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Ruth Reid and Kent Hyde Collection

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RUTH REID AND KENT HYDE COLLECTION



Ruth Reid and Kent Hyde, Santa Cruz, 1951

WORKING WITH the collections at the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives is a unique experience, each collection has its own sense of itself, serving as a window into individual lives, formative political moments and the growth and development of the lesbian community. One of the first collections that I processed was the Ruth Reid and Kent Hyde collection. Ruth and Kent were both writers, life-long intellectuals, weavers and lovers. Their collection covers the duration of their relationship of over forty years. What makes this collection so rich is the breadth of materials which includes a large amount of correspondence between Ruth and Kent and an array of their friends and family. These letters range in subject matter and through their reading one can get a sense of each woman's particular sense of humor, specific interests and professional tone.

Throughout their relationship, Kent passed as a man, working in research laboratories and hospitals. Ruth took care of Kent's mother and kept writing. Their political consciousness evolved as they reacted to the dramatic changes in political and social realities in the United States. Also included in the collection is an illuminating interview, conducted by volunteers at the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives upon Ruth's donation of the collection. After reflecting upon her and Kent's life together, she also delves into the relief and sense of belonging she found once she actively sought out a lesbian community. Turning her efforts to activism in her later years she seems surprised at her and Kent's own aversion to gay and lesbian life. Their collection serves to witness the intricate emotional, political and intellectual lives of these women while simultaneously reminding us



Ruth Reid 1951

West Coast Lesbian Collections

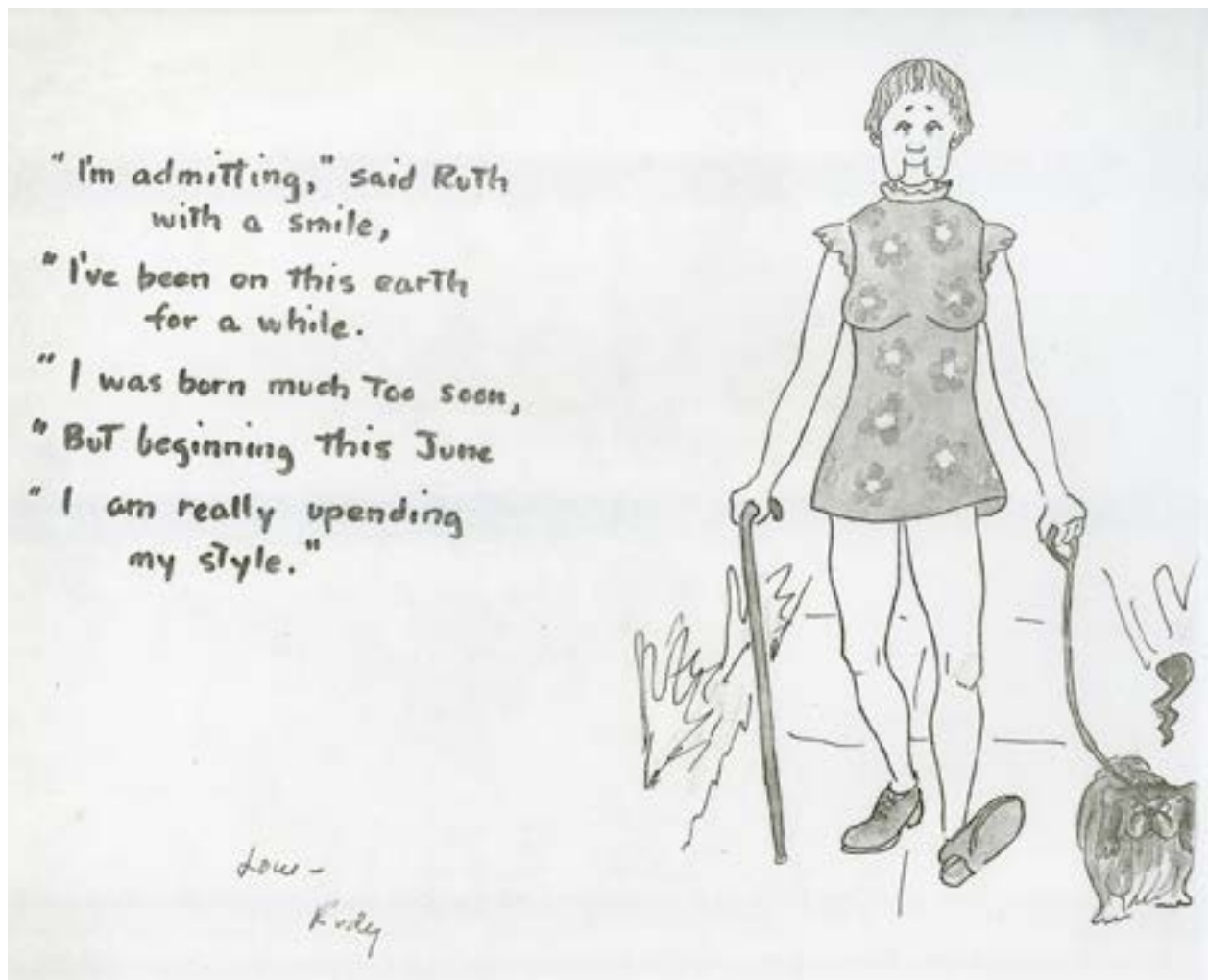


Elizabeth "Kent" Hyde 1938



Materials from the Ruth Reid and Kent Hyde Collection include photos, newspaper clippings, articles, writings, and correspondence from their life together.

MAKING INVISIBLE HISTORIES VISIBLE
collection notes from the NEH/Mazer project



that in order to understand the impact of change, we must look to the words of the people who weathered that change themselves. The Ruth Reid and Kent Hyde Collection has already been requested by researchers and Ruth herself used the interview done by the June L. Mazer Archives as an aid in writing her autobiography, which mainly focused on her relationship with Kent.

– Stacy Wood

Stacy Wood is a graduate student in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA and a graduate student researcher working on "Making Invisible Histories Visible: Preserving the Legacy of Lesbian Feminist Activism and Writing in Los Angeles," a three-year project partially funded by the NEH to arrange, describe, digitize, and make physically and electronically accessible two major clusters of Mazer collections related to West Coast lesbian/feminist activism and writing since the 1930s.