carman: Yes, and some of the hort societies--there will be people in there who are interested in certain things and they'll bring a plant in and show it, and then of course everybody wants to get one.

Riess: And you were one of those people.

Carman: Yes, I took in some things. But they didn't come and buy them very much.

Riess: Well, you probably gave them away [laughter].

Carman: I tried not to, except to people starting nurseries.

Riess: You continued to get things from him in the late sixties.

Carman: Yes. Then in '68 the New Zealand nurserymen, twenty-eight of them, came up here as a tour group [also see p. 33] and Trevor was there and his brother and a lot of other people we have kept up with. George Martin took on the job, or was asked to be their tour leader for California. They got a bus and they went clear down to southern California, back up to northern California, and stopped at all the nursery associations and the big nurseries. They had a great time, I guess.

#### First Kiwi Shipment, 1968

Carman: We talked to Trevor some more at that time, and that's the time we got interested in the Actinidia, the kiwis. So late in '68 we got our shipment of a hundred rooted cuttings of kiwis.

We were first going to import rooted cuttings and establish them and sell them at a wholesale basis. But at that time there was a two-year quarantine on them, so you had to keep them for two growing seasons, and we figured this was going to be not very easy to do, to keep them separated. We decided not to do that, and we started growing our own cuttings. From then on we just kept growing our own cuttings and selling our own rooted cuttings in gallon cans.

Riess: Why wouldn't that always have been a better way to do it?

Carman: They were so reasonable down there, and I didn't know I could grow them when I got them in. But the first year they grew we took cuttings as soon as they got big enough, and some of those rooted the first year. So we figured from then on we'd be able to do our own.

- Riess: Did you have enough room at the other nursery? You were still down there.
- Carman: Yes. It was a little bigger than this; it was an acre and a half, actually. You can put a lot of cans in a small area. Actually, we grew most of them up here. We were growing maybe a thousand a year at the most. It wasn't really big numbers at that time.
- Riess: Were they under shade?
- Carman: No, they were out in the open, under sprinklers with our regular plants. They would get too lanky, really, in the shade.
- Riess: When did you know what a runaway success kiwis would be?
- Carman: Someplace in here [referring to his files] I found a letter I wrote to him that I was going to do an article on kiwis, and we were going to be listed as one of the sources--as soon as that article broke, then we got letters from all over the state and out of state too, inquiries about it. So then we started mail order on the kiwis for several years after that.
- Riess: Where was the article published?
- Carman: In Sunset magazine, probably in 1970, about the time that we moved up here. [January 1970, p. 57]
- Riess: The name really means Chinese Gooseberry?
- Carman: No. The botanical name has actually been changed now. At the time we got it, it was *Actinidia chinensis*; now it's *Actinidia deliciosa* [laughter]. Botanists are doing that all the time.
- Riess: How is this an improvement?
- Carman: It doesn't necessarily mean improving it. It means that the name was given to it before *chinensis* or something. That's the way they figure out these things a lot of times.
- Riess: An article by Charles Burr from 1979 says "...kiwis had been introduced at the plant introduction station near Chico, but were a sleeper in California." [San Jose Mercury News, 26 October, 1979]
- Carman: Yes, they were up there for years, but nobody did anything. In fact, in the late sixties the Schmidt Nursery in Palo Alto was selling kiwis--I never did find out where he got them. But he was selling them as an ornamental vine. One of those was bought by a

landscaper--planted in his place--and it had fruits on it, and supposedly this one was a self-fruiting one.

I got cuttings from that and started to propagate it. Not until several years later did we find out that it did not have pollen on it, and it was not self-pollinating. In fact, we had two like that--one from the Blake Garden that Mai [Arbegast] told me was self-pollinating and it was not. There are no self-pollinating kiwis, although we have another one now which is supposed to be self-pollinating [chuckles] but I'm sure it's not going to be, because they never found any in New Zealand either.

Riess: Were kiwi fruits available in the markets in California?

Carman: No. In fact, they didn't show up until Frieda Kaplan, who was a fruit broker, brought them in.

Riess: Where is she? In southern California?

Carman: Yes. I think the daughter is carrying on the business.

She was one of the first ones to bring them in, and I think they're the ones that gave them the name of "kiwi fruit". Down there they're Chinese gooseberries--in New Zealand that's what they call them. And in other places they call them tao. She gave them this name to sell them, of course.

She [Frieda Kaplan] was really quite a promoter; all kinds of tropical fruits she promoted. She used to put out a newsletter which we got for a while--she probably still does--to the grocery departments at the grocery stores. She was growing sunchokes too, jerusalem artichokes.

Then in the mid-seventies fruit growers started importing plants from New Zealand for commercial plantings for the orchardists, putting in acreage of kiwis. And there was one famous fiasco up by Gridley. Barbie Benton's mother imported a bunch of these, enough for several acres, and they were planted up in this area where they were going to start a plantation to grow the fruit commercially. They didn't take care of them, and so they lost most of them.

Trevor had a friend who was up here looking at them and said that they didn't prepare the ground, there was Johnson grass through the planting. It was a total loss, practically. Trevor sent me a copy of the letter [he received from her]: she asked what they were going to do about it. So Trevor came up here one time and looked at it. [Carman looks through correspondence file]

Riess: That looks like three inches of correspondence with a lot of little air letters.

Carman: That's only for ten years.

Riess: You didn't use the phone?

Carman: Oh, the phone, goodness, no. That was unheard of in those days. We phone them very seldom, maybe once or twice a year now maybe. He's got a fax machine, we don't, so we're still writing letters mostly.

Riess: Give me a sample of one of these letters. Are they friend to friend at this point, or business?

Carman: [hands interviewer a letter]

Riess: [reading] "Dear Ed: Thank you for your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> March and for your interest in providing us with information regarding Actinidia. At the moment, the whole matter is in abeyance as we have not received confirmation from our clients, and as I finish work the day after tomorrow, it would appear that this deal will probably fall through." And so on.

Now why would you be providing them with information regarding Actinidia?

Carman: It was probably information on the place that they were going to be sold to, or the people they were selling them to. I wonder if I could find my letter--was that March '69? [hands interviewer letter] This was my original letter to him.

Riess: [reads letter] "Dear Trevor: George has been keeping us posted on your plans for a quick trip around the world, ending here in April. Would suggest your customer make arrangements with a custom broker. The rain has stopped. Our Actinidia are starting to bud out."

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Carman: When you get plants from overseas, they're coming in by air freight. They come in to the airport, and they're under customs. They get shipped to a customs office. First, I guess they're inspected by the USDA, and then they go to customs. Customs then determines if there are going to be any customs on them, and then they're released either through a broker or to the consignee. But you have to go up there personally and pay the custom fees and broker fees.

So for any kind of major shipment it's much better to have a customs broker do it because they can--I guess they must go from the USDA to the customs, and then they are released from customs. But you have to get all these papers signed before you can get them out of customs. Sometimes it's a lot easier to have a broker do it for you. Then you go up there and you just pay him and then they give you all the plants right there.

So that's probably what we were talking about here in these letters, to have the customs broker--as I mentioned before--do all the paperwork because it's much easier to get it cleared that way, to clear customs.

Riess: Did dealing with New Zealand mean an exponential leap in the Carman Nursery?

Carman: Yes. We've done a little bit with England, but that was much later, actually, after we moved out here. It was very interesting, I think, but not very remunerative. Didn't add to the bank account very much [chuckles]. But it was a lot of fun.

Riess: Had you been working much with George Martin before?

Carman: Yes, we were selling him plants, because by that time he had his own landscape office in Los Gatos, and he was doing different jobs around. They did West Valley College, I think, and a lot of other schools. We used to supply them with some of the groundcovers that had come from New Zealand, like *Coprosma kirkii*, which was a flat groundcover. We supplied him with a lot of that one time, and with some other odds and ends, things that we had.

Riess: You didn't offer large landscaping plant materials?

Carman: No. Five gallon [cans] of some things was the biggest we carried. Sometimes we put a certain thing in a barrel or half barrel, but that thing just sat there for years before it sold.

The *Coprosma*, the only one we sold much of, was a flat groundcover. It could be in a gallon can, but we kept it sheared. Sometimes we grew them in small pots, and they'd plant them out from the pots.

### Into Production, 1970s

Riess: At first did you think of kiwi as a vine, or as a fruit tree?

Carman: Oh, it was strictly for fruit. In fact, in one of these letters I noticed I said to Trevor that we were getting orders from people who had never even tasted the fruit, because of the article in Sunset. I should have kept that article and sent that. One thing I didn't keep.

Riess: [looking through files] This recipe handout is a reminder of how important it is to tell your customers what they're going to be able to do with this thing, how to eat it.

Carman: This is from New Zealand, though, this is a New Zealand article. This is what he sent to me.

Riess: The October 1979 [San Jose Mercury News] article mentions a Kiwi Growers Association. That was here in this country?

Carman: Yes. That was started up in Gridley. It was a growers' association to promote the fruit and to try to have some kind of quality control on it. When they first started selling it, why, they were selling all kinds of little ones and big ones, they were ungraded. Then they went into having commercial packers grade them and pack them and store them, because they'll keep for six to eight months under storage.

Then they had an assessment, so much per ton of fruit, so that they could pay for the growers' association office and their publicity and promotion. That was very active for quite a few years. Lately I think they have only a part-time office in Sacramento because right now the kiwi-growing industry is on the decline because of the competition from France, Italy, South America, and Japan.

Every place is growing them now. We're still importing them from New Zealand. But I can't think of what they're getting for them. If they're selling them for twenty cents a pound here, how much can they be getting them for down there? They're getting them from South America now, too, I'm sure; a lot of fruit is coming in from Chile. Commercial growers are pulling them out and putting in Fuji apples or something like that. Whatever the vogue is right now.

Riess: New Zealand imports continue to be very strong: the apples, the Braeburn, the Gala.

Carman: Those are going to be losing out pretty soon because the markets are coming on here for those.

Riess: California-grown Braeburn and so on?



Carman: Yes. But they're having trouble here, too, with them. We get the Farm Bureau publication, and growers are having trouble getting the color on them.

Riess: At what point were you making money on the kiwis?

Carman: From the mid-seventies, after we got here and into production, up until the early eighties, probably. By then, of course, some of the people who had put in vineyards in Gridley were growing the plants too, and supplying the other growers.

We never did supply many growers. One man I think got enough for an acre over time, but mostly it was homeowners. I know one letter I sent to Trevor had an order for forty-five; that was the biggest order up to that date. But we shipped back east to one of the universities, North Carolina, and a lot of other places.

I noticed one letter said we shipped to Chicago--some lady wanted to grow them as container plants. I never did follow up on that [chuckles]. And some of the big growers in southern California started growing them. Monrovia started growing them. Brokaw Nursery, which grows avocados and other tropical fruits, they're one of the growers now that's growing them. I don't know who else. Monrovia still, but I'm not sure. They're not growing them as much as they had been in the past.

Riess: Do you have the expertise to have done experimental work with them? Crossing them with something, or making a larger kiwi?

Carman: Don't have the time. It would take five years from seed to fruit, and then you could have a fruit that big [gestures]. It could be all males, so you'd have to grow thousands of them to do anything like that. The New Zealanders have done all this work already, basically, although they are coming out with some now with supposedly orange-colored fruits. Somebody gave me one of those a while back. I haven't seen the fruit on it yet.

Riess: If work like that were done in this country, who would do it? Agricultural experiment stations? Individuals?

Carman: The experimental stations are almost nonexistent now because of the government cutbacks and things. Individuals probably would be doing it, but most of the time it wouldn't be profitable. And the time involved. And there wouldn't be a market for that fruit after you've got it developed. There's a limited market for kiwis because of the space requirements. They take a lot of space. Big vines.

Most people who come in and ask for kiwis, the first thing I ask about is space, because if they don't have the space it's impractical. They want to put in a 10' x 10' arbor, but it's not really practical to do it because you'd really be cutting it back severely all the time.

Like I say, if they do develop something new, why, there's going to be a very limited demand for it. The rare fruit growers are probably going to want them, and then they're just going to pass the cuttings around anyway, so there's not going to be a market for it. Where the money is is in getting new petunias and new marigolds and new zinnias--that's where the money is for hybridizing.

Ever been to Goldsmith Seeds in Gilroy? You should go there. In fact, they're having a trial day the 21<sup>st</sup>, I think, of this month. They have all their trial plants out growing in the field plots.

Riess: Is it open to the public?

Carman: The trial day may not be, but in the summer they'll have their beds out, and then you can go down and visit those. They have all kinds of petunias and marigolds and zinnias, different kinds planted alongside of each other, and they're trialing and comparing one to the other to see which one is the best and if theirs are better than somebody else's. That's big business.

In Africa they have big growing grounds, and in Colombia, where they can grow year-round.

Riess: Apparently they have amazing volcanic soil there.

Carman: It's not that, they build their own soil. It's the climate, see. They get the light. They've got so much daylight that they can get three or four crops a year, where here they only get one or two. That's the difference. And the growing conditions--they have even temperatures, there are no cold nights, so the plants just grow better.

And then they've got labor which is very reasonable, because they have a lot of hand pollinating for that stuff. So if you're doing crosses, why, you just take the pollen off one flower and put it on the flower of another plant. They make a lot of money on it.

Riess: That's interesting that you say they build their own soil.

Carman: Yes, because all the plants are grown in containers, I'm sure, so I don't think they're using the native soil. They may use some of it, but I'm sure they're making their own mix. It's all grown on benches and with watering systems in houses, or just out in the open on benches. That way they can control the growth and fertilizer and everything.

Riess: What about the kiwi business for you now?

Carman: We still grow a limited amount. We have one nursery in Redwood City that we sell a few to each year at wholesale, but otherwise it's mostly retail sales here, which are a few every year. It's very minor now compared to what it used to be.

#### A Trip to New Zealand in 1972, and Returning with Rhodohypoxis

Riess: You introduced other things from New Zealand besides the several we've talked about.

Carman: The other introduction from New Zealand was Rhodohypoxis. That would be the most profitable one that was introduced.

We went to New Zealand in 1972.

Riess: You and Jean?

Carman: Yes.

Riess: Earlier you were talking about something, and I was wondering if "we" meant your father who was working with you.

Carman: No. Dad passed away in '68, I think. After we moved here it was just Jean and I.

Riess: And, apropos "we," when you had something as staggering as the thousand kiwis, did you take on some special additional help or does it just mean that you worked harder?

Carman: Our daughter Nancy was working pretty near full time here at that time while she was going to school. So she spent more time there. We did have part-time help, generally high-school kids, for cleaning up and mixing soil and things like that. One or two people came in--they were going to Foothill College, and they had to spend so many hours working in a nursery, so some of them came down here and helped out doing different things.

Riess: But mostly you've defined your nursery business as a one-man operation.

Carman: Definitely, yes.

Riess: Now, you were saying you went to New Zealand?

Carman: We toured both North and South Island. We stayed with Trevor and Mary Davies in New Plymouth for two or three days. That's where their big nursery was. They took us around the area there a little bit, and we met his father, Victor Davies, who was one of the founders of Duncan and Davies--several years later he was knighted by the queen. And we met his sister.

Then we went to South Island and were with Trevor Griffiths, who was an old rose grower--he had a general nursery at that time. He was just getting into roses, and that was '72. He had been on the nurserymen's tour too, so we had corresponded with him. We told him we were coming down there.

What they did was take a holiday and got reservations everywhere we were. When we got to the airport we were going to get a car and Trevor says, "No, we'll take our car. Don't get a car." He had just had a knee operation, so he told me I could drive, and we were all in the same car. We had a great time. He knew most everybody on the South Island. He was very widely traveled, and he and his father used to go out and get Maori artifacts and stuff like that.

We went to one little nursery in Christchurch when we were there, and he had these Rhodohypoxis--it was the first time I had ever seen them. We figured out that we could get them shipped up to us. We were there in January, which is their summer, so they were in bloom, and they couldn't ship until next May or November or whatever it was--the seasons would be opposite.

So we got some in from them and built those up, and they did a very good job, because we were the only ones that had them at that time. They did great for us for several years until we had that big '90 freeze. I never thought about it, but they didn't like that sixteen degrees, so we lost 90 percent of them, I guess.

In the meantime, at Saratoga Hort there was a man who came from England who was going to be director there. He was here a little over a year--a year and a half, I guess--Philip McMillan Browse, and then he got called back. He got a position at the Royal Hort Society's Garden at Wisley as director. His family hadn't even moved over, so he went back.

And that same year they were going to have trials there [at Wisley] of Rhodohypoxis, where they get all the different Rhodohypoxis and put them out in fields and try to get the names straightened out, so I sent them something of everything we had. That was '88 or '89--I'm not sure.

So in '90 when I lost all those plants--. Philip had gone from the gardens [Wisley] because of a dispute [chuckles]. But in the meantime a young fellow who had been over here who had a nursery in southern England--and he had been to the [Carman] nursery and enjoyed it--he had closed his nursery and had gone to Wisley in the rock garden department.

Well, I wrote to him, and in '91 or '92--one of those two years--they sent me back a whole batch of Rhodohypoxis, so I was back in the business. That's the Rhodohypoxis story. We've been selling them ever since.

Now they're showing up in the markets in January, in little pots, forced into bloom around Christmastime and the first of the year, so they're becoming more available. Most people who get them don't realize that after they die down they're going to come up again next year, so they just throw them out like they do most blooming houseplants. When they go out of bloom, why, they throw them away.

Riess: Because if you get something in the supermarket, you never think of it as being perennial.

Carman: Yes. Unless they get a hydrangea or something like that, which they're selling there now. Anyway, they have two or three colors. We have ten or so named ones.

Riess: Why didn't you go back to New Zealand as the source after the freeze?

Carman: Because they were going to send them to me from Wisley for nothing. I'd have to pay for them from New Zealand. And he didn't have the quantities either. Wisley sent me, oh, sometimes a hundred of one color, because they had multiplied, I guess. I think they sent me around 400 that time. In one year I had what took me six to eight years to propagate from the few I got from New Zealand in '72 or '73.

Riess: And that was free?

Carman: Yes, because I had sent them some, and so they were sending some back. And I'm sure that Alan Robinson had something to do with it too.

So that was the second best and probably longest lasting import from New Zealand, and every year we sell them--we ship those mail order, and we have them in rock garden catalogs.

Riess: How did you market them at first?

Carman: Just here at the nursery, actually. Then there was an article in '79 or '80 in one of the first issues of Fine Gardening with pictures of Mrs. Stewart, a lady in Marin County, showing pictures of them in full bloom in pots, and we were listed as a source. We got a lot of orders from that article, and we're still getting orders from that; people have kept these old magazines, and we're still getting inquiries from that. That was very helpful.

Riess: It's described as a "tiny flowering bulb." Can you buy it as a bulb?

Carman: I doubt it. I don't think so. Generally they don't bare-root them and pack them like they do daffodils or something like that, because some of them are only that big. Some look like little tiny ranunculus bulbs, with the kind of pointed ends of the bulbs.

They're fairly perishable. Except one shipment we got from New Zealand--it was gone, lost, for a month, I think, in the mails. We finally called the postal center in Berkeley, or someplace. Somehow I got ahold of someone out on the floor, and she went over and looked in the bin, and there she found the thing, in a bin. But they all survived. If they're put in dormant and packed good, they survive.

### Other Imports

Carman: So that was really the only two things that came from New Zealand that were really productive.

Another thing we brought in which has not been a great thing, but it's a novelty, is a Golden Monterey pine, which occurred in New Zealand.

Riess: Is that Cupressus?

Carman: No, that's the Golden Monterey cypress. That's still being grown a little bit. We have one plant left out here that hasn't been killed by oak root fungus yet.

The Golden Monterey pine is like a Monterey pine, but it has golden needles to it.

Riess: Do you have to work a little harder to sell things that are golden rather than green?

Carman: Yes. It's something that very few people want--except collectors, some collectors want it. We established one at the Strybing Arboretum--it's fairly well established--and it's coning now. And I've got cones from that. There's a certain percentage that come true--not all, fifty percent or something like that.

[looking at list] Oh, there was something else. "Kathleen Mallard," that lobelia. Now that we found in on the North Island, actually. We went to a park, and they had a little conservatory there, and we found this blooming there. We had had that before the war, we had gotten it from a little nursery over in Aptos.

Then I found out that one of the people we visited on the North Island, John Anderson, who grew a lot of pot plants, he was growing it. He agreed to send us some, and he sent us some three different times before we got one that survived, because it's very tender. We had that for years.

Riess: What kind of a looking lobelia is this?

Carman: You know what Cambridge Blue looks like? But this is a double flower. In fact, there was a big half-page ad in Fine Gardening last year about this "new introduction." We just got some back from a nursery back east--Logee's Greenhouses--who had gotten some from us several years ago. They're a large mail-order nursery in Danielson, Connecticut, I believe. Kathleen Mallard has been out, and her son was out last year on a vacation buying trip. They got some plants from us too.

Riess: What are these additional names on the kiwi? The 'Bruno,' the 'Hayward.'

Carman: Those are selected fruit sizes. 'Bruno,' 'Hayward,' and 'Monty.' That's the three that we got, plus the male when we first introduced it.

The 'Hayward' is the one you get in the store; they call it 'Chico' now--or 'Hayward.' That's the one that was introduced at the Chico station. Somebody got it out of there and called it 'Chico,' and then they figured out that it's the same as 'Hayward,' and it probably was 'Hayward' which was introduced from New Zealand in the forties and it's been there ever since.

I got the three because the fruit shapes are a little different. Some are long. Actually, 'Bruno' is supposed to have the most vitamin C, but as far as fruit goes, 'Hayward' is the best one because it has the most weight. So the other ones only sell occasionally.

Riess: That's what I look for in a kiwi, something worth peeling.

Carman: Yes. I've heard of some restaurants that don't peel them, though. I can't understand that. Yuck.

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Carman: Jean likes them dried; I don't. She dries them. And I've seen them in the market now, dried ones. But they come out kind of gray rather than really green. She'll give you some if you want to try them. They're kind of crunchy, they've got the seeds in them. She used a marmalade recipe, and we make kiwi marmalade which she sells out there for the benefit of Good Shepherd Home. But that's the only thing we do with them. She eats them fresh. I don't particularly care for them.

Riess: What is *Epachris longifolia*?

Carman: That's also from Australia, a real novelty. It's kind of a straggly-looking small shrub, but with tubular red flowers with white tips. It makes a nice basket plant.

This *Dymondia margaretae* is the only other really good one. It's been fairly successful, actually.

Riess: From South Africa. What was your connection with South Africa?

Carman: We had been getting seed from the Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden in South Africa for many years, actually. But this *Dymondia* was brought to my attention by Lyle Pyeatt. He had been reading a journal from South Africa and saw this thing described. It's monotypic, meaning it's the only one plant in the genus, and it had been discovered in one place in South Africa.

It's a pretty, flat groundcover with a green leaf which is felted, or gray on the bottom, and the edges are kind of recurved, so it looks like it's got a white edge around all the leaves. It has a little dandelion-like flower when it blooms, which is not very often. It makes a tight mat.

It works quite well in rock gardens or between stepping stones. We saw a garden on a tour in Los Angeles several years ago, and they had it between their stepping stones. It's spread



around pretty well all over California now. A lot of people have sold much more than I have. It's very drought-tolerant.

English Connections, and Further Afield, 1975

Riess: You also have strong ties to England. Tell me about that.

Carman: We met Chris Brickell, who was the director of Wisley, when we were over there in '75. We were talking to somebody else, and we met him very briefly at that time. Then we corresponded with him about something else, I guess. He was over here, visited us some years later. He wrote a book on daphnes, he was one of the real experts, he did a lot of traveling.

He described this Daphne Jasminea in some publication and sent me cuttings in '86. So we grafted some and rooted some and I have been growing it ever since, off and on. It's a really great rock garden plant. I can show you one out there. I've got it in a pot with a rock and it just grows right over the rock, it just creeps over.

It has nice little white flowers but no fragrance, in spite of the name. He maintained it did have fragrance in Europe. Anyway, it's a great rock garden plant--or Alpine plant is what it is, because it has miniature leaves, little tiny flowers, and it blooms a long time. And it's relatively tough. We've sold that off and on here. Siskiyou has it now, and I think there are probably other people are growing it.

Riess: I think of daphne of being difficult and having drainage problems.

Carman: This one can wilt and pick up again. It's one of the few daphnes that will wilt and still not die.

In '75 we went to England, to the Chelsea Show, which is the only time we've been to that. We went to Kew, Wisley, and we've been to the Cotswalds. We visited another friend and stopped at Hillyer's.

I was on the Saratoga [Horticultural Foundation] board at that time, so we were picking up cuttings at Hillyer's, and we had made arrangements to meet him on the 30th or 31st of August, which was a Monday. At that time, I didn't know anything about bank holidays, which is a big holiday in England.

We called him--the night before we got a place in Winchester and stayed there and called him. He had to come out the next morning, so we went out and got to talking. And then he wanted to show us a little bit around, so he got his catalog--which was about that thick--and we spent all morning touring this arboretum which he developing where he had all these plants out of his catalog growing.

Then he said that his wife was going to have lunch for us, so we went in, and she had lunch, and she was kind of complaining that it was a holiday [laughter]. We didn't realize this. Then he was having a little bit of heart problems, so she said he had to rest, and naturally we said that was fine.

After that he came bustling out fairly quickly, and we spent the rest of the day touring this place with Mr. Hillyer, who was the plantsman in England at that time, because his nursery had been going on for--he was the second generation, I guess. They were the biggest nursery in England. We didn't get away from there until four or five o'clock at night, and we were supposed to get back to London that night. He was very gracious, and that was really the highlight of that trip, and probably one of the highlights of my whole career, actually.

Riess: Tell me more about what made it special.

Carman: Here was this man who was one of the greatest plantsmen in England--maybe in the world--at that time, taking a day to show us around. A backyard gardener from California.

Riess: And he had met you out here first?

Carman: He had spoken at Cal Hort, and I think we talked, but he wouldn't remember me from anybody at that time. But I was getting the plants for Saratoga, the cuttings, and so we got those. We never even got into the little nursery he had there. We were at his home, actually, and this has now since been given to the National Trust. It's a National Trust garden. He was developing a big herbaceous border at that time, which was going to be 700 yards long or something like that.

Riess: Is there anything like it in this country?

Carman: Well, maybe back east there might be. I've never been back east, so I don't know, but I don't think so. They had I don't know how big an acreage of arboretum around it, plus the old historic house there. There's so much history there in England.

One couple we visited on that same trip--they were living in a little cottage that was 300 years old. You can't comprehend some of that stuff. They think nothing of that, but I don't think there's anything quite like it. The closest garden that would in any way compare would be Filoli, and that's pretty small compared to something like that.

Riess: Longwood Gardens?

Carman: I don't know. I've never been to Longwood. It's got quite an arboretum, I guess, but I don't know what else.

Riess: Is there a great gardening tradition in New Zealand?

Carman: Yes. Still, like I say, it's hard to see how all the nurseries make a living in New Zealand, because there's so darn many nurseries compared to the people. There's only now probably three million people in all of New Zealand, but there's nurseries all over the place.

When we were in South Island, we visited this one couple and they had about a two- or three-acre garden. They had a sheep ranch there too, but they were taking care of this garden by themselves. They had great big lawns and all kinds of shrubs.

Riess: So you went to England in '75. And where else?

Carman: Then we went to Denmark in '77. Jean's grandmother was from Denmark--her mother was born here, but lived in Denmark for a year or so after school. So we went to Denmark and visited. We toured the country and visited the island of Moen, where her grandmother was born. There were white cliffs there, and she had always heard about going down those cliffs to play at the ocean, but we didn't make that trek.

Then we stopped in Hamburg, Germany, to visit the brother of Gerda Isenberg, to visit her home there. He met us in Hamburg and we drove out towards the Baltic Sea--almost back to Denmark, I guess. We visited the home there.

Riess: It was her family home, and her brother had stayed on there?

Carman: The brother, her brother, had gone back, actually. He had come over here and worked for years. He worked long enough so that he started drawing Social Security.

He was living in Hamburg, actually, but drove us out there to the family home. They had some beautiful specimens there--one copper beech that was almost as big as this house.

We went from there to Holland, and we stayed in Boskoop, which is the center of their nursery growers. We stayed right on a canal there. We could look down on the canal and see the barges coming in. Then we visited a friend--Abe Van Klaveran's brother was over there at that time, so we met up with him. He took us around a little bit there for a couple days.

Riess: To see the bulb fields?

Carman: No, the bulbs were out of season, because it was in August.

We were there for about two or three days and I was never so sick in my life [chuckles]. We went to Rotterdam, I think it was, and ate at a fast-food place of some kind. By the time I got home, the next day, I had some kind of food poisoning. Boy, the whole day I was out of it.

We went to Amsterdam and caught the electric train to the Hook of Holland and took a boat to England, and then we went into London. We stayed there for a day or two, and then we went to Scotland and visited a rock garden in Scotland because Mr. Evans, Alfred Evans, had been over the year previous and stayed with us for one or two nights.

[tape interruption]

Carman: [referring to phone conversation about a former customer] All through the years we got to know him, George Johnson lived in the city. He collected--I couldn't believe how he'd collect this stuff--he didn't drive, so he'd come down by bus, and he'd carry two shopping bags, reinforced, and he would buy gallon cans and put them in there and stack them up and carry these gallon cans on the bus.

He did this all over California, I guess, because he was also down south. He lived two stories up in a boarding house in San Francisco, down by the Haight district. Five or six years ago, maybe seven years ago, his landlady got mad because he had his room full of stuff. Down below on the ground he had a plot that was maybe twice as big as this room, stuffed with gallon cans. I hauled two truckloads of stuff out of there that he gave me.

Riess: You mean he called you and told you to come and get it?

Carman: Yes, and one-of-a-kind stuff.

Riess: And it was all in wonderful shape, probably.

Carman: [laughs] Well, no, it was pretty bad. After that he became friends with somebody in Rio de Janeiro, and he went down there every year, spent a month down there. To see him, you wouldn't believe it. He was a big man, heavysset. Really heavysset.

I would call him once in a while and talk to him, but all of a sudden I couldn't get him--this is a conservator I was talking to. He's in a rest home up in San Francisco. He has some serious problems, I guess. He was quite a character. A lot of people knew him. He was big with the Succulent Society; he'd go to their meetings in San Francisco. He had all kinds of variegated succulents, but one of a kind. I've got some of them out there that are still surviving; I haven't found homes for them yet.

Riess: Before the phone rang we were talking about Scotland.

Carman: Yes. We went to the Edinburgh Rock Garden, which is one of the rock gardens of the world. They have all kinds of plants there that they grow, with all these stone sinks with alpines in them--it's really an amazing place.

Riess: Was that your inspiration for the stone sinks?

Carman: We might have started before that; I can't remember when we started those.

Riess: The October 1979 article said you were famous for stone sinks.

Carman: Well, we must have tried it before that then [chuckles].

Anyway, we were in Scotland, and we went through the Lake District. We were at a garden that was famous for topiaries, and Jean fell at that time and fractured a rib and a vertebra. She ended up in the hospital for two days, maybe three. That was just north of Coventry, and I drove to Coventry one day to look around there. That was a town that was bombed during the war.

We were going to meet Trevor and Mary [Davies] at Wisley just before we came home, because they were going to be getting in to England at the same time. We called Wisley and told them that our plans are changed, and we were going directly to the hotel right next to Heathrow [Airport]. We spent one or two days there before we came home, because she couldn't really walk very well or anything. Mary and Trevor came over there to see us that night, and we had some tea and biscuits or something. They went on with their tour and then we came home. So that was our trip to England. That was our last overseas trip.



## VII THOUGHTS ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS

Plantsmen and Businessmen

Carman: We've been on some trips with Cal Hort. They go on overnight or weekend trips. In '79 we went to Seattle with the Reiters--Victor and Carla Reiter--a couple of times. We've been to southern California on a couple of trips with Cal Hort. We went to Denver three or four years ago with Carla, because Victor and Carla and we were going to go to see another friend, Panayoti Kelaidis, who is curator of the rock garden at the Denver Botanical Garden.

Panayoti [Kelaidis] is a remarkable young man. He's been to South Africa twice in the last couple of years. A really good plantsman. He graduated with a language degree. Somehow he got interested in plants, and he came out here several years ago and bought a bunch of rock plants for the garden. I don't know he got to be curator of the rock garden in Denver, but now it's one of the premier rock gardens in the U.S. His wife is the editor of the Rock Garden Journal. She's a good plantswoman too, very knowledgable.

Riess: What is a good plantsperson? Does that mean somebody who remembers the names of everything or what?

Carman: Right.

Riess: That is what you mean?

Carman: Oh, yes. Like Dick Dunmire--he's the premier one around here, he was at Sunset magazine. He's remarkable. People like Panayoti too. I think they have photographic memories, or even if they read a description they can remember it and relate it to a plant when they see the plant, which is very difficult for me. I just can't remember names or spelling or anything, really. I fumble along.

Riess: It has nothing to do with a green thumb though.

Carman: No, no. A lot of them do grow things well, but a lot of them don't grow things much. But most of them are fairly good growers too, actually.

Riess: That's interesting. Is it a matter of training? For you?

Carman: I didn't have any training at all. All I had taken was a couple of botany classes, I think that's all I took, after the war. I was only there for a year when I decided I didn't think I could stand to wait three or four years to do something.

I see now what I should have taken was a business course, because I'm a very poor businessman. I think that's the trouble. I like to grow plants, and after I grow the plant, why, I don't know what to do with it. It's easy to grow the plant. Like I tell everybody else, you can grow thousands of plants, but unless you've got a market or can sell them, why, you've got a thousand plants that are sitting there getting older every day. So that's what happens here, I'm afraid. I just don't have enough collectors coming in to buy the stuff I like to grow [chuckles].

Riess: The business course would give you legitimate reason to be more hard-boiled or something like that.

Carman: It would have shown me how I could have made some money, maybe.

Riess: You probably know that.

Carman: Well, yes, I guess. I should have grown stuff people wanted rather than what I like to grow [laughs]. That's what I should have done.

Riess: It doesn't help that you were on the A list of best places to visit, the best nurseries, the rarest--I mean, because you are on all those lists?

Carman: Yes, I was. I think I'm getting on the tail end of those lists now [laughs]. There are younger people now who have got a lot more of certain things, the "in" things. I've got a lot of the things that are unusual, but not as much in demand, so that's the thing. They're growing things that are in demand, and so they're selling.



The Unusual, Micropropagation, "Disposability"

Riess: To pursue that idea, you knew where you wanted to go when you went to England and New Zealand by the reputation of the place, and it sounds like people from New Zealand and England came here because you had something very special.

Carman: Yes, we've had a lot of people come from all over the world to visit us, because we were one of the only ones that had that collection at that time. Well, I guess there aren't many still that have it.

Like I say, younger people that are growing up here--it's a lot easier to have unusual stuff now because of the way they propagate with this micropropagation. You get a lab, you can propagate some of this stuff by the thousands in two or three weeks. Or in two or three months you can have 10,000 of these things in little tubes. So it's a lot easier to propagate some of these rare things.

There's a thing they call Starry Eyes--that's a little shade plant--it was supposedly quite rare, but they're propagating it almost by the ton up in Portland. If it sells good, if it gets spread out, why, it's going to be all over the place--in two years it's going to be everywhere. In the past, plants that were a little hard to propagate, or that were not very much in demand, nobody fooled with them.

Riess: This is kind of disturbing. Some things should be rare.

Carman: That's what I think too. There was a thing that came out fifteen years ago, Potentilla 'Red Ace,' which was quite different at that time. All of a sudden Monrovia came out with it, and they were shipping it all over the country in one year or two years because it propagates very easy.

But they were selling it in places where it's going to grow but not perform, because everybody said, "Oh, it doesn't turn red," because it had to be cooler. So that was one of the things that they didn't tell anybody--or nobody really knew at that time --that it should be in a fairly cool spot to have color rather than the hot, bright sun.

I still can't accept things like rock garden plants in gallon cans. I was over at a big nursery in Saratoga the other day, and there they had these lewisias, which are fairly uncommon. They had I don't know how many of them, all different colors in gallon cans, big lush things. They had come from Oregon, because

the people had called me up and wanted to know if I wanted to buy them. I said that I've got those already. I don't have the color selection they have, but I do have a lot of them. A friend gave me a bunch of seedlings a couple years ago.

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Carman: They're promoting everything like that [lewisia] if it's a little bit unusual and it can be propagated, and they're selling them. A lot of people don't know what they are. Some of them probably won't have success with them, so they won't buy them again. But they're in color, and that's still what sells. It's pretty hard to sell something that's not in color unless people really know what it is.

Riess: And there's the kind of mentality of all of this being disposable anyway. I don't think you believe that, though.

Carman: I went to visit a nursery in Redwood City, and I saw four or five, maybe six, flats of lace-cap hydrangeas in full bloom, the white ones. Real nice plants. I said, "That's a pretty good size batch." They said, "Yes, it's all one order. They're having a party, and they're going to use it for decorations. As soon as the party's over, they're going to dump it." That's the way it is, you know: people who have got the means, why, they do that. It's hard to comprehend sometimes that this can happen and does happen all the time.

### Catalogs, Perennials, Cycles

Riess: Do you, Carman's Nursery, have a catalog?

Carman: We had a list when we moved here--a two- or three-page mimeographed list which we never kept up. Two or three years ago there was a young lady, a customer, who became a friend, and she kept bugging us about a catalog. She had a computer at that time, so she came in and did a lot of notes and things and put together a list for us. We printed up I don't know how many.

But soon as we print up a list it's out of date, because some of the stuff didn't grow that year or is not available. So we haven't kept it up, actually. We don't have a real list. I have an old copy of this list, which is not complete; I keep adding things to it, separate pages. [See further p. 130]

Riess: Apropos the business course, are you running the nursery in the same way your father did business?

Carman: That was altogether different. Down there we were running a small, general nursery. We were buying and selling things, all the plants that were being used for landscaping at that time of the big boom of building in the valley. It was a small, general nursery--it had insecticides, fertilizers, soil amendments, fruit trees, shade trees in five-gallon cans.

Riess: So you were really meeting a need.

Carman: Yes. We were selling the things that people wanted at that time, instead of what we wanted to grow. On the side I was growing a few things that didn't sell.

Then when we moved up here, that was in '70, that was when the perennials were just really starting to come into their own, there was a lot of push on perennials. So we went into perennials and we did pretty good for several years. We were selling some wholesale, distributing them to several nurseries. Then everybody started getting the perennials. Now perennials, the last four or five years, maybe more, have been the top thing all over the United States. The big nurseries are selling them by the tons, actually. They're really a big thing.

In the last few years water gardens have come in big. I think perennials are probably going to be big still, but I think the style is going to change, or the cycle is going to be changing: it's going to go into succulents and cactus probably, soon, which were big ten or fifteen years ago.

Riess: That's interesting that you can see those cycles. I don't know what would predict them.

Carman: I don't either. Well, now, of course, the water thing has made a big difference, in California especially. So [it is going toward] native plants, or growing more Mediterranean things rather than all this English stuff which takes so much water. That's made a big difference in some people, not everybody, though. Most people are still putting in plants that are going to take water to keep going during the summertime.

But I think now gardening spaces are getting smaller. A lot of people are living in townhouses or condominiums where they've got a deck or a little patio, and two dozen plants is about all they can put in the tub or pots that they have. And they change them two or three times a year, and so that's where the color is selling good.

Wisteria Mysteries

Riess: Wisteria is another plant you have specialized in. How did that get started?

Carman: I guess it started with Trevor again. It must have been in the early seventies. Trevor was no longer with Duncan and Davies; he has his own company.

Riess: Is he about your age?

Carman: Yes. He's seventy this year, I think. He was up here, and we went to visit a garden over in Saratoga which had some of these four-foot long purple ones, and nice big white ones. He wanted to get scions from that, I think, and so then I got some too. Then we started looking at the W.B. Clarke Nursery's old wisteria list. That had been closed for several years but they were importing wisteria about the same time that Mr. Domoto was. W. B. Clarke was a major grower of wisteria from the '30s to the '50s.

We were looking for those, trying to get that list back into production, because most people were selling blue, pink, white wisteria with no names on it or anything. Then I sent back to some other arboretums back east--Swarthmore and Arnold--and get some scions from them.

Riess: Swarthmore? I didn't know they had an arboretum.

Carman: Yes, I'm pretty sure. I think Judy Zuke was there at that time. She's now at Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Then we started growing those and looking around the valley here for different wisterias, trying to find named ones. So we gradually built up a selection of those. Filoli has a big collection, so we got scions from them and grew some for them. They were planting out more, and they've got some new plantings of them up there. And we just kept building up our stock plants.

Then Mr. Domoto gave us seed--that was in '88 or '89. I planted a bunch of seedlings, and in three years some of them started to bloom, and one of the first ones to bloom was a double one, which I thought was very unusual--the flower looks like a little rose. There was a big one at Filoli on the carriage house, if you were to look there.

Since then I've had three or four more doubles bloom out of that same seed batch. I don't know if Mr. Domoto could understand

what I'm saying now about it, if he has any idea of why this could be. Anyway, we have one that's quite a different color.

Riess: But they were all from one wisteria?

Carman: As far as I know, one plant. He doesn't even remember what plant it came from, I don't think. That plant, I'm sure, now is dead, because most of his plants are really suffering over there.

Four years ago Hillyer, son of Harold Hillyer, wrote from England about this deep purple double 'Black Dragon' wisteria, which he said they had at one time. He sent to Japan for it several times and had not been able to get it since then.

Then I wrote to Beth Chatto, and Rosemary Verey, I think. (I corresponded with Beth fairly frequently.) Rosemary, I think it was, put me in touch with another lady who said she had gotten 'Black Dragon' from Germany. She sent me some scions, and then I got some from Cannington College [Somerset, England], which has the national collection of wisteria.

I got some scions from them, and they bloomed this year, but it's the same as the one that we have. So the one that we have may be 'Black Dragon,' I don't know. That's what Trevor and I are trying to determine. But the picture in the wisteria book looks much lighter than 'Black Dragon.' I have to go up to Filoli and check it out with that one and see how it looks, because that one that Filoli has may be a 'Black Dragon.'

The words, characters, in Japanese can mean more than one color, I understand. There's supposed to be a red wisteria, but the character for red could mean pink or rouge or lipstick--it could mean any of those colors. I got one three or four years ago in Fresno from Mr. Matsubara, who brought it from Japan, supposedly from a red plant. It bloomed a couple years ago, and it's a good deep pink, but it's certainly not red. We're still looking for this red one and for this 'Black Dragon,' if there is such a thing.

Riess: Mr. Matsubara?

Carman: He had a nursery there for quite some time. I didn't know that until--he was over here one time, I guess, years ago, and he had an interpreter with him. He didn't speak much English. I didn't really connect things. He's done a lot of work with persimmon trees, hybridizing persimmons. When we were there, he had been working on grapes, hybridizing the big grapes to send to Japan for gifts. He showed us some that big! [gestures] They use fruit a

lot as gifts in Japan. They'll spend ten dollars for a couple of apples, I guess.

Riess: The only way you and Trevor can ascertain that you're dealing with a named variety is by sight?

Carman: Yes.

Riess: You're not doing tests.

Carman: You can't do any tests, you've got to see the flower. I've sent Trevor scions, and he's gotten scions from a man in Australia who wrote the book on wisteria, Mr. Peter Valder. He had a big estate in Australia with original--some of those original plants came from W.B. Clarke in San Jose, and those were small trees. They had trunks that were like this [gestures] on these tree wisterias. They were old and well established and the names were valid names on them. He's gotten some from that.

Trevor has grown a lot of plants and determined whether they're true or not from the descriptions that are in some of the literature. He's got the best collection now, probably in the world, Trevor does. He's growing, and shipping to England, a lot of the bare root dormant wisteria. I've got one or two stock plants of each of these, but that's all I've got. And we're growing some. We're growing mostly the double one, which is in demand, and the real long one is in fairly good demand, and the white one.

Riess: It's like talking delicious food: the more you talk about them, the more I want one.

Carman: You could grow it in a tub, it would make a nice container plant. You could make a multi-stand tree form. I've seen some in containers about this big that were about that high and that broad, and they're a nice sculpture when they're out of bloom. So there's a lot of things to do with them.

But I've gotten stuff from back east that most of it now has turned out to be something else from what they sent me.

Riess: They gave it a name, whatever it was.

Carman: Oh, yes, they had a name. They gave me a list, I sent for the name, and they sent me the stuff that was named, but when it finally flowered it wasn't that name. Trevor says he thinks you have to go to the plant, look at the plant while it's blooming, and mark the stem that you want [laughter], and that's the only way you're ever to going to get what you expect.

Riess: Does that mean that they revert?

Carman: No, it was just that the plants might have been growing together or something, and they just picked off the wrong plant, or the labels are wrong.

I got scions from the Royal Botanic Garden in Ontario--I don't know how I got touch with them, I think through Lucy [Tolmach], but I'm not sure--and they have a garden with some wisteria there. He sent me a plant from one--it's a named one supposedly, it came from England at one time--and that bloomed this year too.

Also, there was a nursery in Vancouver that got a bunch of wisteria in from Japan. They listed a 'Black Dragon,' but they didn't want to send me one, or it was too much trouble. So I had them send it to the botanic garden in Ontario, and they planted it and sent me some scions. Did they send me scions or not? I can't remember now. Anyway, that was supposed to be 'Black Dragon'--I don't know if that's bloomed yet or not there. I should write to them and find out.

Riess: This is a case where you're just pursuing something because you've become completely intrigued, but it's not a business venture?

Carman: I hope to sell some, yes--I'm selling them. A lady came from Danville the other day. She had ordered one from one of the big nurseries up there. I don't think she ordered right, but she said she wanted a Japanese wisteria. She got a Japanese wisteria, but it isn't the double one she wanted. So she came down here and got one of our double ones.

Riess: How was she led to you?

Carman: I think she called Filoli, and Filoli gave her our name because we deal with Filoli, we sell them wisteria if they're short. They're growing some of their own, but if they need some we sell them some too. They resell them there at their garden shop.

Riess: You talk about perennials becoming popular. I'd think anyone who gardens, what they'd want is perennials. That's the magic of gardening, it seems to me: something that every springtime reappears. Maybe that's more of an East Coast thing, though.

Carman: I think it's more of a place where you don't have gardening year round. See, on the East Coast, from May until November, I guess, is your gardening season. The rest of the year, why, there's white stuff or water or something on top of the ground. Here, every month of the year you can have something blooming if you

want to give it water, and get the right plants. So when they talk about perennials blooming all summer, they're talking about six weeks to two months, maybe.

Here "all summer" is six months at least, and they're not going to bloom that long. So you've got to put some annuals in with them if you want color year round. You cannot grow perennials and have color year round, because in the wintertime--even here--they're going to go dormant, and there will be nothing there unless you have some snaps or petunias or stock or something else, annuals, that's coming up to take their place.

And generally, perennials take up more space than annuals. Petunias are going to get that big whereas an achillea is going to get that big. And an achillea is going to bloom for four months, and you're going to cut it off, and you can't put anything in its place. A petunia's going to bloom for six months, you jerk it out, you put some primroses in for the winter and they're going to bloom for three or four months. So you've got ten months of bloom there.

They're compatible in that you have to have some of the annuals in with the perennials to keep a colorful garden in California.

Riess: In fact, you ended up teaching classes about perennials. Aren't horticultural societies more geared towards perennials? I can't imagine a horticultural society being interested in petunias.

Carman: They show them sometimes. Or they [the members] may not show them, but if they're going to have the color [in their gardens] they're going to have to use them. That's the way I feel, at least.

Riess: [tape interruption] You were talking about Mr. Domoto's miniature wisteria.

Carman: He imported it from Japan and had it for twenty years, I guess, before it bloomed. When it did bloom, there happened to be a man from Japan visiting him, and he couldn't believe it, because in Japan it had never bloomed, I guess.

They took pictures of it and sent them back to Japan to show them in Japan that it really does bloom [laughter]. I think the Japanese name is 'Hime' [spells], which means "blind" or something, because it never has any flowers on it. His bloomed, I've seen it blooming, and mine has bloomed a couple of times. But it's very unpredictable as far as blooming goes, and it's



difficult to grow. It's going to be a real collector's item [laughs], if I ever get enough growing to sell some.

I grow two or three a year, and one or two die, so it's one of those things that's really hard to keep up.

Riess: Why would it die?

Carman: It's in the genes, I guess. It's not a very strong grower. The stems of it, the biggest one would be that thick [gestures]. It's really very thin, it's like wire. His [Mr. Domoto's] big plants have died. He had some before that were about that big and that wide [gestures], and they were at least fifty years old, I guess.

Riess: Do you have bonsai wisteria too? Wisteria does very well as a bonsai, doesn't it?

Carman: Oh, yes. I had a nice one until last year when it drowned. The drain hole plugged up in the bonsai pot, and I didn't realize what was happening. It was an old one: thirty-five or forty years old. It had a nice trunk. I've got it in the pot out there--I'll keep it as a ghost plant or something [chuckles].

Riess: Have you done your own bonsai?

Carman: I took a course years ago from Mr. Yoshimura from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. We did several things at that course--it was a two-month course. That was just before we moved here. When we moved here there were no fences, and we had them all stacked out there, and one night they just walked away and I never saw them again. Nothing left in that group at all. That was twenty years ago.

Riess: Maybe this blind wisteria is like propagating a runt.

Carman: Something like that, yes. It's a dwarf.

Riess: It's rather touching that one would want to do it.

Carman: If it ever bloomed, it's great. A tiny wisteria plant with flowers that long. Leaves and flowers in scale, a natural bonsai.

Riess: You were talking earlier about Beth Chatto and Rosemary Verey, both well-known names.

Carman: Rosemary's a remarkable woman. She travels all around the world giving speeches, she comes to California, she goes to Washington to their shows. I don't know how she can do it, besides writing books.

Beth Chatto has a garden in east England and is another really great plantswoman. She has written several books and has a remarkable garden. She stayed with us, several years ago, for two nights after speaking at Cal Hort.

Riess: Both of these plantswomen are also great gardeners?

Carman: Beth does more gardening than Rosemary does. Rosemary is more of a P.R. person: she likes the speaking and the book writing and things like that.

Rosemary has a great garden--Nancy went there when they were in England, though Rosemary wasn't there, and it was raining--it's written up in all the books, and it's in all the magazines and stuff. Beth actually is out working in the garden, doing the plants and helping the crew.

Riess: Back to being a plantsman and learning the names. For you, you've just learned along the way?

Carman: I haven't [laughs].

Riess: But you deal with plant material all the time.

Carman: I know I do, but I can't remember the names. I just picked it up, I guess. I read a little bit and associated with people who knew. But I don't remember, really, I have a poor memory.

As long as you can remember somebody who knows the name, you're all right [laughter]. There was an article in the San Jose Mercury with a photo of a vine on a wall, and this man said it was a gold coin plant. I looked at it and thought, What the heck is that? I forgot about it, but then Joan Jackson, garden editor of the Mercury, called up one day and asked me what the name of that plant was, and I told her I'd have to think about it. I finally got the picture, and again I looked at it, and realized what it was.

In the meantime I told her to call Dick Dunmire. I guess Dick and I both thought about it at the same time, so I called her back and left a message. It was a Thunbergia Gregory, a plant that we grow out here, but because it was on a great big wall it looked different. So we both came up with the name at the same time.

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## VIII HORTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND PEOPLE

[Interview 3: April 14, 1997] ##

Western Horticultural Society

Riess: Tell me about Western Horticultural Society.

Carman: Western Hort[icultural Society] was organized by Bill Schmidt, who was a premier plantsman on the peninsula at that time. He had Schmidt Nursery in Palo Alto on Lambert Street. He was also a member of Cal Hort. He envisioned Western Hort as being an umbrella organization: it would have Cal Hort and Southern Hort and other western hort societies under its wings.

It never did develop that way. There was not enough interest on the peninsula to get Western Hort going as strong as Cal Hort. Cal Hort is thirty years older, and it had a lot more prestige behind it and a lot more members because the members would come from Marin County and the East Bay and all around. Their membership was three times as much as Western Hort. So Western Hort was basically a peninsula organization going from San Mateo down to San Jose. That's roughly where their membership was located--in the Palo Alto/Los Altos district.

Riess: The program was modeled on the program of Cal Hort?

Carman: Yes, definitely. The same type of organization--board of directors, president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and so on.

Riess: And presenting plants at the meeting.

Carman: Yes, the program was practically the same: a horticultural speaker, then a plant discussion, and lately a plant raffle. Well, Western Hort always had the raffle; Cal Hort's raffle just

started in the last two years, actually, as a way to raise more funds.

Riess: A raffle among the members?

Carman: Cal Hort does fair, I guess, because they've got more members; they do a little better than Western Hort does, I think.

Riess: Cal Hort had started thirty years earlier. In 1933?

Carman: In '32 or '33. There was a big freeze in 1932 in the Bay Area, and a lot of plants were devastated, I guess. A lot of big plants were killed, and so a group of gardeners got together in San Francisco and had some kind of informal meetings to try to discuss and find out what was killed and what wasn't killed. That evolved into the Cal Hort Society.

Riess: You say "a group of gardeners?" Professionals?

Carman: I think there were gardeners from estates and probably a few nursery people back in '32 when they started. It wasn't really a professional group ever, I don't think, in the beginning. They were interested gardeners, I think is what it was. By '63 the estate gardeners were few and far between and most of those wouldn't have been coming to the meetings. It would be the homeowners who were coming to the meetings.

Riess: But they are all amateurs.

Carman: Oh, yes, they're all amateurs, but actually some of the amateurs are more expert than the professionals in their field. They focus on one thing. One young lady who comes to Western Hort grows orchids, and she brings in all kinds of orchids. She's the expert on orchids. Another man grows South African bulbs--Lachenalias--and he has the best collection in the county of Lachenalias. That's the same at Cal Hort.

There are very few professionals at Cal Hort--I mean, there are a lot of designers and things like that, but there are very few professional nursery people that go to Cal Hort or to Western Hort. It's mostly all amateurs and interested gardeners who are interested in plants.

As I say, Bill Schmidt started this, and he called a group together, and they were mostly in the nursery industry. The original board of directors was Bill Schmidt, John Edwards, Ralph Bernstein, Johnny Coulter, Its Uenaka, Dick Dunmire--there must have been three or four others. They acted as the first board of directors until it got going, and then in a year or two, whenever

the terms came around, then they got more of the so-called amateurs in.

Bill, I think, was the first president, and John Edwards was the second, I think. I've got a list of them someplace, but not with me. From then on, there weren't too many professionals either as the president or on the board--one or two here and there, but not a great many. It was mostly all amateurs and homeowners, which is, I think, the way it should be. The society has to have a lot of variety, and that's the way they would do it.

Riess: And instead of being an umbrella group, it's a parallel group.

Carman: Right. It's one of the four groups that sponsors *Pacific Horticulture*.

Riess: You've been a member of Cal Hort.

Carman: Yes. I didn't join until '73, after we had moved here, because I had a school board meeting on the same night that they met. There was no way to get either one of them to change [laughs].

Riess: You would learn something by going to each of these meetings?

Carman: Yes. They have speakers from all around the world. They have speakers from England--especially at Cal Hort.

And then you have speakers who are focused on one thing, like drip irrigation, or organic gardening, and stuff like that. Bob Kourak, who has a lot of drip irrigation systems, he's spoken several times at Cal Hort and Western Hort. You should learn something every time you go.

### Times Change

Riess: When you look back at the organizations, is it possible to chronicle change in taste and style?

Carman: Yes. I can see it most markedly in Cal Hort, because I guess that's the oldest one. When I joined there was a group of gardeners, let's call them, that were in their fifties and sixties--I was a little bit younger. They were serious gardeners. Some of them had fairly large gardens, so they could bring in unusual things, and big chunks of a plant or something like that--I wrote a letter to the awards committee just recently about this.

We would have these tables set up, bigger than this [dining room table], out there in the rotunda of the Academy of Sciences, and they would have two tables full of these things. Now they have one table with a few little things on it. Now the people who are bringing in the material are living in smaller areas, they don't have the space, and so they have a lot of pot plants.

It's quite changed, in the amount of material and the kind of material that's coming in. Of course now you're seeing things that are new to these people, that were brought in thirty years ago by the other people. So it's going around the circle again [chuckles].

Riess: Why would something be rediscovered?

Carman: They just go out of favor. They're not being grown for a while, and then all of a sudden they're available again. They bring them in, and they're new to the people that see them.

Riess: You wouldn't be able to say that it represented climatic changes or anything like that.

Carman: No, it's just fashion. Things change. Right now perennials are the hottest thing over the U.S.--and England, of course, they always have been that way. Water plants have been very highly promoted over the last two or three years. You get these individual pools and a few water lilies and things like that. I think probably succulents and cactus are going to be coming back in. They were big ten or fifteen years ago. They more or less go in cycles, I think.

Riess: It's interesting to think about who makes these things happen. There's an economic drive behind it, isn't there?

Carman: That, I think, and conserving water. There's a big push on drought-tolerant plants now too, for a lot of areas. The last speaker at Western Hort was talking about plants to make a California garden or something, and he showed a lot of native plants and things that were similar that you could use in a garden around the house. But I don't know how many of these things will be accepted, because they're not very showy [chuckles].

### Promoting New Plant Materials

Carman: The people that are doing this are very enthusiastic about it, but to get a new plant accepted is very difficult. I've talked to

Ernest Wertheim about this--and some of the nurserymen, we used to grow some different things, and they'd tell me they've got every square foot allocated to some plant. If they bring a new one in, they've got to move something else out. Unless they get a call for it, they're not going to be the ones who are going to put it there to sell it.

One nursery [Redwood City Nursery] does a lot of unusual things. He gets things from a lot of little growers, and he has the best selection on the peninsula probably. It's a very small nursery, but he has stuff packed in like you wouldn't believe.

Riess: But you won't get a call for something unless people know about it.

Carman: And you've got to get an architect to use it someplace where people can see it. And to get them to use it, they've got to see it. So it's kind of a vicious circle that you can't break into sometimes.

Riess: One way people learn about things is in catalogs.

Carman: What's happening now, of course, is Monrovia Nursery and Hines Nursery and some of the other big nurseries, they have enough money to grow something and promote it and sell it just on their promotion. They get all their customers to take some, and that way it gets spread around.

Sometimes it keeps going, sometimes they grow it for two or three years, and then if it doesn't sell they just drop it. They've made the money on the first go-around on it. To them it's more of an item, rather than a plant, but it's a little different plant, so they promote it.

Riess: And new stuff gets written up in magazines?

Carman: Yes, it gets into some of the magazines and publications. American Nurseryman is one that does a lot with new plants. They have one page dedicated now to plants that people think are worthy of being grown more, and some of those things are very good, and some of them I think are dogs.

Riess: And is there a page dedicated to plants that you ought to get rid of?

Carman: Brooklyn Botanic Garden brought out a whole handbook just recently about exotic pests over the U.S. You'd be surprised what's on that list. It's a big list, and some very good plants are on that

list, but in places they're really pests, depending on where they're being grown.

There's a melaleuca on there which is taking over the Everglades in Florida. And of course in the Santa Cruz and Watsonville area, the pampas grass down there is an exotic pest. And the Cytisus [broom, C. scoparius] along Highway 17, and I saw some up on Highway 80 last year, almost up to the summit. They seed prolifically, they come up, and they'll do in very poor conditions.

There's stuff up in Marin County--I don't know what that weed was up there that the [California] Native Plant Society was trying to control. I can't think of what it is now. There's things all over that are like that, that are gradually encroaching and crowding other natives out.

Riess: Were new things introduced at Western Hort and at Cal Hort?

Carman: Oh, they had already been introduced someplace else. The nursery would be growing it, and then they would be being sold someplace, somebody would buy it, grow it, then they'd bring it in and show it.

Nurserymen would already have known about this plant, probably. But not necessarily. Sometimes people would grow things from seed or they were sending away and getting something that's not being grown by any of the wholesalers or the big growers.

#### Saratoga Horticultural Foundation

Riess: Saratoga Horticultural Foundation was formed the same year, 1963. Why 1963? Why were things happening then?

Carman: Coincidence, I guess. Ray Hartman is the one who started Saratoga Hort Foundation. He was the owner of Leonard Coates Nurseries at that time. He had a piece of land over in Saratoga and he donated the land and some stock plants, I think, to start out. It's been on a perilous footing ever since.

Saratoga Hort was formed to introduce new and desirable plants for the home landscape. That was their mission, to find new and improved plant material for the home gardens.

Riess: Selfless?



- Carman: Yes, that's supposedly what it was. But then there was a lot of opposition to it by nurseries, thinking that Ray was getting a special price or a special deal from Saratoga or something like that. So there was jealousy or non-support from the very beginning. There was some talk about them selling directly from there to landscapers and things like that, so there was a lot of misconceptions and suspicions at that time.
- Riess: Are there parallel organizations in other parts of the country that have been successful in doing this kind of development work?
- Carman: The only people would be commercial nurseries, commercial wholesalers--Monrovia or Hines. They've got people looking all the time for new things, and they're interested in new things all the time.
- Riess: A horticultural foundation has a high-sounding name.
- Carman: Yes. But they never got support. Well, they introduced a lot of different things: the gingkos, magnolias, liquid ambers--but there's been a lot of controversy about those because of the root systems [chuckles]. They've introduced a lot of different things that are still on the market.
- Riess: Liquid amber I'm very fond of.
- Carman: Terrible root system. I've got pictures of a tree planted in a little parking strip like this, and I've got pictures of the roots this big that are just cut off with a chainsaw at the curb. They were used in the wrong place, for one thing. But people didn't pay much attention, so they just planted it where they wanted it.
- Riess: California didn't use liquid ambers in a big way before '63?
- Carman: They were probably being grown, they were seedling grown, so you've got all different kinds of colors. Saratoga, what they did was select several colored ones and then grow them from budding, from grafting, so they'd all be the same color. There were about four or five that they introduced. One was a real dark red, one more yellow. Then of course they were all female forms, so they make those ball seeds, which are the insurance people's dreams.
- Riess: Saratoga Hort had a lot of room to work with developing material?
- Carman: They didn't have a great deal of room. They had two or three acres over there, I think. At one time they had an agreement with San Jose Water Works for planting out over at one of their pumping stations on Williams Road. They put a lot of material out there for it to grow up so they could see mature specimens of it. Now

they don't have access to that anymore, but they have a new plot in San Martin now where they're doing that.

They also have agreements with some of the parks and arboretums around the state to put out some of their newer things which they're bringing in, to get to try out in different parts of the state. That's what should have been done years ago, but it never got off the ground. Just trying it in one location is not very good policy.

Riess: How is it supported as a foundation?

Carman: It's supported by what they can grow and sell. Starting now, they've got a wholesale price list, and they have one day a month, I think, where they're open to the public down there where they are now. And they have some grants.

They had an associates organization for quite a while and they were doing quite well. Then when they moved down to San Martin, why, the associates were all up here, so gradually--I don't know what happened; that was absorbed into some sort of a membership deal. I'm not sure how that's worked now. They have two different--one an endowment fund, and one a research fund.

They're getting a lot of material in now from China through the arboretum up in Sebastopol, Quarry Hill. There's an individual up there who is developing her own arboretum in a big rock quarry. She's sending this man to China to collect seeds, and they're sharing with Saratoga. They get a lot of stuff, some new, and some things that had been introduced before, but they're getting another seed source for some of them. Some of the things will be different, some will be the same as has come in before. But that's one of their best sources right now of new material.

### UC Davis

Riess: Does UC Davis do the same kind of thing?

Carman: Davis does economic things. I mean, they'll have a collection of olives, or a collection of peaches, and things like that to maybe do some hybridizing on those. But they do very little on ornamentals--mostly economic things. They had that ongoing for alstroemerias for at least twenty years; they've never gotten it off the ground, as far as I was concerned. They were always trying to improve them and get them better, and I don't think they ever did get much on the market.

Riess: Why would they fail at that? Is it the plant or the institution?

Carman: Well, maybe what they were trying to do, they never did get the results they wanted, I guess, and they just kept trying. There's a lot of commercial growers now, they may have gotten some stock from them, but most of the things that are growing now are the Dutch hybrids, I think.

A lot of times commercial people will be doing the same or parallel things, and of course if they find something that's good they'll propagate it, put it on the market and sell it, whereas the school will still be trying to find something better. They're not progressing with selling it, with getting it out.

Riess: There's so much information to disseminate in the nursery business. How do you keep up?

Carman: You have to read the trade magazines; that's where it's going to show up as quick as anything. There was a state publication that came out that had Davis information in it on California agriculture, and Pacific Coast Nurserymen magazine, and American Nurseryman magazine.

Riess: Is going to meetings essential for keeping up with the business?

Carman: Yes, in some ways. It would be talking to individual people there, maybe finding somebody that has expertise that you're looking for, or a speaker that's bringing new material or showing slides of new material that you haven't seen before or new techniques of doing something.

Then there's the International Propagating Society, which is devoted just to propagation. Most of the time it's fairly technical, but you can get a lot of information from that. They put out a yearbook about that thick every year. Presentations are given--I think it's worldwide now. They have sections in England, the U.S., New Zealand, Germany, and Holland, I guess. There's a lot of technical information there as far as how to do it. Some of it's beyond the reach of small places, because they go into all this lab stuff.

Riess: Would you have speakers from the industry, though, when you have your Cal Hort or Western Hort meetings?

Carman: Not many directly, like Hines or Monrovia, not many from those people. It would be more people that are doing plant hunting. Or we might have the people from Quarry Hill or other arboretums and things like that, or individual small nurserymen who are fairly new.

Carman: Very seldom do you have somebody from Monrovia or Hines speaking at a Cal Hort meeting, but you would have them sometimes at a nurserymen's meeting. And at the nurserymen's meeting you would have people from the irrigation specialists, commercial irrigation production people, who would be speaking to the nurserymen's groups. The conventions used to have more information; now they have some statewide seminars where they have different speakers on plants and irrigation and pest control and fertilizers--four or five topics like that. They would be put on by the makers or the producers of the different items that they would be speaking on.

Riess: You took a lot of executive positions in Western Hort over the years.

Carman: Mostly in the last few years. I think that nurserymen should not run the show at the societies.

#### Cal Hort, Awards, the Journal

Riess: You were awards committee chairman for Cal Hort for ten years? What did you do?

Carman: We would give out the plant awards. Betty Rollins was the chairman when I first joined it, and then she retired and I kept on going. It would be about five or six members, and we would review the plants that were shown during the previous year and try to pick out some that were outstanding.

There was the merit award which would be a plant that would be suitable for planting in the major part of the Bay Area, not some specialty plant--it wouldn't be an orchid or anything like that. It was something that could be used by most people in the Bay Area.

Then we'd have cultural awards for a plant that was grown--a really good pot plant or something that was in excellent condition.

Later we started education awards, where they would bring in a series of ten or fifteen different ceanothus, all named, and show those. Those were the three main awards. There could be more than one cultural award, there could be more than one merit award, if the committee decided that.

The award went to the plant, supposedly. The award was given to the plant, then "exhibited by--" the person who showed

it, see. That list is on a computer now. One of the newer members within the last five years has put it on computer. It's a very impressive list. Pretty near all the plants that are being grown in the Bay Area right now are on that list.

Riess: Does that mean that you can never repeat?

Carman: It really shouldn't be repeated. If it was given fifteen years ago, why, the plant is still being grown--it shouldn't be given again. It isn't an award that has to be given either, as far as I understand.

Riess: There's got to be a lot of personal rivalry.

Carman: No, I don't think so. We'd pick out three or four things and vote on them, and the majority of votes would get it. Or we'd discuss it, and either we'd say this or that and decide which one is really going to be the best one and that would get it. Most of the time the committee didn't get an award, because it's one of those things we didn't do unless it was really an outstanding plant.

The awards weren't done until the end of the year, and we'd go over the list. All the plants shown are written up in the board minutes, they all come out with descriptions. So we go over those lists. Some of the people might personally be thinking about that when they show the plant. You could pretty much tell when something was shown--in your mind you would think that that was probably something that was going to be on the list for an award.

Riess: As you pointed out, one of the things that came out of all of this was the magazine.

Carman: They created the magazine, yes. See, originally Cal Hort published a journal which came out four times a year. In there, they would have articles on various plants. Some of the people who had grown them or knew something about them wrote them.

Then around '63 Cal Hort, Western Hort, Southern California, and the group in Seattle--Northwest Horticulture or something like that--those four groups then got together and put up some money to get Pacific Horticulture started, which would then be the quarterly published for all these groups. Membership in the individual societies would give you a subscription to the magazine.

Then they went to color, and George Waters was hired to edit it. He's been editor for the last thirty years now, it must be.

Owen Pearce, I guess, was editor for a while, and then George took over. Owen was the original editor of the Cal Hort Journal.

Pacific Horticulture now does the same thing: they have authors from all around the world now, mostly California, doing stories on gardens and plants, with fairly nice color photographs. It's supposedly one of the premier horticultural publications now.

### Lester Hawkins

Riess: A collection of articles from Pacific Horticulture came out about three years ago that included one of your articles.<sup>1</sup> It also included a number of pieces by Lester Hawkins.

Carman: Yes. Lester and Marshall Olbrich had Western Hills Nursery and Garden. I first met them down at the other nursery when we were down there. Marshall, at that time, had white hair. He was quite young, and I thought, Gee, that guy must be old; he's got white hair. They would come in and look around and buy a few things, and I never did find out who they were.

They were developing that garden over many years, and they grew a lot of unusual and new things that nobody else was growing at that time. They went to Ray Williams in Watsonville, who was importing a lot of seeds from Australia, and then they sent away for a lot of seeds. They were really pioneers on introducing new things, I would say. That's where Lester got all his knowledge about these things: by growing them and putting them in gardens in Marin County. He was doing gardening and landscaping in the area.

Riess: He was an unusual combination.

Carman: I think his degree was in literature or something. I think they might have both been literature--I can't remember now. They were well-educated, but they were kind of early-day hippies, I guess you'd call them [chuckles]--without the long hair. They were very knowledgeable, really, really good plantspeople. Lester and Marshall both. And Lester did write a lot.

Riess: You and they both had connections with New Zealand and Australia, too. Was this something you talked about?

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<sup>1</sup>p. 226, The Pacific Horticulture Book of Western Gardening, edited by George Waters and Nora Harlow, David R. Godine, Publisher, 1990.

Carman: No, I really didn't have much contact with them. We didn't get up there very often--maybe once every two or three years we'd get up there to talk to them, and we'd see them in meetings, but you don't have much time to talk at meetings. We'd exchange plans every once in a while, but we never did get up there and have any all-night discussions like some people did who had the time.

Riess: How did they introduce these Australian plants? From putting them in gardens? Or did they introduce plants in a more formal way?

Carman: No, it would be informal, because they didn't grow any amount of things--they just would grow enough for gardens, or to sell at the nursery there [in Occidental, California]. And I don't know how much they were selling in those days.

Riess: Their impact is quite limited if they're not going to do a lot of propagating.

Carman: Yes. It was limited except when he wrote about them; that would get more people aware of them. That way they would make more of an impact.

Riess: Elizabeth McClintock has been one of the writers over the years.

Carman: Oh, yes. She's been there for forever. She's quite a gal. She was at the Academy of Sciences. Well, I guess she was in Berkeley first. Then she was the botanist at the Academy of Sciences. She's still writing for Pacific Horticulture, about the trees of Strybing Arboretum.

Riess: And that's another connection, of course: the arboretum itself.

Carman: Strybing was started by members of the Peninsula Nurserymen: Juel Christensen, Charlie Burr, and Eric Walther, who was a curator at Golden Gate Park at that time. That story is in Charlie Burr's history, actually. [See "The First Twenty-five Years", appended.]

### Rock Garden Society, Bonsai

Riess: You had a role in a lot of other organizations. Perhaps you would tell what their particular niches were and who hooked them all together, which I think is really interesting. The [Western Chapter, American] Rock Garden Society you joined early.

Carman: Yes. I don't know how I got interested in the Rock Garden Society. What year did I join that?

Riess: In '73. Who brought you into that?

Carman: It was probably Victor Reiter, in San Francisco. He had a big rock garden. That place was just spectacular--I've got some pictures--really spectacular. That's probably how I got connected with that, and I joined the society. Then you get the quarterlies and you get seed lists, and you can start to go and get seeds and stuff like that.

Riess: So that had a real impact on this nursery, that you would be offering more plants based on the seeds that you got from the Rock Garden Society?

Carman: Yes, and things that Victor gave me. We were growing a few things down at the other nursery before we moved, I think.

When we moved we were going to drop all the common stuff and just grow the unusual stuff, and that's what we did. We were already doing more with perennials. Then it was perennials and rock gardens, and then bonsais kind of crept in there someplace along the way.

I think I told you I took a course, in the late sixties, I guess, from Yoshimura, who was the bonsai master from Brooklyn Botanic Gardens. He came out here to give a three-week course, or something like that, up in Los Altos. Everybody did a plant the same night. We had about eight or ten plants. Then we moved up here, and they were sitting out in the ground, and they disappeared one night, so I don't have any of those left now. They went down to the flea market, I guess, in somebody else's truck [laughs].

Riess: What was it like to take that class? Is it that you stand in front of the plant and wait for the plant to reveal its nature to you, or something like that.

Carman: No. You cut it to make the shape is what you do. You take a real bushy plant like this, maybe this high and this wide, and you end up with something like that and like that.

Riess: And you decide what its nature's going to be.

Carman: That's right. You decide. You could take a plant that's straight up, you can put wires on it and make a weeper out of it. You're the one that develops the character of the plant. The tree doesn't tell you; you tell the tree [laughter].

You ought to go to the some of the bonsai demonstrations. They have dremel tools and drills and saws, and they'll take a



tree that's this big, and it'll end up about that high with the top all shredded like lightning has hit it, with a few branches sticking out. It's really remarkable what some of those people can do with a five- or ten-gallon plant, a big rangy plant. They come out with something that looks pretty good when they get done, but it'll take about two years for it to really fill out, and then it looks really beautiful.

I put a plant out in the front garden here one year. It was supposed to have been a dwarf conifer, but it had the wrong name on it, so within two years it was about that tall. Some bonsai enthusiast came in and asked about it. She wanted it. I said, "If I can dig it up." So she took it. She said in two years she was going to be showing it. I've still got her name; I've got to find out what it looks like now, if she still has it.

I grow small plants in four-inch pots and gallon cans for people to make their own, but I don't have time to make them anymore.

Riess: What's the definition of a rock garden? There's a pretty wide range, isn't there?

Carman: A very wide range, yes. A rock garden doesn't have to have any rocks, actually. A rock garden is a garden that's generally mounding so you can get good drainage, mostly. But it's where you're growing dwarf or alpine plants that are going to stay in fairly small sizes. You can get five hundred plants in a space as big as this room, or something like that. Rocks enhance it, but it doesn't have to have rocks to be a rock garden.

Riess: The dwarf plants stay that size, so it's not a high-maintenance garden?

Carman: Oh, it's pretty high maintenance. You have to keep it weeded, and you have to be sure the plants do stay small. Sometimes they take pinching back. You have to take the dead flowers off. There's quite a bit of work to it, I think. Mine is the weed patch out here. Most of the weeds are out now, but they're getting back. I've got to get out there. A lot of stuff has been overgrown, so a lot of it has got to be replanted.

Riess: What is the tradition of rock gardens? Is it an American tradition or does it come from someplace else?

Carman: It probably comes from England. It's been on the east coast for many years more than out here, I think, but it's pretty widespread. There's a big national rock garden society, and a

quarterly. There's a small group in the East Bay that meets. The Northwest has a big and very active group.

### Kiwi Growers' Association, and Photographing Plants

Riess: What I don't see in here is that you were a member of the Kiwi Society, or the individual plant groups?

Carman: Didn't I put down the Kiwi Growers' Association? I was in that for many years. They had a kiwi group that formed in the late sixties, I guess, when the kiwis were all the rage at the time and they were propagated everywhere.

This kiwi association was formed to promote sales and culture of kiwis. It was headquartered in Gridley, in the valley. We went to some of the meetings. It was more aimed for production than propagation, and we were only propagating at that time, although we did sell some plants for small plantings.

That [kiwi association] kept up until '80 maybe, and then it kind of tapered off because everybody was pretty well set on production, and they had their packers, and that was all pretty much commercialized. I guess there's still a small group, because somebody called last year from the association. They have a part-time office in Sacramento.

Riess: Why did they call?

Carman: They wanted a picture of the male and female flower. They didn't even have a picture of that in the office over there. And that's the only way you can tell the plants, when they're blooming, when they're in flower. I sent them some pictures of that. That's what they called for.

Riess: That's been an important contribution from you to the business, the picture taking.

Carman: Well, I take a lot of pictures.

I gave some to Fine Gardening for oreganos and rhodohypoxis. I've given some to several publications, some books, Sunset. In one of their old Sunset books they used a half-page ad with my rock garden picture that I took in Oregon. Some of my pictures are in their CD-ROM. I haven't seen it, but there are two or three in that.

Riess: When you're taking a picture--for instance, the lewisias that I was admiring out there--do you really struggle with lighting, or do you just take it?

Carman: Usually I pose them, yes. I take all the dead leaves off and clean them up a little bit.

Riess: Perhaps pose them against a dark backdrop or something like that.

Carman: Yes. The photograph on the cover of Pacific Hort--actually I cut the plants and stuck them together because they weren't growing in the right space. But nobody knows that now but you. [laughter] I think everybody does that to get a good picture. Some people do it more than others, I think, as far as posing.

Riess: You were taking pictures for fun? Or did you need them for something?

Carman: I was taking them for fun. I've taken pictures ever since I was a kid. I had a little tiny plastic camera that took a picture about as big as a post stamp. Pictures of dogs and fish and stuff like that.

Shortly after returning from the service I bought a Retina IIIc 35mm camera made by Kodak. Color film was becoming widely available so I took slides of family outings and garden plants and scenes. That was my first really good camera.

Riess: How are the slides holding up?

Carman: Pretty good, except in 1955 Kodak had trouble with a fungus--but we cleaned up most of them. The lady across the street used to work at Kodak, on Page Mill, and she took them up and they cleaned them all off for me, except one I found recently of a historic building in Los Gatos that had fungus. I took it up to the people in Palo Alto, and they cleaned it and made a print of it for the people in Los Gatos.

If you go to a lab that knows what they're doing, they can clean them up for you. It looked like a light coloration in circles. It was a fungus growing.

Riess: I've seen your photography in Pacific Horticulture.

Carman: Yes. In 1992 when we went to New Zealand I bought a 35mm Nikkormat (poor man's Nikon) with a macro lens. With this I was able to take real close-ups and general scenes. From then on I have taken slides of all the plants we have grown for our files. This camera has been on all of our Cal Hort trips and every place

else we have been since. Sunset used a shot of a rock garden taken in Oregon, a whole half page! We have gotten requests from various publications--one in Canada used a couple of slides. Some have been used in Pacific Horticulture articles. And I have used many of the slides for shows to various horticultural groups.

[laughing] I really have to get busy! I have a couple of years to be put in file boxes.

Royal Horticultural Society, and English Gardens ##

Riess: The Royal Horticultural Society--why did you join that?

Carman: That we joined after a trip to England. In '75 we went to England, to the Chelsea show. Also, we were corresponding with somebody from at the Royal Hort Society for something. We went out to the gardens, and he showed us around.

I've got some old slides of that, things which they probably don't have now because they had a big storm there in the eighties, and it blew down a lot of the big trees which are in my pictures. He introduced us briefly to Chris Brickell, who was the director there at that time. He went on to become the authority, is still the authority, on horticulture in England.

Then we went up to Shakespeare country, and that's the year we went to see Hillyer, who took us around for a day there.

Riess: Yes, I think you talked about that. The bank holiday day.

Carman: Right. So then we joined the RHS and get their publications. We've traded plants from then on. They've sent things, I've sent things to them. They're one of the premier societies. They're getting a little bit commercialized now. Their publications are mostly all ads [laughs], but I guess they have to do it to survive.

Riess: The English always had the reputation of being the gardeners. Perhaps it's that ideal atmosphere that they live in.

Carman: Yes, I guess it is. Probably part of it is their winters. Their winters are lousy, I think, and so as soon as they get a little bit of sunlight they get out there and get some color in the garden. I think that's a lot of it too. Same way with variegated plants: the English and the New Zealanders really like variegated

plants to color all that green. Here in the U.S. a lot of people think those plants are sick or dead or dying.

We were in England that one year, in June. Everything was green. Everything. We came home and drove down from the airport, and it looked like a desert here. I couldn't get over the change in that ten-hour flight, to come from that green to all the dry grass, and it's hot and dry and just dead, it seemed like, after leaving that green. I think that's part of it, why they garden the way they do. And I guess they've had a little more history of gardening than we have.

Riess: And when people came from the East Coast to California they tried to plant the plants they knew from home.

Carman: Yes. It's difficult to duplicate things like that unless you have unlimited water, and some gardeners. The only place that does it really well is probably Bucharth Gardens in Victoria. Filoli does a good job, but they have fifteen or twenty gardeners and a lot of help. It's a fairly limited space, too.

Riess: For me, it's hard to realize that some perennials will die in my garden because they don't have a dormant period, a winter.

Carman: Yes, and there are certain things that probably wouldn't--oriental poppies, for instance. Because they have a summer dormancy, see? Here, I think that summer dormancy is so--they get so dry or they stay too wet, they just rot and they don't come back again. I've tried them several times.

Most people don't realize here that we live in a desert--from now on until November, there's going to be practically no rain to measure. Along the coast you can do much better, because you get foggy days and stuff like that.

#### Saratoga Horticultural Foundation Directors

Riess: When we were talking about Saratoga Hort, I forgot to ask you about Maunsell van Rensselaer. Was he an effective director?

Carman: Van was kind of hard to get to know, really. He was quite a taskmaster, I guess. He selected quite a few things. Some of them--[laughs] they say that they took a picture of one of the gingkos they introduced looking into the wind, because if you took it crossways it was leaning!

Van was the first director, and he was there fifteen or twenty years, I guess. Then they had Richard Hildreth for just a short time--that's when I was on the board. Richard came from Davis. He never did get things together, I don't think. I was board president at that time, so I had the great task of telling him that his services were no longer needed. I don't think he's thought much of me since then.

Then we had Dennis White. I think he was a friend of Mai's [Mai Arbegast]. He took over for a while, and he was a promoter. He was supposed to raise a lot of money for the board, and he didn't raise anything, I don't think. Then Lou Schenone, who was Pacific Nurseries, he was acting director when we moved to San Martin. Then I think maybe Philip Browse came.

He came over from England, and he was commuting back and forth. Then his family came over. They never did get into a house, I don't think. She didn't like it here, and I don't know about the two girls, whether they did or not. But he got a call back within a year that the directorship at RHS Wisley was open. Of course that was too good a thing to pass up, so he went back.

Also then they had that big storm in 1987. It blew many, many immense, 200-year-old trees down. And he had a disagreement with the board of directors on how to go about re-doing the garden, so I guess he left because he didn't get support from some of the board.

Lowell Cordes came after Philip, I believe. And then after Lowell left, I think Joe Solomone was acting director. Two years ago, I think it was, Cathy Hesketh came in as executive director and Joe is research director.

Riess: That's a lot of people trying to make their mark in a short period, isn't it?

Carman: Well, Lowell was here for about four or five years, I guess. Lou was one or two. Van was the longest tenured there, and he introduced most of the liquid ambers and the ginkgos and the magnolias at that time.

Riess: Under the others, were there particular highlights? Particular introductions?

Carman: No. Philip was working with some wisterias, and he had a big collection of cistus, which he thought, and I think too, would have been a good thing to work on, but it was a long-term project, hybridizing those things. I would have to look at the list to see

what has been introduced since then, but there have been a few things that have come along since then.

Riess: If Philip Browse was offered the directorship of Wisley that means that he was a pretty high-powered person, doesn't it?

Carman: He knew Chris well and moved in the same horticultural circles, I guess. Actually, he had been a teacher at the Brooksby Horticultural School, he was in a teaching position. So he came here from Brooksby and really did know his plant materials.

### International Plant Propagators Society

Riess: That same year, you also joined the International Plant Propagators Society.

Carman: I guess maybe Don Dillon--he is the owner of the Four Winds Citrus Growers in Fremont--he or somebody talked me into that. He was a big man in the International Propagators Society.

We attended one of their gatherings in Vancouver about ten years ago, where they had a two-day meeting with presentations during the day and an awards dinner and stuff like that. Then I've been to one in Sacramento and one other one. Every three or four years, if you don't go to a meeting, you have to write a paper for it. So you could never go to any meetings and just write papers forever if you wanted to. Or you could go to meetings all the time and never propagate a plant and still belong to it. But like I say, there's a lot of good material that comes out of those meetings and the publications.

Riess: You skim through to see if there's something relevant.

Carman: Yes. I saw something in there by Philip last time, where he was talking about growing palms. He's in southern England--I don't know how many palms he's growing in southern England [laughter].

### Santa Cruz Arboretum

Riess: And in 1976 you joined the Santa Cruz Arboretum. Tell me about your connection with Santa Cruz.

Carman: It's been very slight, actually. I joined in '76. Let's see, one time before that Saratoga got in some plants which were to go to Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz didn't take them or something, so I potted them up and kept them here for a while and then they got them. Then I joined this, and even though it's just over the hill, I've gotten there very seldom, actually. I didn't get to any of the meetings, so it was just getting the publication and sending in the dues. Then a very good friend gave us a life membership in 1990. I get over there once in a while, but I really haven't gotten much from them as far as new things.

Ray Collett is director and guiding light there; he's a history teacher, I believe, and a pretty good plantsman. He had been the guiding light. I guess he could have retired several years ago, but he stayed on so he could keep the arboretum going.

They've gotten some fairly good endowments. One man left money for the New Zealand collection, and they got a grant from the Stanley Smith Foundation for some houses or something. So they're getting some funds in, but not enough so that they can live off the interest on the endowments, I don't think.

They have a propagation scheme where they're growing plants, and they have a sale a couple of times a year. I think the Lanes [Sunset magazine former owners] gave them money to put up a horticultural building. That's up now. Johnny Coulter, a retired nurseryman living on Oregon, just gave them a complete collection of the Cal Hort journals and Pacific Horticulture from the beginning, up to date. So they have that in their library. Like most places, they're going door to door to keep going. Brett Hall is the manager there.

Their collections of New Zealand and Australian plants is the best in the United States.

Riess: Did it come about because the landscape has been so important in the perception of that campus?

Carman: I don't think it had anything to do with the landscape of the campus. They didn't landscape with those plants.

Riess: I know, but why a major arboretum at UC Santa Cruz?

Carman: For one thing, it's got an ideal climate for those plants, and the South Africans too. All the proteas and leucospermums--they've got one of the biggest collections outside of South Africa of those two, I guess. So it's really a big collection of plant material. It probably should be utilized more.



Nevin Smith at Wintergreen, who is now at Suncrest, has gotten a lot of things out of there, and he's propagating them and getting them on the market. And I think Jeff Ahorne from Sierra Azul is too.

Riess: Is it right on the campus?

Carman: Right at the edge of the campus, yes. Have you ever been there?

Riess: No.

Berkeley has some fine specimen trees on campus.

Carman: I think most of their real big collection of plants is up at the Botanical Garden.

Riess: It surprises me that Santa Cruz would have it unless there were academic support for it.

Carman: There was university support for it until last year or the year before--then they started cutting back 50 percent a year. I think within the next year or two there will be no more support from the university. Like everything else they're cutting back--I don't know where the money's going.

### Alpine Garden Society

Riess: The Alpine Garden Society sounds like a rock garden society.

Carman: It's headquartered in England, of course. They have different material because they grow a lot of more interesting and almost impossible-to-grow-here things, that they grow there.

Riess: Why were they more interesting?

Carman: Just because they're hard to grow. Like anything else--you go to Fiji and the people are trying to grow roses, which don't do down there. It's like trying to grow English gardens here where you can't grow them. [laughs] It's the same way all around the world, gardeners are crazy. [Carman gets the Alpine Society journal.]

It's stuff like that, see? [shows picture] That's not in color, but you've got those things in a six-inch pot. I think it's great to be able to grow that.

Riess: We're looking at *Draba dedeana*.

Carman: And there's all kinds of stuff from the Caucasus and from the Alps.

Riess: This says the mountains of Spain here.

Carman: But when you see color photographs of things, where they're solid blossoms, it just blows your mind at the perfection of it. And then when you read about the trouble they go to to keep these things--putting a glass over them in the winter and putting them on the north side of the buildings and stuff like that--they're really dedicated to growing these things.

And of course, there they have so many of these groups around that they have these shows, and they have judgments for the shows. You can get cups and plaques and stuff like that.

Riess: They are all grown in containers?

Carman: Yes, I would say that everything that they show probably is grown in the container. That's why I think it's so interesting that they can take the time and the effort to do this thing--maybe five years of time to get this thing to bloom at the right day, to show it in perfection.

Like the plant I showed at Cal Hort last year: it was a thyme, it had a pretty nice shape to it, and it had little white flowers all over it, bracts. It was the first year it's bloomed like that at the right day. It's going to bloom this year, but I know it's not going to be the right day. So I may wait three to five years for that to come at the right time.

You can't time it. Sometimes you can. By shading it or giving it more light or more heat or something like that you might be able to bring it up a little quicker.

Riess: That's the pleasure, control over these small things.

Carman: And to grow them at all. Sometimes these things grow naturally where they get frozen under snow in the wintertime. So to duplicate that condition without having the snow--it takes a lot of expertise. I think it's unusual and fascinating to be able to do that.

Riess: I know you're a member of the Garden Conservancy, which was started by Frank Cabot. Have you been to his place [Stonecrop] in Cold Spring, New York? He is also a rock garden person.

Carman: I've never been east of Denver to see any gardens.

The Herb Society, the NCCP in England, Gene Pools

Riess: The Herb Society. What is the definition of herbs in this Herb Society?

Carman: Herbs are plants that are used for cooking or medicinal purposes, although they do not promote the medicinal use of any herb, they're very strong about it. They have a culinary section, they have a horticultural section, and they have a historical group.

The group, they all like to eat, so they have these fancy dinners using all these different herbs and stuff. Then the propagating people, or the gardening people, used to have sales-- I'm not sure if they do anymore or not. And promote the use of herbs in cooking and decoration. All the cooking herbs are the ones that are most widely used.

I was looking at an herb list that just came, and they have people who have collections--like there's one in Texas, Madeleine Hill, I think her name is, has a collection of all the rosemarys, I think, all the named varieties of rosemarys. Another person will have all the collections of thymes. Another has a collection of basils.

Same thing as what's being done in England for all the gardening plants--they have this National Committee for Conservation of Plants, NCCP, in England, and they're trying to get one going here in the U.S. now, starting back east. Some of these large gardens or national trust gardens in England will take on a certain plant and try to get all the named varieties.

##

Carman: They keep them separate, and keep--like a gene pool is what they're doing.

Riess: Keeping a gene pool of some things, like corn and potatoes, seems easy because you just keep the seed, or the potato. But how about for garden materials?

Carman: You have to keep living plants. You have to keep propagating, and you have to keep them true to name and not grow any seedlings. So it would be quite an undertaking.

There's one college, Cannington College, which I got some scions of the wisterias from. They supposedly had a good collection of wisterias. I got some things from there--not what I thought I was getting. I don't know. The name might not have

been understood. The communication sometimes with these people is not the best. Some people communicate good, some never answer letters.

Generally we've become much more concerned about gene pools because of the hybridization of everything. You get hybrids which are sometimes better--generally they're better as far as production of fruit, but not being hardy to diseases. So if you get one hybrid type of tomato or strawberry or something, and some kind of disease hits it, you're going to completely wipe everything out because they have no resistance to it.

There was a piece in the paper yesterday about some man in Santa Cruz who has a big bean gene pool--it showed a bunch of beans he had collected. But the worst of it is, when that person dies or something, then what happens to that? You've got to have somebody to carry it on. That's the thing about an individual taking care of a gene pool without having some organization. It's a problem.

Riess: You think there's a limit to what the USDA can do.

Carman: The USDA is doing less and less, I'm afraid, because of cutbacks.

They had a big pistachio hybridizing program going in Texas, and they were going to cut off funds from that. I couldn't figure out why the pistachio association didn't take it over. I almost wrote them a letter, but I didn't get to it. Supposedly the pistachio industry's pretty big in the U.S. Here in California it's big. Some of these associations should start taking care of some of these things themselves.

Riess: And there's so much interest in old roses. And old apples.

Carman: There's a big antique apple organization in Marin County, and they have 800 varieties, I think. Wisley has their pears and apples and I think plums. Pears, I think they have 600; apples, I think they have 900. So they've got a pretty good selection there.

#### A Review of the Route from Grower to Retailer

Riess: When your daughter Nancy came in earlier, she asked about the tarragon?

Carman: We sell herbs to one nursery up on the peninsula. Tarragon is a popular one, and this is the first propagation this year, and they

want some, and they're late [chuckles]. I hope the roots are big enough to move into pots.

Riess: Do you grow the other herbs?

Carman: Yes, we grow all the popular ones: rosemary, thyme, sages, lavenders, oregano, and marjoram. We sell a fair amount here, and we sell it to this one nursery on the peninsula.

In the fifties we were one of the first nurseries, down at the other place, to grow herbs in clay pots--everything was in clay pots--and we'd put five kinds to a flat and sell them to this fellow who used to wholesale plants. We sold them to Nelson Nursery, which used to be up in San Leandro.

Riess: This was that idea that everyone could grow herbs on their windowsills?

Carman: Oh, no, I don't believe in that. These were pots to be sold to customers to put in the ground. But you grew them in pots because those were the only containers we had at that time. We would sell collections of herbs, five of each kind, five kinds to a flat, and then they'd sell them by the flat to their customers to be sold at retail.

Riess: It's hard for me to understand the levels of your marketing.

Carman: At that time we were growing in larger quantities, so we did some wholesaling. We were growing the ice plant they used on the freeways, we were growing that in flats and selling it to Nelson. We were growing boxwood cuttings and putting it in hundred count flats and selling that at wholesale. We were growing certain things in gallon cans and selling groups of that to him. He was a big broker in San Leandro.

Riess: Nelson's a broker in San Leandro.

Carman: He was. The nursery's been gone for many years now. He was a wholesale nursery, I should say. He would buy it wholesale, or at a discount from wholesale, and re-sell it wholesale.

We would go up there and buy things from him too if we didn't get them delivered. A few plants or whatever we needed. He would grow some things, he would buy things in from all around the state. He had a complete selection of all sorts of ornamentals and containers for home landscaping--in five gallons, too.

Riess: It's difficult to understand how many hands a plant passes through.

Carman: It would be grower, wholesaler, retailer. Basically it would be three hands. Except for instance we'd be a grower, and we'd also be a retailer, so it would be only one place. Most of the garden centers buy from a wholesaler, or from a grower; they buy from the producer direct to the retailer, so it's only one away from the one that grows it.

Riess: A retail nursery will sometimes have a place in the back where things are not for sale.

Carman: Most of them don't any more. They can't afford the space anymore. In fact, some of the retailers now, they buy their fruit trees bare root, they have a nursery in Sacramento can them up, and they order them in as they need them. So they bring in five every week of whatever they need.

There's a small nursery in Redwood City, the one I know there, they buy their roses in and can them up, but then they stack them all over the nursery because they don't have a place to put them--they've got them stacked three high sometimes. Some of the other ones, they buy their roses, have a big wholesaler can them up and hold them, and then every week they bring in a few.

The big places like Home Depot, they don't grow anything; everything comes in on pallets and stacked up three high. They buy direct from the producer, mostly. And they tell them what price they're going to pay for it, a lot of the times.

Riess: Since I met you, I went to Orchard Supply for the first time. It seemed like everything was half the price that it was at Berkeley Horticultural Nursery, my usual place.

Carman: Well, Berkeley Hort, they have what you call a full-service nursery, and they have consultations. You can probably get advice, and they may even go out to the garden and look at it and tell you what you should plant and things like that.

Orchard Supply doesn't. They have a plant to sell it, they have people there who may know what they're selling, they may not if they have not been trained, but they have units to sell. So that makes the difference in 20 percent or 30 percent of the price. That's what the independent seller battles these days. They've got to really offer service to keep their customers and do something different all the time.

Riess: What they need to do is have coffeeshops in the nursery.

Carman: They're a big thing back East already. They're advocating that in some of the magazines. Some of the big centers have got a whole coffeeshop where you can have sandwiches even, I think. Kathy's ahead of the game--Kathy Crane up at Yerba Buena. She's got a tea room now. I thought about it, but it's too much work.

### Conserving Gardens

Riess: The most recent of the organizations, the Garden Conservancy, it's interesting that there had been no way of really conserving important gardens.

Carman: I think it's necessary, too. There's nothing much around here. Ruth Bancroft's garden is nice, but it's very unique. It's mostly all really drought-tolerant stuff. It's really out of this world as far as most people are concerned. The other big garden that people go to is Filoli, and that's the other side of the scale: most people can't have that kind of a garden either because it's so big and so labor intensive that you just can't do it.

But there's nothing else available that's being thought of to be conserved, I don't think, around there. It should be. But I don't know of any gardens--there are probably a lot of them up in Hillsborough. But again, most of those, like most of the other gardens back East, they're big old gardens which were built in another time. They're not going to be built again. So it would be nice to show people what has been done in the past, even though they can't do it now. They could maybe take one thing from that and do that.

Riess: And is that all the Garden Conservancy is aiming to do? To show what has been done.

Carman: I think that's all they can do, actually--to conserve old gardens and bring them back into their former glory, if possible, depending on how far they've gone into disrepair.

Riess: It's problematic to conserve something that's growing.

Carman: Yes, it is.

What they do in England, they have this national trust thing, and they're conserving big places. Acres. And big castles, and big mansions and things like that. They're charging for it, of course; that's the only way they can do it. That's the only way they can do it here too as far as that goes, unless they

can get a lot of endowments, which is probably going to be very difficult.

### Victor Reiter

Riess: What made Victor Reiter so exceptional? What was his niche in the horticultural world?

Carman: Victor went to Berkeley, I guess, and I think he almost got a degree as a doctor. I think his father was growing some plants there, and then Victor got started in fuchsias first, I think. He was a hybridizer of fuchsias, and he introduced quite a few different fuchsias. I don't know how he got into rock garden plants from there--I never did ask him about that.

Riess: Did he have his nursery right in San Francisco?

Carman: Yes, at 1195 Stanyon Street. He called it La Rochette, which is "The Rock." I've got one of his old catalogs, and he had a very impressive list of rock garden plants. This was before the war.

Then during the war he went to work at Hendy's, I believe, and he met [Alexander] Poniatoff. Poniatoff was one of the founders of that computer place [Ampex] on the peninsula, right there off Bayshore, where we used to meet for Western Hort. Mrs. Poniatoff got us in so we could meet there, and that's where we met for years.

After the war, Victor got into rock garden plants. I don't know how long that lasted, because I don't think the nursery lasted much beyond the fifties.

Riess: The nursery closed in '70, it says here.

Carman: I'm sure it did before that.

Then he developed this whole rock garden up the hill there. Victor was very gregarious, and after the Cal Hort meetings he would invite people up to the house, and they had this great big living room there with this fourteen-foot table, and they would have these coffee cakes and serve coffee. And when the magnolias were blooming, they'd have lights on them--the great big pink Campbellii magnolia was just magnificent.

They would take flashlights and go out looking at plants in the rock garden. And there'd be discussions on plants and



everything else at these get-togethers. That's why so many people knew him, because he was a big contributor at Cal Hort, and also inviting these people over so he could get to know the people socially.

And then the nursery--we have a friend here who got to know him at the nursery. He used to get plants from him. That was right after the war that they got stuff from him. He was very sharing. He would give you a plant and give you information or help you in any way he could--or seeds or anything like that.

Riess: Did they have children?

Carman: Yes. Victoria's the oldest, and then Charlie, and then Ginger.

Riess: But nobody took over the nursery?

Carman: No. Victoria lives about four houses up the street, Ginger lives right next door, and Charlie lives someplace else in town. They all live in town. The two houses, where Victoria lives, I think that butts up to the nursery, and so does Ginger's. And of course Carla's [Mrs. Reiter]. It kind of a pie-shaped piece of property; it goes up to the transmission tower up there [Sutro Tower] in the forest up there, so it goes right to the eucalyptus.

He wanted to develop it at one time, but the city wouldn't let him put in housing there. He has an entryway up at the back of the driveway to the top of the property, so he has access to the top of the property.

Riess: When a nursery like that closes, what happens to all the plants?

Carman: Like Victor said, "When the gardener dies, the garden dies." And that's what's happening. For a while the rock garden group, or Ted Kipping, they'd get a bunch together and go over and weed a little bit. But the last time I was up there it was pretty near gone, because the blackberries had just come right down the hill.

Ginger's husband, he has a tree company or maintenance company or something, and he was interested a little bit. But Victor was out there at least four hours a day. He was taking care of his stocks and bonds for four hours and working in the garden four hours a day, and you could keep it down that way. But without doing that four hours a day, there's no way you can do it.

"You Can't Control Things After You're Gone"

Carman: And Mr. Domoto's, I was over there about a month ago, and I walked out and everything out in the back--the lath was gone, the tables were gone, the plants were gone. There were a few sitting around, but he's lost most of his bonsai.

Riess: They were gone as in dead? Or just removed?

Carman: I don't know whether they were dumped or what had happened to them.

Riess: I'm upset, and you must be too. With all these organizations, you'd think at the very least these plants could find homes.

Carman: There's nobody who has gone to see him, I don't think, to talk to him about it. Nobody ever suggested anything about it. I was up there one time, and some of the lath had blown down, but I don't get up there very often, so I didn't realize that all this had blown down in the last couple of storms we had up there.

The glasshouse is still there; he had some guy weeding the plants in the glasshouse, but I don't know how much was in there, really. So I don't what happened to all the crabapples and other plants there that were partially bonsai'd. It's what happens.

Riess: You've decided to be philosophical about it.

Carman: Yes. I've written a letter to Nancy, to tell her what to do.

Riess: And maybe a sign that says "Come one, come all" at that point.

Carman: That's up to her; she can do what she wants.

Riess: And that's what I'm really asking about Victor Reiter's place.

Carman: There was nothing there to--unless they go out and dig up the plants and that would be kind of foolish.

Riess: Because everything's in the ground. We're talking about a garden that's in the ground.

Carman: If it was plants that were in pots, it would be a different story probably. Domoto's, I don't think anybody ever asked him about it or thought about it. It's just one of those things that somebody thinks that somebody else is going to do it and nobody else did it.

It's one of those things, you can't control things once you're gone, you really can't.

[laughing] I went to a memorial two weeks ago of a friend of ours. He had a little nursery down here, and he was a teacher, and he did honky-tonk piano. If you'd ask him to play something, he'd sit down and he could play it. He could play anything you asked him. They had made some recordings or tapes of him playing, and they were playing those at the memorial. That was the greatest thing. He would have appreciated it [chuckles].

Riess: So you can control your own memorial.

Carman: If people will do what you ask them.

It's one of those things--you just can't control it.

Riess: That doesn't stop you from wanting to, though.

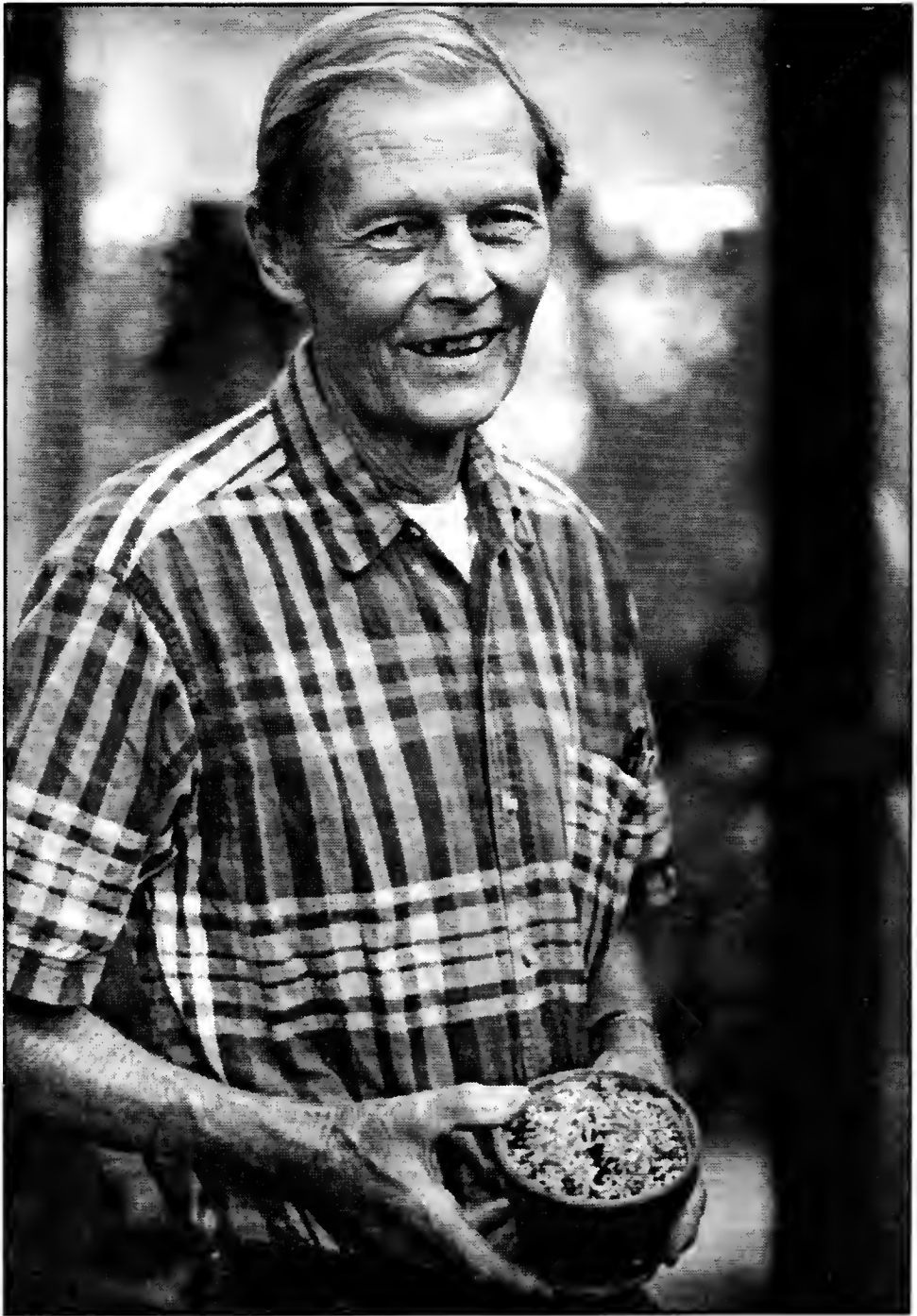
Carman: Yes, you would like to do something with it. There's no money to do anything with it. You can't endow it--if you could find a big endowment then she [daughter Nancy] could keep going. Haven't hit the jackpot yet.





Top row: John Work, Dan Chambers.  
Second row: Bob Schramm, Nancy Schramm, Trisha Work.  
Third from top: Jenny Work, Julie Work, Diane Chambers.  
Bottom row: Steven Work, Ed Carman, Jean Carman, Laurel Chambers.  
Photographed on the occasion of Ed and Jean's 50th anniversary, 1994.





Ed Carman, 1995.

Photograph by Eugene Louie for the  
*San Jose Mercury News.*





## IX THE VIEW FROM LOS GATOS

[Interview 4: April 28, 1997] ##

Jean Carman

Riess: Today, before we tour the nursery, I'd like to fill in a few blanks in your life story. Eleanor Jean Campbell was your high school sweetheart?

Carman: Yes. We were in the same class, and Miss Clark was our librarian and also the homeroom teacher, which they had at that time. We'd go there a certain period during the day, and you could study and use the library and things like that. She sat Jean in front of me--it was alphabetical. That's where we really became acquainted. It was our sophomore or junior year, I guess. Then we just started going together, I guess. It never dissolved after that [laughter]. I ended up as the senior class president, and I think we were in the junior class play together too. That's a long time ago.

Her family lived up on the hill in Los Gatos, and her senior year her mother sold that place and moved into Willow Glen, because her older brother and she would be going to San Jose State. So in her senior year of high school she lived in Willow Glen. I would deliver plants to a couple of nurseries in San Jose before I would go to school in the mornings sometimes. She would wait--I guess her mother would take her over there and she would wait at the corner for the bus with her girlfriend, and would wave as I went by [laughs].

Then I got a car my senior year--I don't know how I got that, and I don't know how much we paid for it. It was called a Rockney, a little four-door sedan, like a little Chevrolet. It was a nice little car. We would go places in that. We went to

the high school dances, and I was on the track team, ran high hurdles, and on the basketball team.

We graduated in June '41, and I started at San Jose State in September '41 in an industrial arts major--that's what I was going to be eventually. She started in the teacher training courses. After one semester or quarter she was fed up, she couldn't stand the high pace or something, so she quit and went to Healds College and took an accounting course.

She graduated from there--I think it was a two-year course--and went to work for a title company in San Jose on North First Street, and worked there until--oh, let's see, '44 we got married and she was still working there, and I came home in '46. She quit in '46 after she was pregnant with our oldest daughter. We were living with my folks down at the old place.

I went one year to San Jose State, so that would bring us into June of '42. And I told you earlier about the war years.

#### Staying on in Los Gatos

Riess: After you married you have always stayed in Los Gatos?

Carman: Yes. I couldn't think of going anyplace else, because I didn't know anything. I had no craft or anything. The nursery, I guess I liked it--my mother always asked if I didn't think I would like to go into teaching.

Riess: Why teaching?

Carman: Something away from the nursery business, I guess.

Riess: Many people moved to the Bay Area right after the war because they had been here during the war and discovered how wonderful it was.

Carman: Oh yeah, I know, the nurseries started popping up like toadstools all around Santa Clara Valley. Forty or fifty of them, I guess, at that time. Then they started developing just down the road from us, Cambrian Park, started subdividing and building houses.

What my dad and I built up was a small, general nursery. But the worst of it was, I wouldn't delegate or hire people to work. I wanted to do it myself, I guess. That's the reason I think we never did grow in size.

Riess: Did you recognize that at some point?

Carman: No, I just recognize it now [laughter]. It's a little bit late to start over again.

Riess: Are you serious?

Carman: Yes, after talking to all these other people who started out with nothing and built these rather large nurseries. [referring to his project of updating histories of peninsula nurseries for C.A.N.]

Part of it might have been growing up in the Depression, because we built this house on the property down there, and we had to save up enough money so we could buy the stuff to build a house. There was never any idea of borrowing money to do something. That may be part of it. But you can't look back, they're gaining on you [chuckle].

Riess: There was the GI Bill.

Carman: I never gave it a thought, because there wasn't that much cash flow in the nursery at that time. We were paying off the property there, we were still making payments on it. And there was nobody else to work in the nursery.

Riess: Your dad didn't hire anyone either.

Carman: We had part-time help. We had a lot of people part-time, a lot of high school kids, a lot of young fellows. It was all part-time. They were just doing the chores. Two or three people came in to help with sales sometime during the years.

I was never an aggressive salesperson or a businessperson, but I've had a lot of fun.

Riess: Jean was your businesswoman.

Carman: She was an accountant, actually. She kept the books and did it very well. And she's still doing it.

Riess: When I talk about staying in one place, California is full of people who came here and said goodbye for good to wherever it was they came from.

Carman: Yes. There's that three or four or five or six foot of white stuff every year back there in most places. And a lot of people didn't like that after they had been out here and seen the climate.

The Other Fellows in the Business

Carman: One nurseryman over here, he and his wife and two daughters were living in Cleveland. He was working in a foundry. They came into southern California, and she said that when he saw the trees there he said, "I found where I want to stay." They moved up here and bought an acre and a half. He never went back to Cleveland, except one time, in the forty years that he lived here. They came here for vacation and never left.

Riess: This guy had had no experience in the nursery business?

Carman: Not a bit. He was a foundryman. He worked at Hendy's for a while.

Riess: How did he think he could possibly run a nursery if he didn't know anything about plants?

Carman: A lot of the other people did too. A lot of the Japanese were the same way: they learned as they went along. One of them was a truck farmer, more or less, in Mountain View. Now they've got a big bedding plant nursery.

One fellow on the east side came up here to help his friend with a roadside fruit stand. He was going to go to UC Berkeley for a degree, but he worked so much in the fruit stand that he couldn't do it. Then they widened the street, and they couldn't have an open fruit stand anymore because they were in the city of San Jose, and there was a nursery going out of business a little ways away, so they started to open a nursery there. He learned as they went along. He's got a very successful nursery; he's trying to sell it now because he wants to retire. A lot of them did that.

There's only one, over in Santa Clara, that I know got a horticultural degree in southern California; the other one was a builder and his brother, and they were growing field-grown pansies and digging them and putting them in baskets and selling those, and delphinium and things like that. Then they got more of those and decided to open a nursery.

Riess: These people must have a natural limitation on what they knew about horticulture. Don't they have to learn about propagation, chemistry, stuff?

Carman: No, most of them don't, actually. As soon as they open the nursery, then they go buy the plants and just resell them. Buying

and selling is all they're doing. They got started in a nursery in a small way by growing a few things, maybe.

This one man started with growing Transvaal daisies. It was the Daisy Garden Nursery at that time. They added a few things at a time, and pretty soon they had all kinds of things. Then they added fruit trees--they wouldn't grow them, they would just buy them in. The salespeople told the customers about them, or they'd have catalogs which would describe them--"This plant's going to get to be about three-by-three, it's going to have purple flowers, put it here." That's all they have to know. So then they're in business.

Riess: And often that's all the landscape architects who bought the plants knew.

Carman: A lot of the architects are reading about plants in books--this looks good, let's put it in. But when people would come looking for it, it's not available, and that's because the architect specified something that looks good in the book but it's not being grown.

### The Vanishing Experts

Riess: I would expect if I went to Berkeley Hort Nursery with a mottled leaf they would be able to tell me what to do. I expect a lot of expertise.

Carman: Is there a lot at Berkeley Hort?

Riess: It's pretty good. Or they say, "Our rosarian is in on Thursday." [laughs] Or they say, "Go see Bob Raabe," like he's the only plant pathologist.

Carman: He is. And when he quits, we're going to be really lost, because nobody is taking his place. Nobody. He's got fifty years of experience. You can show him a symptom and he can tell you what did it--he doesn't have to see the plant. He's a marvel. He's only working part time now. He's retired. Like I said, he's the last one that really knows anything. I think that position he had is gone now. Maybe up at Davis there are some people.

A lot of these people, they get to selling plants, and they're selling all the fairly run-of-the-mill things, so they don't come in contact with anything unusual or different, so they don't know it. It's especially true now of the young salespeople.

Very few of them could identify anything that's really out of the ordinary, even though they do have these courses on plant ID, but plant ID is only on the most-used things, I believe.

Riess: And the most-used things would all turn up in the Sunset Western Garden book.

Carman: The Sunset garden book has a lot of things that aren't that most-used, either. Everything would be in the Sunset garden book that's most used.

Riess: What about everything that's out in your nursery? It's not going to be in the Sunset garden book, is it?

Carman: Some of it isn't; a lot of it is.

Our mix really started after we moved here in '70, actually. Because when we were down at the other place we had general things. Although I was getting interested then in different things like rock garden plants, and perennials, because the Page Mill Nursery had phased out about that time. They were the big source of perennials on the peninsula in the late forties and early fifties. Two women up there, Margaret Truax and Peggy Stebbins, ran it. They were friends of Elsa Uppman Knoll from Sunset. In fact, they went to the gardening school that she ran at Stanford.

I called Elsa the other day and talked to her.

Riess: What did you talk about?

Carman: I was asking her about the girls at Page Mill, but she's a little bit fuzzy on her recollections, I guess, because I talked to Dick Dunmire and he was much more up to date. One of them passed away, but they closed the nursery before her death.

#### Community Volunteer Since 1946

Riess: When you got back from the war in 1946 you were a volunteer fireman, scout master, men's club.

Carman: It seemed like it was the thing to do. Being a fireman was kind of exciting: you would run out and jump on the tanker. Old Slim Bartlet would drive out to Lone Hill, a little isolated hill about 100 feet high toward Almaden, and we'd put out the grass fire.

Riess: Were the phones in the houses? How did you get the alarm?

Carman: When they first had the fire station it was down at a dehydrator just beyond where the old nursery was, and you could hear the sirens when they would start out. So if they were coming by, if you could get out there quick you could hop on.

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Carman: Later on they had the little radios that you could get. I never did get one of those, because it was it was in the fifties or sixties when I had too much to do to go chasing fire engines.

Riess: Are fires a very big danger for nurseries?

Carman: No. See, there were no fire departments around when that was started, no way to get help, except the California Department of Forestry, and that was up at Alma, up in the hills. So the volunteer fire department was started by a friend down in Cambrian Park where we lived, that's where they started it. Then they built a fire station right across from the nursery [at Union and Bascom], which is still standing there, but it's used for something else now.

The Cambrian Men's Club, they were sponsors for the scout troop, and so I guess when I was asked to be the scout master I joined the men's club. Maybe I joined before--I'm not sure. They were working for the school, different activities at the school.

The school was the center at that time, in the forties--there was only one school in the district, and that was the center of all activities. They had the Cambrian fiesta where they had all these booths that the men's club would put up. The different organizations would run games and things or sell something to eat and make money that way for the school or the organization.

Riess: After the war were there a lot of fatherless boys?

Carman: No. They only were fatherless because their fathers were doing something else. They had fathers, but they weren't there.

Riess: But not killed in the war.

Carman: No. These would have been born during the war probably, because they were ten or twelve years old. But they were not orphaned, no. There was only one mother, Mrs. Sopher--I think his father wasn't around, and I don't know where he was, whether he had been killed or they were divorced.

Two of the boys, the Morris twins, they were real intelligent, and they went on to become the highest they can get in the National Park Service. One's in Hurricane Ridge in Anacortes, and the other one is in Arizona at the Grand Canyon, I think. Dave and Doug Morris. The Morris' mother lives not too far away; I talk to her once in a while.

The Williams family, they had five boys, so they kept the troop going for quite a while. He was a father that was there. He worked up at [Kaiser] Permanente as a mechanic, and he was a real hard-working guy. He was always there. Whenever we'd go on a trip he was there. His kids all came out really good.

Riess: You were pretty free to do things with your work schedule?

Carman: Yes. When you don't have to be at a certain place at a certain time--I could always leave early or do something else, because Dad could take care of the nursery.

### School Board

Riess: The school board, was that when your daughters were in school?

Carman: They must have been in school. At least one or two of them. I was asked to fill a vacancy [in 1958]. I was on that for thirteen years.

This was when they first had short skirts. They were supposed to be at the kneecap. This one gal came to school with it above, I guess, so the principal sent her home [laughter]. It came up before the board, and there was a lot of press there--I have a clipping of it someplace. The woman asked if I wanted her to parade up in front of the board, and I said no. How it resolved, I guess we upheld the principal.

The main thing about that period was the expansion. They were expanding: building schools and building schools. We built four or five schools at that time when I was on the board. Since then they've torn one completely out and put in low-income housing, and one is being rented out as a preschool. The old Cambrian school area has been completely torn out, and that's high-income housing. The other one, Houge, is still operating as a school. That's where the board meets. There's one other school operating, I think.



Riess: Is Los Gatos--or was it up to a certain point--quite a homogeneous community?

Carman: Yes, up until about the early fifties it was pretty much a sleepy little town. After that it started growing and getting upscale. Now it's really upscale. If you have a Los Gatos address, you've really made it. It's crazy.

Riess: It's never had a large population of Hispanics or blacks?

Carman: It doesn't now.

Riess: Did it at some point?

Carman: Well, maybe in the 1800s it had quite a few Spanish, I would guess. Practically no blacks. There would have been a lot of Italians, probably, rather than Spanish. But they would have been immigrants and they were staying. Los Gatos--for one thing, there's not much housing. The housing that's there is very expensive, so that precludes a lot of people coming in at all. Some way with Saratoga.

After the late seventies enrollment started to slack off, and then these other things happened, so the school has compressed a little bit now--the amount of students is less, although it's growing a little bit now. The only reason I left [the school board] was because I moved here, and then there was a faction in there that wanted to get some new blood on the board, so they mounted a big election campaign. I wasn't about to go out and electioneer.

Charlie Sartorette and I were both off the board at that time. He was an old-timer. He used to work for the electric company in San Jose. He had a house on Bascom, and he was part of the men's club too. We used to go up there for their big meatball feed every summer on the back patio. The house was quite unique. Joanne Herz and her husband bought the house and moved it onto White Oaks and refurbished it. She's got every room refurbished in the style of the thirties. She belonged to the County Historic Commission or something. It's really quite a showplace.

### Moving Houses Around

Riess: Moving houses around sounds like a popular solution down here.

Carman: It was a big business in those days, because there were places you could put them. Now there's no place you could put a house. You can't take an old house and move it someplace and bring it up to code and everything and still have an old house, because it just isn't allowed anymore. Sometimes you can move them to south county.

They've moved quite a few historic houses around. The Ainsley place in Campbell was moved. That was the home of one of the old fruit growers and processors--the house used to be down on the corner of Hamilton and Bascom. It was moved west on Bascom, over the freeway--there are pictures of it sitting on top of the overpass on the freeway--down through the side streets, and it's in Campbell now by the library, and it's been refurbished back to the thirties. They've got all the original stoves and everything in there, I think. They built a little annex building there, where they have a museum set up with a lot of artifacts from the time. They've redone the garden fairly well; it's not like it used to be, but they've done fairly well. That was a big project.

Riess: How was moving this house? Was it a big project?

Carman: This one? Not too bad. They cut it across right here. It was cut in half. They moved this half down first, I guess, and two or three weeks later they brought that half down. They went down through the orchards and came back up here. There are still leaves in the attic up there where they brushed against the trees.

Riess: What did you have to do about foundations?

Carman: They put just a regular foundation on it, concrete, like it was before. They raised it up, then they put the foundation in, then they lowered it down. They bolted it down. It went through the quake fine.

Riess: The houses here don't have cellars.

Carman: No, they're too expensive. You've got to excavate, and you've got to put all the reinforcing around. So there are very few cellars. Across the street, the old house there had a cellar. The heater was in the cellar. The old place we had down there built in the 1880s had just a dirt cellar. In fact, we brought the--that little structure at the side of the garage was the door into the cellar of the old house. You walked down about four steps, ducked your head under the rafters. It was a dirt cellar.

More on Writing the Peninsula C.A.N. History

- Riess: I realize that often you answer me out of your knowledge of the history of the profession because of your interviews with other nurserymen around here. Tell me more about the book you will be getting out.
- Carman: The first chapter will be pre-war--as far back as I can remember in the thirties, up to the war. Then the middle chapter will be Charlie Burr's "First Time Around," plus some of the recollections on the "Second Time Around."<sup>1</sup> The last chapter will be the demise of the nursery industry, so to say. I will talk about the people who weren't mentioned in there, tell when they started, a little bit about them, and if they closed, when they closed, or who's doing it now. That's the way I am thinking of setting it up.
- Riess: With C.A.N. as the publisher? It sounds like it might have a wider interest.
- Carman: It might. I was thinking we would get it all together, see how much it's going to be and put a copyright out for the nurserymen. Maybe that's not practical. They could sell it at one price to the nursery people and one price to the public or something like that. I don't know if that's ever going to work out.
- Riess: Are you going to include pictures?
- Carman: No. There's nothing to take pictures of, actually. Some of the interesting nurseries are all knocked down, and that would raise the cost pretty high, even black and whites.
- Riess: Is it also a kind of rallying cry to save any of these places or to save anything? Do you have a mission like that?
- Carman: No. My mission is, like somebody said, "If you don't know where you've been, you don't know where you going." Some saying like that. If you don't know past history, present history doesn't mean much. This is just to give the younger generation some insight of what went on before. That's all. And a little bit of history of some of the people who weren't mentioned in that book, because there are very few nurseries mentioned in that part of Charlie's--five or six or seven.
- Riess: Are you writing a couple of pages about each?

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<sup>1</sup>Both of these publications are included in the Appendices.

Carman: Oh, no. Some are only going to be a quarter page.

Riess: And in each case you've gone to the original source if you can find somebody there.

Carman: Yes.

Riess: You've been driving around doing this?

Carman: Some of it. I've just sent out a bunch more questionnaires. I call people and tell them I'm going to send them a questionnaire.

I got one back the other day from a young fellow whose father started at the California Nursery--actually Hans was born on the property of the California Nursery, I guess. Then his father went to work for the 1939 Exposition on Treasure Island, and when the war came on, he went to work at Hendy's or someplace like that, all the while he was starting a nursery up in Redwood City. It goes on to where the nursery closed in the fifties.

Riess: The son wrote and told you all this?

Carman: Yes. He's got a lot of history. He sent me a clipping of his dad. He was in the paper for his fiftieth anniversary or something. He said it brought back a lot of memories. I've got several others which haven't replied yet. I've got to call them up and get them going. I've got a lot of typing to do yet.

When I get it typed up I might have you look at it and see what you think.

### The Future of Small Nurseries

Riess: What is the future of the small nurseries? Are there any starting up?

Carman: The small nurseries are going to keep doing what they're doing, and the big nurseries aren't going to change. There are a lot of small nurseries. There's a gal over at Cal State Hayward. She teaches horticulture there, and she's got a little nursery over in Martinez. She's in contact with another nursery down someplace else. They're going to keep doing what they're doing, actually, regardless of what happens. But the big nurseries like Woolworth's and places like that, they're not going to change. They can't change.

Most of them are offering unusual plants, stuff you can't get at Woolworth's and places like that. So that's why they exist, because of their personal interest in it. If she finds out that she can't make a go of it, she's going to do something else. There's another young lady from Cal Hort who does consultation work. She grows plants, and I don't know how she does all she does.

Riess: Maybe the smaller ones need to wear two hats, nursery plus the design. And plant pathology, too!

Carman: Some of them are doing design, probably. Pathology, I don't think they worry about that. There's so much information out there about how to grow plants: they can read it in a book, they can read the label on the bottle if something's dying.

Riess: "They" being the buyer?

Carman: No, no, the people growing it. The homeowner, after they've bought the plants, it's up to them to keep them alive. And I know that they're growing some that aren't going to survive very well.

Some people, they get on a thing about bringing these Australian or South African things in--they're great plants where they come from, but whether they're going to adapt here is another question. Everybody has to go through this. I did [laughs]. A lot of the stuff I brought in never made it out of the nursery door.

#### Continuous Arrival of New Plants

Riess: On the garden tour I took this weekend I ran into a person who was originally from Ireland, and he had a lovely weigela that he had brought from Ireland. It was a special, pretty thing.

Carman: What's his name? He might be in the Rock Garden Society.

Riess: Richard Sullivan.

Carman: Tall, thin guy?

Riess: Yes.

Carman: Yes, I know him. A good plantsman. He's given me a couple of things which I no longer have.

- Riess: He told me that when he brought it back he took it up to Western Hills and they propagated it for him. Then it became available. Would that be a kind of common scenario?
- Carman: Yes, in a lot of cases. They're not supposed to bring plants in without a permit, but a lot of people do, and if it's not on a prohibited list, I see nothing wrong in propagating it.
- Riess: I didn't think there was anything wrong, it's just that I didn't realize that Western Hills would propagate anybody else's stuff.
- Carman: Oh, well Maggie Wych goes over to England and brings back stuff every year. If there's something they didn't collect, she's collecting it now and bringing it up and propagating it. She's bringing in things every year now.
- Riess: Nurseryman magazine sometimes will have articles about new perennials. Would they know about the same new perennials that, for instance, would be available through Western Hills?
- Carman: They could be the same things. Western Hills probably could have had them years ago, and they're just getting them now. There's a lot of stuff in those magazines that isn't really new--there are a lot of really new things popping up in the trade in just the last few years.
- Riess: In those magazines a nursery in Arkansas, perhaps, will suddenly have three or four things that you can only get from that nursery.
- Carman: Yes, sometimes they would be the only ones that have it for the time being. As soon as a few nurseries get it, unless it's patented it's going to be spread around pretty quickly. Patented are not supposed to be propagated without paying a license fee.

"Choose Horticulture?" ##

- Riess: On your résumé it says that you distributed a video called "Choose Horticulture" in 1992. I don't know what the video was, but I wonder if you've continued, in the spirit of horticultural education, to lobby for people going into the trade.
- Carman: That video was put out by the C.A.N., and our chapter bought enough to send one to each of the high schools that had a horticulture program in the Santa Clara Valley.

Riess: That had a program in horticulture? That's not a common high school program though, is it?

Carman: Quite a few had it, yes. A lot of them we sent also to the counselors to try to get the students interested in horticulture, so they'd have something to view and give them an idea of some of the opportunities in horticulture. It gave a little résumé of nursery work and landscape work and things like that in this video. The chapter authorized getting these, and I organized sending them all out to the different teachers.

The chapter as a whole was trying to do that, but it's difficult now because there aren't many--although right now enrollment is picking up a little bit in the horticulture classes. Foothill College in Los Altos is the best one around here. In the seventies they were really filled up with students. Horticulture classes were overflowing, and everybody was into it. It's kind of slacked down, but now they say it's picking up again a little bit. Things go in cycles.

Like there are a lot of people who come in here that had been working in electronics. They've gotten fed up with electronics and they want to do something else. They just quit their jobs and go take some classes in horticulture or go to work at a nursery or stuff like that.

Riess: Horticulture would follow a good economy, wouldn't it? It's one of those optional things.

Carman: It does make a difference, yes. If the economy's good, horticulture sales are good. Although I think it was still strong in the Depression days because people were growing things to eat. It wasn't ornamental horticulture, but it was survival.

Riess: Have there been people you would think of as your students who have passed through this nursery or who have worked for you?

Carman: There's one lady who went to Foothill, I think. She was coming in here weeding in exchange for plants. Then she started growing different plants. She was a pretty good grower. She started growing things and doing ceramics, going to the local Farmers' Market and selling all her creations. She always wanted to get into a nursery--now she's working at Yamagami's Nursery over there.

There's one high school boy that worked for a while, and he was working at Woolworth's for a while, but I've lost track of him, so I really don't know. Other than that, I can't think of any that have stayed in it after they left. Most of them are high

school kids that worked here. They're just looking for a paycheck, most of them.

Well, and there are some people who started in the nursery business who got a lot of small plants from us when they were starting out. They would come in to buy stock plants. Several nurseries have gotten started with some unusual things that way. One fellow in Santa Barbara, he sold out and the person he sold to came and got a few things for a while. But once they get a start they don't have to come back if they're good growers.

Riess: Do young nursery people come and make an appointment with you and walk around and learn from you?

Carman: No, not really. There are mostly some customers who come in who are knowledgeable. They come in and buy things and talk a bit. I was thinking of doing some propagation classes, but like other things, I never got it off the ground.

Riess: Propagation classes for the local school?

Carman: No, for individuals. People in the Western Hort Society. A couple of them asked one time. We have had classes in making concrete troughs. But that's about all that we had classes in.

Riess: Maybe you should do that. I just have the feeling that people aren't going to know enough [tape break].

### Victor Reiter's Rule of Three

Carman: [talking about the nursery] I probably now have more labels of dead plants that I have had than I have live plants [laughs].

Riess: What are we going to do about that?

Carman: Like I told you before, like Victor said, unless you keep three plants, you're going to lose it. I've done it. I've lost several that way. I had the double lobelia which we got from New Zealand after many years. It's a good thing I sent some back to Logee's Greenhouses in Connecticut, because they sent me back this year plants which I've got to take some cuttings of now. That's it.

Unless you share things and get them spread out, they're going to be lost. I've lost a lot of stuff that way. Some of it I can't get back, because nobody else has it. I got some seed



from a friend who's in New Zealand, but I don't know if it's going to grow or not. It's a nice little rock garden plant.

Another *Phyteuma* [*P. comosa*], that one I grew several years and finally didn't propagate it, and didn't have the three plants like Victor told me, it's gone now. But those things are beyond most people's interest. That's the thing. There's not enough interest in it, there's not enough people growing rock garden plants.

### Fanatics and Novices

Carman: I don't know if you looked at one of those Scottish rock garden books there. Those people are fanatics there. They've got these glass houses with frames, with stuff in pots, and they devote all their spare time to that. We don't have that here, actually. Our growing conditions are different, for one thing. Some of those things just wouldn't make it here; no matter what you did you couldn't keep them alive for very long. And you don't have the burning interest to do it.

The West, I think, is still pretty much of a beginner as far as gardeners go. There are a few really good gardeners who are interested in it and devote all their time to it. I'm not one of them, because I don't really have a garden. I think the eastern U.S. has more of a history of gardens and big estates than the West does.

The only notable gardens now are the wineries. People have got a lot of money to put in these instant gardens--within two or three years they've got a great big place with allees and arbors and forty-five wisteria in a row and stuff like that. There's no really old gardens--the only place that's really old that's open is Filoli. There are a lot of other old estates on the peninsula but none of them are open. The people that have got them have got the iron gates up with electric fences.

There's the one garden in Santa Barbara, what do you call it? Lotusland. It's a famous one, and it's open, but it's having a hard time keeping going. I don't know how many gardens are open in southern California, either.

I just got a list of the Garden Conservancy open gardens for some time in May. That'll be interesting probably to see some of those because some of the gardens around Carmel are pretty nice. They have enough money to do what they want and do it first-class.

Riess: But that is different from struggling against the elements to keep Alpine plants alive. Does it make sense to be struggling against the elements?

Carman: Well, sometimes it doesn't make sense, really. I think that's a gardener's goal: to grow something that can't be grown. They want to do it, and they're going to do it if they possibly can. I told you we stopped in Fiji to see this friend of our New Zealand friend, and there they were trying to grow roses in the tropics, and they don't do that good. The citrus was looking fairly good, but even citrus don't do that good in the tropics, I don't think. They're always trying to grow that thing that won't grow there.

There are people that want to grow mangos and papayas and stuff like that around here, and they just can't do it unless you put up a hothouse and keep it above fifty-five degrees.

Riess: Back to the magic three plants. The lobelia. What happened?

Carman: I had a lot of plants last year, but I wasn't paying attention to get some cuttings off them when I should have. All of a sudden I found out there was only four or five left, and they were in such condition that they weren't really good for cutting. And I tried to get some inside to get them to grow to make cuttings, and they just didn't respond. So there it was gone.

Riess: Why were they in such a condition?

Carman: They didn't get cut back. When they get into pots they get overgrown, and unless you replot them and get some new roots on the stems they just kind of wither away. They might have gotten dry or they might have gotten too wet, because they just withered away.

## X WALKING THROUGH CARMAN'S NURSERY WITH ED CARMAN

Riess: Do you have your nursery divided up--[laughs] sort of like a hospital, with various emergency rooms where you practice triage?

Carman: It's all triage [laughter].

Riess: Let's take a tour of the nursery. Can we do that?

Carman: Sure.

Riess: Do you want to start out by talking about how you have it set up?

Carman: There's no rhyme or reason.

Riess: We are in a glasshouse.

Carman: Yes, well, we have a propagating house, a glasshouse, where we do most of all the propagating. The next, plastic house is supposed to be a transition from the glasshouse to the outside. Then from the plastic house they go out underneath the lath or into containers out in the field. So it's a progression of moving on. As they get bigger and hardier they move from one environment to the next environment, and then outside. It's supposed to work that way. Sometimes they get stuck in one place and never move until they silently pass away. [laughter]

Riess: Are you in one area at one time of year and in another at another? I mean, does it follow the seasons?

Carman: No, because we propagate almost all year round on something or other.

Right now we should be doing some grafting on wisterias. I have done some, and I should be doing some more of those right away. Then pretty soon the new growth will be in the stage where we can do cuttings of it. That will be later on this summer.

In the meantime, we're growing things from seed. We're growing other things from cuttings, and so we propagate what we think should be done when it's right to do. That could be any month of the year if the plant's in the right condition. Most of our plants are softwood cuttings, so they should be taken as the plant is growing and just kind of stops growing before it flowers. That could be any time of year for most things.

Some of the conifers and things like that are only taken in the fall--September, October, November. They're rooting now. Some of those probably could be transplanted now, they've probably got roots on them, but they haven't gotten done yet. If we wait too long, then they're going to silently pass away before they even get done. A lot of things, they get into one stage and then they get stuck there, I don't get them done, there's so much other stuff to do, they just sit there for six months too long.

Riess: Do you label the pots by date? I know that you can't have gotten this far without having some--I don't want to hear that there's no plan! [laughter]

Carman: By golly. No, I'm sorry to say there is no propagation schedule written down. There should be.

Riess: Is there an inventory anywhere?

Carman: Three or four years ago one of our customers who became a good friend insisted we make a list. She came every week and got a list of plants that in the meantime she wrote down. Finally she got it onto a computer and made a list for us. That was the first list we've had since we moved here in 1970. And that list that we had in '70 was just a list of material that we were growing for wholesale. We have a master copy and one other copy of that list.

But it's like I said earlier, as soon as this was printed it was out of date, because some of the stuff wasn't available, or some of it we just didn't have at that time because it had been two or three months since the list had been made up. Lists are difficult to keep current, especially with the material that we've got.

Riess: How would you know where the thing was in the nursery?

Carman: Ah, that's the question.

There are some things that are more or less put together. A lot of the two-inch conifers are on one side of the nursery, and rock garden plants are more or less in one place, the bonsai materials are more or less in one place. The stuff that's not for

sale is in one place--the stock plants. So it's more or less organized, but not in a real formal organization.

Riess: When you go out there are you ever seized with an attack of forgetfulness about the name of something or other?

Carman: More often than I'd like to admit. Those "senior moments" come all too often. What I do is stop thinking about it and do something else. Then at two o'clock in the morning or five o'clock that night maybe I think about it.

Riess: But the other thing you could do is go to your inventory.

Carman: Sometimes I can do it that way, yes. But if I forget the name of it, I can't look it up [laughs].

Riess: A nice part of the nursery story, of course, is Nancy's role.

Carman: All the girls grew up in the nursery. They all had jobs when they wanted money. There was a job out there, "Go do something outside," and they got paid for it.

Nancy's the youngest one. I think she has the time and inclination to do a garden. She has a big vegetable garden at home. Diane, the second daughter, is the one that really could grow house plants. Her room when she was living here--I don't know, she had a hundred plants in there or something. She had an egg case of praying mantises hatch in her room. She had to take everything outside so the young ones could get off of the plants. It took her a week or something like that to get them out of there!

Now she's working full-time as a director at a nursery school, from seven to six or something. So she has a couple of house plants left, but that's about it.

The oldest daughter is really handicapped with climate. They live up in Plumas County, and they have frost in June and frost in August, so their growing season is between those two frosts. They do grow pretty good root crops, and she's done that in the past, but now she's working pretty much full-time during the school year. They've done a lot of work getting their land leveled off, so they might get back to it this year. Her vinca are doing well, she has her pansies blooming--last night we talked to her.

Riess: Maybe you should give each daughter a starter set of twenty-four rare plants. Like a gene pool or something like that.

Carman: They wouldn't have time to take care of them now, actually, the two older ones. Nancy's the one that I hope will take care of some of the things. There are a couple of things which I would like to see her carry on, because they would be easy to take care of, and something that she could sell, besides keeping going.

Riess: That's nifty. But they remain unnamed?

Carman: Yes, for now, I guess [chuckles].

The girls were a great help over the years as they were growing up. I'm sorry to say they probably missed some outings on week ends because the nursery was open. And Jean has kept the books all these years as well as doing the countless reports. My family really deserves the credit for our nursery keeping going over the years.

[tape interruption]

Riess: The praying mantis reminds me--I want to ask you about your approach to pesticides and organic gardening. Where have you stood on all of this?

Carman: We use snail bait like mad. We buy it in fifty-pound bags. Expensive stuff, too, but it's really good. It's Deadline granules, a common snail bait. It comes in a squeeze tube sometimes, so you can make a line around the plants, and also they have it in pellets. But the granule form is much better, because you can't see it when you put it out, but pets can't easily pick it up. We use that and we use earwig bait. I've got to put some more of that out.

Riess: Do you just draw a line around the entire nursery?

Carman: No. The granules we scatter. Just broadcast it everywhere. For snails and slugs. Otherwise, we have a little bit of Malathion which we use occasionally for aphids. We had some scale last year on our nursery inspection, and it was on an Abutilon, which is their favorite resting place. We cut that off and discarded it, we got rid of the scale that way. Otherwise, I really don't spray, except for weeds--we use Roundup and several other weed killers, pre-emergents in gallon-can size containers, to keep some of the weeds down. We didn't get as much done as we should have, so we've got a good weed crop again.

Riess: Can you apply any of these pest controls or weed killers right through your watering system?

Carman: The only thing we use through the watering system is a 30-10-10 fertilizer, which we dissolve and put on with the Hozon [trade name for the proportioner]. It's an attachment that goes on the hose, you put it onto the sprinkler. That we do too little, actually--we should do it a little more often.

Riess: Once you've fought back the snails and slugs one year, and maybe a second year, where do they come from the third year?

Carman: You don't get them all. I'm sorry to say you don't get them all.

Riess: You can't create a snail-free environment.

Carman: We almost could, probably, if we'd really clean up under all the benches and everything. If we got everything cleaned up we probably could do it. We just don't have the manpower to do it.

Riess: Sometimes they live in the foliage. I think they're breeding in my orange tree.

Carman: Yes, they go up and stay up in trees for a long time sometimes. But they have to go down to lay eggs. They have to go underground to lay eggs. I know customers or friends who have small gardens, they go out every night at ten or eleven o'clock with a flashlight and pick everything. Within two weeks they've got practically everything gone. In a small garden, that's a quick way to do it.

##

Carman: [walking through the nursery] This is a pot of lapageria seeds coming up. There are maybe a hundred in there. As soon as you start transplanting seeds, then you run into trouble because your space multiplies a hundredfold, maybe. Those are willow cuttings, ten or twelve there. As soon as you move them up, you've got ten pots instead of one. So that's the thing with seeds: the multiplication is very rapid there.

The big nurseries now all have seeding machines. They're all run by machine. They have vacuums, and they run them right over the plug trays and the thing goes down and puts one seed in each plug, and the tray lifts up. It does it automatically. For bedding plants that's the whole answer, yes.

Riess: Now this is a lot of wisteria for one small pot. This is about a two-foot wisteria in a two-inch pot.

Carman: That's one wisteria. We grow the wisteria seeds and put them in either this size or larger pots. These are then used to graft as understock, to graft a known variety onto this, to make a named

variety. There are a lot I can show you. [walking through, tugging on some of the little plants]

Otherwise there are some hardwood wisteria cuttings--some are making roots, some are not. [pulls on plant] This has a little root there, this has a root. These will go into gallon cans and go out under the shade arch as soon as we get time to do it. A lot of these are not rooted, of course.

Riess: They are in foam blocks.

Carman: Yes, with tubes, with holes in them, one cutting per hole. They make very good root systems though.

That's a weeping cypress that's rooted now, probably. I've got to get that transplanted now too.

Those are seeds from strawberries, 'Alexandria' strawberry, fraises de bois, the woodland strawberry. Real soft fragrant berry. They use them in some of the very fancy restaurants.

Riess: Who are you growing them for?

Carman: A couple of the nurseries on the peninsula buy them, and homeowners.

Most of the things are cutting-grown in here, sage, tarragon, decorative oreganos. This oregano is the one that has the four-inch bracts, kind of showy.

These are caper plants here. There's a big one over there with the flower on it. They bloom in the evening. They're just about past now--see, there's one. After they flower there's the seed, and there's the caper that you pick. But that's too old. You have to pick them before they break into flower so you're picking the buds.

Riess: Has Jean ever processed them?

Carman: No. A friend in Los Altos does it, gets about a pint a year from two or three plants.

There's my lobelia, and that's ready to take cuttings of now. Here's a daphne that we got in England several years ago, a nice little plant, but no fragrance to it.

Riess: You're growing a tremendous variety of things here, including geraniums, tomatoes, cosmos. Not exactly what I expected to find here.



Carman: Yes, that cosmos, that should have been out. That was grown for an order, but they didn't do very good.

Riess: Why cosmos?

Carman: This person wanted to put them out in her garden. She wanted white ones, and she couldn't buy white herself.

The tomatoes and peppers and squash, and the melons, those are for personal use.

Riess: What's this?

Carman: Well, these are all cuttings. I just put them in rows in the flats. We grow only a few of some things, so you can't devote one flat to each thing. There's about six or eight different things there in a row, different Chamaecyparis, and they've already got roots because they're starting to grow, so they've got to get out of there. That's a Picea 'Little Gem.' It makes a tight, bun type of plant. That's a golden yew there, weeping yew. Variegated boxwood. These are more Alberta spruce there.

Riess: What do you put them in to root them?

Carman: What we use mostly is Dip and Grow. It's a liquid, and you dilute it down 1 to 4, or 1 to 5, or 1 to 10, depending on what you're growing. Some things don't use it at all. For most of the herbs we don't use it at all.

Riess: What's the part that takes the most expertise about propagating?

Carman: Timing, probably, is the most important thing, to decide when you're going to take the cutting, when the plant looks right to take a cutting. I'll show you here. This lemon thyme, one of the variegated thymes, these are just about right to take the cutting now. It's fairly new growth, but it's not flowering. They'll root very quickly. Here's another oregano, and that's just right now, just right to take. Same way with these sage here. When they're a little bit longer we can take a tip cutting on that.

Riess: And the sage look ready to sell, too. You might take a cutting from a plant you're about to sell?

Carman: Yes, we could take tip cuttings off these. Sometimes it's easier than growing a bunch of stock plants, although we try to keep some of these in a gallon can someplace because sometimes you run out.

Here's that introduction from South Africa, the *Dymondia margaretae*, that's made the greatest impact on California of any of our introductions because it's fairly widely used now.

[moving through the nursery] This is called the plastic house--it's made out of plastic. This is where they come after they come out of the glasshouse. They come here to harden off, or to continue to grow.

Here are some wisteria that were grafted. This is the stock that has been cut off, and this is the graft that is starting to grow already.

This is the miniature wisteria from Mr. Domoto. I have a pretty good crop of those coming along this year. If it would only bloom better, it would be a great plant. But they sometimes don't bloom that well.

You know what a pawpaw is? From back east? This is the plant. These are some grafts here and they're just starting to grow. This is the scion here. Got to keep this pinched back. Some of those have already got leaves on them. Soon as the graft starts to grow, then the top is cut off. See, the graft is starting to grow here.

Riess: How often do you check them?

Carman: Well, I try to watch them as I come through, and see if they're starting to grow.

Here's a ficus tree that we picked up the seed of in Hawaii years ago. Odds and ends. That's variegated *Bougainvillea* over there in that basket. That was given to me twenty-five years ago by a man, Paul Hutchison, who used to be at Berkeley, and it was a very popular thing at that time. In fact we sent some to a nursery in Australia--I don't know whether they ever got it into production or not.

That's the purple-flowered bottle bush.

A friend in Monterey gave me a whole flat of seedling cyclamen, hardy cyclamen. I've got to transplant them. These'll take two years to flower, probably. Time is what you're dealing with.

This one is a variegated baby tears that a man from Michigan sent me in exchange for another plant--one of those rare things that only a variegated fanatic could love. [laughing]

Riess: Here comes a variegated ivy.

Carman: That's 'Gold Heart', that's really a nice variegation.

Here's what the wind did the other day. [surveying fallen pots]

Mostly these are cooking herbs, and a few other things mixed in with them. We've got the plastic to keep some of the sun off-- we'll put some shading on this pretty soon to keep the hot summer sun off. In the wintertime we just keep the rain off of them.

Riess: Shading?

Carman: Yes, we spray it on with a sprayer, and the rain washes it off in the wintertime.

Now, there are some of the strawberries that are ready to go. They make a mound, they don't trail, they're just a clump type.

Riess: This is a variegated lavender?

Carman: Yes, that was given to me by Saso's [Herb Garden] Nursery over in Saratoga. As you see, you've got to be very careful, in variegations, to keep the green off. This variegation's not going to do very good. You've got to pick out what's going to survive [when you're propagating], with the right balance between the green and the variegation.

Riess: Wonderful to be around it. Wonderful smell.

Carman: This is a type of [Lavandula] dentata, or French lavender, and it's more fragrant than the other ones.

Riess: You're sort of touching everything as you go.

Carman: There's something over here that's really tactile.

[stopping at the tarragon] See, if you're doubtful about tarragon, you can taste it. It has a little licorice flavor to it.

Here's one of the thymes, *T. membranaceus*. That's the one that won an award last year at Cal Hort. It has a white bract and a white flower, so when it's fully opened it will be solid white-- it's quite showy. I think I got it from Victor Reiter, I'm not sure. I've had it so long I can't remember now.

Riess: Have you been propagating that?

Carman: Yes, it's a little difficult, so I only have a few plants at a time.

Here's the wisteria after it gets bigger.

This is the lath, or shade part. And here are some of the wisterias we got last year from New Zealand. These were grafted last August, I believe. They are all coming along pretty good. Trevor's going to be up in June, so I'll have to show him what his stock looks like. Another two years before they bloom.

Riess: What about this area? Is there something happening here?

Carman: That weed patch, you mean? It's mostly weeds. I've got to go through it, and if there's no plant, then it's one of those things that goes out to the dump pile. It's hard to keep the weeds out of the four-inch pots except by pulling, and you never get them all out at a time, so you've always got some in the pot coming along.

That's a little *Arenaria*, one of the rock garden plants that makes a really tight mat.

Riess: Does the rock help give warmth to the plant? Is that the idea?

Carman: Well, it gives it warmth and gives it drainage. It has less tendency to rot off or die off because of water around the crown. Most of the slower-growing rock plants we use the small crushed granite as a mulch. These are a lot of the small plants that could be used for troughs, or small plants for rock garden areas.

Riess: "Two-and-a-half- to three-inch pots, \$2.50 each, or as marked."  
"Four-inch pots, \$3.00." You know, I'm always here on Monday, but I haven't seen the place the rest of the week, Tuesday or Wednesday.

Carman: It's about the same. [laughs] People might come in. Most people come in and look around, and then if they've got questions they come back and ask us. A lot of the people that come in are quite knowledgeable. Some people that come in know nothing and they don't know what they're looking at. The ones that are fairly knowledgeable, they enjoy looking around and seeing all this stuff that don't see someplace else.

Here's one you shouldn't miss. *Scleranthus biflorus* from Tasmania.

Riess: [feeling plant] Oh, my goodness, how soft and nice! We're now at one of the troughs. I want to take a picture of you here. [tape break]

What we're standing in front of now is a combination of bonsais and tufa sinks.

Carman: These aren't bonsai, these are just dwarf conifers, actually, which haven't been trained in any particular manner. They are just slow-growing.

Now, this is the other introduction we talked about that's done quite well, *Rhodohypoxis baueri*, from South Africa. A South African bulb. A very tiny bulb, and very long-blooming. This will bloom for three months, the longest bloom of any really small bulb.

Riess: Have you worked on the color variation?

Carman: Oh no, no. There's some that they've been working on for years, and there's a lot that are the same color with two different names, I think. They are showing up in markets now. Pot plant growers are growing them and forcing them, so they are showing up in some of the markets. But most people don't realize that they're going to last, even when they go out of bloom. They could keep them for another year, but they probably just throw them out like they do with any other house plant that goes out of bloom. They make very effective container plants, especially in a nice big bowl.

Riess: What other nurseries would have them?

Carman: Not many. Siskiyou would have a few. And I think Miniature Plant Kingdom has some, also two of the growers in the Watsonville area. They are becoming more available.

These are our stock plants of *rhodohypoxis*, and these we keep and divide them every year, multiply them.

Riess: [tape break to take a picture] Do you mix all your soil?

Carman: Yes.

We have sawdust and sand, and then we recycle some of our soil, and we use some recycled soil. So it's 60% sawdust and 20% sand and 20% recycled soil.

Riess: And how do you sterilize it?

Carman: We used to use methyl bromide to sterilize it, but now we can't use that anymore, so we just have to let it set now.

Here are some *Lewisia*s which we got from one of the seed exchanges. Seven kinds have come up there. These we have tried to keep marked.

Here's a New Zealand plant called the bush daisy, because it makes a big bushy plant with a daisy on it. It grows on the east coast of the south island, on the coastal bluffs there, I understand.

Riess: *Pachestegia insignis*? And it has a thick juicy leaf?

Carman: Yes, a very heavy leaf to withstand the conditions.

This one plant, we only grew it one time, from seed. It's a New Zealand alpine, *Celmisia*, not sure which one. It has a white daisy flower on a stem about ten inches high and silver leaves.

Riess: Here are your water plants.

Carman: Yes, we don't fool with them much now because everybody has water plants. Once everybody starts handling them, then it's not practical for us to.

We have a bunch of bonsai material here, different conifers. Dawn redwoods which we grow from seed. Japanese maples which we grow from seed. We use those for grafting.

Here are some older *Lewisia*s. Some of these are mixed, so we can't tell what colors they are until they bloom. Generally I'm trying to pick out some odd colors and put them away for seed stock.

Riess: Plants in such small containers must need practically daily watering.

Carman: Yes, these should get watered now, they didn't get watered yesterday. When the real summer comes they do get watered every day.

Riess: You don't have an overhead watering system here.

Carman: No, we had one at one time but it didn't work out good. We do have overhead on most of the other tables.

[added later]

Riess: Ed, here the tape ended. Can I ask you to add anything you want by way of a finale? For instance, I can lead with the question, "In a fire or earthquake, what's the first thing you'd grab from the nursery?" And why?

Carman: I guess I would grab the card file of plants that we are growing or have grown and lost. Then I would take the guest book of people who have visited the nursery. From personal experience in an earthquake you just hang on 'til it is over, then pick up the pieces!

Riess: And from the house?

Carman: The nursery records would come first. Then probably the boxes of slides--there are about ten thousand flower and plant slides and five thousand family slides. The slide boxes would be easy to grab.

Most of the collection of things around the place have sentimental value only to me--for instance, a brass lock to my grandfather's wine cellar. But Diane and Nancy seem to have inherited some of the collecting genes, so they will possibly appreciate some of the more exotic items.

But to me, the most valued collection is in my memory, which is hard to share and almost impossible to pass on to others. Over the years we have had customers turn into good friends, and met many generous nurserymen and Hort Society members. We have been fortunate to visit some of the leading nursery people in England and New Zealand. Everyone in horticulture that we have met over the years has been unfailingly the most friendly you can imagine.

Planting seeds that sprout and can become trees, rooting cuttings of herbs or flowering shrubs, watering and fertilizing to see them mature--and all the while they never complain or talk back! What more fulfilling way to spend a lifetime?





## TAPE GUIDE--Edward S. Carman

Interview 1: March 24, 1997	
Tape 1, Side A	1
Tape 1, Side B	11
Tape 2, Side A	22
Tape 2, Side B	33
Interview 2: March 31, 1997	
Tape 3, Side A	41
Tape 3, Side B	50
Tape 4, Side A	60
Tape 4, Side B	69
Interview 3: April 14, 1997	
Tape 5, Side A	78
Tape 5, Side B	86
Tape 6, Side A	95
Tape 6, Side B	102
Interview 4: April 28, 1997	
Tape 7, Side A	111
Tape 7, Side B	117
Tape 8, Side A	124
Tape 8, Side B	133



## APPENDIX

A	Biographical sheet provided by Ed Carman	143
B	"Carman's Nursery", by Marshall Olbrich, <i>Pacific Horticulture</i> , Winter 1991	148
C	"Perennials for Western Gardens", by Ed Carman, <i>Pacific Horticulture</i> , Summer 1994	152
D	"Ed Carman's award caps 49 years in nursery trade", by Joan Jackson, <i>San Jose Mercury News</i> , September 21, 1995	156
E	"The First 25 Years, 1950-1975," by Charles Burr, Peninsula Chapter, California Association of Nurserymen	158
F	"2nd Time Around, 1950-1986," by Charles Burr, Peninsula Chapter, California Association of Nurserymen	171



Ed Carman  
16201 E Mozart Ave  
Los Gatos Calif 95032

APPENDIX A

- 1922 Born 28 June 1922, Los Gatos, Calif
- 1937 Graduate 8th Grade Lexington School, Alma, Calif
- 1941 Graduate Los Gatos High School, Senior Class President
- 1943 - 1941 San Jose State College
- 1944 Married Eleanor Jean Campbell, San Jose Calif
- 1946 - 1943 80th Infantry Division, Third Army, ETO
- 1946 Entered Nursery business with father, Hugh Carman  
Bascom Ave and Union Ave

Children: Three daughters, Patricia, Diane, Nancy

- 1970 Moved nursery and house to present location at  
16201 E Mozart Ave

## California Horticultural Society

- 1997 - 1973 Member Calif. Hort Society  
 1993 - 1984 Awards Committee Chairman, Calif. Hort Society  
 1987 - 1984 Executive Council Member, Calif Hort Society  
 1978 Calif Hort Society 'Annual Award for Contributions  
 to Horticulture in California'

## Western Horticultural Society

- 1997 - 1963 Charter member WHS  
 1996 - 1995 President Board of Directors  
 1995 - 1994 President " "  
 1994 - 1993 Vice-President Board of Directors  
 1997 - 1987 Plant Discussion Chairman  
 1983 - 1980 Board of Directors  
 1966 - 1963 Charter Member, Board of Directors
- 1994 - 1986 Advisory Committee, Central County Occupational  
 Center, Landscape Nursery Program  
 1993 Toichi Domoto Oral History, Co-Chair Funding Comm.  
 1988 - 1963 Saratoga Hort Board of Directors(President two terms)  
 1894 - 1972 Advisory Comm. Ornamental Hort, San Jose Metro.  
 1976 - 1967 Judge, San Mateo County Fair  
 1973 - 1963 Instructor 'Garden Maintenance & Landscaping  
 for Homeowners' San Jose Metro Adult Ed.  
 1964 Designated Subjects Teaching Credential - Life
- 1971 - 1958 Board of Trustees, Cambrian School District,  
 Chairman three terms  
 1970 - 1946 Cambrian Men's Club, Secretary 15 years.  
 1960 - 1946 Volunteer Fireman, Santa Clara County Central Fire  
 District.  
 1959 - 1946 Scoutmaster, Troop #34, Cambrian  
 1951 Assistant Scoutmaster, World Jamboree, Irvine, Calif.

## Peninsula Chapter California Association of Nurserymen

1997 - 1950 Charter member

1997 - 1989 Board of Directors

1997 - 1990 Chair. Chapter Awards Comm  
1995 Pacific Coast Nurseryman Award  
1992 Chair. Comm to distribute 'Choose Horticulture Video' to all high school in Santa Clara County

1992 Chair. Comm to install 'Charles Burr Memorial' at San Jose Mercury.

1992 Recipient, Outstanding Achievement Award'

1988 Recipient, 'Chapter Nursery Service Award'

1986 Co-Chair, Strybing Arboretum Demo Garden repant project

1983 - 1982 Treasurer

1975 Recipient, 'Award for Continued Dedicated Service 25 yrs

1974 - 1972 State Director

1972 - 1971 President, Board of Directors

1971 - 1967 Treasurer

1967 - 1965 State Director

1964 - 1963 President, Board of Directors

1963 - 1962 Vice-Pres, Board of Directors

1962 - 1961 Board of Directors

## Horticultural Organizations

1997 - 1991 The Garden Conservancy, Charter Member

1997 - 1980 The Herb Society of America, Western Region  
Honorary Life Member

1997 - 1980 The Scottish Rock Garden Club

1997 - 1979 Alpine Garden Society - England

1997 - 1976 U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum, Charter Member  
Life Member 1990

1997 - 1976 International Plant Propagators Society

1997 - 1976 The Royal Horticultural Society - England

1997 - 1973 American Rock Garden Society

## Publications

- 1990 'The Pacific Horticulture Book of Western Gardening'  
Pg 226 - Perennial Plants, Planning, Preparation and  
Choice.
- 1989 'Successful Perennials for the Peninsula'  
Western Horticultural Society, Palo Alto  
pg 35, 53, 72, 78, 86, 99.
- 1989 'Old, New, Unusual: Without Hormones, Heat or Mist'  
IPPS Combined Proceedings Vol 39, Pg 93.
- 1987 American Nurseryman - Field Notes  
Pg 162, January 15th, 'Dymondia margaretae'
- 1986 'Propagation of Flowering Plants of *Metrosideros  
carminea*'  
The Plant Propagator IPPS, Vol 32, No. 1, Pg 6
- 1980 'Propagation of *Actinidia chinensis* by Hardwood cuttings'  
The Plant Propagator, Vol 26, No. 4, Pg 14.
- 1974 Consultant - Sunset book - 'Ideas for Hanging Gardens'
- 1972 Consultant - Sunset book - 'How to grow Herbs'

## Photo Publications

- 1993 'Annuals for the Praries', Edgar W. Toop  
University of Alberta, Canada  
Pg 53, 65, 72, 115.
- 1992 The Herb Companion, Feb/Mar  
Pg 24, 25, 26.
- 1987 American Nurseryman -Field Notes  
'*Dymondia margaretae*' Pg 162, January 15
- 1980 Pacific Horticulture Vol 41, No. 4, Winter 1980-81  
'*Physalis peruviana*' - Front Cover
- 1979 Sunset New Western Garden Book  
Rock Garden - Pg 116



## Plant Imports

1993 Wisteria 3 named varieties England  
1993 Wisteria 1 named Canada  
1992 Rhodohypoxis 12 named varieties England  
1986 Daphne jasminea England  
1979 Coprosma kirkii variegated New Zealand  
1978 Epacris longiflora New Zealand  
1977 Hypericum aegypticum England  
1976 Dymondia margaretae South Africa  
1973 Rhodohypoxis 10 varieties New Zealand  
1973 Cupressus s. 'Swains Golden' New Zealand  
1970 Lobelia 'Kathleen Mallard' Re-introduction New Zealand  
1968 Coprosma r. 'x Coppershine' New Zealand  
1968 Actinidia chinensis (deliciosa) Bruno, Hayward, Monty females,  
1 male form, New Zealand  
1966 Coprosma prostrata New Zealand



from Pacific Horticulture,  
Winter 1991.

## Carman's Nursery

MARSHALL OLBRICH

*Marshall Olbrich sent this article to Pacific Horticulture about two weeks before his sudden death in July. In the accompanying letter he said of Ed Carman: "He is a connoisseur's nurseryman. He is the one who has the blue ginger or Russellia equisetiformis when you can't find it."*

A few years ago, writing an obituary for plantswoman Nova Leach of Stockton, I used with full feeling the expression "a saint of horticulture." This is not a phrase lightly used, and it came to me first, and surely to others, in reflecting on those arch saints of horticulture, Ray and Rose Williams of Watsonville. To be a saint one properly should have passed to one's reward and have one's miracles attested. Also, though one is allowed, in Baron von Hugel's phrase, minor sins of accident and surprise, one must have a single-minded devotion to plants. With Ray Williams the miracle is there to see: his last great work, the grounds of Gavilan College in Gilroy, which surely will be recognized as the most important pioneer dry garden in California (I can use that absurd neologism "xerophytic" no more than I can

use the redundant "plant material"). Beatification can happen only to those who, in St Cyril's phrasing, have fallen asleep before us, but in warmth of feeling we can allow ourselves the appellation "living saint" or "living proto-saint" (or up and down the scale) for Gerda Isenberg, celebrating her ninetieth birthday, for Rose Williams, and for Ed and Jean Carman.

Plantsmen can be adventurous, like Forrest, Fortune, Wilson, Douglas, Rock, Comber, the present-day Archibalds, and the rest of those at this moment vigorously extending our garden world. They can be chroniclers, like the great W.J. Bean, Liberty Hyde Bailey, Ernest Lord of that magical, early *Shrubs and Trees for Australian Gardens*, or the mysterious W. Arnold-Foster, who wrote the classic of clas-



sics, *Shrubs for the Milder Counties*. Plantsmen can be conservators, like the directors of Kew and Wisley, Eric Walther of San Francisco's Strybing Arboretum, Lawrence Johnston at Hidcote, Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst, or that buccaneer-plantsman, the late Don Stryker on the coast of Oregon. Finally, they can be those whose gift to us is to make plants available: those nurseries of the past—Veitch, Vilmorin, Robinson's Hardy Plants; and those of the present—Hillier's, Paul Picton, Elizabeth Strangman of Washfield, Don Mann of the Forge Nursery, A.C. Leslie and Joe Sharman of the newest and brightest Monksilver Nursery, Beth Chatto and all too many others in England; Eschmann of Emmen in Switzerland; and Forest Fam, We-Du, Canyon Creek, The Woodlanders, Montrose, the new Heronswood Nursery, and too many others to mention in this country.

Here belongs Ed Carman and also what I shall describe as the myth of Ed Carman.

Unlike our explorers, his adventures have been mainly with the plants, growing up in his father's nursery on Bascom Avenue, a rather tiny street in greater San Jose, and moving a few blocks away to the pleasantly named Mozart Avenue, a quiet residential street where he and wife Jean guard their treasures.

More than thirty years ago, when Lester Hawkins and I started our garden, we visited Carman's nursery, then at the old location. Like a snake shedding its skin, there were vestiges of the old—sacks of manure and peat moss, junipers and leptospermums. But the new creature was emerging: a block of plants—I have forgotten whether epimediums or heliobores, but definitely not to be found at the supermarket—were roped off with criss-crossed ribbons and "sold" tags. "Oh, what a sale!" I thought, and then realized they hadn't been sold at all but were being kept as stock plants. The situation has not changed in all the subsequent years.

Ed is, perhaps, the finest plantsman of us all, but there is a special puzzlement and charm to his nursery. First, like any truly innovative nurseryman, such as Don Stryker of Langlois, Oregon, where one parted the weeds to see the rare black daphne (*Daphne × houtteana*), which Brian Mathew thought extinct at the time; or Paul Hutchison of Escondido's Tropic World, or Bernard Acquistapace, Darily Combs, and Mark Bartholomew in Santa Barbara, the present-day mecca for plant buyers; in short, like anyone introducing and growing his own plants, Ed has too much to do. So the unknowing outsider, seeing weeds in the far forty perennial area, will find, as he approaches the throbbing heart of the enterprise—the propagating house and associated tables—that disorder progresses to an almost crystalline neatness.

But my myth is not through. Any nurseryman growing his own plants, which often are to be found nowhere else, ferociously and with his life protects his stock. The sneaky, knowledgeable buyer, drawn by forces beyond his control, inevitably goes to the new and rare, whereupon, like Albrich protecting the treasure against Siegfried, a head pops up and a voice thunders "You can't have it!"

As a small nurseryman in much the same position, I went a different way, hiring assistance in the form of a splendid nursery and garden staff. But means outgrow ends in this bad world, so while I still have the weeds, I feel I have lost some of the charm that Ed and Jean's totally deliberate and self-conscious determination to stay small has enabled them to retain.

Finally, I mention another topic—that nurseryman's ailment that dares not say its name. This is the inevitable paranoia a person feels, when he has gone to some trouble to introduce and prove the value of a plant, upon seeing his child, seduced by a popsicle, wandering off to other growers. As Beth Chatto, who had just returned from Germany, exclaimed: "But all I saw were *my* plants!"

I honestly believe that Ed and Jean, like Ray and Rose Williams, have never been troubled by such thoughts. As a less nice person, I can think impure thoughts for them. I have always



Marshall Olbrich

thought that they got far too little credit for their introductions and contributions to our gardening. As an example (which I remember because my devil-tempted soul would have frothed at the mouth), through their friendship with Trevor Davies of the famous New Zealand nursery, Ed and Jean have given us many new plants from that part of the world, including the shiny, brownish green *Coprosma* 'Coppershine'. Like Beth Chatto's plants, this was surely Ed's plant, and yet, when another person exhibited it and received an award at the California Horticultural Society's annual dinner, I recall no credit given.

*Dymondia margaretae*, *Erigeron karvinskianus* 'Moerheimii', *Helichrysum argyrophyllum*, eleven cultivars of *Rhodohypoxis*. . . there is little point in going down the long list of their introductions here. This is what we owe, and for this we give thanks. ♀

## Marshall Olbrich, 1920-1991

In 1941 Marshall Olbrich came to California from Wisconsin to do graduate work in philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, and, after nearly twenty academic and urban years in San Francisco, he and his partner Lester Hawkins did what virtually everybody in those days talked about. They moved to the country, built a house with their own hands, and started a garden.

Western Hills, the idiosyncratic and distinguished garden they created in Occidental, about sixty miles north of San Francisco, is a romantic paradise and a tremendous plant collection, a demonstration of the best sort of plantings for this area and a nursery, developed by Marshall, of good and rare plants. As the garden evolved, through drought and deluge and devastating frost, Marshall Olbrich became one of the foremost plantmen of this country. He had a world-wide correspondence with other gardeners and plant enthusiasts and collected plants and seeds from everywhere. He grew plants from every Mediterranean climate and dispersed them with an eye for excellence and usefulness and, for a nurseryman, a lunatic generosity. He was a major figure in the California Horticultural Society, exhibiting plants and serving as its president as well as writing (all too little) for this and other horticultural publications. With his discriminating plantsmanship and enthusiasm for the best plants, he was an irreplaceable resource to his peers and to innumerable younger gardeners.

All this only partially accounts for the feeling of loss I have, despite his having arranged that the nursery and garden at Western Hills continue, because, in my mind, Marshall Olbrich was an American aristocrat, an example of the best sort of person our country produces, and because for me, and a lot of others, Western Hills was more than just the finest garden in California or an unparalleled source of satisfaction for our horticultural needs and greeds. What Marshall and Lester created in their three acres of rare plants was a focus of activity in horticulture and the art of garden design, a haven of rational discourse and good garden talk supported by extremely hard work.

I met Marshall somewhere in the middle of

the garden's thirty-year growth into the unofficial status of living national treasure, a reputation that he viewed with amused resignation, and I think my experience was shared by many others. The "family" that lived and worked at Western Hills and the group of friends that gathered there accepted an obsessive interest in plants and gardening as normal. Our common fascination with plants was the starting point for an endless conversation that covered every subject. Somehow, without pompousness or pretension, it was assumed that art and ideas were important and that what we were doing was significant, that conventionality was less important than human consideration, that reason and imagination were as much garden tools as shovels were, and that excellence and honesty really mattered.

This liberal atmosphere of cultivated people cultivating plants, a combination of shop talk and salon, encouraged a lot of us to believe that perhaps we too could create good gardens and live lives we chose. It was also a salient lesson to see the brutal hard work, sometimes primitive conditions, and menial jobs required in the beginning to support this life of the mind in the midst of a garden. When things didn't seem to be turning out that way in our own lives, visits to Western Hills gave us heart and provided a refuge among glorious plants and ideas.

The inspiration of Marshall's avid scholarship and gleeful enthusiasm for good plants and his discrimination in selecting them are as much a legacy to his friends as his plant introductions. His last letter to me ended: "The garden has never been more photogenic! Boy! The plants I got. Come up and see!"

In realizing how much I am going to miss his generosity and playfulness, his honesty and wicked sense of humor, I am coming to see how much of my validity as a designer and horticulturist is due to that endless conversation, how often my satisfaction at getting a new plant, or at getting something right is set in terms of "Marshall would like that." I suspect a lot of people feel the same. We don't need to go up to Western Hills to see what Marshall Olbrich meant to California horticulture. We need only step through the garden door.

Chris Rosmini  
Los Angeles

from Pacific Horticulture,  
Summer 1994.

## Perennials for Western Gardens

ED CARMAN

*Wherever [perennials] are planted their effect depends on their suitability for a particular position in the garden, and on the careful juxtaposition of different plants (now very much an 'in' subject called plant associations). Most modern suggestions for successful plant associations depend on producing harmony of color, combined with contrasting leaf textures.*

*Phillips and Rix, Perennials*

Plants and garden styles often appear in one area, increase in popularity, and spread rapidly across the country before giving way to a successor. For the past several years interest in perennial plants has been gathering momentum and is now at a peak not seen in many years. Magazines and books show us gardens filled with perennials in full glorious color. On the West Coast wholesale growers' lists bulge with new items every year. In some cases these are plants that were considered rare or hard to find only three or four years earlier.

Many perennial plants new to the nursery trade are first seen in Washington and Oregon. The climate in the Northwest permits almost any perennial to flourish. Enthusiasm for plants is high, and there are several strong perennial plant societies and many avid collectors and small specialty growers.

Further south along the Pacific coast, where there usually is no rain from May to November, perennials must be chosen with the drier climate in mind. Even here areas with plentiful water and microclimates favoring lush growth of perennials occur, but most gardeners must consider drought tolerance in their choice of plants.

Gaining favor for the past several years are salvias, which are now at the crest of the fashion wave. Three nurseries in the San Francisco Bay Area each list over thirty varieties of salvias. Red-flowered *Salvia greggii* is an old standby giving reliable performance in hot, dry situations. Plants introduced from Texas and Mexico have resulted in hybrids with flowers in several colors, including deep red, white, coral, pink, orange, yellow, and lavender. These woody subshrubs have stiff, closely branched, upright stems from two to six feet



Group of hostas

may reach eight feet in height with hundreds of small, fragrant white flowers. Crambe is a summer bloomer that needs room and summer water. It is a spectacular specimen in a large lawn.

For gardens with filtered sun and plenty of water there are forty species of *Hosta* with hundreds of cultivars. Grown primarily for the form and texture of their leaves, many hostas have white or lavender flowers on tall stalks in summer or fall. They are enjoying great popularity, and keen amateurs as well as professionals are raising new ones every year. One grower in Michigan lists for sale eight hostas with blue leaves, seven with yellow to gold, seventeen with cream to gold margined, ten with white margined, and ten with green. These herbaceous perennials are completely hardy but must be protected from snails and slugs, which are a constant menace to them. Gardeners unable to provide a moist, woodsy location, and unwilling to protect hostas from pests, may like to try the august lily (*Hosta plantaginea*), which seems more tolerant of sun and dry soil and less attractive to slugs and snails.

In 1978 the leading nursery in New Zealand listed only ten selections of native flax (*Phormium tenax*) in a small range of colors. Just last

season one of the leading growers in southern California listed twenty-five phormium cultivars from two to eight feet in height and in a wide range of leaf colors. Most of the compact plants have rather narrow leaves with pleasing upright or arching growth. Recent selections in the three- to five-foot range are multi-colored, and some are being grown to provide leaves for florists. *P. colensoi* 'Cream Delight' has arching leaves two and one-half inches wide, with a yellow-cream mid-stripe, green margins, and a red edge. *P. colensoi* 'Maori Sunrise' has three-foot arching leaves with mixed tones of rose to pale pink and bronze. *P. colensoi* 'Jack Spratt' has upright, twisting, maroon leaves about two feet high. Other selections have combinations of green, yellow, red, apricot, pink to green, green and cream, and bronze to scarlet. The most intense color develops on new leaves as they mature. Some selections occasionally revert to a single color, so any offsets that differ from the original plant should be removed when first noticed. All of the New Zealand flaxes do best in a sunny exposure with well drained soil and some summer water. The largest plants can be overbearing, so must be sited with care. The dwarf and mid-size plants deserve a place in any border with space for them. ♀





Iris 'Upper Echelon', a recent introduction among many hybrids of Pacific Coast native irises now available with flowers in a wide range of colors. Photograph by George Waters

*Crambe cordifolia*

*Salvia mexicana*.  
Author's photographs  
except where noted



*Phormium* 'Smilin' Morn'

tall. With shearing they make attractive hedges. The flowers, produced on new growth, attract hummingbirds all summer.

Most salvias need good drainage and full sun. Cold tolerance varies, depending somewhat on soil and exposure. As with many plants, it may be necessary to try several locations before finding the spot where they do best.

*Salvia clevelandii* and *S. leucophylla* grow six feet high and eight feet wide, and when established will survive without summer water. The woody stems carry rough-textured leaves that are fragrant when crushed. The flowers are in whorls along the stem, pale blue on *S. clevelandii*, rose-lavender on *S. leucophylla*. The cultivar *S. 'Allen Chickering'* is a hybrid between these two; it makes a dense shrub four by five feet with deep lavender flowers.

*Salvia azurea* var. *grandiflora* is a tall, spindly grower to five feet with true blue flowers on narrow spikes at the tip of each shoot. This is a rather lax plant best grown among others that give it support for summer and fall bloom.

Probably the most unusual salvia is *Salvia discolor*, with arching, hairy, white stems to four feet tall. Its three- to four-inch medium green leaves are white and hairy underneath, giving a variegated effect. The nearly black tubular flowers have white, woolly calyces.

Many hybrids of Pacific Coast native irises thrive under average garden conditions. Plants are now available with broad-petaled flowers in white, yellow, maroon-purple, blue, and several multi-colored combinations. Plant these in sun to part shade in well drained soil for spring and early summer bloom. They make a hardy groundcover and are somewhat drought tolerant after becoming established.

Several native coral bells (*Heuchera*) also do well with moderate watering, and hybrids of these plants give reliable summer color. Introduced from Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, *Heuchera 'Genevieve'* has deep pink flowers on thirty-inch stems. *H. 'Santa Ana Cardinal'* has red flowers on three-foot stems. From the Channel Islands comes *H. maxima*, a tall plant with pink and white flowers on three-foot stems. One of the most striking coral bells is *H. 'Palace Purple'*, which was found by

chance at Kew Gardens among plants from seed sent from the United States. This compact plant has such rich plum-purple leaves and stems that the small white flowers are barely noticed.

Almost unknown in gardens a few years ago, ornamental grasses have invaded the West Coast in great numbers and in many sizes and shapes. Grasses are available that grow from a few inches to ten feet tall and in many colors. Blue fescue (*Festuca glauca*), an old stand-by, provides color obtainable from few other plants. One of the most striking plantings of blue fescue is seen in the blue garden at Lotusland in Santa Barbara, where it is used as groundcover. *Carex buchananii*, a native from New Zealand, is clump forming with upright bronzy orange foliage. Japanese blood grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) forms a dense clump of vertical leaves, green below and blood red above as the plant matures. Another elegant grass from Japan is *Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'*, a slow-growing, clump-forming grass with flat yellow leaves that have thin green and red stripes from base to tip. It does best with regular watering and in part shade. *Stipa tenuissima*, with the finest texture of any grass, does well in most soils but will not tolerate standing water. The old leaves turn golden brown in fall.

Some plants seem never to go out of style. One long-time favorite is *Gypsophylla paniculata 'Bristol Fairy'*, which was given an award of merit at the 1926 Chelsea Show. This hardy, drought tolerant perennial is still popular for its masses of small, double white flowers that are cut for bouquets and dried for long-lasting arrangements. In flower the airy stems fill a space some three by four feet. After flowering the stems should be cut just above the foliage, which will sometimes produce a second bloom. At the end of the year it is best cut almost to the ground, leaving about three inches of woody stems. This will produce a compact plant with strong flower stems the next season.

*Crambe cordifolia*, a member of the cabbage family, appears from a distance to be a giant 'Bristol Fairy'. A large rosette of broad leaves forms a sturdy base for the flower panicles that

from San Jose Mercury, 1995

# Ed Carman's award caps 49 years in nursery trade

BY JOAN JACKSON  
Mercury News Garden Editor

**L**OS Gatos nurseryman Ed Carman got into kiwis — the fruit, not the flightless birds — before most California gardeners knew how to spell the word, let alone recognize the fruit.

The owner of Carman's Nursery had made a lot of nursery friends in New Zealand and exchanged plants with them, so he brought the kiwis to Los Gatos and began selling them in one-gallon pots in the early 1980s — just when kiwis took off as a trendy food.

He became — and remains to this day — the top expert on kiwis in California, just another feather in the Carman cap. His specialties also include unusual herbs and rare alpine plants.

But what Carman may be best known for is helping his customers, even if it means sending them to a competitor.

So it makes sense that Carman, nurseryman *extraordinaire*, has been named Pacific Coast Nurseryman of the Year. The award by California Association of Nurserymen is the highest honor the professional organization awards to

anyone in the horticultural field.

A native of Los Gatos, Carman, 73, has been in the nursery trade for 49 years. He and his father, Hugh, opened the nursery in 1946 at Bascom and Union avenues and in 1970 moved the nursery and house to the present location at 16201 E. Mozart Ave., off Bascom near Good Samaritan Hospital.

The CAN award recognizes Carman's lifetime dedication to the nursery industry.

A writer and photographer, he has written numerous articles on introductions of plants, served as consultant to

See *CARMAN*, Page 4D



An echeveria at Carman's one-acre nursery waits for a customer to take it home.

## ■ CARMAN

from Page 1D

Sunset Magazine for the Western Garden Book and other Sunset specialty garden books, and was a founding director of the Western Horticultural Society.

He has been a leader of the Peninsula chapter of CAN since the chapter's founding in 1961. His affiliations range from the International Plant Propagators Society to the Royal Horticultural Society in England. Volunteer fireman, scoutmaster, fair judge — he's done it all.

If you are looking for a plant and can't find it anywhere, Carman probably has it. And if he doesn't, he will send you to a competitor who does. If you bring him a picture of a flower or a tree and ask for its name, he probably can identify it. And if he can't, he will find someone who can.

"He is a plantsman *par excellence*, the nurseryman's nurseryman," says John Chiapelone, president of California Association of Nurserymen and owner of Burlingame Garden Center, who presented the award to Carman last month. "He actually forms a bridge between the old guard in the nursery industry and the new

**Carman says spending 49 years with his hands in the soil has been a satisfying career.**

incoming people in the industry. He listens well, and when he offers advice, it is very well done."

But if you ask Carman, "How do you see yourself," he answers simply, "Having fun.

"This is like a big private garden," he says about the one-acre nursery that surrounds the family home where he and his wife, Jean, raised three daughters.

Carman says spending 49 years with his hands in the soil has been a satisfying career. "I've met a lot of wonderful people, met some big names, people from other countries, so I don't think I could have done any better at something else."

His best accomplishment, he says, "has been helping other people with their problems, identifying plants and answering questions that others aren't able to answer."

He's not talking retirement, either. "If I retired, I'd still do the

same thing," he says. His daughter Nancy works three days a week at the nursery. "If it wasn't for her help, I probably wouldn't still be open," he says.

The future of nurseries like his is something that worries him. "I think the golden age of the nursery business is over. The biggest change has been the move from individual owners to the chain-type operation and the discount stores like Home Depot and Orchard Supply Hardware," he says.

"The only way small owners will survive is to specialize and maybe do mail order. Land is not available for new nurseries. It's too expensive for young people to enter the nursery business in most places."

His own nursery, he says, will close when he is gone. But right now, lucky for all of us, it's business as usual at Carman's Nursery.

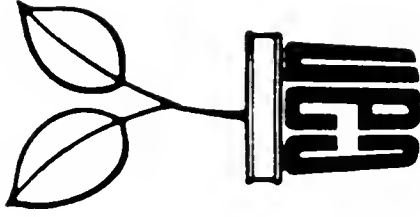
Write Garden Editor Joan Jackson at 750 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose 95190; or fax (408) 271-3786. Or call the California Relay Service, (800) 735-2922, and tell the operator that you wish place a TDD call to Joan Jackson at (408) 920-5518.



EUGENE LOUIE — MERCURY NEWS

Los Gatos nurseryman Ed Carman has been named Pacific Coast Nurseryman of the Year.

# THE FIRST 25 YEARS 1950 - 1975



PENINSULA CHAPTER  
California Association of Nurserymen

## CONTENTS

	Page
The Beginning	1
Chapter Accomplishments	5
Leaders in Horticulture	9
Honors Accorded Chapter Members	18
The Chapter Presidents	19
About the Author	21

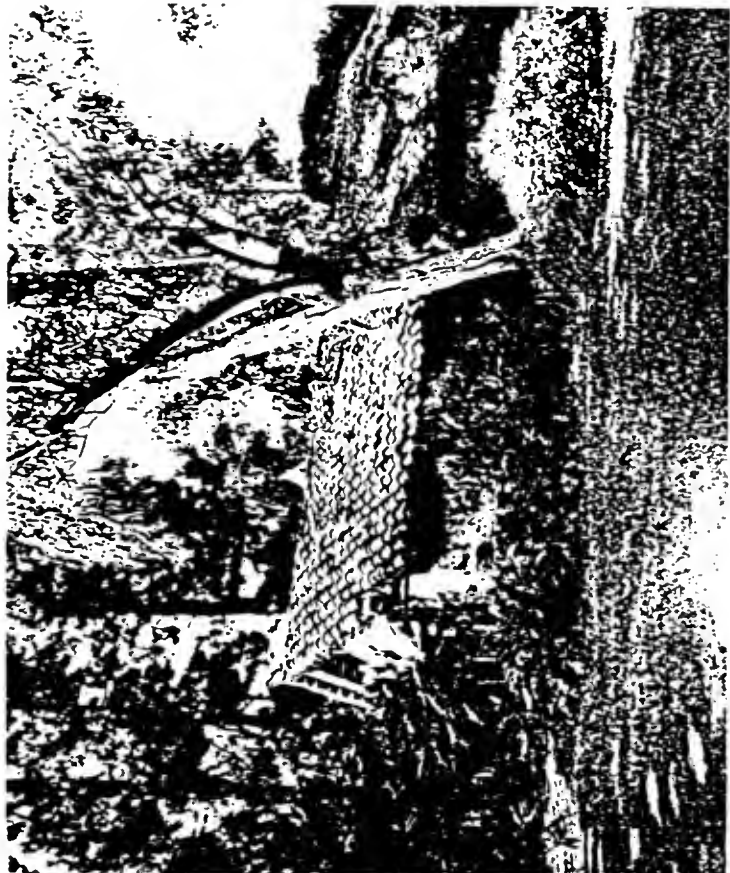
It was the mid-Thirties. We were off to a good start in the Great Depression. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president and had set up NRA—which decreed a five-day work week to put more people to work. Prohibition was just a memory. The V-8, the Straight-8 and the Packard V-12 were fighting it out in the big car field. Most people did well to afford a Six. Gas was 30¢ a gallon and the speed limit 45 miles per hour.

There was very little residential and commercial building activity. FHA and the movement of national firms to the East Bay were in sight, but not active as yet. The 1939 Treasure Island Exposition was just on the planning boards. Plant sales were at a standstill.

George C. Roeding, Jr., president of California Nursery Co., decided to get a consensus on the opinion of Bay Area retail nurserymen regarding markup of purchased nursery stock. The California Nursery had almost abandoned its wholesale business and was becoming firmly entrenched in the retail business, both nursery sales and mail order. The prices in its catalog had a far-reaching effect in the area, so George wanted to learn the opinion of others. He called a meeting of about a dozen of the area's retail nurserymen one summer day in the gardens of Old Adobe, on the nursery ground at Niles (now a district of Fremont).

At the time, very little wholesale ornamental nursery stock was grown in northern California, other than fruit trees and roses. With the exception of Leonard Coates, most nurseries were dependent upon container stock from southern California sources, and B&B field-grown stock, as well as deciduous flowering shrubs and trees from the Northwest. Material from both sources was shipped by single or pool carloads to the railroad siding nearest the customers. Inside the door was a map showing the location of each retail nursery's order, a manifest for each customer and the estimated weight of each order. The customer having the largest order in the car took responsibility for paying the freight and collecting from others.

Problems discussed at the Old Adobe meeting included minimum markup (fixed at double cost after transportation was added), minimum deliveries, credit policies and replacement practices (very important in the area of B&B field-grown plants). Walter Hoff, owner of the West Coast Nursery (now The Tree Farm) in Los Altos, had a particular axe to grind. He was heavily engaged in landscape design and planting, and



*"Old Adobe" — site of the first meeting of the "Central California Nurserymen's Association".*

had lost some design business to members of the UC-Berkeley landscape architecture department. Walter found this competition from a tax-supported institution unacceptable!

The group decided that a letter to the Regents would be in order—so they became the Central California Nurserymen's Association. John McDonald, office manager of the California Nursery was asked to procure letterheads and stationery and write the letter over Walter Hoff's signature. The competition from Berkeley was brought to an end!

At this point, let's take a look in the California Nursery Catalog of 1936 and see which were the predominant varieties, and prices:

*Berberis* (11 varieties): 1-gal. sizes 50¢ to 75¢, larger B&B from the field \$1.50 to \$2.50.

*Camellias* (12 varieties): Field-grown only — 15 - 18" \$1.50; 2½ - 3 ft. \$3.00 to \$4.00.

*Cotoneasters* (11 varieties): 1-gal. at 50¢ to B&B 4 - 5 ft. at \$1.50 (this was *C. pannosa*).

*Fuchsias* (24 varieties): These were the early days of the Fuchsia Boom created by Sidney B. Mitchell's importation from England of 50 varieties from England and their dissemination to the trade by George Budgen and his Berkeley Horticultural Nursery. The "boom" resulted from everyone bent on becoming an amateur hybridizer getting into the act! Retail price for 4-inch pots — 50¢.

*Roses* (lots of variety): bush and climbing non-patents bare root were 50¢ and 60¢ each — less in quantity. The few patents were \$1.50 each. Blaze, Charlotte Armstrong and Peace were yet to come — the first patents to strike it rich! Tree roses were \$2.00 each, except when you bought 10 or more — \$1.75 each.

*Conifer* prices were a little higher — they had to be. Almost all were field-grown and shipped down from Portland. Best sellers were *Thuya aurea nana* and *Thuya pyramidalis*, \$1.00 for 12 - 18" to 5 - 6 ft. for \$4.50. Irish Yews were expensive — 3 - 3½ ft. at \$4.25 up to 7 - 8 ft. for \$12.00.

*Spring-flowering Shrubs*: all field-grown and sold while dormant, bare root stock for 50¢ and 75¢, 2 - 3 ft. size. Lilacs brought 90¢ (because they were budded on privet rootstocks).

*Shade & Flowering Trees*: sold only during the bare root season

from \$1.50 to \$2.00 for the 6 - 8 ft. and 8 - 10 ft. sizes. Flowering Cherries were \$1.50 for 5 - 6 ft.

*Fruit Trees*: price depended on the quantity — the home orchard-ist paid 50¢ for a 4 - 6 ft. tree, the commercial grower 30¢. Walnuts were higher at \$1.75 and \$2.00, as well as chestnuts and pecans. Citrus (only 5 kinds) were \$2.50 and avocados \$2.75. Grapevines (cutting-grown) were 15¢ in small quantity, down to 3¢ by the thousand.

*Insecticides*: Ortho Garden Volck ("as nearly complete a garden spray as you can buy") cost \$1.00 for a pint bottle. A Hudson sprayer to apply it cost \$1.30.

*Fertilizers*: The only small-package line was from "Gaviota". You could buy a 100-lb. bag for \$4.00 down to a 3-lb. bag for 30¢ ("ideal for your garden, your lawn and your pocketbook").

The retail nursery business suffered serious losses of personnel starting in 1937, due to activities preliminary to the 1939 Exposition. The Exposition officials had to have trained nursery talent at any price, easing outbidding nursery owners salary-wise. They needed help in all divisions: growing, planning and acquisition of specimen plants.

A second wave of problems came with the advent of World War II—loss of personnel to the draft and war-related construction—so that in 1942 the Central California Nurserymen really came alive! There was excellent leadership available in Clarence Perkins of Jackson & Perkins Co., Pleasanton, Jack McDonnell, McDonnell Nursery, Oakland and Clyde Stocking, Stocking's Roses, San Jose.

A board of directors was formed (each from a particular field in the industry — roses, fruit trees, ornamentals, bedding plants, etc.) and two officers selected — president and secretary-treasurer. A constitution and by-laws were formulated for the Central California Nurserymen's Association. The permanent meeting place was selected — so everyone knew where to be on second Tuesday evening at 7:30. It was the Florence Restaurant in Niles. Dan Quarteroli served cocktails at the bar in front — at 50¢ each, while wife Alice and her mother prepared dinner in the rear—\$2.00 with wine and a five-course dinner. Alice was the victim of rationing, just like any other household or restaurant, but she managed to save enough meat stamps for us to have something besides chicken every third meeting. Attendance varied between 35 and 50 — all male — and arguments about the state of the business could last until midnight!



(Now you can understand why *our* first president made it mandatory to close out at 10 p.m. sharp). It was a long way back to the Peninsula, especially with lights on dim (a wartime regulation) across the Dumbarton Bridge.

In the late Forties it became obvious that there should be a separate, Peninsula organization, so a small group started meeting informally to discuss markups (changed to 2½ times laid-down cost), delivery and re-placement policy. If there was a basis for serious discussion it was caused by the formation of a marketing order for bedding plants grown in California, which firmed up the price and required an overall view of price structures. The cost of personnel was rising and that was an additional cause for concern in reaching a profitable markup structure. By now, Elmer Merz was firmly seated as executive-secretary for CAN, and an equitable arrangement was worked out with Central Chapter for division of territory and funds.

The year was 1950 — Elmer inducted the officers — Jim Wilson, president, Neil Shaffer of Santa Cruz, vice-president, Juel Christensen, treasurer and Charles Burr, secretary. The Peninsula Chapter was in business! The idea in the beginning was that we would encompass the growing Monterey Bay area as well as the Peninsula and Santa Clara Valley. Elmer got us to sponsor a convention in Santa Cruz the first year of our organization to create more interest in CAN in the Monterey Bay communities. The convention turned out fine, but the Peninsula meetings were not attended by nurserymen outside our present area. Who can blame them when Highway 17 was three lanes — the third lane for passing in either direction!

In 1951-52, the same officers served, except that Neil Shaffer was replaced by John Edwards.

### Formation of the Monterey Bay Chapter:

In the spring of Jim Wilson's second term, members of the Peninsula Chapter met with Monterey Bay area nurserymen in Salinas and Monterey. After several attempts, the minimum number to form a Chapter turned up for a meeting and were signed up to create the Monterey Bay Chapter. Some of its members still kid us about being "railroaded": We all were mighty proud of our "child" when we attended their first convention in Monterey in 1972. They did a great job!

### Sponsorship of the Green Thumb TV Program:

One of our active members and a past president, Ernest Esch, whose nursery was located on Willow Street in San Jose, had a son who was chief engineer for KRON-TV, a leader in Bay Area TV programming. He got the Chapter involved with the Bonnie Kiever daytime variety show. Chapter members appeared on a regular basis once a week to talk about various plant material with Bonnie. She and her husband (the station manager) were called to New York, leaving us on our own with a Sunday morning half-hour show, which was called The Green Thumb Show.

162

This went on for several years, until national programming and the need for commercial sponsorship forced KRON-TV to make other plans. We had a great deal of technical gardening help from members of the Central Chapter and Jack McDonnell spelled Ernest Esch and Ray Hartman as MC on several programs. The station announcer, Vern Wilson, became a garden enthusiast and assisted greatly in making the program successful. You can still hear his voice on nights and weekends.

### Formation of the Strybing Arboretum Society:

Juel Christensen's first nursery was located in San Francisco. One of his horticultural contemporaries was Eric Walther, superintendent appointed by John McLaren to look after the area in Golden Gate Park known as the Strybing Arboretum. It had been named for Helene Strybing, a wealthy widow who endowed the arboretum with a considerable sum (for those days).

To Eric's disgust, the successor of John McLaren had the funds tied up in a kind of political limbo. He enlisted the aid of nurserymen, through Juel, to get something done about it! When Juel approached the Peninsula board of directors for support, he was promptly made chairman of the Strybing Arboretum Committee. Between Juel and Eric, an impressive group of laymen, botanists and nurserymen was assembled — including Walter Heil, director of the DeYoung Museum. He was an expert on Park politics. Chapter participants included John Edwards, Bert Plath, Bill Schmidt and Charles Burr, the latter keeping the minutes and handling such correspondence as was necessary.

After several meetings in San Francisco, an organizational meeting was called for November 17, 1954, in the DeYoung Museum, at which a temporary slate of officers and constitution and bylaws for the Strybing Arboretum Society was adopted: Owen Pearce, editor of the California Horticultural Journal, president; Elizabeth McClintock, botanist at the California Academy of Science, secretary; and Bill Schmidt, treasurer. In February, 1975, a permanent slate of officers and directors took over and in 20 years the membership has risen to nearly 1000. Last fall Juel Christensen and Charles Burr were among those original committee members honored at a 20th anniversary celebration.

In those 20 years Strybing Arboretum has become one of the outstanding arboreta in the world. John Bryan, present director, is a great friend of the Chapter and receives its continuing support (more on this later).

#### The Saratoga Horticultural Foundation:

While the Peninsula Chapter was getting on its feet, Ray D. Hartman, chapter member and president and general manager of Leonard Coates Nurseries, San Jose, was busy completing a dream of his own — the formation of a research facility that would select, evaluate and produce for distribution to the trade, clones of shrubs and trees of superior quality. He had settled on Saratoga as the most desirable location and purchased the property that is still occupied by the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation.

Ray Hartman enlisted the aid of industry, finance, educational institutions and the nursery industry in backing his dream, and in 1951 the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation became a non-profit California Cor-

poration, with a self-perpetuating board of trustees and a board of counselors identified with Western horticulture, arboriculture, landscape design and botany.

The Peninsula Chapter has maintained a close alliance with The Foundation and several members have been included on the Board of Councilors since the beginning. John Coulter, past chapter president, is currently superintendent, and Ed Carman is a trustee. The Chapter was responsible for starting a fund for a modern propagational facility now being used at Saratoga and obtained additional funding from CAN.

The first director of The Foundation was Maunsell Van Rensselaer, who came to Saratoga from the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. "Van" regularly participated in Chapter functions and was responsible for selecting most of nearly 40 introductions, including two that were patented.

He was succeeded in September, 1971, by W. Richard Hildreth, who came with a long record of achievement in taxonomic botany and plant exploration. Dick is an active participant in Chapter affairs, takes much interest in Western Horticultural Society and is president of Pacific Horticultural Foundation, publisher of the California Horticultural Journal.

#### The Western Horticultural Society:

163

In the early 1960's, Wm. E. Schmidt, a past president of the Chapter and owner of Schmidt's Nursery in Palo Alto, felt the need for a Peninsula organization that would have a common appeal to amateur horticulturists and professionals alike. Bill called a meeting of chapter members in his nursery office and received enthusiastic support. He was already held in high esteem by Peninsula gardening enthusiasts, so with some dedicated effort on Bill's part and the support of both professionals and amateurs, the Western Horticultural Society became a reality in 1963.

Several Chapter members have participated in the Society as directors and officers. Five have been president: Bill, John Edwards, John Coulter, Gerda Isenberg and Charles Burr. Now, as the nurserymen wished it to be — most of the direction is from amateurs and Ben Heller is the only remaining nurseryman on the board of directors.

Many of our Chapter members worked closely with Elsa Uppman Knoll while she was Garden Editor for Sunset Magazine. While Elsa was president of the Strybing Arboretum Society, she encouraged the cooperation of the Arboretum, Sunset Magazine and supporting horticultural organizations in the construction of a series of Demonstration Gardens at the Arboretum. The Peninsula Chapter was included as a sponsor.

Progress was slow at first, and several sections were vacant until John Bryan was appointed Director of the Arboretum. He encouraged the Chapter to "get going", and in 1971 Mark Pyle was appointed chairman of the demonstration garden committee. Plans were drawn, material selected and donated by chapter members, and in July of 1971, in a three-day session that involved about 25 chapter members, installation was completed. The Peninsula Chapter Demonstration Garden was dedicated in September of the same year, with Mrs. Lawrence Lane, chairman of the board, Lane Publishing Co. (Sunset Magazine & Books), officiating.

#### San Mateo County Fair & Floral Fiesta:

We thought that past president Lou Schenone would get that over-long title shortened during his three-year term as president of that organization, but it was not to be! Well, as far as Peninsula Chapter is concerned, it was always simply "The Fiesta", a source of funds for various Chapter activities.

The Chapter became involved when the flower show was moved from the Bay Meadows Clubhouse to a brand new Hall of Flowers. Doug Baylis was the landscape architect in charge, not only for The Fiesta, but for the nurserymen as well. We got our feet wet by enlisting Sunset Magazine's aid in supplying blow-ups of their garden pages and displaying the actual material used in the story.

The classification used to support the prize money awarded the Chapter has always been in the area of education of the public in plant materials used in local gardens. At various times, the display has featured shrubs, trees, color and groundcovers.

Members of the Chapter have supported the Fiesta in many ways

—in construction of their own nursery displays, in construction of the Chapter's exhibit, as judges, and in the case of Bert Plath and Lou Schenone, as directors of the fair association. Hundreds of truckloads of plant material have been supplied to The Fiesta exhibits by our members to acquaint several hundred thousand fair viewers with the value of gardens in their lives.

#### LEADERS IN HORTICULTURE

##### W. B. CLARKE

His first name was Walter, but he preferred to be called "W.B.". The site of his nursery, at the intersection of Schallenberger Rd. and Oaklanc Road, San Jose, is now occupied by the Santa Clara County corporation yard. You can still see some of the original stock plants used for propagation growing in parts of the landscape.

W. B. was quoted as saying that "If it had not been for *Raphiolepis indica rosea*, we might never have survived The Depression". He recognized it as a winner and set out as many stock plants as he could get — then propagated every inch of grafting wood he could take from the plants. Angiers quince seedlings were used as the root stock and the Clarke Nursery turned them out by the thousands in 4-inch pots. Of course, they were hardly saleable in that condition, so the retail nursery had to can them in gallons themselves until W. B. got around to believing that the metal container was here to stay! Because he believed in grafting, as against growing from cuttings, he was able to increase his new introductions rapidly — though expensively. His trucks picked up the used 4-inch pots on succeeding deliveries and the retailer received a credit on the Clarke books.

Because of space limitations, the Clarke Nursery (officially W. B. Clarke & Co.) farmed out the production of its many introductions of deciduous flowering trees and shrubs, with the exception of quinces and lilacs, which W. B. needed close at hand for pollination and selection of new varieties. At one time, W. B. had been hired by The Carnegie Institution to try to keep records of Luther Burbank's crosses at his experimental gardens in Santa Rosa. Burbank resisted at every step, but W. B. was around long enough to gain an insight to his methods (very loose by present-day standards).

W. B. was responsible for the introduction of *Prunus bilieriana* (*P. mume* & *P. cerasifera pissardi*) and himself discovered Helen Borchers flowering peach and Thundercloud flowering plum. He introduced two varieties of *P. mume* (Rosemary and Peggy Clarke) as well as many flowering cherries, which he dearly loved. He discovered an exceptional form of *Crataegus lavellei* with beautiful fall clusters of fruits, which he named Autumn Glory. As a general rule, W. B. shied away from naming new introductions after people. Helen Borchers, Rosemary and Peggy Clarke, Clarke's Red (a camellia) and Clarke's Giant (a lilac) were exceptions. He liked to name plants so that they were descriptive of the introduction's character — as in Blue Hyacinth lilac and Thundercloud plum (purple foliage with white flowers).

In addition to a whole series of lilacs, W. B. introduced a great many flowering quinces. Most of the actual introduction was through the catalogs of the California Nursery and Wayside Gardens (Mentor, Ohio). Although he didn't participate in their cost, he encouraged catalog nurseries to make color plates of his new introductions by giving them exclusive privileges to the available stock the first year. During the time the Clarke Nursery sold both retail and wholesale, W. B. issued a small black and white catalog with a single illustration on the front cover. He had such a way with words, it was hardly necessary to use illustrations! He chose a good title for his catalogs — "Garden Aristocrats."

As the Clarke Nursery's introductions became a volume wholesale business, its small staff was unable to cope with retail customers, so a "wholesale only" sign was put up, alongside "closed Sunday", which had always been in effect.

Among W. B.'s many favorites was wisteria. He obtained many varieties from Japan and the Domoto Nursery. The latter had brought the first selections from Japan in 1913 to grow on for the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. Like many nurseries, Clarke's ran into resistance because of the wisterias' bad habit of growing like mad without producing flowers, so they adopted the standard form, which took up less space and insured flower production with very little pruning.

Another parallel to Domoto's was the production of tree peonies. W. B. became fascinated with their almost unlimited possibilities in form and color. He worked out a code system with Walter Borchers so you could read the flower form and color on the label of those plants that

had already bloomed and were chosen for distribution.

In addition to ornamental trees, shrubs and vines, the Clarke Nursery became a prime source of roses for retailers in northern California. W. B. encouraged Rudy Anninger, his traveling salesman, to enter into a partnership with Frank Molena for the purpose of growing roses for wholesale. He obtained membership in AARS, giving Rudy and partner first year access to All America introductions. The combination of a well-known source and a well-grown product made the enterprise hugely successful!

W. B. Clarke took an active interest in nursery trade associations and was president of CAN for the year 1927-28.

#### RAY D. HARTMAN

It is difficult to disassociate Ray from California Natives, and his enthusiasm for them often clouded the greater scope of his organization—the Leonard Coates Nurseries. The main office, florist shop and retail salesyard was located in San Jose on The Alameda at the Santa Clara city line. There was a large container-growing operation in Morgan Hill and a field-grown ornamental growing grounds in Santa Cruz. Deciduous fruit, flowering and shade trees were grown at Brentwood.

Ray was active in CAN and was president of the state association in 1934-35. Even with his busy schedule he managed to attend many of Peninsula Chapter's meetings during the formative years and actively supported Chapter projects.

The Leonard Coates 48-page catalog of the Thirties gave California Natives the first five pages in the book, listing a total of 110 varieties. Considering the difficulty of propagation in those years and a rather lukewarm reception by the public, this was an amazing enterprise! Probably the first real break-through came with trial plantings made by the California Division of Highways. H. Dana Bowers, the first person to head a department of highway planting, had his problems with the highway maintenance people looking after plantings after installation. He worked out native plant lists with Ray Hartman, using varieties as near their type locality as possible, which exposed the public to the beauty and utility of natives on the state's highways. Of course, natives needed

care, too, so that only the most persistent forms survived until planting sites were specially prepared to rigid specifications and automatic irrigation provided. Now we see a happy combination of both natives and exotics in our freeway planting, a tribute to Ray's enthusiasm.

Let's take a look at other material in the Leonard Coates catalog of the Thirties. Coates was the best source of Eucalyptus in the state. They were being widely planted as windbreaks and as screens along highways, and even in large gardens. You got a flat of 100 for \$3.50. Other Australian natives included Callistemon (one variety), Acacias (18 varieties), and Melaleuca (5 varieties). Coates listed 17 varieties of Cotoneasters, both upright and spreading, 11 varieties of Heathers, 7 varieties of Euonymus, 7 varieties of Privet and 12 varieties of Veronicas (this was the proper name before the advent of Manual 32 and Hebe).

Prices were about the same, or a little lower, than those listed in the California Nursery catalog of the time. This was because of a peculiarity we called the "farming area syndrome" — that you couldn't ask the same prices obtained in the metropolitan areas. The California Nursery catalog prices had to be adjusted a little for the benefit of their Sacramento, Modesto and Fresno branches!

This is as good a place as any to comment on salesyard pricing systems. There weren't any. If the customer came in without a catalog he paid in the range dictated by the kind of car he drove up in! Jim Wilson remembers that many of the Hillsborough residents buying from the nursery he worked for borrowed a Ford or Chevy before going to purchase plants. Naturally, this policy changed with regular meetings of nurserymen.

#### MAUNSELL VAN RENNELAER

He was always simply "Van" to his nurserymen and horticultural friends and associates. He has a list of horticultural credits that will long be remembered.

Van became director of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in 1934, and held that position until he became associated with the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation, as director, in 1950. While in Santa Barbara, Van was instrumental in having *Sequoia sempervirens* adopted officially as

the state tree of California. He was co-author of "Ceanothus" with Howard McMinn, published in 1942, and author of "Trees of Santa Barbara". He authored numerous articles for magazines and horticultural journals. He was a past president of the International Shade Tree Conference and actively supported other national and international horticultural organizations.

More of Van's accomplishments are recorded in the section on the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation.

#### WILLIAM E. SCHMIDT

Of all our Peninsula Chapter plantsmen, Bill is probably the most widely known — internationally, as a matter of fact! In an area of heavy competition among hybridizers in many lands, Bill, the perfectionist, tops them all!

For the record: his "Regals" (*Pelargonium domesticum*) have won 19 awards granted by the Royal Horticultural Society of England. Grand Slam, his great red pelargonium, has won four, Aztec and Lavender Grand Slam, three each, La Paloma and Joy, two each and the other 14 varieties, one each. Bill introduced a total of 56 "pels" between 1947 and 1969. His last introduction, Georgia Peach, many consider to be best of all. Of the 56, 12 are sports of existing varieties, all the rest from seedlings.

Bill is responsible for many zonal geranium introductions, ten varieties, of which three are semi-dwarf. These were introduced between 1942 and 1964. His ivy geranium introductions total eleven, which include four that sported from previously introduced varieties.

The Schmidt Nursery introduced many varieties of fuchsias from various hybridizers, and seven of Bill's own crosses. At one time, he tried his hand at camellias, resulting in a double pink that Bill named Sonata. There is a large plant of it growing in the Huntington Gardens, but Bill never got around to developing it commercially.

Bill discovered a *Tulbaghia violacea* (society garlic) with white variegated margins on the leaves which he called Silver Lace. This is still available from Ed Carman, as is the Schmidt strain of *Scabiosa caucasica*, which the Schmidt Nursery grew and sold until it closed in 1968.

## LEADERS IN HORTICULTURE: William E. Schmidt (Continued)

Clivias interested Bill very much. He selected a strain of *C. miniata*, available from 1946 to 1968, and crossed them with *C. nobilis* to produce another strain which he sold from 1956 to 1968. What was left of these are growing in back of the old Strybing Arboretum director's office, before it was moved to the new library.

When Bill was asked why he never did anything with his *camellia* Sonata, he recalled a wholesale customer's remark about one of his new *pelargoniums* — "I wouldn't like it even if it got up and danced around."

Bill and Letha Schmidt now reside in Sun City, Arizona, where they often entertain many of their old friends, especially in the dreary (elsewhere) winter months. Bill was a charter member of Peninsula Chapter and served as president in 1954-55 and Convention Chairman in 1958. There is more about Bill's exploits in the story about the Western Horticultural Society. His unique and highly-regarded nursery was located at 355 Lambert Avenue in Palo Alto and was a haven for many of the more expert amateurs, who still mourn its passing.

## CLYDE STOCKING

A name synonymous with roses. But roses were not Clyde's first growing endeavor. After leaving the service as an army "chef" following WW I, he had visions of making a cleanup with tomatoes, then beans. The tomatoes were a total loss, but the beans made a net profit of \$4.00. It became obvious to Clyde that Ramona was not going to be impressed with a statistic in that area, so he turned to tree surgery and general gardening.

This led to growing nursery stock in the Almaden Road area. Clyde discovered that he was pretty good at getting walnut buds to stick, so he obtained some Rosa manetti understock cuttings and was successful in budding roses. About this time the Santa Clara County Rose Society was organized (the first in California) and Clyde had some automatic customers. He and Ramona were living on 16th street in San Jose, so the Almaden-grown roses were sold there. Actually, Clyde and Ramona consumed their flock of hens and used the chicken house as their base of operations!

The present site of Stocking's Roses at the corner of Mabury Road and Capitol Expressway was developed in 1938. Ramona still lives there.

## LEADERS IN HORTICULTURE: Clyde Stocking (Continued)

although George Haight is the present owner and operator of the business. Clyde was a regular contributor to the "Proof of the Pudding" section in the American Rose Society Annual, and developed a national following with his authoritative evaluations of new varieties. We can remember his one poor guess — "First Love is well-named — it often fades". The variety is still around!

Clyde introduced two roses, seedlings of crosses made by Dr. C. E. Adams, a local rosarian: Prosperity, a yellow hybrid tea, struck a hopeful note when there was not much prosperity around, and Susan Louise (Mrs. Adams), a nice pink, a tremendous grower that would be classified as a grandiflora by present-day standards.

Stocking's Roses was an early member of AARS and one of 26 rose test gardens is still there, maintained and evaluated by George Haight. Clyde was a past president of Central Chapter, president of CAN in 1944-45 and president of AAN in 1956-57, after serving a six-year term as director from Region VI.

## OTTO MEERLY

The Otto Meerly Nursery was located off the Alameda de las Pulgas on Monterey in Menlo Park. Later, Otto was required by the city planning commission to build a retail store on another site (Alameda at Ivy Avenue) in order to make some necessary improvements on the home nursery property. The store site is now a gas station and the nursery is occupied with residences.

Otto was best known for his double petunia introductions — a sensation in his tastefully executed gardens in The Fiesta, as well as in the Chapter display. He selected distinct clones from plants grown from the best seed sources in his nursery. Offered in 4-inch pots, Otto's cutting-grown doubled petunias were available in other nurseries as well as his own. All were named, and each distinct in its pattern and color.

Mr. & Mrs. Meerly retired to Shingle Springs (Placer County) and later moved to a motel (Villa Montreux) they had built in South Lake Tahoe before closing their nursery.

## EDWARD S. CARMAN

Ed is a native of Los Gatos and a product of San Jose State. In 1946 he joined his father Hugh in the retail business known as Carman's Nursery at the corner of what is now Bascom Avenue and Union, Campbell. Ed became a charter member of Peninsula Chapter in 1950, has twice been president and treasurer for three terms. A few years ago Ed moved the nursery to its present location on Mozart Avenue in Los Gatos and the emphasis now is on wholesale and retail perennials and named varieties of *Actinidia chinensis*, an expanding fruit crop enterprise in California (the fruit is known as Kiwi). Ed and his wife Jean have three daughters — Patricia, Diane and Nancy.

Ed has a plant variety exchange going with Duncan & Davies, New Zealand nurseryman well-known in California and operating probably the largest nursery in the southern hemisphere. He has provided them with original stock of Rosemary, Photinia, Felicia, double-flowering Prunus, Abelia, Ceanothus, Garrya and others. Ed has introduced a formidable list of plant varieties, many from New Zealand. His introductions:

*Coprosma species: C. prostrata*, a mat-forming groundcover, especially adapted to coastal California. *C. Hybrids* — six varieties in shrub form of varying habits and leaf forms.

*Corokia hybrids*: unique plants with a bushy, upright habit with yellow flowers and various foliage shades (they have foliage?).

*Actinidia chinensis* (Kiwi): fruit producing females in three varieties and one male pollenizer, Viva.

*Cupressus species: C. sempervirens gracilis*, a small growing variety with fine foliage, and *C. semp. Swane's Golden*, with golden-green foliage.

*Passiflora species*: Ed has introduced two varieties — *P. 'Cracker-jack'* is a large purple-fruited variety, a *P. edulis* clone; *P. antioquiensis* has red flowers, followed by banana-like fruits.

*Dimorphotheca variegata* will make a showy groundcover, with its variegated foliage and iridescent pink flowers.

*Daphne odora varieties*: If these prove resistant to the Daphne's common troubles, Ed will have done the industry a tremendous favor!

*Rock Garden plants*: These include the "lost" variety *Lobelia*

*erinus flore plena 'Kathleen Mallard'* that can only be propagated by cuttings. *Pittosporum 'Tom Thumb'*, six varieties of *Hebes*, *Phormiums 'Rubra Dwarf'* and *'Thumbelina'* (very dwarf), *Wahlenbergia mathewsii*, *Parahebe lyallii*, and *Scutellaria sp.*

PCN AWARD: W. B. Clarke 1949  
 Ray D. Hartman 1955  
 M. Van Rensselaer 1960  
 Wm. E. Schmidt 1969  
 Albert Wilson 1974

YOUNG NURSERYMAN OF THE YEAR:

Barrie Coate 1968  
 Brian Gage 1969  
 Paul Uenaka 1973

SECRETARY OF THE YEAR:

Paul Uenaka 1969  
 Tad Nakagawa 1970

CHAPTER AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE:

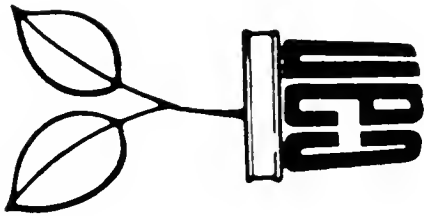
Charles J. Burr 1964  
 John Coulter 1965  
*Honorary Life Membership:*  
 Wm. E. Schmidt 1971



James H. Wilson

1950-51 ) James H. Wilson, Peters & Wilson Nursery, Millbrae  
 1951-52 )  
 1952-53 John E. Edwards, John E. Edwards Nursery, Palo Alto  
 1953-54 Ernest Esch, Esch's Nursery, San Jose (deceased)  
 1954-55 Wm. E. Schmidt, Schmidt's Nursery, Palo Alto  
 1955-56 Walter C. Borchers, W. B. Clarke & Co., San Jose  
 1956-57 John E. Coulter, Coulter's Nursery, San Carlos  
 1957-58 Charles J. Burr, Calif. Garden Supply, Palo Alto  
 1958-59 Itsuo Uenaka, Cupertino Nursery, Cupertino  
 1959-60 Louis D. Schenone, Pacific Nurseries, Colma  
 1960-61 John Hahn, Ruehl-Wheeler Nurseries, San Jose (deceased) 169  
 1961-62 Peter M. Sugawara, Monte Bello Nursery, Los Altos  
 1962-63 Chester R. Williams, Green Hills Nursery, Millbrae  
 1963-64 Edward S. Carman, Carman's Nursery, Los Gatos  
 1964-65 George S. Haight, Stocking's Roses, San Jose  
 1965-66 Barrie Coate, Barrie's Trees & Shrubs, Aptos  
 1966-67 John F. Chiapalone, Burlingame Garden Center, Burlingame  
 1967-68 Jack Christensen, Christensen Nursery, Belmont  
 1968-69 John Van Auken, E. B. Stone & Son, San Carlos  
 1969-70 ) William M. Leonard, East Side Nursery, Palo Alto  
 1970-71 )  
 1971-72 Edward S. Carman, Carman's Nursery, Los Gatos  
 1972-73 Gus Pappas, Pappas Bros., Colma  
 1973-74 Joe G. Cherolis, Joe's Nursery, Colma  
 1974-75 Ben Furuichi, Los Altos Nursery, Los Altos





- 1926-27 Hans Plath, San Francisco
- 1927-28 W. B. Clarke, San Jose
- 1934-35 Ray Hartman, San Jose
- 1939-40 Frank Tuttle, San Jose
- 1944-45 Clyde Stocking, San Jose
- 1953-54 James H. Wilson, Millbrae
- 1963-64 Ken R. Hartman, San Jose
- 1967-68 Itsuo Uenaka, Cupertino
- 1971-72 John F. Chiapelone, Burlingame
- 1975-76 Jack Christensen, Belmont



After graduating from UC-Davis with a BS degree in Horticulture, Charles Burr was employed by George Roeding, Jr. to work in the California Nursery Co. shipping department. He held the following positions with the company in his 18 years' employment: shipping clerk, order clerk, branch manager (Menlo Park), head of the fruit tree and export department, Niles, assistant general manager and director of advertising and promotion.

After leaving California Nursery, he became engaged in the wholesale nursery business, which has involved him in retail and wholesale nursery advertising, specialty nursery growers' representation and horticultural writing.

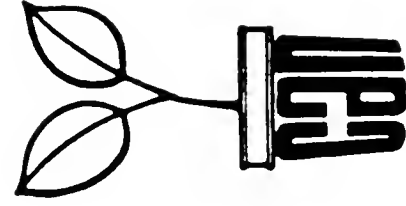
He served three terms as secretary-treasurer of Central Chapter, was the first secretary of Peninsula Chapter, later president and state director. He was an original member and twice chairman of the Market Development and Public Relations Committee, CAN, and is currently chairman of the CAN Awards Committee. He has been president of Western Horticultural Society and of the Pacific Horticultural Foundation, publisher of the California Horticultural Journal.

His wife Paula is a retired administrative assistant, Stanford University Planning Office. Charlie and Paula have two children — Ben Burr, geneticist at the Oak Ridge National Laboratories, Tennessee, and Jane B. Sprague, medical sociologist in the Medical School at UC-San Diego. There is one grandchild, Milo Benjamin Sprague.



# 2nd Time Around

1950 - 1986



PENINSULA CHAPTER  
California Association of Nurserymen

The editor has some acknowledgements to make: to Paul Uenaka, for update information and suggesting the title of this edition; to Tad Nakagawa for refreshing memories of situations and dates and checking the copy; to Russell Satake for supplying a ton of chapter minutes and to Chris Zercher for doing the typing. Its Uenaka suggested the inclusion of Reminiscences to make them a matter of record.

Charles J. Burr

### REMINISCENCES

If you were able to get together a few of the Peninsula Chapter's charter members and got them started talking about old times, chances are the main thrust of the conversation would include these memories:

#### EVOLUTION OF THE TIN CAN

There was a time, in the not-too-distant past, when plants were grown and sold in clay pots, or B&B from the field. Everything! Including landscape ornaments. There were no metal containers.

The metal container probably came into being because of the sardine canning industry in Monterey. They received the materials used in the canning process - oils and condiments - in quart, gallon and five-gallon tins.

There was a Henry Green, a nurseryman, who was quite a distance from his nearest source of clay pots - San Jose. Henry was a thrifty person and found the sardine packers welcomed him with open arms when he proposed taking some of the empty cans off their hands.

### FOREWORD

This historical reference is an update of the 1975 Peninsula Chapter publication titled "The First 25 Years" and was instigated by Tom Ellington, chapter president and his board of directors.

A fact the editor found out right at the start: the Peninsula Chapter has not been dormant in the past 11 years. It continues to live up to its reputation for being innovative in accomplishment and dedicated to the nursery industry and to horticulture.

If there is anything to decry, it is the disappearance of such nurserymen as W.B. Clarke, Ray Hartman, Bill Schmidt and Floyd Dillon, who brought us more than a little esteem from their foresight and horticultural devotion. We still have Ed Carman, but after him, who is left? The answer is obvious - operating a nursery business is so time-consuming and complex there is no time left for horticultural refinement. Their replacement is likely to become institutions such as the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation.

The sections in this history devoted to leadership and accomplishment have been edited to bring them up to date. New additions to the 1975 history include CANERS, The Nor-Cal Trade Show, the Tom Kawakami Open and Reminiscences, taken from a CAN convention handout written by the editor. And we must not forget The Bell - overlooked in the 1975 edition.

It wasn't long before Henry was known as "Tin Can" Green because everything he sold out of his nursery was grown in metal containers.

About the same time there was a big boom in Eucalyptus planting. They were tricky to keep in pots because the tap roots quickly grew through the hole in the bottom of the pot and anchored the plants firmly to the ground. The quarts and gallons alleviated the problem and suddenly there was a big business in used cans.

J. V. Mann, then general manager of the California Nursery Co. at Niles (now part of Fremont), was offered some empty gallons by a local cannery. He had them delivered and stacked in an empty shed. There were more than the shed could hold - they overflowed out the door.

Unfortunately for J.V., they were spotted by his boss, George C. Roeding, Sr., one day while the two were making a weekly nursery inspection. Mr. Roeding wanted to know "what's with the cans?" J.V. replied that he was going to try some in place of pots. The reaction was even more disastrous than J.V. had expected, but after quietly talking over the possibility, Roeding relented, but not without explicit instructions - "Be sure those cans are painted and make them green!"

Leonard Coates Nurseries had a growing grounds at Morgan Hill and secured a large stock of used fives. The tops were still on the cans and it was a laborious process taking them off. One of the employees thought of the perfect solution. There were lots of unsold fruit trees left in the healing-in bins, so he stacked the bundles in the middle of several hundred empty fives, started them burning with gasoline, and voila! - the solder securing the lids melted and the tops fell away.

Want to know more? Drain holes were poked into the base of the containers with miners' picks, then stacked on a sloping ramp where they were individually dipped into a solution of green shingle stain and paint thinner. Restacked on the table, the excess paint drained back into the dipping barrel.

W. B. Clarke of San Jose would have no use for metal containers. Everything in his catalog was listed in four-inch and six-inch pots. When a retail nursery got delivery of their order, the pots were discarded in favor of gallons or fives and the pots returned to Clarke for credit the next time his truck turned up. The pots were washed and stacked, ready for the next lot of material from the propagating department.

#### HOW TO DIG A PLANT

Before metal containers became a reality (see Evolution of the Tin Can), five-gallon size shrubs were grown in the field. The rows were spaced so that a horse, a man and a plow could operate between them. Irrigation was by furrows between rows.

In fall and winter when the plants had reached dormancy, the plants were dug and placed in beds of shavings under lath. To accomplish the digging of a plant you had to have with you several items: a balling spade, long and concavely curved with a razor sharp edge. D-handled spades were the only kind used. You had a ball of sisal binder twine and a sharp pruning knife and a used burlap bag. You should have a second burlap bag to kneel on and a file to keep the spade sharp.

First, you tied the plant into a narrow column so it was easier to work around. Then you scraped off the loose soil from under the plant.

You started making the ball by chipping a circle around the plant that would preserve enough roots to sustain the plant. You chipped away until the feeder roots disappeared, then worked the spade around under the ball, finally lifting it out on to the piece of burlap bag, which was neatly folded and tied, with the final tie around the neck at the base of the trunk.

As soon as you were finished, you or your helper carried the plant to the end of the row, where it was picked up by a truck and hauled to the lathhouse.

It was nice work when the weather was good - otherwise miserable!

#### BUYING PLANTS - THE HARD WAY!

Retail nurseries in central and northern California depended largely on Southern California wholesale nurseries to supply the bulk of their plant material. Same-week deliveries after placing orders is common today, but that is not the way it used to be!

The typical modus operandi was to get yourself to Los Angeles by train or plane, rent a car and visit your sources in person. You either gave the wholesaler your order on the spot or made notes and sent in your orders later, after you had covered all bases.

It became simpler to get in touch with Alfred M. (Pete) Peterson, who picked you up wherever you were staying, then drove you to the wholesale nursery sources. Pete represented most of the wholesale nurseries in Southern California. This usually took two or three days and a lot of hard driving because there were no freeways then.

The next job was to get the material you selected delivered to your nursery. Pete really earned his commission on your purchases at this point.

You seldom had a full carload of your own. The space was 10 by 40 feet and the minimum weight 20,000 pounds, or 10 by 50 feet and 30,000 pounds minimum. Pete would figure out a way to combine several orders so you didn't have to pay for the minimum with only 15,000 pounds of plants. (Incidentally, the special rate for plants between L.A. and the Bay Area was 50¢/100 pounds.)

He had your sources deliver the plants to freight cars at Shorb Station (later combined with Alhambra and called Alhambra Station). The orders were loaded by the truck drivers in the cars Pete designated. To keep the containers from shifting, Pete hired one of the drivers to stay the rest of the day to do the necessary carpentry work to keep the load from shifting. There was a handy lumberyard across the street where one by twelves could be purchased. Orders could be separated by boards, which at the same time saved the nursery stock when the cars were "humped" by ungentle yard crews.

Pete made out the necessary paper work and tacked it inside the door, together with a map showing the location in the car of each order, and manifests of all shipments. The car was consigned to the railway siding nearest the nursery with the most material.

The receiving nursery paid the freight and pro-rated the charges according to the schedule Pete had worked out and air mailed with a copy of the waybill. The receiving nursery had another responsibility - notifying the agricultural commissioner so the plants could be inspected as they came out of the car or after being picked up and delivered to the various nurseries.

There was no conformity in county inspection regulations. Each commissioner was kink in his own county, and his standards prevailed. Years later, of course, Wray Hiltabrand, then chief of Nursery Service, got the commissioners to agree on the more workable system of intrastate shipments of nursery stock. (see story under "Pinto Tag")

Oh yes, in the event that rejections were made of any of the plants in the car, they were placed in quarantine, sprayed and cleaned up to the satisfaction of the inspector and charges billed to the grower.

#### THE 'PINTO TAG'.

Max. J. Leonard was a long-time agricultural commissioner for San Mateo County and was the first commissioner to espouse an inter-county certificate for pest-free plants which he called the "pinto tag." This designation referred to the pink and green colors bisecting the small paper tag printed on gummed paper.

Max probably instigated this to get his inspectors out of a lot of unnecessary work. His staff was over-committed because there were so many other kinds of inspections required. San Mateo County shipped millions of dollars worth of cut flowers. The county was a receiving point for all kinds of produce and eggs for distribution to other areas in the state and handled a lot of flower, vegetable and grass seed.

Adding to the problem was a matter of geography - the county is split right down the middle by the Coast Range, so Max had really to look after two counties, one completely rural and the other suburban. There was a lot of incoming nursery stock involved, so he suggested the issuance of the certificates tied to a twice-

a-year thorough nursery inspection. A master "pinto tag" certificate permitted shipment without further inspection to any customer in another county within the state. If the nursery failed to pass the test, the "pinto tag" privilege was removed until it was cleaned up to the commissioner's satisfaction.

#### ORGANIZING CENTRAL

It was the mid-Thirties. We were off to a good start in the Great Depression. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president and had set up NRA - which decreed a five-day work week to put more people to work. Prohibition was just a memory. The V-8, the Straight-8 and the Packard V-12 were fighting it out in the big car field. Most people did well to afford a Six. Gas was 30¢ a gallon and the speed limit 45 miles per hour.

There was very little residential and commercial building activity. FHA and the movement of national firms to the East Bay were in sight, but not active as yet. The 1939 Treasure Island Exposition was just on the planning boards. Plant sales were at a standstill.

George C. Roeding, Jr., president of California Nursery Co., decided to get a consensus on the opinion of Bay Area retail nurserymen regarding markup of purchased nursery stock. The California Nursery had almost abandoned its wholesale business and was becoming firmly entrenched in the retail business, both nursery sales and mail order. The prices in its catalog had a far-reaching effect in the area, so George wanted to learn the opinion of others. He called a meeting of about a dozen of the area's retail nurserymen one summer day in the gardens of Old Adobe, on the nursery ground at Niles (now a district of Fremont).

Problems discussed at the Old Adobe meeting included minimum markup (fixed at double cost after transportation was added), minimum deliveries, credit policies and replacement practices (very important in the area of B&B field-grown plants). Walter Hoff, owner of the West Coast Nursery (now The Tree Farm) in Los Altos, had a particular axe to grind. He was heavily engaged in landscape design and planting, and had lost some design business to members of the UC-Berkeley landscape architecture department. Walter found this competition from a tax-supported institution unacceptable!

The group decided that a letter to the Regents would be in order - so they became the Central California Nurserymen's Association. John McDonald, office manager of the California Nursery was asked to procure letterheads and stationery and write the letter over Walter Hoff's signature. The competition from Berkeley was brought to an end!

The retail nursery business suffered serious losses of personnel starting in 1937, due to activities preliminary to the 1939 Exposition. The Exposition officials had to have trained nursery talent at any price, easily outbidding nursery owners salary-wise. They needed help in all divisions: growing, planning and acquisition of specimen plants.

A second wave of problems came with the advent of World War II - so that in 1942 the Central California Nurserymen really came alive! There was excellent leadership available in Clarence Perkins of Jackson & Perkins Co., Pleasanton, Jack McDonnell, McDonnell Nursery, Oakland and Clyde Stocking, Stocking's Roses, San Jose.

A board of directors was formed (each from a particular field in the Industry - roses, fruit

trees, ornamentals, bedding plants, etc.) and two officers selected - president and secretary-treasurer. A constitution and by-laws were formulated for the Central California Nurserymen's Association. The permanent meeting place was selected - so everyone knew where to be on second Tuesday evening at 7:30. It was the Florence Restaurant in Niles. Dan Quarteroli served cocktails at the bar in front - at 50¢ each, while wife Alice and her mother prepared dinner in the rear - \$2.00 with wine and a five-course dinner. Alice was the victim of rationing, just like any other household or restaurant, but she managed to save enough meat stamps for us to have something besides chicken every third meeting. Attendance varied between 35 and 50 - all male - and arguments about the state of the business could last until midnight! (Now you can understand why our first president made it mandatory to close out at 10 p.m. sharp). It was a long way back to the Peninsula, especially with lights on dim (a wartime regulation) across the Dumbar-ton Bridge.

## ORGANIZING PENINSULA

In the late Forties it became obvious that there should be a separate, Peninsula organization, so a small group started meeting informally to discuss markups (changed to 2½ times laid-down cost), delivery and replacement policy. If there was a basis for serious discussion it was caused by the formation of a marketing order for bedding plants grown in California, which firming up the price and required an overall view of price structures. The cost of personnel was rising and that was an additional cause for concern in reaching a profitable markup structure. By now, Elmer Merz was firmly seated as executive-secretary for CAN, and an equitable arrangement was worked out with Central Chapter for division of territory and funds.



The year was 1950 - Elmer inducted the officers - Jim Wilson, president, Neil Shaffer of Santa Cruz, vice-president, Juel Christensen, treasurer and Charles Burr, secretary. The Peninsula Chapter was in business! The idea in the beginning was that we would encompass the growing Monterey Bay area as well as the Peninsula and Santa Clara Valley. Elmer got us to sponsor a convention in Santa Cruz the first year of our organization to create more interest in CAN in the Monterey Bay communities. The convention turned out fine, but the Peninsula meetings were not attended by nurserymen outside our present area. Who can blame them when Highway 17 was three lanes - the third lane for passing in either direction!

In 1951-52, the same officers served, except that Neil Shaffer was replaced by John Edwards. John was the owner of Edwards Nursery in East Palo Alto, where he specialized in growing azaleas and camellias for the wholesale trade. His sons Charlie and Duncan later took over the operation and moved it to Watsonville. John retired to live in Walowa, WA.

#### CHAPTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

##### THE GREEN THUMB PROGRAM

One of our active members and a past president, Ernest Esch, whose nursery was located on Willow Street in San Jose, had a son who was chief engineer for KRON-TV, a leader in Bay Area TV programming. He got the Chapter involved with the Bonnie Kiever daytime variety show. Chapter members appeared on a regular basis once a week to talk about various plant material with Bonnie. She and her husband (the station manager) were called to New York, leaving us on our own with a Sunday morning half-hour show, which was called The Green Thumb Show.

This went on for several years, until national programming and the need for commercial sponsorship forced KRON-TV to make other plans. We had a great deal of technical gardening help from members of the Central Chapter and Jack McDonnell spelled Ernest Esch and Ray Hartman as MC on several programs. The station announcer, Vern Wilson, became a garden enthusiast and assisted greatly in making the program successful.

##### THE STRYBING ARBORETUM SOCIETY

Juel Christensen's first nursery was located in San Francisco. One of his horticultural contemporaries was Eric Walther, superintendent appointed by John McLaren to look after the area in Golden Gate Park known as the Strybing Arboretum. It had been named for Helene Strybing, a wealthy widow who endowed the arboretum with a considerable sum (for those days).

To Eric's disgust, the successor of John McLaren had the funds tied up in a kind of political limbo. He enlisted the aid of nurserymen, through Juel, to get something done about it! When Juel approached the Peninsula board of directors for support, he was promptly made chairman of the Strybing Arboretum Committee. Between Juel and Eric, an impressive group of laymen, botanists and nurserymen was assembled including Walter Heil, director of the DeYoung Museum. He was an expert on Park politics. Chapter participants included John Edwards, Bert Plath, Bill Schmidt and Charles Burr, the latter keeping the minutes and handling such correspondence as was necessary.

After several meetings in San Francisco, an organizational meeting was called for November 17, 1954, in the DeYoung Museum, at which a tem-

porary slate of officers and constitution-by-laws for the Strybing Arboretum Society was adopted: Owen Pearce, editor of the California Horticultural Journal, president; Elizabeth McClintock, botanist at the California Academy of Science, secretary; and Bill Schmidt, treasurer. In February, 1955, a permanent slate of officers and directors took over and in 30-odd years the membership has risen to well over 1000. Juel Christensen and Charles Burr were among those original committee members honored at a 20th anniversary celebration in 1974.

#### SARATOGA HORTICULTURAL FOUNDATION

While the Peninsula Chapter was getting on its feet, Ray D. Hartman, chapter member and president and general manager of Leonard Coates Nurseries, San Jose, was busy completing a dream of his own - the formation of a research facility that would select, evaluate and produce for distribution to the trade, clones of shrubs and trees of superior quality. He had settled on Saratoga as the most desirable location and purchased the property that was formerly occupied by the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation.

Ray Hartman enlisted the aid of industry, finance, educational institutions and the nursery industry in backing his dream, and in 1951 the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation became a non-profit California Corporation with a self-perpetuating board of trustees and a board of councilors identified with Western horticulture, arboriculture, landscape design, botany, entomology and plant diseases.

The Peninsula Chapter has maintained a close alliance with The Foundation and several members have been included on the Board of Councilors since the beginning. John Coulter, past chapter president, was a pro-tem superintendent, and Ed Carman, Lou Schenone, Its Uenaka and Don Dillon Sr., trustees.

The first director of The Foundation was Maunsell Van Rensselaer, who came to Saratoga from the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. "Van" regularly participated in Chapter functions and was responsible for selecting most of nearly 40 introductions, including two that were patented.

He was succeeded in September, 1971, by W. Richard Hildreth, who came with a long record of achievement in taxonomic botany and plant exploration. Dick was an active participant in Chapter affairs, Western Horticultural Society and was a president of Pacific Horticultural Foundation, publisher of the California Horticultural Journal. Hildreth is now Director of the University of Utah Arboretum in Salt Lake City.

In 1984 Saratoga Hort purchased the property it now occupies at 15185 Murphy Ave. in San Martin. The Saratoga property was sold and a brand new facility built on the new site - said to be the most modern propagation facility in the West.

The Foundation also obtained the services of a new director - Philip Macmillan Browse of Melton Mowbray in Leistershire, England. Director Browse, head of the Department of Horticulture, Brooksby Agricultural College, is the author of several works on plant propagation. He took over his duties in January 1985. He is well-known by nurserymen active in the International Plant Propagation Society.

The Foundation will continue to locate and develop clones of desirable plants for distribution to the California wholesale nursery trade.

In the early 1960's, Wm. E. Schmidt, a past president of the Chapter and owner of Schmidt's Nursery in Palo Alto, felt the need for a Peninsula organization that would have a common appeal to amateur horticulturists and professionals alike. Bill called a meeting of chapter members in his nursery office and received enthusiastic support. He was already held in high esteem by Peninsula gardening enthusiasts, so with some dedicated effort on Bill's part and the support of both professionals and amateurs, the Western Horticultural Society became a reality in 1963.

Several Chapter members have participated in the Society as directors and officers. Five have been president: Bill, John Edwards, John Coulter, Gerda Isenberg and Charles Burr. Ed Carman still attends Western Hort's meetings faithfully and is active in the display of interesting and unusual plants at their monthly meetings in Los Altos.

#### SUNSET DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

Many of our Chapter members worked closely with Elsa Uppman Knoll while she was Garden Editor for Sunset Magazine. While Elsa was president of the Strybing Arboretum Society, she encouraged the cooperation of the Arboretum, Sunset Magazine and supporting horticultural organizations in the construction of a series of Demonstration Gardens at the Arboretum. The Peninsula Chapter was included as a sponsor.

Progress was slow at first, and several sections were vacant until John Bryan was appointed Director of the Arboretum. He encouraged the Chapter to "get going", and in 1971 Mark Pyle was appointed chairman of the demonstration garden committee. Plans were drawn, material selected

and donated by chapter members, and in July of 1971, in a three-day session that involved about 25 chapter members, installation was completed. The Peninsula Chapter Demonstration Garden was dedicated in September of the same year, with Mrs. Lawrence Lane, chairman of the board, Lane Publishing Co. (Sunset Magazine & Books), officiating.

As with most gardens, plants have a habit of growing out of proportion and eventually fall into an imitation of a "jungle". At the instigation of Ed Carman, the Chapter employed the services of a San Francisco landscape architect in the spring of 1986 to design a new garden.

Under the co-chairmanship of Ed and Don Dillon Jr., several crews of volunteers, outdated plants were removed and replaced by a brand-new planting. When members of the American Horticultural Society attended one of their scheduled convention events in the Demonstration Gardens in August they were suitably impressed by our Chapter's efforts.

#### SAN MATEO COUNTY FAIR AND FLORAL FIESTA

We thought that past president Lou Schenone would get that over-long title shortened during his three-year term as president of that organization, but it was not to be! Well, as far as Peninsula Chapter is concerned, it was always simply "The Fiesta", a source of funds for various Chapter activities.

The Chapter became involved when the flower show was moved from the Bay Meadows Clubhouse to a brand new Hall of Flowers. Doug Baylis was the landscape architect in charge, not only for The Fiesta, but for the nurserymen as well. We got our feet wet by enlisting Sunset Magazine's aid in supplying blow-ups of their garden pages and displaying the actual material used in the story.

The classification used to support the prize money awarded the Chapter has always been in the area of education of the public in plant materials used in local gardens. At various times, the display has featured shrubs, trees, color and groundcovers. Members of the Chapter have supported the Fiesta in many ways - in construction of the Chapter's exhibit, as judges, and in the case of Bert Plath and Lou Schenone, as directors of the fair association. Hundreds of truckloads of plant material have been supplied to The Fiesta exhibits by our members to acquaint several hundred thousand fair viewers with the value of gardens in their lives.

### LEADERS IN HORTICULTURE

W. B. CLARKE

His first name was Walter, but he preferred to be called "W.B." The site of his nursery, at the intersection of Schallenberger Rd. and Oakland Road, San Jose, is now occupied by the Santa Clara County corporation yard. You can still see some of the original stock plants used for propagation growing in parts of the landscape.

W.B. was quoted as saying that "If it had not been for *Raphiolepis indica* rosea, we might never have survived The Depression". He recognized it as a winner and set out as many stock plants as he could get - then propagated every inch of grafting wood he could take from the plants. Anglers quince seedlings were used as the root stock and the Clarke Nursery turned them out by the thousands in 4-inch pots. Of course, they were hardly saleable in that condition, so the retail nurseries had to can them in gallons themselves until W.B. got around to believing that the metal container was here to stay! Because he believed in grafting, as against growing from cuttings, he was able to increase his new introductions rapidly - though

expensively. His trucks picked up the used 4-inch pots on succeeding deliveries and the retailer received a credit on the Clarke books.

W.B. was responsible for the introduction of *Prunus blieriana* (*P. mume* x *P. cerasifera* *pis-sardi*) and himself discovered 'Helen Borchers' flowering peach and 'Thundercloud' flowering plum. He introduced two varieties of *P. mume* (Rosemary and Peggy Clarke) as well as many flowering cherries, which he dearly loved. He discovered an exceptional form of *Crataegus lavelleii* with beautiful fall clusters of fruits, which he named 'Autumn Glory'. As a general rule, W.B. shied away from naming new introductions after people. Helen Borchers, Rosemary and Peggy Clarke, Clarke's Red (a *camellia*) and Clarke's Giant (a lilac) were exceptions. He liked to name plants so that they were descriptive of the introduction's character - as in 'Blue Hyacinth' lilac and 'Thundercloud' plum (purple foliage with white flowers).

In addition to a whole series of lilacs, W.B. introduced a great many flowering quinces. Most of the actual introduction was through the catalogs of the California Nursery and Wayside Gardens. Although he didn't participate in their cost, he encouraged catalog nurseries to make color plates of his new introductions by giving them exclusive privileges to the available stock the first year. During the time the Clarke Nursery sold both retail and wholesale, W.B. issued a small black and white catalog with a single illustration on the front cover. He had such a way with words, it was hardly necessary to use illustrations! He chose a good title for his catalogs - "Garden Aristocrats".

As the Clarke Nursery's introductions became a volume wholesale business, its small staff was unable to cope with retail customers, so a "wholesale only" sign was put up, alongside "closed Sunday", which had always been in effect.

In addition to ornamental trees, shrubs and vines, the Clarke Nursery became a prime source of roses for retailers in northern California. W.B. encouraged Rudy Anninger, his traveling salesman, to enter into a partnership with Frank Molena for the purpose of growing roses for wholesale. He obtained membership in AARS, giving Rudy and partner first year access to All America introductions. The combination of a well-known source and a well-grown product made the enterprise hugely successful!

W.B. Clarke took an active interest in nursery trade associations and was president of CAN for the year 1927-28.

RAY D. HARTMAN

It is difficult to disassociate Ray from California Natives, and his enthusiasm for them often clouded the greater scope of his organization - The Leonard Coates Nurseries. The main office, florist shop and retail salesyard was located in San Jose on The Alameda at the Santa Clara city line. There was a large container-grown ornamental growing grounds in Santa Cruz. Deciduous fruit, flowering and shade trees were grown at Brentwood.

Ray was active in CAN and was president of the state association in 1934-35. Even with his busy schedule he managed to attend many of Peninsula Chapter's meetings during the formative years and actively supported Chapter projects.

The Leonard Coates 48-page catalog of the Thirties gave California Natives the first five pages in the book, listing a total of 110 varieties. Considering the difficulty of propagation in those years and a rather lukewarm reception by the public, this was an amazing enterprise!

Probably the first real break-through came with trial plantings made by Caltrans. H. Dana Bowers, the first person to head a department of highway planting, had his problems with the highway maintenance people looking after plantings after installation. He worked out native plant lists with Ray Hartman, using varieties as near their type locality as possible, which exposed the public to the beauty and utility of natives on the state's highways. Of course, natives needed care, too, so that only the most persistent forms survived until planting sites were specially prepared to rigid specifications and automatic irrigation provided. Now we see a happy combination of both natives and exotics in our freeway planting, a tribute to Ray's enthusiasm.

MAUNSELL VAN RENSELAER

He was always simply "Van" to his nurserymen and horticultural friends and associates. He has a list of horticultural credits that will long be remembered.

Van became director of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in 1934, and held that position until he became associated with the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation, as director, in 1950. While in Santa Barbara, Van was instrumental in having Sequoia sempervirens adopted officially as the state tree of California. He was co-author of "Ceanothus" with Howard McMinn, published in 1942, and author of "Trees of Santa Barbara". He authored numerous articles for magazines and horticultural journals. He was a past president of the International Shade Tree Conference and actively supported other national and international horticultural organizations.

Of all our Peninsula Chapter plantsmen, Bill is probably the most widely known - internationally, as a matter of fact! In an area of heavy competition among hybridizers in many lands, Bill, the perfectionist, tops them all!

For the record: his Regals (Pelargonium domesticum) have won 23 awards granted by the Royal Horticultural Society of England. 'Grand Slam', his great red pelargonium, has won four, 'Aztec' and 'Lavender Grand Slam', three each, 'LaPaloma' and 'Joy', two each and the other 9 cultivars, one each. Bill introduced a total of 64 Regals between 1941 and 1969. His last introduction, 'Georgia Peach', many consider to be best of all! Of the 64, 15 are sports of existing cultivars, all the rest are seedlings.

Bill is responsible for many zonal geranium introductions, ten cultivars, of which three are semi-dwarf. These were introduced between 1941 and 1964. His ivy geranium introductions (1940-1951) total eleven, which include four that sported from previously introduced varieties.

The Schmidt Nursery introduced many varieties of fuchsias from various hybridizers, and seven of Bill's own crosses. At one time, he tried his hand at camellias, resulting in a double pink that Bill named 'Sonata'. There is a large plant of it growing in the Huntington Gardens, but Bill never got around to developing it commercially.

Bill discovered a Tulbaghia violacea (society garlic) with white variegated margins on the leaves which he called 'Silver Lace'. This is still available from Ed Carman, as is the Schmidt strain of Scabiosa caucasica, which the Schmidt Nursery grew and sold until it closed in 1968.

Bill now resides in Sun City, Arizona. He is active in the Sun City Rose & Garden Club and Valley of the Sun Men's Garden Club. Bill was a charter member of Peninsula Chapter and served as president in 1954-55 and Convention Chairman in 1958. There is more about Bill's exploits in the story about the Western Horticultural Society. His unique and highly-regarded nursery was located at 355 Lambert Avenue in Palo Alto and was a haven for many of the more expert amateurs.

#### FLOYD DILLON

Floyd C. Dillon, retired from the merchandising field, didn't own a crystal ball, but he foresaw a future for citrus that was beyond the dreams of other horticultural entrepreneurs.

Dillon - the father of Don and grandfather of Don Jr. - knew that California faced two facts in its future: the shrinking size of gardens and an influx of thousands of new residents whose exposure to the state in their armed services years sold them on a better quality of life in California.

He figured correctly these new Californians would want some citrus in their gardens. But, in a small garden, how can there be a selection when one orange alone would use up 400 square feet?

Just 40 years ago (1946) Dillon went to UCLA to talk to Dean Robert Hodgson of the division of Subtropical Horticulture about the idea of growing citrus on dwarfing rootstocks. He had already grown some deciduous dwarf fruit trees in his garden, obtained from the Ernest Birk Nursery in Belmont, a pioneer in this field.

Dr. Hodgson gave Dillon much encouragement and introduced him to the rootstock experimentation at both UCLA and what is now UC-Riverside. He also found out about a successful method of citrus propagation - the twig graft, used by Four Winds today.

The first dwarf citrus grown were on leased property in Ventura Co. and the first plants ready for sale were delivered to the Birk nursery in Belmont. To escape quarantine problems, Dillon purchased the property on Palm Ave., then in Mission San Jose, now part of the City of Fremont. The site was chosen because the area had a long history of relatively mild winter temperatures.

The thirty cultivars of citrus grown by Four Winds found an acceptable market: first in the Bay Area, then in the interior valleys and finally in Southern California. Four Winds has shipped the product to Hawaii in wholesale quantities and in smaller numbers to many points in the U.S. and the world.

Don came into the business after his service in the Navy. Fred Real came with the movement from Piru to Mission San Jose. Now, youth is beginning to prevail: Don Jr. and Mike Andrade, Fred's son-in-law, are heirs-apparent to operation of the business.

CLYDE STOCKING

A name synonymous with roses.

The present site of Stocking's Roses at the corner of Mabury Road and Capitol Expressway was developed in 1938. Ramona still lives there, although George Height is the present owner and operator of the business. Clyde was a regular contributor to the "Proof of the Pudding" section in the American Rose Society Annual, and developed a national following with his authoritative evaluations of new varieties.

Clyde introduced two roses, seedlings of crosses made by Dr. C. E. Adams, a local roseman: 'Prosperity', a yellow hybrid tea, struck a hopeful note when there was not much prosperity around, and 'Susan Louise' (Mrs. Adams), a nice pink, a tremendous grower that would be classified as a grandiflora by present-day standards.

Stocking's Roses was an early member of AARS and one of 26 rose test gardens is still there, maintained and evaluated by George Height. Clyde was a past president of Central Chapter, president of CAN in 1944-45 and president of AAN in 1956-57, after serving a six-year term as director from Region VI.

EDWARD S. CARMAN

Ed is a native of Los Gatos and graduated from San Jose State University. In 1946 he joined his father, Hugh, in a retail business - Carman's Nursery, then situated at the corner of Bascom Avenue and Union, Campbell. Ed became a charter member of Peninsula Chapter in 1950 - has been twice president and served three terms as treasurer. He is a devoted member of California Horticultural Society and Western Horticultural Society.

About 1970 the nursery was moved to its present location on Mozart Ave. off Bascom in Los Gatos, where Ed specializes in perennials, rock garden plants and Actinidia chinensis (named varieties of Kiwi). Sales mostly are retail, with a small amount of wholesale business. He and his wife have three daughters and four grandchildren. Daughter Nancy still works part time in the nursery.

Years ago, Ed became a fast friend of Trevor Davies, whose family owned the largest nursery in New Zealand - Duncan & Davies. Trevor and Ed

exchanged many varieties of interest in both New Zealand and California. Ed obtained his first stock of Kiwi varieties from Duncan & Davies. Trevor and Ed are very much interested in developing a self-pollinating hybrid that will successfully grow and produce in cold climates.

One of the most popular of Ed's importation was Rhodohypoxis, a native of South Africa and an excellent rock garden subject. Another South African native turned out to be an excellent groundcover to win the trade - Dymondia margaritae, which recently appeared in Sunset Magazine.

Ed has been closely identified with Saratoga Hort since its beginning and served for 12 years on its board of trustees. His nursery has a wide following of customers in the Pacific Northwest, East and a devoted local following of garden specialists.

UPDATE...1975-1986

#### NOR-CAL TRADE SHOW

The Peninsula Chapter's first trade show occurred in the large banquet room at Lou's Village, San Jose. Although small in stature, there was enough interest to plan a show in more spacious surroundings the following spring.

Tad Nakagawa, chapter president for 1975-76, got a committee together and announced a "Spring Trade Show" to be held at the San Mateo Co. Fairgrounds on Thursday, Feb. 5, 1976. It was not a salubrious day for a "first ever" - the Hamilton range and Santa Cruz mountains had a record snowfall the night before and the temperature low. Attendance was modest because of the cold but enough people registered to ensure a repeat performance in the opinion of Tad, his committee and the exhibitors.

The San Mateo fairgrounds became the permanent location of the spring trade show and the Peninsula Chapter the sponsor until 1980. By 1979 it became obvious that it was an area-wide event and required the combined efforts of the Peninsula, Redwood Empire, Central and Monterey Bay chapters to support what was to be called the Nor-Cal Spring Horticultural Trade Show.

With the support of all four chapters, attendance and booth space demand rose to remarkable figures. By the 1986 show, booths reached 300 spaces and the attendance to near the 3000 mark. The hours open had to be extended to 10 to 9 and a new larger building used. The "standby" waiting list for booth space continues to grow, putting extra pressure on the committee and the fairgrounds people for additional space.



chapters), nursery and allied companies and even local garden clubs.

Peninsula Chapter's contributions are derived from such enterprises as the San Mateo Fiesta and the Nor-Cal Trade Show. The Chapter always sells out its quota of CANERS raffle tickets, plus available extras. Three named Chapter funds produce \$1200 annually for education and research.

THE TOM KAWAKAMI OPEN

One of the highlights of the Peninsula Chapter's schedule of activities is the Tom Kawakami Open, an annual golf tournament celebrated by both our Chapter and the Central Chapter, our parent.

It is named after Tom Kawakami, founder and original proprietor of the East Side Nursery in Palo Alto. Tom and his fellow nurserymen golfers: Mas Oka of Yamagami's, George Yamanaka, Bonsai Nursery and Joe Jio, Jio's Nursery teed off at Pleasant Valley Golf Course every Thursday morning, rain or shine. The golf course extended adjoining tee-off times to other nurserymen in the Chapter on many occasions and at least one "Open" was held there. Other sites included Sunnyside, Spring Valley, Sunol and the popular Riverside course south of Coyote.

The first Chapter-sponsored tournament bearing the Kawakami signature was held at the Sunnyside course in 1975. Number 12 was held this year (1986) at the Riverside Golf Course.

THE CALL-TO-ORDER BELL

Lee Davidson, sales manager of Pacific Guano Co., thought that glass-tapping was not a good way to call chapter meetings to order. In addition to his sales managing, Lee liked to cast metals. So he cast a brass bell with the proper insignia on it and presented the bell to Ernest Esch at the beginning of his chapter presidency in 1953.

A fringe benefit for CAN has been a healthy increase in contributions to CANERS Fund due to the trade show's financial benefits to the participating chapters. Chairmanship of the committee revolves among the four chapters, so that each is involved with this obligation once in four years.

The committee has plenty of responsibilities, involving planning, publicity, layout (insisting on wide aisles), assistance to exhibitors, sign-up on show day for the following year in order of seniority and financing. The fairgrounds people provide registration and catering services.

CANERS

Peninsula Chapter members attending the 1969 convention in Yosemite National Park will remember the acceptance speech of Leo Dupuich, just inducted as president of CAN. Acceptance speeches generally are predictable. Leo's was not!

His audience listened in fascination as Leo told how the nursery industry and the association with his fellow nurserymen had enhanced his and his family's life (he had been a railway locomotive engineer). Leo found a way to show his and his family's appreciation by establishing a fund to stimulate education and research in ornamental horticulture. He provided a check for \$2500 in the name of his family to establish a fund which became CANERS.

CANERS was enthusiastically accepted by CAN and its membership. It has now grown to more than a million dollars. Generous contributions are made to the fund annually to provide educational scholarships and support research. The single largest contribution comes from the annual CANERS Raffle. Other support is derived from individuals, organizations (including CAN

PENINSULA CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

1950-51)	James H. Wilson, Peters & Wilson Nursery, Millbrae
1951-52)	John E. Edwards, John E. Edwards Nursery, Palo Alto
1952-53	Ernest Esch, Esch's Nursery, San Jose (deceased)
1953-54	Wm. E. Schmidt, Schmidt's Nursery, Palo Alto
1954-55	Walter C. Borchers, W.B. Clarke & Co., San Jose
1955-56	John E. Coulter, Coulter's Nursery, San Carlos
1956-57	Charles J. Burr, Calif. Garden Supply, Palo Alto
1957-58	Itsuo Uenaka, Cupertino Nursery, Cupertino
1958-59	Louis D. Schenone, Pacific Nurseries, Colma
1959-60	John Hahn, Ruehl-Wheeler Nurseries, San Jose (deceased)
1960-61	Peter M. Sugawara, Monte Bello Nursery, Los Altos
1961-62	Chester R. Williams, Green Hills Nursery, Millbrae
1962-63	Edward S. Carman, Carman's Nursery, Los Gatos
1963-64	George S. Haight, Stocking's Roses, San Jose
1964-65	Barrie Coate, Barrie's Trees & Shrubs, Aptos
1965-66	John F. Chiapelone, Burlingame Garden Center, Burlingame
1966-67	Jack Christensen, Christensen Nursery, Belmont
1967-68	John Van Auken, E.B. Stone & Son, San Carlos
1968-69	William M. Leonard, East Side Nursery, Palo Alto
1969-70)	Edward S. Carman, Carman's Nursery, Los Gatos
1970-71)	
1971-72	

1972-73	Gus Pappas, Pappas Bros., Colma
1973-74	Joe G. Cherollis, Joe's Nursery, Colma
1974-75	Ben Furuichi, Los Altos Nursery, Los Altos
1975-76	Tad Nakagawa, Cupertino Nursery, Cupertino
1976-77	Ben Heller, Heller's Nursery, Morgan Hill
1977-78	Robert Spear, Springdale Garden Center, San Jose
1978-79	Frank Halstead, Roger Reynolds Nursery, Menlo Park
1979-80	Dean Schenone, Pacific Nurseries, Colma
1980-81	Preston Oka, Yamagami Nursery, Cupertino
1981-82	Paul Uenaka, Springdale Garden Center, San Jose
1982-83	Joyce Okumura, El Real Nursery, Santa Clara
1983-84	Don Schenone, Pacific Nurseries, Colma
1984-85	Don Dillon, Jr., Four Winds Growers, Fremont
1985-86	Tom Ellington, Cal-Turf, San Jose

MEMBERS RECEIVING PENINSULA CHAPTER AWARDS

PENINSULA CHAPTER AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

1964	Charles J. Burr
1965	John Coulter
1975	Edward Carman
1981	Peter M. Sugawara

PENINSULA CHAPTER HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

1971	William E. Schmidt
------	--------------------

MEMBERS RECEIVING CAN AWARDS

CAN PRESIDENTS FROM PENINSULA CHAPTER

PACIFIC COAST NURSERYMAN AWARD

- 1949 W. B. Clarke
- 1955 Ray D. Hartman
- 1960 M. Van Rensselaer
- 1969 William E. Schmidt
- 1974 Albert Wilson
- 1984 Its Uenaka

YOUNG NURSERYMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

- 1968 Barrie Coate
- 1969 Brian Gage
- 1973 Paul T. Uenaka
- 1981 Ben Heller
- 1982 Preston Oka

ELMER J. MERZ MEMORIAL AWARD

- 1979 Charles J. Burr
- 1983 James Wilson

RESEARCH AWARD

- 1980 Glenn Goldsmith

SECRETARY OF THE YEAR AWARD

- 1969 Paul T. Uenaka
- 1970 Tad Nakagawa

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

- 1985 Paul T. Uenaka

- 1926-27 Hans Plath, San Francisco
- 1927-28 W.B. Clarke, San Jose
- 1934-35 Ray Hartman, San Jose
- 1939-40 Frank Tuttle, San Jose
- 1944-45 Clyde Stocking, San Jose
- 1953-54 James H. Wilson, Millbrae
- 1963-64 Ken R. Hartman, San Jose
- 1967-68 Itsuo Uenaka, Cupertino
- 1971-72 John F. Chiapelone, Burlingame
- 1975-76 Jack Christensen, Belmont

AAN PRESIDENTS FROM PENINSULA CHAPTER

- 1957-58 Clyde Stocking, San Jose
- 1977-78 Itsuo Uenaka, Cupertino



May 1998

## HORTICULTURE, BOTANY, AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The following interviews related to landscape architecture, garden design, horticulture, and botany have been completed by the Regional Oral History Office. Through tape recorded autobiographical interviews with scholars and professionals in these fields, individuals working in a wide range of gardens and arboreta, and members of native plant conservation groups, we are documenting over a half-century of growth and change in wild and cultivated California and the West. The interviews, transcribed, indexed, and bound, may be ordered at cost for deposit in research libraries.

## Individual Memoirs

BANCROFT, Ruth (b. 1908), The Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, California: Creation in 1971, and Conservation. 1993, 149 pp. Interviews with the owner-designer of a four-acre dry garden in Walnut Creek, California, the Ruth Bancroft Garden, the first garden designated under The Garden Conservancy.

BRACELIN, N. Floy, The Ynes Mexia Botanical Collections. 1982, 25 pp. An interview with N. Floy Bracelin on the Mexia botanical collection and on Mrs. Mexia's Mexican and South American expeditions. Interview conducted by botanist Annetta Carter.

CARMAN, Edward S. (b. 1922), Pacific Coast Nurseryman, Award-Winning Horticulturalist, and Historian. 1998, 195 pp. Peninsula nurseryman discusses area nursery history, introduction of the kiwi and other New Zealand imports, propagation of rare and unusual plants, and the horticultural community.

CONSTANCE, Lincoln (b. 1909), Versatile Berkeley Botanist: Plant Taxonomy and University Governance. 1987, 362 pp. Dean and botanist discusses research in the biosystematics of *umbelliferae*; recollections of colleagues and graduate students.

DOMOTO, Toichi (b. 1902), A Japanese-American Nurseryman's Life in California: Floriculture and Family, 1883-1992. 1993, 360 pp. Life story of eminent nurseryman, tree, shrub, and flower breeder, bonsai practitioner; family, education, experience of racial discrimination; membership in California nursery and horticultural groups.

GREGG, John W. (1880-1969), Landscape Architect. 1965, 182 pp. First head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at UC Berkeley, professor from 1913-1946, talks about the relationship of landscape design to architecture in the early days of the profession.

ISENBERG, Gerda (1901-1997), California Native Plants Nurseywoman, Civil Rights Activist, and Humanitarian. 1991, 150 pp. History, through interviews with owner-founder, of Yerba Buena Nursery, a California native plant and exotic fern nursery in Woodside, California.

LAWYER, Adele (b. 1918) and Lewis (b. 1907), Lawyers, Inc: Partners in Plant Pathology, Horticulture, and Marriage. 1990, 273 pp. Husband and wife plant pathologists discuss research work for Del Monte Corp.; developments in fruit and vegetable varieties; breeding Pacific Coast native iris.

MCCASKILL, June (b. 1930), Herbarium Scientist, University of California, Davis. 1989, 83 pp. Discussion of curatorial functions, and public service role, of the UC Davis Herbarium, 1935-1988.

PEARCE, F. Owen (1897-1994), California Garden Societies and Horticultural Publications, 1947-1990. 1990, 86 pp. Founding of Strybing Arboretum Society; editing California Horticultural Journal; membership in garden organizations, and memoirs of plantsmen. Interviews conducted by Adele and Lewis Lawyer.

RODERICK, Wayne (b. 1920), California Native Plantsman: UC Botanical Garden, Tilden Botanic Garden. 1991, 166 pp. Family history and career of lifelong gardener, nurseryman; head of California section, UC Berkeley Botanical Garden, 1960-1976; head, East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden, 1976-1983.

ROTH, Lurline Matson (1890-1985), Matson and Roth Family History; A Love of Ships, Horses, and Gardens. 1982, 271 pp. History through interviews of landmark estate, "Filoli," house and gardens in Woodside California; Matson family history. Includes interview with horticulturist Toichi Domoto.

SCOTT, Geraldine Knight (1904-1989), A Woman in Landscape Architecture in California, 1926-1989. 1990, 235 pp. Distinguished practitioner's personal statement of her education and career choices; private practice for over thirty years, clients and convictions; lecturing in UC Berkeley's Department of Landscape Architecture.

WIESLANDER, A. E. (1890-1992), California Forester: Mapper of Wildland Vegetation and Soils. 1985, 316 pp. Forestry management, education; soil and vegetation studies, mapping; native plants, and manzanita specimen plantings; history of East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden.

#### Multi-interview Volumes

BLAKE ESTATE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. 1988, 582 pp. Interviews with family members, architects and landscape architects, gardeners, staff, and two presidents of the University of California to document the history of Blake House, since 1967 the University's presidential residence, and the Blake Garden, a ten-acre horticultural mecca utilized as a teaching facility.

Interviews with Mai Arbegast, Igor Blake, Ron and Myra Brocchini, Toichi Domoto, Elliot and Elizabeth Evans, Anthony Hail, Linda Haymaker, Charles Hitch, Florence Holmes, Clark and Catherine Kerr, Janice Kittredge, Geraldine Knight Scott, Louis Stein, George and Helena Thacher, Walter Vodden, and Norma Willer.

CALIFORNIA WOMEN IN BOTANY. 1987, 177 pp. Interviews with botanist Annetta Carter on the UC Berkeley Herbarium, 1930s to 1980s; Mary DeDecker, botanist and conservationist, on the desert flora of the Owens Valley region; Elizabeth McClintock, botanist, on the California Academy of Sciences Herbarium, collecting and interpretation, and conservation of rare native species of the San Francisco Bay Area.

THOMAS D. CHURCH, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT. Two volumes, 1978, 800 pp. A study of Thomas Dolliver Church (1902-1978), landscape architect, through interviews with colleagues in architecture and landscape architecture, staff, clients and friends, landscape contractors and nurserymen, and with Elizabeth Roberts Church.

Volume I: Interviews with Theodore Bernardi, Lucy Butler, June Meehan Campbell, Louis DeMonte, Walter Doty, Donn Emmons, Floyd Gerow, Harriet Henderson, Joseph Howland, Ruth Jaffe, Burton Litton, Germano Milono, Miriam Pierce, George Rockrise, Robert Royston, Geraldine Knight Scott, Roger Sturtevant, Francis Violich, and Harold Watkin.

Volume II: Interviews with Maggie Baylis, Elizabeth Roberts Church, Robert Glasner, Grace Hall, Lawrence Halprin, Proctor Mellquist, Everitt Miller, Harry Sanders, Lou Schenone, Jack Stafford, Goodwin Steinberg, and Jack Wagstaff.

LESTER ROWNTREE, CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT WOMAN. 1979, 344 pp. Memoir about Lester Rowntree (1878-1979), horticulturist, naturalist, and seed collector. Interviews with horticulturists, botanists, and family members: Margaret Campbell, Skee Hamann, Heidi Rowntree Melas, Robert Ornduff, James Roof, Cedric Rowntree, Harriette Rowntree, Lester Rowntree, Lester Bradford Rowntree, Nancy Rowntree, Rowan Rowntree, and Jo Stallard.

#### Volunteer Interviews

Interviews conducted by volunteer oral historian Mary Mead with the following five individuals relating to various periods and issues in the history of the California Native Plant Society.

BURR, Joyce E. (b. 1912), Memories of Years Preceding and During the Formation of the California Native Plant Society, 1947-1966, 1992, x, 120 pp. Botanic Garden site controversy, James Roof, William Penn Mott, Jr.; CNPS founding; G. Ledyard Stebbins, Alice Howard, Susan Frugé, Mary Wohlers; Huckleberry Trail, Citizens of Urban Wilderness Areas.

FLEMING, Jenny (b. 1924), Memories of the California Native Plant Society During and After Its Formation, 1955-Present, 1993, x, 108 pp. Personal interest in conservation, landscaping with native plants; CNPS plant sale, fund-raising; Bay Chapter since 1976; Tilden Botanic Garden Volunteers, Rare Plant Project; Sierra Club, US Forest Service.

STEBBINS, G. Ledyard (b. 1906), The Life and Work of George Ledyard Stebbins, Jr., 1993, vi, 145 pp. Developmental genetics, research in perennial grasses, Davis herbarium; CNPS Sacramento Chapter, and state presidency; Rare Plant Project, field trips, coordinating council, members; endangered species, North Coast-Central Valley Bio-Diversity Transect; Botanical Society, Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum, Botanical Congresses.

STROHMAIER, Leonora H. (b. 1911), Memories of Years Preceding and During the Formation of the California Native Plant Society, 1955-1973, 1992, ix, 83 pp. Ph.D. in plant physiology, work in food technology; marriage to Erwin Strohmaier; role of Berkeley Garden Club and Regional Parks Association in creation of CNPS, and CNPS early years.

WOLFE, Myrtle R. (b. 1904), Memories of Early Years and Development of the California Native Plant Society, 1966-1991, 1991, x, 92 pp. CNPS founding, and crises of fires, freezes; East Bay Regional Parks District; Tilden Botanic Garden; UC Berkeley Department of Botany, and Botanic Garden; James Roof, Wayne Roderick, other CNPS members.



## INDEX--Edward S. Carman

- Ahorne, Jeff, 100  
 Alpine Garden Society, England, 100-101  
*American Nurseryman*, 82, 86  
 American Rock Garden Society, Western Chapter, 90-92, 108; rock garden plants, 100-101, 126-128, 138  
 Anderson, John, 59  
 Arbegast, Mai, 49, 97
- Bancroft, Ruth, 106  
 Berkeley Horticultural Nursery, 105, 115  
 Bernstein, Ralph, 79  
 bonsai, 91-92  
 Brickell, Chris, 61, 95, 98  
 Brokaw Nursery, 53  
 Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 76, 82-83, 91  
 Browse, Philip McMillan, 56-57, 97-98  
 Bucharth Gardens, Victoria, 96  
 Burr, Charles, 6, 48, 90, 121
- California Academy of Sciences, 90  
 California Association of Nurserymen (Peninsula Chapter), history: 6-8, 13, 28ff-38, 112-115, 121-122; membership, 38; Pacific Coast Nurseryman of the Year award, 39; participation, 40; Strybing Arboretum, 90; "Choose Horticulture," 124-125  
 California Horticultural Society, participation, awards, 39-40, 87-88; travel, 66; 78ff-82, 86-87, 107-108; *Pacific Horticulture*, 88-90, 94-95  
 Campbell, Eleanor Jean. See Carman, Jean.  
 California Native Plant Society, 93  
 California Nursery, Niles, 29, 122  
 California Packing Company (CPC), 8  
 Campbell, Alvin, 21  
 Cannington College, 97, 102-103  
 cans, pots, 10-12  
 Carman and Weltz families, 1-5, 15-20  
 Carman, Ed: Army, 80th Infantry Division, 22-26; photography, 22-26, 93-95; community volunteer activities, 116-119; education, 22, 27-28, 67, 112; house, house moving, 33, 119-120; travel, 55ff-65, 96; troughs, 11, 138-139  
 Carman, Hugh, 1ff-14, 27ff-55  
 Carman, Jean, 26, 55ff-65, 111-113, 132  
 Carman's Nursery, Bascom Avenue, 5ff-14, 27ff-40; catalogue, 69, 130-131; marketing, 45, 52; Mozart Avenue, since 1970, 41ff-77, 111ff-141  
 Chambers, Diane, 131, 141  
 Chatto, Beth, 72, 76-77  
 Christensen, Juel, 90  
 Church, Thomas D., 33, 42, 46  
 Clarke, W.B., 71, 73  
 Coates, Leonard, Nursery, 6, 29, 83  
 Collett, Ray, 99  
 Cordes, Lowell, 97  
 Coulter, Johnny, 79, 99  
 county agricultural commissioner, 35  
 Crane, Kathy, 106
- daphne, 61  
 Davies, Trevor (Duncan and Davies, New Zealand), 32-33, 41-42, 46ff-53, 56, 65, 73, 138  
 Dennisen, George, 4, 15  
 Dillon, Don (Four Winds Citrus Growers, Fremont), 98  
 Dodd, Dorothy, 15, 20  
 Domoto, Toichi, 17, 34-36, 71ff-76, 109

Dunmire, Dick, 31, 66, 77, 79, 116  
 dymondia, 60-61, 136

Edwards, John, 79-80  
 Evans, Alfred, 64-65

Filoli, 71, 74, 96, 106, 127  
 Foothill College, 125

Garden Conservancy, 101, 106-107,  
 127  
 genetic diversity, gene pools, 102-  
 103  
 Golden Monterey pine, cypress, 43,  
 58-59  
 Goldsmith Seeds, Gilroy, 54  
 Griffiths, Trevor, 56

Hall, Brett, 99  
 Hartman, Ray, 83-85  
 Hawkins, Lester, 89-90  
 Hayward, CA, 3, 16-17  
 Herb Society, 102; herbs, 102-104  
 Herz, Joanne, 119  
 Hesketh, Cathy, 97  
 Hildreth, Richard, 97  
 Hill, Madeleine, 102  
 Hillyer, Harold, 61-62, 72, 95  
 Hines Nursery, 82, 84, 86-87  
 Home Depot, 105, 123  
 Hutchison, Paul, 136  
 hydrangea, 69

Ingerson, Frank, 4, 15  
 International Plant Propagators  
 Society, 86, 98  
 Isenberg, Gerda, 63

Jackson, Joan (San Jose Mercury),  
 77

Japanese Nursery, 36  
 Japanese nurserymen, tomato growing,  
 8-9, 12, 36-37

Jio, S.H., Nursery, 36  
 Johns, Marjorie, 15, 20  
 Johnson, George, 64-65

Kaplan, Frieda, 49  
 Kelaidis, Panayoti, 66  
 Kipping, Ted, 108  
 Kitazawa Nursery, 36  
 kiwi, 32ff-55, 59-60  
 Kiwi Growers Association, 52, 93  
 Knoll, Elsa Uppman, 32, 116  
 Kourak, Bob, 80

Lane, Bill and Jean, 99  
 lewisia, 68-69  
 Lexington, and Alma, California, 3,  
 15-19  
 liquid amber, 84  
 lobelia, 59, 126-127  
 Logee's Greenhouses, 59, 126  
 Los Gatos area, 2ff-19, 111ff-120;  
 High School, 20-21, 111-112

Martin, George, 33, 42ff-47, 50-51  
 Matsubara, Mr., nurseryman, Fresno,  
 72  
 McClendon, Betty, 18  
 McClintock, Elizabeth, 90  
 McDonald, Mamie, 18  
 Monrovia Nursery, 43, 82, 84, 86-87  
 Morris, Dave and Doug, 118

National Committee for Conservation  
 of Plants, 102  
 native plant growers, 14, 70  
 Nelson Nursery, San Leandro, 104  
 Northwest Horticultural Society, 88  
 nursery business, World War II, 8.  
 See California Association of  
 Nurserymen, history

Oka, Sam, 37  
 Olbrich, Marshall, 89-90  
 Onishi, S., Nursery, 36-37

- Orchard Supply, nursery, 6-7, 30, 105
- Pacific Coast Nurseryman, 86
- Pacific Nurseries, Colma, 29, 97
- Page Mill Nursery, 32, 116
- Pearce, Owen, 89
- Peatt, Lyle, 60
- perennials, 70, 75
- pest plants, 82-83
- pesticides, 13, 33-35, 132-133
- plant propagation, 68-69, 129ff-141
- Poniatoff, Alexander, 107
- Quarry Hill Arboretum, Sebastapol, 85-86
- Raabe, Robert, 115
- Ratcliff, Evelyn Paine, 4
- Redwood City Nursery, 82
- Reiter, Victor and Carla, 66, 91, 107-108, 126-128, 137
- rhodohypoxis, 55-58, 139
- Rider, Marie, 1, 15, 18, 20
- Robinson, Alan, 57
- Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley, 56-57, 61, 95-96
- Santa Cruz Arboretum, 98-100
- Saratoga Horticultural Foundation, 56, 61, 83-85, 96-97
- Sartorette, Charlie, 119
- Saso's Herb Garden Nursery, 137
- Schenone, Lou, 97
- Schmidt Nursery (Bill Schmidt), Palo Alto, 48-49, 78
- Schramm, Nancy, 25, 55, 77, 109-110, 131-132, 141
- seed companies, 13-14, 54
- shipping, 44-45, 50-52, 58
- Sierra Azul, Nursery, 100
- Smith, Nevin, 100
- soil, 54-55, 139-140
- Solomone, Joe, 97
- Southern California Horticultural Society, 88
- Stebbins, Peggy, 32, 116
- Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco, 90
- Sullivan, Richard, 123-124
- Sunset magazine, 31, 93-94, 116
- Tanaka Nursery, 36
- Tevis Estate, 3
- Tolmach, Lucy, 74
- Truax, Margaret, 32, 116
- Uenaka, Its, 79
- University of California, Davis, 85-86
- Valder, Peter, 73
- van Rensselaer, Maunsell, 96-97
- Van Klaveran, Abe, 64
- Verey, Rosemary, 72, 76-77
- Walther, Eric, 90
- water gardens, 70, 81
- Waters, George, 88-89
- Wertheim, Ernest, 82
- Western Garden Book, 116
- Western Hills Nursery, Occidental, 89, 124
- Western Horticultural Society, 78ff-82, 86-88, 126
- White, Dennis, 97
- Williams, Ray, Watsonville, 89
- Wilson, J.H., 38
- wisteria, 46, 71-76, 97, 102-103, 133-134, 136, 138
- Woolworth's, 122-123, 125
- Work, Tricia, 131
- Wych, Maggie, 124
- Yamagami's Nursery, 125
- Yerba Buena Nursery, Woodside, 106
- Yoshimura, Yuji, 76, 91-92
- Zuke, Judy, 71



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