ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

MICHAEL GABALDON

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STATUS OF INTERVIEWS:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH

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STATEMENT OF DONATION
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Michael H. Gabaldon

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INTERVIEWER: _____
Erik Allan Stovey

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A note on editorial conventions. In the text of these interviews, information in parentheses, ( ), is actually on the tape. Information in brackets, [ ], has been added to the tape either by the editor to clarify meaning or at the request of the interviewee in order to correct, enlarge, or clarify the interview as it was originally spoken. Words have sometimes been struck out by editor or interviewee in order to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition. In the case of strikeouts, that material has been printed at 50% density to aid in reading the interviews but assuring that the struckout material is readable.

The transcriber and editor also have removed some extraneous words such as false starts and repetitions without indicating their removal. The meaning of the interview has not been changed by this editing.

While we attempt to conform to most standard academic rules of usage (see *The Chicago Manual of Style*), we do not conform to those standards in this interview for individual's titles which then would only be capitalized in the text when they are specifically used as a title connected to a name, e.g., "Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton" as opposed to "Gale Norton, the secretary of the interior;" or "Commissioner John Keys" as opposed to "the commissioner, who was John Keys at the time." The convention in the Federal government is to capitalize titles always. Likewise formal titles of acts and offices are capitalized but abbreviated usages are not, e.g., Division of Planning as opposed to

"planning;" the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, as opposed to "the 1992 act."

The convention with acronyms is that if they are pronounced as a word then they are treated as if they are a word. If they are spelled out by the speaker then they have a hyphen between each letter. An example is the Agency for International Development's acronym: said as a word, it appears as AID but spelled out it appears as A-I-D; another example is the acronym for State Historic Preservation Officer: SHPO when said as a word, but S-H-P-O when spelled out.

Introduction

In 1988, Reclamation began to create a history program. While headquartered in Denver, the history program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

One component of Reclamation's history program is its oral history activity. The primary objectives of Reclamation's oral history activities are: preservation of historical data not normally available through Reclamation records (supplementing already available data on the whole range of Reclamation's history); making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

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For additional information about Reclamation's history program see:
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Oral History Interviews
Michael Gabaldon

Storey: Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Michael R. Gabaldon, Director of Policy Management and Technical Services in the Denver Office, in his office, on December 7, 2004, at about one o'clock in the afternoon. This is tape one.

Well, Mr. Gabaldon let me ask where you were born, and raised, and educated, and how you ended up at Reclamation?

Early Life

Gabaldon: Okay. I was born in Belen, New Mexico. That's a small town just south of Albuquerque, about thirty miles south of Albuquerque. In fact, it's known as the Hub-City of New Mexico, not because it's a hub of business, or anything like that, but just because it's–well, for two reasons. One, it's the geographic center of New Mexico, pretty close to it, and the other reason is the Sante Fe Railroad had a pretty good station there in the past. It has since then kind of diminished, and not as big as it was at one time. But, a railroad hub, and a lot of directions, railroad

tracks went out of that, that place. So, that's where I was born. And, I was, I grew up in that place, was there until I went to college, when I was eighteen years old. And, I'll get to the college thing.

Let me talk a little bit more about the Belen, New Mexico thing. I did grow up on a small farm. It wasn't a big farm by any means, but I mean it was my father's livelihood. And, my parents were, were somewhat older than traditional parents, when I was born. My father was fifty-two. My mother was forty-three. So, when I was born I had a whole bunch of brothers and sisters that already had their own kids. So, it was, I was born with a, I was the last in that family, but I had a lot of nephews and nieces that were my age. So, since my brothers and sisters are so much older than I was, it was really my nieces and nephews that I kind of hung out with, went to school with. I was closer to them than really my brothers and sisters that are older. So, not to get into a whole lot of family detail, there.

Storey: No. That's fine.

Gabaldon: Went to–another fact of where I was born, it was about, less than a mile as the crow flies from the

Rio Grande there, and the farm that my father had was a little bit of corn, a few cows, and a couple of pigs. That kind of thing, not a, not a big farm but it was fun growing up in that environment. And, we were a Spanish-speaking family. I didn't learn English, actually, until the first grade. That's when, you know, going to grade school. In fact, I remember my sisters, older sisters, well all of them are older, teaching me how to, you know, at least ask how to go to the restroom in English, you know, because that was pretty important in going into the first grade, being that I didn't know a whole lot of English. So. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, I got into the grade school and, of course, learned English as I went. Actually, I always joke that I'm still learning English, even after all these years.

Student of the Month

But, so I grew up in that environment. Went through that whole system, grade, public school system there. Got to high school and my goals in life were to be a, one of two things. I was going to either be a truck driver, which three out of my six brothers were, were truck drivers. So, I thought, that's kind of fun. They do a pretty good job of that. Or, probably the other three of

my six brothers were mechanics. So, I was either going to be a truck driver or a mechanic. When I was a senior in high school I was Student of the Month. And, this is something that your home room nominates you for, if you're doing pretty darn good in your grades. And, they select one boy and one girl to be the students of that month, during the whole school year. So, in being Student of the Month, you get interviewed by the local newspaper, and the *Belen* [*News*] *Bulletin* was the local paper.

So, myself and this girl who was my co-Student of the Month, went to the newspaper to get interviewed. And, of course, they're asking, "Okay, what do you–wow this great, quite and accomplishment, what are you going to do when you grow up?" basically. And, for whatever reason I had heard this term civil engineer, and I really didn't even know what a civil engineer did, because again I didn't have any major goals to even go to college. But, in that interview I said, "Well, I'm thinking maybe civil engineering." I just thought it sounded, sounded good. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, that's what came out in the article, and there was, you know, had our pictures in there with a little write-up of it. And, that's kind of a footnote. I'll come back to that

as I tell you how I ended up in civil engineering.

Trained in Water Technology

But we, my mother, at the time, was working for kind of a housekeeper, keeping, watching these couples' kids. I don't know what you call that. Well, this guy that she worked for headed up some programs in the state of New Mexico that, that would encourage high school students to go and seek higher education, et cetera. So, he came to me and he said, "Hey, there's this program at New Mexico State University that the state of New Mexico is sponsoring and paying people's tuition, and also paying them $90 a week to go to this training. It's a two-year program in water technology. And, the state of New Mexico had quite a shortage of water, water experts, in wastewater and water technology. They just had a shortage in the whole state. So, in cooperation with the state of New Mexico they developed this program where they would grant people a two-year degree, pay tuition, et cetera.

So, this guy told me about that, and I'm thinking, "Hey, ninety dollars a week, that doesn't sound too bad." This was, like I said,

when I was a senior in high school. So, I signed up for that program, and started there at New Mexico State in Las Cruces, and it, they teach you everything from hands-on cranking valves, and tearing pumps apart. I mean, the nuts and bolts of water, water delivery, and water technology, and gearing you up to go work for a city, a municipality, down the road. And, with that came some certification. The state of New Mexico requires a one through four certification to be a water operator or a wastewater operator at wastewater plants, or water plants, drinking water plants. And, so with this, you get your two-year degree. You have to, you waive the experience part of going to go test in the state of New Mexico, which required, I think, a four-year experience before you could even go test, for the Level 1-4, four being the highest. So, we come out with this two-year degree, go test for the Level 3 test, and then you're certified, then you can go run a wastewater plant for the city of Albuquerque, or whatever.

So, through those two years, I remember my first semester. I was just there to get the $90 week and kind of (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) coasting. And, my G-P-A came in like at barely a 2.0. I mean, I just barely, barely got by. And, this other

guy that I was, kind of befriended, well he came in with a 4.0. I mean, he had a perfect grade in that first semester. And, I thought, "Hey, I can do better than this guy, you know." So, next semester I really kicked in there, and made the Dean's List the following three semesters, ending up with a two-year degree.

Went to Work in Gallup, New Mexico

And, I had a couple of job offers from that, and actually had about three or four, but a couple that I was considering. One was in the city of Gallup. They wanted me to go run their water lab, and their wastewater plant, that were actually in the same place then. The other offer I had was in Glorietta, New Mexico, which is a small town just northeast of Santa Fe. They're in the mountains, just a beautiful place. And so, I went in and interviewed with these two entities. They kind of wined and dined me. Back then what I considered wining and dining. Bought me lunch at the cafeteria, that kind of thing. No wine. And, had solid offers from both of them. At the time, my girlfriend was, happened to get a job in Gallup, New Mexico, so, you know, I did the math there and ended up taking the Gallup job instead of the (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Glorietta job.

In the Glorietta job, I would be running the whole facility. It's a small place, a small town, and I was somewhat intimidated by that, thinking, "Man. I don't know if I could just step in to run the whole thing." Over in Gallup, which was of course a much bigger town, there I would be working under a civil engineer, under the guidance of the city engineer. So, I took that job. Hated Gallup. I, I just did not like that place at all. And, there I was working under a civil engineer. This guy said, "Hey, you've got a pretty good knack for this stuff. You're pretty darn good at this stuff. I mean, have you ever considered going and getting an engineering degree?"

And, by the way, the two-year degree, at New Mexico State, had a lot of courses in the civil engineering department. A lot of the chemistry, we had to do a lot of the water sanitation-type engineering (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) courses, that, that were just part of the curriculum in this other two, two-year program. So, in talking with this guy there in Gallup, he encouraged me to maybe go back to school and go get my civil engineering degree. And, I thought, "Hey, that doesn't sound like a bad idea. I kind of don't like this town anyway." So, I

signed up for classes at University of New Mexico, in Albuquerque. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, got accepted in their civil engineering program, and that's how I got into civil engineering at University of New Mexico.

Entered Civil Engineering Department at the University of New Mexico

And, it always tied back to maybe what I told the *News Bulletin*, when I was a senior in high school, that I was going to be a civil engineer. Now, I don't now if that's coincidence, or it was some kind of a, something planted in my mind that ended me seeking that kind of degree. So, got into the University of New Mexico and thought, for a while there, I was really liking electrical engineering, and thinking, "Well, maybe I want to go in that direction." But, when it came down to it, what I liked, and what I wanted to do was civil engineering, the building things, being in the mud, being in the dirt, and not being in front of a terminal, not being in front of a computer all day long. So, kind of ironic that that's, in management that's somewhat where we end up, you know, in a desk, even though I didn't really want to do that, and that's why I chose civil

engineering.

I finished that degree in four years, with decent grades. I mean, in New Mexico State I was doing the Dean's List, et cetera, but at, in my civil engineering degree I still graduated slightly over a 3.0. So, it wasn't too bad. And, got to my senior year in civil engineering, and we start interviewing. I think most colleges do this, where they bring in recruiters to the university. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, we usually start interviewing in the, not the last semester of your senior year, but the next to the last semester just to start getting experience in interviewing. And, they kind of encourage us to do that. So, so we set up interviews. And, there's people coming in, you know, from Shell Oil, from–I mean, all engineering firms, construction, Bechtel. And, a lot of folks just set up interviews at universities, and I'm sure University of New Mexico's not the only one. I mean, I know it's not the only one.

And, and as we're signing up for interviews, one caught my attention, and that was the Bureau of Reclamation that was coming in to interview folks. So, I signed up for that one. We had a, in my fluid mechanics class, taught by a Professor Martinez–not later to become

Commissioner [Eluid L.] Martinez,[1] another Martinez–but on of the textbooks that we used in there was a *Bureau of Reclamation Manual*, you know, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) a water manual. And, we also had the *Water Measurement Manual*. So, so that was the first time I even heard of Bureau of Reclamation. You know, growing up I've heard of, I heard of the Corp of Engineers, and I've heard of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, as far as water-related organizations, but the Bureau of Reclamation was never anything I was, I'm sure I heard about it, but it never registered. So, it was only in text books and fluid mechanic classes that I, I said, "Oh, this is a Bureau of Reclamation book. That's pretty interesting. They must be quite the organization." So, forwarding to the recruiters coming in, I was pretty impressed in the fluid mechanics textbook, and et cetera.

1. Eluid L. Martinez was commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation from 1995 to 2001 and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Eluid L. Martinez, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interview conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, during 1996 to 2001, in Washington, D.C. and Santa Fe, New Mexico, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2006, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

Interviewed with Bureau of Reclamation

So, I had Professor Martinez, whose son had, had either worked with the Bureau of Reclamation, or anyway, knew about it. He's, he had told me, "Hey, Bureau of Reclamation isn't, isn't a bad place to consider working in, you know, down the road here. So, if you're looking for what to do, and the kind of things that interest you." So, when they came into recruit I thought, "Wow. I didn't even know they were coming in," and saw their name on the list. So, I signed up for that one. And, the people that came in to interview me were from the Southwest Region. This was back in 1980, so we still had the Amarillo Office. And, for whatever reason, they were the ones that had sent out a recruiting team for the Bureau of Reclamation. And, it was their H-R [Human Resources] person, and I don't remember her name right now. Their Administrative Assistant, I don't remember her name. I still have it in my notes. But, she interviewed me along with an engineer from that office. And, they, it was a pretty darn good interview. And, of course, I learned even more about the Bureau of Reclamation, in that interview.

And, got to then my last semester of engineering and still hadn't had any solid job offers. Well, I hadn't really started applying yet. I had just done the interviews, which then you have to submit an application after the fact. So, then I started getting the, putting my head to putting applications together, applied for the Bureau of Reclamation, and applied for the Sante Fe Railroad, applied with the Mountain Bell, which at the time A-T&T they were called Mountain Bell, at least in the (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) New Mexico area that's what they were called. I don't know if they were a branch, or what, but, but–and a couple of other applications that I had out there. I only mentioned those three is because those are the three that I ended up considering going to work for. I had offers from them, and I had a couple of other offers. Veteran's Administration was another place I had applied for that had an offer. And, those three that I was–this is leading to how I ended up with the Bureau of Reclamation–those were the three that I narrowed it down to: Santa Fe Railroad, Mountain Bell, and Bureau of Reclamation.

Sante Fe Railroad, which was big in my hometown there, growing up, and a lot of my uncles worked for the Santa Fe Railroad, was a,

I mean, a good job. I mean, you worked for the Santa Fe Railroad in my hometown growing up, you were, you know, you were somebody. So, I interviewed with them. I applied for them. Then I interviewed with them after. I mean, the Bureau of Reclamation I interviewed during college. The Santa Fe Railroad, it was right after college, or during my last few weeks of college. And, they ended up offering me a job. And, with them you have to be a surveyor for a year, before you could go do engineering. You had to do a solid year of surveying. I mean, solid surveying. And, I thought, "well, you know, I want to go be an engineer. I don't want to be a surveyor." So, I thought, "No, they're out. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I don't want to be a surveyor."

And so, Mountain Bell also gave me, offered me a job. They interviewed me, by the way, video-conference-wise. It was a (Storey: Really?) yeah. I guess, I mean, they were kind of on the cutting edge. I guess since they were a telephone company. I interviewed with a lady who was in Phoenix, and I was in Albequerque. And, you know, I was in front of a screen, and there was a camera on me, and I saw her, and she was seeing me. And, that was a pretty interesting interview. But, got that job offer. That

job was in Tucson. And, I thought, "I don't want to go to Tucson. You know, it's too hot down there." And so then the Bureau of Reclamation, got a job offer from them. And, the first offer, I say first because there was actually two offers from the Bureau of Reclamation, the first one was in Duchesne.

Storey: In Utah?

Took the Reclamation Job in Montrose Colorado

Gabaldon: Yeah. They wanted me to go out there and be a construction inspector, which is, of course, what I wanted to do. I mean, I wanted to get into construction. So, as I was kicking those around, I looked at the map, and looked at where Duchesne was, and I thought, "Man. I don't know about this." About a week later, I get another call from the Bureau of Reclamation, and they were offering me a job in Montrose, Colorado. So, I had never heard of Montrose, and I looked at a map again, and there's Montrose, Colorado. And, my thinking is, "Wow, you know what?" I was big-time into skiing at that time. I mean, I was skiing Taos, and Santa Fe, and Sandia in Albuquerque. And, you know, I'd venture up to Durango to ski at

Purgatory, and occasionally go up to Aspen. It was all during college. So, I looked at a map, saw Montrose, Colorado, and saw Telluride. I saw Aspen. I saw Purgatory. And I said, "Hey. That's where I'm going." (Laugh) You know, so I thought, "Hey, that's a, that's, I'm going to go work for this Bureau of Reclamation."

So, I took a drive to Montrose. And, now I graduated in December, from college, so it was off, off-semester just when I started. (Storey: Uh huh.) So it just–so, I got this offer, you know, probably in December. So, I thought, I better go check this Montrose out. So, I drove up there, myself and my wife-to-be, at the time. We drove to Montrose, and drove over Red Mountain Pass in this fierce snowstorm, white-out snowstorm, and got to Durango. And before we headed up the mountain, people were telling us, "Hey. You better get chains, and, you know, that's pretty tough going there." So, we made it over the first mountain, got to Silverton, and I thought, "I better buy some chains," you know. So, we chained up and made it the rest of the way. And, it was at night, and like I said, whiteout-type conditions. Spent a few days in Montrose. And, on my way back, over that Red Mountain Pass, I thought, I couldn't believe what I went over. I would have

not gone over that in that snowstorm, you know, when I was seeing it in daylight.

Rotation Engineering Program

But, after consideration and knowing what the job was going to be, they were, they had direct-hire authority back then. They were hiring a lot of engineers right out of college, you know, into this Rotation Engineering Program. And, I, I started there in Montrose. A whole bunch of guys that are out there right now that, at least a handful–Ed Vidmar, who is up in Provo now, and Ed Warner, who is in Grand Junction, Bill Ballard, who is, who works in construction now, he's an inspector working out of Tularosa on a desalting plant. There was about eight or nine of us that started in that office that are still, a lot of them are still with Reclamation, and have moved up very successfully in (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) the organization.

And, I was pretty excited just to go work in construction. Ridgway Dam was where they put a whole bunch of us there in that Rotation Program. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) That Rotation Program was a good program. I'm glad to hear that we're still doing it, here and there. It's not as

widely used as it was back then. But it, got to Montrose and had a number of assignments that I could pick from. And, I'm including going to the Regional Office at Salt Lake, to you know, inspection, construction, to designs and estimates, to–it was a great program. And, got to do a little bit of all of those, and ultimately ended up in the field engineering, and a Grouting Inspector. I was the Grouting Inspector at Ridgway Dam.[2]

And, now that, Brit, to answer your, I think we've answered your question of how I got into Reclamation. I was going to start going into a little bit more of what I did in (Storey: Go ahead.) Ridgway. But, I don't know if you want me to continue (Storey: No, go ahead.) if there are any questions up til now, on the getting into it?

Storey: Well, I have questions, but we can always go back (Gabaldon: Okay.) to those.

Gabaldon: At Ridgway Dam, you know, I was hired on a lateral, 7-9-11. A lot of engineers were coming in 5-7-9, or 7-9-11, depending on your G-P-A.

2. Ridgway Dam and Reservoir are the primary features of the Dallas Creek Project that serves lands along the Uncompahgre River in Colorado. For mor information, see Wm. Joe Simonds "Dallas Creek Project," Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Reclamation, 1999, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

So, I happened to get the 7-9-11. So, as a GS-7, and in six months I moved up to a nine. And, at that nine level, they were going to–well they put me–we had, at Ridgway Dam we had round-the-clock operations out there, as in any major construction outfit. They put me as a Shift Supervisor on grouting. And, we had two shifts, at first. And, they were twelve-hour shifts. They worked thirteen hours, by the time you finished with the, you know, drive out there and drive back to Montrose. It was about twenty miles from Montrose.

Grouting Inspector at Ridgway Dam

So, at thirteen-hour shifts we had the 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shift, starting out, and I was the highscaler, the rope guy. They put me on the ropes. This was before I was a Shift Supervisor. And, so we had the, I was getting hazard pay. Okay, I was a GS-9, making, doing a whole bunch of overtime, you know, because thirteen hours, and we're working seven days a week. And, we also had hazard pay, which is twenty-five percent. I was working the night differential, the whole shift, 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., there was night differential ten percent, on top of the twenty-five percent, on top of the overtime. And,

man I made a lot of money that summer. It took me years to make that salary that I did that first year, because of all those add-ons. And, so my wife was pretty excited about, about that money I was bringing home, and that kind of thing.

But, really enjoyed that work. And we, after a full summer there, and into the winter a little bit, we moved from the right abutment to the left abutment. When we moved to the left abutment, we finally went to three shifts. And, that's when they made me a Shift Supervisor. And, the shift, or the crew, was about five people per crew. And so, that was my first taste of any kind of supervision, any kind of managing people, et cetera. And that was fairly early on, you know, probably a year into it, where I was running this crew. And, we had the swing shift, which wasn't bad, and we had the, since I was the green Shift Supervisor, the other two shift supervisors were pretty seasoned, I was the green Shift Supervisor so they put a, more of the seasoned crew with me, so, you know.

Reclamation does some pretty good things there. And, just enjoyed the heck out of that work. I mean, everybody would say, "Man, grouting. That's the, that's the worst thing you

want to draw. You want to be a Concrete Inspector, or you want to be a Earthwork Inspector. You know, but you don't want to be the Grout Inspector, because you're out there in the mud everyday. And, I mean, you always got to be wearing the boots." And, I loved that stuff. I loved that stuff.

Pete Aberle, Reclamation's Grouting Expert

You know, being in the mud reminds me of–a little short sideline here is Pete Aberle, as you know, was Reclamation's grouting god, if you will. I mean, he is world renown, not just in this country, but world renown as a grouting expert. And, still doing consulting there, and still being tapped from all sources to still do some grouting consulting. Well he, he went out there during one of these, while I was a Shift Supervisor out there. And, we were working with a construction company that was Hayward Baker was the subcontractor on grouting. Hayward Baker out of, I believe they were out of Massachusetts or something. Hayward Baker had this new fandangled, fancy way of monitoring grout injection, and it was propriety-type stuff. They didn't want anybody to know how they were doing this work. They didn't want anybody

to–and the contracts were signed such as that, that you know, we couldn't be, the Bureau of Reclamation couldn't share their technology, et cetera.

So, Pete Aberle was out there just checking the work out there. He was out there in the mud. And, they have these grout headers that was pumping grout into, into the ground. And, Aberle was out there taking photos. And the, the construction company head guy comes out there and he says, "Hey Mike, this guy can't be taking pictures out there. This is stuff that's propriety," et cetera. So, he and I go out there, "Hey, Pete, you know, this guy says you can't be taking pictures, you know." And, Pete Aberle just kind of looks at him, and takes a couple more pictures, goes to the next grout header, takes (Laugh) Alberle just kind of, "Hey, you can't tell me what to, what we can do or can't do. You know, this is our project, you know." And he was right. You know, Pete Aberle was right. So he was, I love that guy. He's just a very, a very interesting guy. I don't know if you've had much experience with him?

Storey: I've never met him.

Gabaldon: Character. You might interview him someday. You'll get some very colorful, colorful interview from him. And, there's no question about that. So, . . .

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BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. DECEMBER 7, 2004.

Storey: Just start right back.

Grouting Inspector, "Best Job I Ever Had"

Gabaldon: Okay. Again, like I was saying, the grouting inspection was one that was not desirable. And, I loved that. And, enjoyed the heck out of it, and would do it again in a heartbeat. In fact, I would say that that's, in twenty-four years with the Bureau of Reclamation, I still say that's the best job I ever had. I just, it was fun, just enjoyed the heck out of it. There's a close second, of the jobs I've done, and even a close third, but that one, (Laugh) that one's at the, that, that stuff we'll talk at another time.

The Santa Fe Railroad, when they said you got to be a surveyor for a year, interesting enough, on down times from between Phase I, and Phase II in construction, the Bureau of

Reclamation, after grouting, and after some of these other things, they'd always–we had five survey crews going in just the Upper Colorado Region back then, and they were still looking for crews. So, what they would with us new engineers is they put us in a survey crew. And, you know, we'd be on a, surveying out there on Ridgway Dam, or go to Grand Valley on the Highline Canal. And, I thought, "Man this is great stuff, too. I love surveying." I thought, "Maybe I should have taken that job with the Sante Fe Railroad. This surveying stuff isn't too bad." So, I actually did about, about a year's worth of surveying, intermittently, through down times when they put these crews together. And, again, started off as a rodman. In surveying, you start as a rodman, then you graduate to the notekeeper, then you get to the instrument, then you get to the crew foreman. So, I was able to do all those, all those duties.

Storey: Tell me about, more about each of those, if you would?

Reclamation Survey Crew

Gabaldon: Yeah. The rodman is literally the guy who holds the rod, you know, and you got a got on an

instrument getting, if we're doing elevations, trying to get the elevation, or doing contours. A number of things. The surveyor, survey instrument is somewhat leveled. I mean just Survey 101. That instrument's leveled to the world. And so, you can shoot an elevation on a rod over here, and get a number, then turn your level over here, and you have your rod that's now, you know, in a hole, so you get a different reading. And, I mean, basically you can take that difference and you know that the elevation difference is three feet, or whatever. And, you always start off at a benchmark, a known benchmark that's, that are throughout the United States. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So that's, I mean, just elevation-type surveying. There's a whole lot of other types of surveys.

But, the rodman is the guy who is out there just holding the rod. You got to hold it very level. And, you got to hang onto it until the guy gets the reading and then gives you the signal that you can move on to your next point. Then the notekeeper is, again you have a survey book, and all the readings are being tabulated. And, you know, you get a forward reading, you get a back reading, to keep your reference going as you're moving forward on a line. Let's say you're

bringing a canal elevation, or something, so you want to get the slope of that canal. So, you're always getting a back shot, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) you know, wherever you started on this reference point. So, you start there. You get a back shot, spin it around to the front shot, get that one. The guy in the back, well in most cases you'll have one guy. So, you get the back shot. You're the rodman. The guy shoots you. You then go around to the front shot. Then he reads you there, and you get the numbers then. instrument man picks up his stuff, [Beeping] goes ahead of you, shoots back on that one. That's when we bring in an elevation line, kind of a leapfrog deal.

And then you have the notekeeper that's keeping tabs of every, every reading you have out there, and even doing some calculations as you go. And, eventually you get to the, your elevation point. So, or you've brought in an elevation. The instrument man is doing just that, doing the reading, and you know, spinning around, setting the instrument, make sure it's level every time you set it up on the tripod, and make sure you're right over your reference point with a plumb bob. And then you have the crew leader that's just kind of running the crew and making sure things are getting done. (Storey: Uhm-

hmm.)

So, interesting work. I mean, that's just one aspect of surveying. I mean, there's a whole bunch of it. And, as I was going through that, we started graduating to some of the electronic type devices where now, instead of a rod you have a target. And, it's a mirror, a series of mirrors in there, and your instrument reads that, automatically calculates what that elevation is, you know, so you don't have to do a whole lot of the number crunching. And, it happened to be that I got experience on both types of, you know, the old guard, and then we were starting to get the new instruments.

Storey: The lasers?

Gabaldon: Lasers. Exactly. (Storey: Yeah.) We were starting to get the new, new lasers there in the Montrose Office. So, it's a, fun work. And, survey crews are just pretty crazy people too, you know. So, it's fun. So, I did a lot of that. And, there was a story I thought of in there that, that I just forgot about, but, on a survey. Anyway, did some of that. Oh, that's what it was. A little side story on grouting.

Blanket Grouting

We had, when I was a Shift Supervisor–grouting, you do, blanket grouting is one of the groutings we do. Basically you have a foundation on a dam that's got some cracks. It's not solid. So, you want to pump grout in it. And, grout is kind of a almost liquid concrete, and you're literally injecting it, pumping it into the ground. And, usually you're pumping it in here, and you know, thirty feet down there it's showing up, you know. So, it's time to stop grouting here, cap that one, move onto another one. And, it's one of the few things that, in construction inspection, in Reclamation, that the inspector has a lot of say. I mean, the inspector is usually on, let's say dirt work, or lets say rock work, you know, they're out there making sure the work's getting done, but, you're not really saying, "Hey, bring in this load over here, and bring . . ." the contractor's doing that. I mean, you know, they're looking at the specifications and it's pretty well dictated in the specs. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Grouting, you're going to hook up to, you set up a grid. You start in a hole over here, and depending on how much it takes, depending on how much your pressure starts backing up, you

then, the Bureau of Reclamation, the onsite inspector, makes the cut, whether, which hole to go to next. So, you have this grid out there and you're pumping here and it's taking and taking and taking. You could be on a hole for days. And then the contractor's love that. And, you start with different ratios in the mix. You start with a lighter mix. You could start to a, say a 8:1 mix, just to see what this hole's going to do. Then you . . .

Storey: Eight?

Gabaldon: Eight parts.

Storey: Parts?

Gabaldon: Water to cement.

Storey: Okay. So, it's very liquid?

Gabaldon: Right. Very liquid. And, there's grout mixers, et cetera. Then you, then you go down to maybe a 4:1 mix. If this thing's just taking and taking and taking then you say, "Okay, let's thicken it up a little bit." You start thickening it a little bit. And, you're watching the pressure on this header. And, as the pressure starts–and the

specifications, it specifies what pressure you're going to, you're done. If you get to a certain pressure, "Okay, that' not going to take anymore. Or, "we're going to start blowing things up, or something, you know." And, I don't remember what that number is, but–okay, so you start to an 8:1. Contractors don't like that, because they're getting paid by the sack of cement, you know, that's going into this mix.

Storey: Quantity? (Gabaldon: So, yeah.) That way we have a way of measuring?

Gabaldon: Yeah. Yeah. So, 8:1 mixes, 6:1 mixes, even 4:1s, the contractor is not liking that at all. So, they want to come off of that pretty soon. So, they're hoping that the inspector, you know, "Hey, come on. We've been on this one for hours, or we've been on this one for days, let's go to a thicker mix." So, you thicken it down. The contractor's love the 1:1. That's usually where you're going to end up in a grout situation. We don't get any thicker than that, at least not when I was working at Ridgway Dam. So, contractors will pump 1:1 all day long. They're making money on that one. And, they're loving that.

Testing to Determine if Grouting is Necessary

Well, when we got to the left abutment–what we do is we drill a hole, a fifty-foot hole, and we back out. We water test it. And, we water test it at two stages, at twenty-five feet from bottom. We put what we call a "packer" in there, that basically seals the hole. And, we pump water into it and see how much pressure it's taking. Well, if it's not taking pressure that means you got to grout it. If it's, if the pressure goes up in a hurry you're done. "Hey, this hole doesn't need grout. It's pretty, pretty tight." So, you test that. If it's a taker, what we call a "taker," then you start your grouting sequence until it refusal, until it hits refusal, which is this pressure whatever it is. You do that. You let that hole–let's say it was a taker. You let it sit for, I don't know, a number of days. Then, you come back to the top stage, test that.

Meanwhile, you've moved on to other holes. Then you come back to the top stage. You test that, and do the same thing. And, there's different sizes of holes. I mean, there's different, we've done thirty-footers, but the story that I'm getting to, that's taking me a while to get there was a fifty-foot hole. And, we go in there.

We test, we test the bottom and it was, it was tight. It wasn't a taker. So, we had a shift change right then. The, you know, you got to be careful at shift changes. So, my crew was coming in. And so, you know, they pass on the notes, et cetera, and they say, "Hey, we got to test the, that one's tight. You got to test the top stage. So, okay, so we set up for the top stage. The hole collapsed. You get that often. A hole will collapse, so the contractor has to go back in there with their drill. And, these guys are on air-track drills, and they can maneuver those. I mean, you can go finish one hole and move onto the other one. You're there in ten minutes, set up, and punching the hole.

Mistakenly Grouting the Outlet Tunnel

So, the contractor goes back in there, punches the hole. For whatever reason, went all the way through to fifty feet, even though he didn't need to. He just needed to go down twenty-five because the bottom had already been determined tight. Well, top stage we tested and it's a taker. So, we set up the grout header on there and we start injecting grout, and man, this thing's just really taking. I mean, it's just eating this stuff up. And, you know, pretty soon around

the corner comes a couple of contractor crew guys. "Hey, you guys, man turn that thing off." We're, "What's going on?" He says, "You guys punched a hole into the tunnel, and you're grouting the tunnel, (Laughter) on the outlet works and stuff," you know. So, we shut that off. So, that was kind of a–Ed Vidmar was on that crew with me, and he's always, we always tell that story. So we, I mean we had punched a hole all the way through, and we were just grouting a tunnel that we had already dug out.

The, do you want me to keep on from (Storey: Sure.) grouting to (Storey: Sure.) to how maybe I ended up getting into, well . . .

Storey: Let's talk more about grouting, (Gabaldon: Okay.) since we're here, and sort of stopped. (Gabaldon: Yeah.) My question for you was going to be, how do you inspect something you can't see? (Gabaldon: Uhm-hmm.) So, it's this pressure thing? (Gabaldon: Yeah.) Once you, once it gets to a certain point, you know that the interstices down there are beginning to fill up?

Gabaldon: Right.

Storey: And, when it gets to a certain pressure you know

that you have done an adequate job? How do we know that, by experience?

Reclamation Has Quite a Bit of Grouting Expertise

Gabaldon: Yeah. By, by experience. I mean, we've grouted dams since, you know, we've been in existence. (Storey: Yeah.) And, we probably wrote the book on grouting. I mean, that's one of the areas that Bureau of Reclamation has quite a bit of expertise, especially with Pete Aberle who, just remarkable knowledge in that area. But, it has to do with geology. And, I'm not a geologist, but you know, you do the core samples, and you determine that there's some porous material on there. And, if it's too porous, of course, you're not going to build a dam there. I mean, if there's some determinations made that if, you know, it's just not a good site for building a dam. So, you go to the next one. I'm sure there's been a lot of decisions like that throughout . . .

Storey: So, that's how you get your specs then?

Gabaldon: Yeah.

Storey: They've cored. They know the type of material?

Gabaldon: Yes.

Storey: Okay.

Gabaldon: They know the type of material, and we're building dams on some pretty solid stuff to start with. I mean, you know, we've got some pretty good bedrock. But, even in, even in those materials, you're still going to get some porosity, so. (Storey: Yeah.) One of the things we do is we go out there and grout. Not only do we grout what we call "blanket," but we also grout the abutments into the, into the abutments to make sure that those things are solid. (Storey: Uh huh.) And, on Ridgway Dam we did quite a bit of that, quite a bit of grout on both abutments. And then the blanket grouting. And, I don't remember what that pressure is, even though I, I did hundreds of tests. It's just not in my mind. I'm thinking two pounds per square inch but that's not one that I should be quoted on. I mean, it'll be on the Ridgway specs.

And, you drill this hole and you put a pipe in there, usually a three-inch, four-inch pipe that's imbedded about a foot, and sticks out about another foot. And, you let that seal up, and you know, get a little bit solid in there. And so, you

drill a couple of foot hole to start with, you put this pipe in there, and you seal it with concrete, real concrete, and you let those set for a day. This is the way you're setting up for the grouting. And, you put it at an angle that matches up what this drill rig is going to latch onto to this pipe, and then just start drilling into at that exact angle. And, you're on a grid, depending again on the geology. But, you could be on a grid on a six-foot grid. That's what I remember Ridgway Dam being. So, so, you know, imagine you've excavated where the dam's going to be, and now you've cleared all the excess material, and you're somewhat down into, you know, some solid material, and now you've got all these grout pipes sticking up on this six-by-six foot grid. And, you have this grid laid out on a piece of paper. So, and then you just start, you know, if you're going to, if you're going to grout this hole, and you're done with that one, well you're not going to go right to the next one. You're going to go to, you know, two or three down, grout that one, come back, pick up the one in the middle. Because, the theory being is these two are going to fill . . .

Storey: They're going to spread out?

Gabaldon: Yeah. They're going to spread into there. So,

now that middle one–and that was the case in most, most situations, that middle one's now, not going to take as much grout. And, you, you do this grid, and you're sealing it as you go, until you hit refusal on each hole. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And every once in a while you hit, you hit one that surfaces someplace. You're punching to this one and it's taking, and taking.

Storey: Follows a seam or something?

Gabaldon: When you get a big taker, I mean that's one of the jobs. You're out there looking to see where this is showing up. Because, you know, you know you can't be taking that much, unless you've drilled into a tunnel or something. (Laugh) So, you're out there, you know, looking, and you're in the mud and you're in the, you know, grout all over the place. So, what you do is you put dye in the tanks, in the grout tanks, the grout mixers, and so you're grouting into this one. If you suspect one that–it's got to be showing up someplace. So, then you start looking around, and by golly it's showing up over here. So, you come off that hole, and then you start working around it trying to seal that path. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, eventually you get it. And then you do core samples at the end, and just to check

how, how you made out, you know.

Storey: Oh, so you put a core down and see if this, the grout has spread into the core.

Gabaldon: After the fact, yeah. After the fact.

Storey: Interesting.

Gabaldon: You'll, you'll core, and, you can see the grout, in core samples, you can see where its been pretty effective. And, it's a pretty darn good process, you know.

Storey: That's interesting.

Gabaldon: Yeah.

Storey: I've always wondered, because it, you know, it's invisible.

Gabaldon: Yeah, it is.

Storey: Basically. And, I've never had a grout inspector (Laugh) before.

Gabaldon: You, you know, you need to talk to Aberle, just because, just the colorfulness of that guy. But,

it's, it, like I said there's a lot of inspectors that they don't want that. They, it's almost like drawing the short straw, you know. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, I didn't know better, you know. Of course, I'd have like to have been inspecting concrete, which I did later on in my career. But, the grouting was kind of the bottom rung, if you will, on inspection. And, I'll tell you what, I loved it. (Storey: Hmm.) I just enjoyed the heck out of it, because you're making some decisions right out of the gate, you know, and "Okay, we got to go to that hole next." And, you know. And, you don't do that in any other part of inspection. That's the only thing you do that in. So, you got to be pretty knowledgeable of course. And, of course, we had quite a few experts in that. The two crews we worked for, the Shift Supervisors were Danny, Danny Blowers, who later went to work in Waddell,[3] as the head grouting person over there. Bob Wilson who was my Shift Supervisor when I started, also just knows that stuff inside out. And, of course, all this was being designed by here, by the Denver Office, by Peter Aberle's shop at the time. I don't know who the grouting expert is now.

3. New Waddell Dam, constructed between 1985 and 1994, stores Colorado River water for the Central Arizona Project.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Tell me more about shift changes. How did that work?

Shift Changes during Construction

Gabaldon: Shift changes were interesting, especially in grouting. Because, if you're on a, if you're on a hole, you can't come off it. You can't say, "Okay, we're turning this one off and going home for the day." You got to stay on it. So, when we started grouting at Ridgway Dam, with the two crews, the whole concept is that our crew was 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., the other crew the opposite of that. And, we were going to be, every two weeks, every pay period, shifting, where we'd go to the day shift, and they'd go to the night shift. And, we were not going to be working on Sundays. So, the Sunday would be the day that we'd switch over. Well, when we started grouting over there we didn't hit a Sunday of a non-taker in progress for, for almost the whole time. I mean months. And, it actually turned out better, because this changing from day to night, vice versa, was–I mean, just when you're getting used to sleeping in the day, then now you're going to have to, that wasn't a very bright idea, to be shifting every two weeks. And, it didn't turn out that way.

It turned out that we were almost the whole time, because we had that taker every Sunday. And so, we ended up working the seven days a week. The shift change itself, when–we had a pass-on book. And, the Shift Supervisor would take notes in this book, and that would be the book that they pass on to the next Shift Supervisor. And, in that book it was usually four or five pages worth of, "Hey, this guy over here, their light tree wasn't set up right so, you know, we did an inspection on that and it was just too dark out there, so we had to shut down that, we had to shut down that driller. They're moving in new plants, and they should be done with that by, you know, 4:00 a.m." So, you know, you pass on that kind of information, or "Hey, we're on hole, you know, 1+06." The holes were referred to by the survey stationing of them. "We're on that hole, and we, you know, we just went to a 6:1 mix. Recommend that by 4:00 p.m. that you, if it hasn't sealed up that you go down at that time . . ." that's the kind of stuff that you pass on to your crew.

So, you're out there, a new crew comes on, and you have a counterpart in that next crew. And, you know, before I was a Shift Supervisor, let's say I was the highscaler, so, I was the guy

on the ropes watching the drilling and the grouting on the abutment. So, my guy would come up on the ropes, and we'd pass on the info–actually we'd either pass on over there, if I was on a taker that I couldn't get away from, or I'd come down and, "Okay, that guy's," same type deal there. Everybody else on the crew had a counterpart. So, they'd give their personal information to that next crew member that maybe wasn't reflected in the pass-on book. The pass-on book was mainly from Supervisor to Supervisor.

Eventually Went to Three Shifts

And, the, when we went to the three shifts, then of course you could have a pass-on from two shifts ago that, "Hey make sure you pay attention to this, when that's going on." We worked through a winter out there. When we moved to the left abutment it was starting to get into the wintertime. And, we were working graveyard, my crew. By then I was a Shift Supervisor. And the new crew was, I believe we were on , the way the crews–I think we started at 4:00 p.m. What does that give you eight hours later?

Storey: Twelve, I think.

Gabaldon: Yeah. So, it was, we had a big storm out there, and we were waiting for this crew to relieve us, and, it was already twelve, it already one, it was already–I mean, they were an hour late, and we were getting pretty concerned just from a safety standpoint. So, they, so by then I called the head guy of grouting out there, Bob Reinhardt, I don't know if you've ever run into him. He's retired now. Reinhardt was, the guy I was reporting to, who then reported to the Field Engineer. So, I called Bob Reinhardt at two in the morning, you know, and I hated to do that, but you had to. And, out there we didn't have phone lines quite yet. So, we had this funky radio phone system. So, it was kind of an over-and-out type thing. But, you were able to dial in, but it was like a weird delay, just the way the phones worked out there.

So, I got a hold of Reinhardt at two in the morning, and just as I woke him up, we see the headlights coming up the, up the, up the road there. And, I said, "Hey, never mind," you know. But, then they got there, and turns out there was an accident that they were delayed, you know, helping out getting somebody out of

the snowbank, and that kind of thing. So, that's the way we would pass on from one shift to the other. And, that would always lapse about a half hour or so, overlap on each end. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) A new would come in, you'd be passing on their stuff, and you always wanted to see that crew showing up, I mean, because–especially when we were doing those twelve-hour, 6:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. You know, come that sunrise, you knew that crew was going to be coming in anytime. (Storey: Yeah.) Always a welcome, welcome sight.

Storey: Well, since we sort of slowed down, let's go back. You were raised on an irrigated farm, right?

Growing Up on an Irrigated Farm

Gabaldon: Yeah. Yeah. middle Rio Grande.

Storey: What do you remember about the irrigation?

Gabaldon: What I remember about the irrigation, my, we did, we irrigated the rows, you know. It wasn't flood irrigation or anything like that. We'd bring in water from, you know, the head ditch into some laterals, and then ultimately into our farm.

And, it wasn't, it wasn't big, when I say farm, it wasn't like, you know, 200 acres, or 40 acres. It was more like a 20-acre type thing, and probably about ten acres of that was farmed. So, it wasn't even, even the twenty acres.

And, it was, you know, I remember, growing up, going out there and cleaning the ditches with my dad and my brothers. And, what I remember the most for, because it was fun, is my dad would put–I must have been pretty young–but they put us on, kind of our butt, sitting on shovel, if we were needing to cross a small ditch or something. And, he'd kind of pitch us across to the older brother that was on that side, and they'd kind of catch us. So, and, I say us, my nephew and I. So, that was always kind of fun being pitched across the ditch there. But, we'd, we weren't, my father wasn't a, we didn't have a whole lot of equipment. I mean, literally, I remember, we farmed with a plough horse and a plough still. And, by then, you know, there are already tractors. I mean, my uncle, who had forty acres just across the dirt road from us, he had a tractor, you know, and but my dad still used a horse and did the ploughing and the rows with this horse. And, he'd let us as kids, be up there ride on, (Storey: Ride on the horse?) the

horse. So, that was kind of . . .

Storey: I used to do that too.

Gabaldon: Yeah, I loved that. That was kind of fun. But, it was a Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District land, irrigated land. I mean, so, it was our land, but it was on their project, on the Middle Rio Grande Project that, I didn't even know anything about that until later when I became Area Manager in Albuquerque. But, we actually farmed off of a M-R-G-C-D [Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District] water. (Storey: Yeah.) And, you know, and mostly we grew corn. And, it was row irrigated. So, I mean, I remember being out there hoeing, and cutting weeds as I was getting a little older.

Storey: This was field corn or eating corn?

Gabaldon: I'm sorry?

Storey: Field corn or eating corn?

Gabaldon: Eating corn. Eating corn, yeah.

Storey: It was a garden.

Gabaldon: It was . . .

Storey: A truck garden?

Gabaldon: It was a big garden, yeah. Yeah, a big garden. I mean, but, we also grew some wheat, and that was–I grew up on Gabaldon Road, you know. And so, I don't know the exact history but my father had about twenty acres here, and my uncle had about forty, other uncle, on this side had forty . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. DECEMBER 7, 2004.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. DECEMBER 7, 2004.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey, with Michael R. Gabaldon, on December 7, 2004.

He got his dad mad or something?

Gabaldon: Yeah. Maybe, why he ended up with a twenty acres and not forty like my other uncles, I don't now. (Storey: Uh huh.) But, the, so my uncles all kind of farmed together with my dad, and they had maybe a slightly bigger operation in wheat and flour. I mean wheat that they'd take to the flour mills to sell, and that was, I mean I wasn't

into any of the farming itself, other than helping my dad out. I mean, I was a pretty small kid still, you know. In fact, by the time I was in junior high my father had become ill. So, that's another story, but he wasn't farming anymore. So, by even junior high we'd still, we already weren't doing any of the farming. You know, it was, so it was early on. Those memories of the farming were early on. Now, my uncle still did, beyond that and into my junior high and high school years. So, so it was early memories of that farming stuff that . . .

Storey: Do you, do you ever remember any water problems on the farm?

Drought during the 1950s

Gabaldon: No. I tell, I tell this story when I've spoken at drought conferences, or even other conferences. I always say that, you know, one of the most severe droughts that we had in New Mexico was in the '50s. I mean, in fact, now, the drought we're going through now, one of the benchmarks is the drought of the '50s, not just in New Mexico, but in the whole Southwest. It was one of the worst droughts on record. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, I always tell the story that my father

was a farmer, a small farm there, and there in the mid '50s in this drought he didn't have a whole lot of farming to do because of the drought. So, he didn't have a whole lot to do, and so he was kind of bored. And, my wife, I mean his wife, my mother, was also kind of bored, because she helped on the farm. And, so out of boredom they kind of got together, and by golly they, a kid was produced, and I say, "And forty-eight years later here I am a direct product of the drought," (Laugh) you know. So, you know, I don't remember any problems. And, in fact, in the mid '50s when they had that drought back there, I'm sure my father and my uncles, I mean, obviously they experienced that drought, and they were farmers. So, they had to have felt the impacts (Storey: Yeah.) of that.

Storey: You didn't aspire to farm even?

Gabaldon: No. And, I'm not quite sure why. You'd think that that would be a progression there. I really, other than those early memories, and then the next few years with my father being ill–and I know that's not the subject of this–but, I kind of got away from some of that and started going in a–didn't have any even role models, if you will, to "What am I going to do when I grow up?" My

brothers were in the mechanics and the truck driver type things, but by then (Storey: Yeah.) the farming had kind of gone away. But, you know, and into the high school years where you're really starting, "Okay, what am I going to do in life?" type of thing. By then the farming was kind of behind us, so.

Storey: Was there a lot of emphasis on science and math, and things, in your high school?

Interest in Math Started in High School

Gabaldon: No. No. No. In fact, this is one of those that maybe you don't want to admit type of things, but in junior high, in my school system in Belen, by the time you're in the ninth grade–junior high is seven, eight, nine. In high school it's ten, eleven twelve. By the time you're in the ninth grade you should have your algebra out of the way, okay? I took algebra in the eighth grade, and I failed it. I wasn't excited about math. I could care less about math. And, it just wasn't my mind set, you know. And, so ninth grade I thought, "Man. I don't want to take algebra again," so I didn't take algebra. In fact, I don't know how I got it, you know, and I don't know how they let me get away with this stuff. So, ninth grade I didn't get,

I didn't take any math. So, I'm getting to the tenth grade and I'm thinking, "Wow, I've got to have algebra to graduate," you know. (Laugh) So, tenth grade I got into this math class that's a pre-algebra, if you will, and, and I did pretty darn good there. And then I started liking math. And, this is in the tenth grade, where it should have been way earlier. So, I'm thinking, "Hey, this math stuff's kind of interesting, you know, kind of fun."

So, then I get to the eleventh grade and now I'm taking algebra, where I should have done it in the eighth grade, right? So, I'm taking algebra in eleventh grade, and I'm in class with, you know, sophomores, with tenth graders. And, you know, in that class I'm doing excellent, you know, and I'm, "This algebra stuff's fun," you know. "Man, how come I didn't focus (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) on this early on?" So, I'm enjoying the heck out of it. In fact, I remember that was my home room. And, in your home room, that's your first period, at the end of the year, the person that has done the best in that class gets a, at the end of the year, at an assembly, you get a certificate. And, I remember my teacher, Mr. Sanchez saying, "Hey, you have the best grade in here, but I wanted to ask you–I'm more than

happy to give you the award, but it is an algebra class that you should have probably taken in the eighth grade, you know, ninth grade. So, I don't know if you want to be recognized for that." And I said, "Naw, give it to the next guy, you know," but . . . Then my senior year I took an advanced algebra class and by then I should have already been in the calculus, etc.

"I Was the First to go to College"

Now, bear in mind, I had no idea that I wanted to go in engineering, you know, yet. So, but, just loved it. Loved algebra. Loved math. Got into that two-year degree at New Mexico State, and had to take some algebra and trigonometry in there. And, just, I mean, "A" student in those areas. I mean, just enjoyed the heck out of math. Got into calculus, and when I went to my, for my engineering degree, and same deal there. I just thought, "This math stuff is the best thing since sliced bread." So, early on, I, there was (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) no math. My parents were not educated. They were maybe third, third grade education type thing. My mother grew up in the hills there in New Mexico, and the Manzanos over to eastern side of the state. And, my father wasn't educated either.

So, there wasn't really any of that, that–I mentioned I have six brothers, and I had six sisters, all older than I, than I was. My next older sister was the first one to complete high school. Then, I was the first one that went on to college.

So, you know, just, I mean it was as totally generation from my older brothers and sisters, and they, you know, they went down the path of trades, and those kind of things. And, all very successful, but it's just that going to college wasn't something that was (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) encouraged or–it wasn't discouraged–but it wasn't really thought of, you know. It wasn't really on our minds as growing up.

Storey: Let's see, why don't we, let's talk about what you did on the Rotation Program.

Rotation Program

Gabaldon: Okay. Rotation Program, they first put me in inspection, which did a, this is before we got into the grouting, and all that. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) This is, got into doing a little bit of inspection at Ridgway Dam. Ridgway Dam, when I came on board, Phase I was, was finishing, and we were about to go into Phase II. So, there was a gap

there. And, the Phase I was all the prep work, all the initial excavations, and, you know, basically before you start building it up.

Storey: Clearing the reservoirs?

Gabaldon: Yeah. Yeah.

Storey: And clearing the foundation?

Gabaldon: Doing the cofferdams, yeah. Clearing the trees, and et cetera, so. So, I got on the tail end of some of that on the inspection. I did some design and estimates work. We had a Design and Estimates Branch there in Montrose. And, got to do some pretty good work in there designing some canals, doing more of concrete quantities. Now, the whole focus of Montrose Projects Office was Ridgway Dam and Grand Valley Highline Canal. So, pretty much any work we did was focused on those things. So, did a lot of concrete quantities on structures. I mean, literally taking the drawings from the specifications and determining how much concrete is going to be required in this (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) particular structure. So, I did some estimating. Did a little stint in the Contract Administration Branch, working on some modifications, getting a feel for

what goes on in those areas and how a, how negotiations take place, et cetera.

Each one of these that I'm going through was maybe from a month to two months assignments. Some longer. Did a rotation in the Salt Lake Office for six months. And, that was, it was probably closer to five months, than six months, because I went back earlier. And, that one I worked in the, I was working the Designs Branch there, in the Salt Lake Office. The Regional Director at that time was, before [Clifford] Barrett, I, I don't even remember. I mean, you know, we didn't, we weren't in those circles of, you know, of R-Ds [Regional Director] and stuff.[4] I mean, coming in fairly new, just trying to get some traction, just trying to figure out what this Bureau of Reclamation thing does, you know. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, I did a stint there in Salt Lake, and enjoyed that. Came back to Montrose, and about then is when we were gearing up on, you know, construction of Ridgway Dam. So, then they started putting us on some crews, and inspection crews, and so on.

Storey So, did they ask you where you wanted to work?

4. N. W. "Bill" Plummer was the Regional Director of the Upper Colorado Region in Salt Lake City from 1978 to 1981.

Some Preference on Where to Work

Gabaldon: They did.

Storey: Or did they just assign you?

Gabaldon: They did. They asked, and of course it wasn't a total choice. I mean, if there wasn't a spot in Designs and Estimates, well, there's not a spot there. And, there was a lot of spots in Construction Inspection, which is what I wanted to do anyway. So, I didn't really consider a whole lot of the others. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So.

Storey: Now, when you say, "design and estimating," was that in order to check the contractor's quantities, or to develop figures so that you would have an idea when they came in with.?

Gabaldon: Both. The Designs and Estimates Branch, which we don't have any more of those, in a projects office, because we don't have really projects office anymore. And, Montrose was a Montrose Projects Office, as opposed to a Montrose Construction Office. And, it was projects office–you probably know this better than I do–the term "projects office," is because that

office had several projects that it did construction management for, or inspection, or O&M [operations and maintenance], even. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, there's a projects office, and we had, you know, Crystal Dam, Morrow Point Dam, so we had that project. We had the Dallas Creek Project, Ridgway Dam. So, that's why it was called a projects office. But, in that Projects Office we had a Contract Administration Branch, we had a Designs and Estimates Branch, and we had a O&M Branch, a couple of other branches. But, the Design and Estimates Branch is where we do design data collection, we do design estimates, and–let me back up, design data gathering is what we did in that branch. We go out there–I got in too late on the Ridgway Dam design data gathering, but I was there for the Grand Valley Canal.

Design and Estimate Branch

Storey: Grand Valley Canal?

Gabaldon: So, what that means is, we go out there, we do the surveys, we go out there and determine, "Okay, there's this power line over here where they're going to be doing this excavating. We, we go do some geology. We go, you know,

assess the condition of the existing canals, and we talk to, in my case one of the assignments I had is "Talk to every landowner, every farmer, on the Grand Valley Canal that was going to get delivery point, or water delivery." I talked to each one of them, asked them where they wanted their delivery, you know. So, you go out there in the field and . . .

Storey: Yeah, where do you want your turnout?

Gabaldon: Where do you want your turnout? (Storey: Sure.) And, what was interesting is we were going from a, we were going into the, from open laterals to pipeline. And, this was under the Salinity (Storey: Program? Yeah.) Program.[5] The theory being, a lot of salt was getting into the system by open laterals. So, we were putting a whole bunch of pipe in. And, I go out there and talk to, you know, Farmer A over here and I say, "Hey, where do you want your lateral?" He'd say, "Well, over here." And, I'd say, "Well, why don't you put it up here, that way . . .," you

5. The Colorado River carries roughly 9 million tons of salt annually past Hoover Dam. Management of the Colorado River salinity problems are conducted by a joint effort state and federal agencies. For more information, see Lara Bickell, "Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Project," Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Reclamation, 1999, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

know, not water spreading by any means. I mean, he was still the right classification of land, et cetera. But, "If you put it there then, see this little section here, you can irrigate that too, you know."

And, "Well how are we going to get the water up there?" You know, well, "You're going to be in pressured pipe now." And the farmer would say, "Well, okay. Well, if you say so," you know, type thing. And, I'd explain to them how under a pressurized system you're going to have head on the, you know, and be able to get your water up higher instead of just down here, you know, so. And, it fortunately turned out that that was the case and those people that I convinced to–again, for the record, it wasn't water spreading, it was land that they, was in the right classification, there. (Storey: Yeah.) So, that, we do design data collection.

We'd go out there, and here's where they want their turnout. I would then survey that in. I'd have some survey instruments with me. And, bring that back to the office and do some calculations on if a turnout would fit there. I had the specifications for the turnout. Get that information to the Denver Office, the E&R

[Engineering and Research] Center, who then, off of that data, would design the pipeline going to that, the amount of pressure, the size of pipe based on the acreage, and et cetera. And, so that's what the Design and Estimates Branch would do.

Storey: Now, how did the Region fit into this? They also had design and estimating (Gabaldon: Yeah.) functions, right?

Worked with Region and Denver Offices

Gabaldon: They had design and estimates functions also. That, that one we would run a lot of–there was certain designs that they would do, or a certain design–in the field we do the design data gathering. Some of the work was actually being designed in the Region as opposed to in the Denver Office. And, I think that's still the case today. If its such that they have the expertise there, then they would do it. Those are for maybe smaller projects in–those areas I was working on, we were working directly with the Denver Office. I don't remember a whole lot of interaction with the Design Group, in the Region. And, I don't know if that's just that's it.

Now, when I went to Durango Office, when I transferred to the Durango Office, and Animas-La Plata Project,[6] on that design estimating process we worked a lot with the Region, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) as we did with the, with the Denver Office. So, on the Highline Canal, on that design data gathering, we did a lot of quantities, and estimates for the project itself.

One of the first, first, on the Government Highline Canal, I did the quantities for the whole canal. And, that's the number that ended up in the specifications. And, so that data comes to the Denver. The Denver Office puts the specs together and that's the number that shows up in the specs, you know. And, in fact, we do a lot of the drawings. Like, like we do the map of the canal, the cut and fill, how much, you know, you're going to have to excavate here, and bring in here. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And so, if you go back and look at drawings, on the Grand Valley Canal, and the laterals out there, if you look at the actual specifications that went out on the street, my name is actually on the, on the design

6. The Animas-La Plata Project was originally authorized by Congress as part of the Colorado River Basin Act of 1968. By the 1980s, the project had been scaled back to provide water to the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribes.

drawings. And, in some cases a designer, and in some cases as the technical reviewer. And then those end up coming to Denver, then they do their thing over here, and then bless it and put their stamp on it, and then it goes in the spec.

Preparing Estimates for the Bidding Process

So, it's a, it was quite a process back then. One of the, I did the, maybe wrap up with a story here, but we did the, on the Highline Canal. I did the estimates on that, and I forget what the number is, but let's say, it was for sakes of arguments, 200 cubic feet of excavation, you know. Those numbers go in the spec. Before the spec hit the street, we have a pre-bid conference and we have a pre-construction conference, et cetera. And then we have a bid opening. Pre-bid conference, bid opening, then pre-construction conference, once you know who the contractor's going to be.

In the pre-bid conference, you usually get the contractors that are going to be bidding on a job, coming out there, we show them the project, they ask questions, they ask contractual questions, they ask site questions, you know, et cetera. So, in that, before then as contractors are

putting their bids together, I guess this is after the pre-bid. As they start putting their bids together, they saw a quantity for "excavation from borrow" in there. I don't remember what that number was. Let's say, 50,000 cubic feet of dirt that I said, that the specifications said, "We're going to need, we need to bring in 50,000, or 50,000 cubic feet of dirt in this canal job," you know, "you're going to have to import." And, Ball, Ball & Brosamer was going to be one of the bidders on this, you know, the big boys. And they contacted our office and they said, "Hey, we want to see the take-off sheets on how you came up with that number." Ken Oullette was the Office Engineer at the time. So, I say, "Hey Ken, B, B & B they're wanting our raw data on how we came up with that number." And, I said "I'm reluctant to send that because, I mean, the raw data, I do a lot of calculations beyond that."

The raw data is you run a template of your shape of you canal, and you run it on a computer. Today it's done a lot easier. Back then you had to do a whole lot of work even to put it in a computer system. You run this canal template through what you've already surveyed as the original ground out there as part of your design data collection. So, you run this template through

there. At the end you come up with a quantity. And, as you're running this through you're going to get some areas that you're going to have to fill material. You're going to have some areas that you're going to have to cut. And, you know, ideally if you end up with as much cut as fill, you know . . .

Storey: That's perfect? (Laugh)

Gabaldon: Yeah. You're going to have excavate here, and hopefully, because the ground's too high, and hopefully you can take that material and put it over here where you need to build it up. Well, this, so you run this template. I came up with this raw data, and then to that I add all kinds of factors: material shrinkage, depending on the type of material it's going to shrink a certain percentage. It's going to, it's going to be affected by how long it's going to be in the haul route, and in a dump truck. It's going to be affected by, by how far the backhoe's going to drop it into the truck. You know, a whole bunch of factors that you put into that raw data, and then you come up with a number that's 50,000 cubic feet, cubic yards, of material that you're going to have bring in from a borrow area, that of course we've already designated the borrow area as suitable

material.

Bidder Questions on the Estimates

So, bottom line, "Hey contractor, the specifications say you're going to have to bring in material." Ball, Ball & Brosamer asked for that number, so Ken Oullette made the cut, "Yeah, let's go ahead and give it to them. Put a cover page on there. 'This is raw data,' you know, 'subject to revision, hasn't factored in shrinkage, hasn't factored in . . .' et cetera, et cetera." And, Mike said, "We'll make it available to Ball, Ball & Brosamer, make sure you make it available to all contractors." So, we issue an amendment to the spec. And, amendments always come out, you know. So, one of the amendments was already going to come out anyway. Said, "By the way, this information is available."

So, a couple of other contractors called and asked for the information. Bids came in, the low bidder, Hajco out of Salt Lake, they were the low bidder. And, on that bid item they bid I believe it was two cents a cubic yard. Everybody else bid like two dollars, three dollars, including Ball, Ball & Brosamer who had the same data that they had. And, so of course, we

flagged that, and we told the contractor, "Hey, you're the low bidder but," but after a bid we take those bids and we analyze them, and evaluate them, and go through them with a fine-tooth comb, especially the low bidder.

One Contractor Made an Obvious Error

Well, this is flagged, so we go back to the contractor and we say, "Hey contractor, you possibly have an error here." And, of course, the contractor, if it's an obvious error, they could either withdraw their bid, it goes to the next bidder, the next low bidder, or if it's not an obvious one we could hold them to it, you know. "Hey, that's what you bid. Sorry, You got to, you got to deliver on that." This one seemed like maybe an obvious error, especially when you compared it to everybody else. And, we do side-by-side, every bid, every bid item, side-by-side comma of everybody that bid. So, that one just jumped out. So, we call the contractor, they said, "No. That's not an error. We're standing by that number." We said, "Okay, but, you do realize that you're going to have to borrow 50,000 cubic yards of material? You're going to have to import it." "No, we're fine. We're fine with that." You know, "Our analysis show that

we're okay, based on the raw material that was given to us."

And, so I'm getting nervous, you know. I thought, "Man. I hope my number's good." (Laugh) And, so that contractor was awarded the contract and day, about day two they, I mean about week two, they started, they're starting to haul in some material. And, they're starting to realize that they're having to bring in a lot of material. And, so they say, "Hey, we're having to bring in a lot of material, and we're only getting a penny a yard, when we should be getting, you know, two or three dollars a yard." And, before we even granted the contract, we had our record that we pointed that out to them. We sent them a letter from the Contracting Officer saying, "Please note that that item seems askew. You have notified us that, that it's a good number and therefore you got to, you got to go with it." So, we give them all kinds of warnings, and all kinds of outs, if they really wanted to they could have actually gotten out of that one.

"They're Losing Money Big Time"

And, so contractors, I mean they realize they're having to import material, and it's, they're

losing money, big time. I mean, it costs a lot more than a penny to bring that stuff. They're having to pay their crew and their, et cetera. So, they turn in a claim saying that they relied on this raw data that was given to them. And, I spent probably six months, after that, getting our position together on what that, fighting that claim. At the end of the contract, the number they had to bring in was within four percent of my number. So, that, I mean so I, I really lucked out. You know, because I was starting to question whether I had the right number or not. And they, the contractor, when I ran this template, I ran it from, you know, station 0+00, 1+002. I ran it downstream, if you will, where they started their work on the opposite end. So, that was one of the first things they said. "Hey. You need to run those numbers again, because, you know, you ran them from that end, and we're starting the work from here." And, I said, "Well, it's going to come out the same."

And, it did. But, I went through–I was one of the first–I remember, we didn't have all the fancy spreadsheets and all that, but our, by then I had just transferred to the Durango Office, so I was still working that claim a year later, after the job, trying to reconcile that whole thing. So, just

to, to answer your question, rather lengthy answer on that, some of the work that's done in the Designs and Estimates Branch, and that's some of the estimating that takes place, estimating (Storey: Yeah.) quantities.

Storey: Harold Arthur said that the reason they made, they forced him to become Deputy Chief Engineer was so that he could learn how to negotiate (Gabaldon: Yeah.) that end of the contract period. That was the primary. They viewed that as the primary job of the Chief Engineer, and the Deputy Chief Engineer.

First Contract Negotiation that Dealt with Bigger Picture

Gabaldon: I've been in a lot of, a lot of negotiations on, you know, from modifications to the contracts, and that one was one of the first ones that I really dealt with, with the big picture. I mean, the Region was in, the Contracting (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Officer, a lot of meetings in Salt Lake, a lot of meetings with the contractor. Me, center stage, you know, putting up–that's before PowerPoint–but, you know, showing templates, and showing how I ran the material, and showing how I put factors in there. And, one of the big factors that the contractor hadn't considered is

part of the dirt work you have to compact it. You know, so, just by compacting it, alone, means you can't go by that raw data, you know. That doesn't have that material that's compacted. That's one of the big errors they had. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, and end of the day, I don't even remember, I mean, we prevailed on that claim, but I don't remember what the–I think the contractor did get something, because, I don't remember for what, but it certainly wasn't for the spec quantity.

Storey: And that was on the Grand Valley Canal?

Gabaldon: It was on the Grand Valley Canal, yeah. On the Highline Canal, there,

Storey: And the idea there is that if you pipe it, the water's not contacting the soil and picking up (Gabaldon: Yeah.) salts?

Salinity Control on the Grand Valley Canal

Gabaldon: What we did is we lined the canal, membrane lining in this case. There were some sections that were concrete lined, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) but for the most part it was membrane lined. And, you do the math on that. The designers here in

Denver, we got a lining . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. DENVER 7, 2004.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. DECEMBER 7, 2004.

Storey: Now.

Gabaldon: You have to line, you have to line the canal, in this case to keep the salt from infiltrating into the water. But, a decision's made that, "Under Salinity Project, we're going to line this canal." The designers in Denver, they take a look at that and they say, "Okay, we could concrete line it, or we could membrane line it." Now, concrete lining requires side slopes of X and cost of concrete," and this is part of the design data that we do out of the office. Well, here's your concrete plants, here's your batch plants, here's your material for concrete, here's your cost for that material, here's your pits, you know, et cetera. So, all that gets factored in, and the designers say, "You know what? If we go concrete lining it's going to cost this much. If we go membrane lining it's going to cost this much."

And, so they make those kind of cuts. I mean, it's like, you know, do we build an earth dam or do we build a concrete dam? A lot of it

has to do with the materials at hand and the cost of materials to the local area. You could build, you could have the same project in an area that has better material. So, you, maybe you go concrete. In this particular one, it was determined that we go membrane lining. So, we membrane lined, that's like basically a P-V-C-type (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) lining on the canal. So, we membrane lined that canal, and then the laterals, the laterals are the ditches that come out from the main canal that were open, open ditches. Again, they're getting salinity into the system. Those we put in pipeline, P-V-C pipe, et cetera. So, that was basically what that project was, under the Salinity Project.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Did you have any contact with how the project costs were allocated on that? Did the water users have to pay any? (Gabaldon: Kind of, no.) You didn't have any experience with that.

"I was a Field Guy"

Gabaldon: But, I wasn't, back then I didn't know the bigger picture of how even projects were paid for.

Storey: You were just doing the engineering?

Gabaldon: I was doing the engineering. I was doing the inspection, doing design data collection, and out there talking with farmers. And, you know, it's, it's amazing to me that I went all the way through to the Bend Construction Office, that we'll probably get to in future interviews, before I met a Commissioner. And, that was, that was probably, by then, twelve, thirteen years into my, my career. (Storey: Uh huh.) I mean, I was a field guy, you know. I was out there, you know, with the steel-toed boots and the hard hat, you know, for the early part of my career. So, in fact, the regional directors, I even seldom met them, you know. I mean, they'd come out to, to the–I never saw one in Montrose. I did see one in Durango, and did see one when I went to Salt Lake early on in the rotation, but more of an introduction type thing. So, you just didn't deal in those circles then. It's kind of interesting.

Storey: Yeah. Well, I think this is a good time to stop, (Gabaldon: Okay.) actually. It's pretty much (Gabaldon: All right.) on time.

Gabaldon: All right.

Storey: Let me ask you whether you're willing for the information on these tapes and the resulting

transcripts to be used by researchers?

Gabaldon: Yes. I'm okay with that.

Storey: Great. Thanks.

Gabaldon: Okay.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. DECEMBER 7, 2004.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. APRIL 5, 2005.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian with the Bureau of Reclamation interviewing Michael Gabaldon in his office in Building 67 on the Denver Federal Center, on April 5, 2005. This is tape one.

Last time when we talked you mentioned that you went to school without having any Spanish? I mean English. English?

Gabaldon: Well, grade school.

Storey: Yeah, when you went to grade school?

Gabaldon: Yeah.

Storey: Could you tell me what kinds of situations you ran

into?

Challenges Associated with Being a Spanish Speaker

Gabaldon: Yeah. We had a, well my older sisters did teach me how to request a bathroom break, you know, how to go to the restroom in English. So, it was, so that was taken care of. I mean, we didn't have any problems there. But the, I think where I encountered–and I wouldn't even call them problems. Maybe more of challenges, that I don't even, just looking back, it seems like it was a challenge at the time. I didn't think anything was abnormal or, you know, that I wasn't just part of the stream. Because, where I grew up there were a lot of Spanish-speaking kids, and Spanish-speaking teachers. I mean, my first grade teacher was Mrs. Sanchez. So, she was able to at least communicate, somewhat, in Spanish to me. But, where I, I started recognizing that there was some challenges was, I think it made me a lot more less outspoken, you know, because, well, I was speaking a different language. So, I would maybe be a lot more reserved than other kids back in the first, second, into the third grade.

And, it also, of course, the lessons were in

English. So, it took me a while, took me a little extra effort to start learning the–you know, I mean one of the, you know, we're learning the alphabet, that kind of thing. So, that was, I mean the alphabet not being too different, but at least pronunciations and sentence structures that you start developing that early on. There was some challenges there. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

But, as far as on the social side, you know, recess and those type of things there were plenty of kids there that spoke both languages and I never noticed a problem there. I did notice some, and this might be true throughout my growing up, where I'm somewhat fair-skinned, and in fact, I was a red-haired, freckled faced kid, when I had hair, but, so I did notice that there was some people that would speak Spanish that didn't realize I spoke Spanish. And so there was some, maybe some things said that, "Hey wait a minute, you know, you're talking about me, or you're talking about," you know, so in Spanish-type thing, because they didn't think I was Spanish speaking. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Now, that's outside of school. But, I don't know, I'm kind of rambling there. But I didn't, I don't remember seeing problems other than the one that I think I held back in conversations, and

raising my hand and, you know, wanting to answer questions, that type of thing. Because my English wasn't quite there, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) you know, to be able to articulate a proper sentence in the first, second, you know, grade, probably into the third. So.

Storey: But by then you had pretty much picked it up?

Gabaldon: By then I felt pretty comfortable, you know, with it. And, you know, I don't remember the exact time in there, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) but it was certainly by the fourth grade I was, I didn't even notice it.

Storey: Hmm. Good. Well, I think last time we left off talking, we had talked about grouting at Ridgway?

Gabaldon: Yeah.

Storey: And, did you think of anything more?

Grouting Inspectors Make Decisions Daily

Gabaldon: No. Other, and I think I mentioned it before, but grouting is one of the only inspection components out there in a construction site that the inspector

makes decisions on a daily, on an hourly basis even, as to where to, which hole to go to next. So, the government has a lot of responsibility there. You know, traditional inspection is just, okay, making sure the rebar is tied right, making sure the concrete has the right mix, making sure that, you know, you have the right, right earth material in a fill section. But, in grouting the inspector, the chief inspector has the say, "Okay contractor, you're going to that one next. And, now you're going to this one. And, okay, it's time to pull off of that one." You're pretty much directing work out there, so it's pretty unique, actually, to a traditional inspection that (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Reclamation does. So, that's about the only thing that I can think of that we didn't touch on last time.

Storey: Now, did you stay an inspector while you were there, or . . . ?

Gabaldon: Did, I'm sorry?

Storey: Were you just an Inspector, (Gabaldon: I was a . . .) or did they make you a Supervisor? (Gabaldon: I was a . . .) How did that work?

Became a Shift Supervisor Early On

Gabaldon: I was a Shift Supervisor. We had, when we started grouting, on grouting you can't come off a hole. Once you're hooked onto a hole, you cannot come off of it. So, if you're pumping grout into it and you have a shift change you got to just pass on that information to the next shift. So, in other words, you can't go eight hours and then come back sixteen hours later for your shift. It's around the clock.

And, when we started at Ridgway Dam, we had the two shifts, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. And, at that time I was the highscaler on the ropes, on the right abutment at the time. And, what happened is we were trying to go into three shifts, and so they started training me as a Shift Supervisor for that third shift. And so, that's how I became a Shift Supervisor out there. And, it was very early on in my career. I mean, that was the first assignment I had right out of college. So, somebody saw that at least I had some potential to be the Shift Supervisor. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, by the time we went to the left abutment, we went to three shifts then and that's when they gave me the third shift. And, they gave me more of the senior inspectors on my crew. You know,

we had a lot of people on detail out there from the Denver Office at the time. A lot of people that are working around now. Betty Chavira was out there. On inspection, we had a whole bunch of people that are–Charles Swanson who is a Spec Writer here. We had about seven people. Each crew had about five people, and we had at least seven people from the Denver Office out there helping out on the different grouting crews. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, on my crew they gave me the seasoned crew, if you will.

When they made the third crew they picked from the other ones and put us on a graveyard shift, is where we ended up. The first, the first two crews, where we had the two crews and were working twelve hours each–that turned into thirteen hours by the time you had a shift change and pass on information, and driving out there–that crew was, we had the, Max Stodolski was our Project Construction Engineer at the time. Actually he was the Field Engineer at the time. Max Stodolski later became the Project Construction Engineer, then he went onto the Durango Office to be Projects Manager there, when we were going to be doing the Animas-La Plata (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Project. But, I mention that because Max Stodolski's wife

worked for the Bureau of Reclamation. And, she was on my, my grouting crew. So, I, you know, it was pretty good to have the Field Engineer's spouse on my crew. So I, it was, just made up for some interesting dynamics there, and actually pretty good ones, so. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Working with the Contractors

The other thing that was unique to Ridgway was we had a contractor out there who had proprietary information on their grouting techniques. It was the first time we used computer techniques out there. So, as we were grouting, everything's being run on a computer, and everything's being monitored on a computer, your pressures, your rate of injection, and so we had an inspection, inspector that their sole job was to keep an eye on that monitor. And, if the pressure started getting too high then they'd radio me, or whoever, to, "Okay, you know, we need to start coming back down. That pressure's getting too high." Or, "we need to thicken the mix, you know, or thin the mix," whatever the case might be there.

So, it, at that time we had a Pete Aberle who –I'm sure you've, I don't know if you've

interviewed him before? Maybe you haven't. (Storey: Hmm uhm.) But, he's the grouting–I mentioned his name last time–he's the grouting expert for Reclamation. (Storey: Yeah.) And, Pete would go out there every once in a while and check out this contractor. The contractor was Hayward Baker, and they had these proprietary headers on the grout connection to the grout hole, and they also had proprietary computer systems, etcetera. So, Pete Aberle would go out there and be looking at this stuff, and he'd be taking pictures. And, Hayward Baker would say, "Hey, you can't do that," you know. And, Pete Aberle would say, "Sure we can. This is our project." (Laugh) You know, so it was a kind of fun watching that too. (Storey: Hmm.) But, grouting was fun. It was one of the best assignments I've had in Reclamation, going way back, way back then.

I think I mentioned before that it took a while for me to make up that salary of that, to be able to match that salary from the first summer that I worked in Reclamation, because we were working twelve hour shifts. We were working the 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., is the one I was one. So, you had night differential, which was ten percent for the entire shift. And then, I was the highscaler

for that crew, so I had a twenty-five percent hazard pay on top of that. So, you had all the overtime, all the haz pay, and the night differential. I made a lot of money then.

Storey: Added up, huh?

Gabaldon: Yeah, it added up in a hurry. And, it's not just the summer. We went into the winter there, too. So, many cold nights out there (Storey: Yeah.) on the grouting crew.

Storey: You were there when?

Gabaldon: Eighty-two, '83, time frame, somewhere in there.

Storey: Well, when you came to Reclamation, did you have a plan for where you wanted your career to go, or did you just come to Reclamation?

No Clear Career Plans When Coming to Reclamation

Gabaldon: I really did not have a plan. My, the reason I got into Reclamation was because it was Montrose, Colorado, and it was pretty close to some ski areas. And, that's what, I had a few job offers coming out of college, and I looked at a map and saw Montrose. And, I never even heard of

Montrose. And, I saw that it was pretty close to Telluride, pretty close to Aspen, to Purgatory. And I said, "Hey, that's for me." So, that's how I ended up (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) going there. Once I got into it, and got into, "Wow, we're building a dam here." And, "Hey, we're designing some canals and laterals over in the Grand Valley, near Grand Junction," and I thought, "Hey, this is an engineer's dream," I mean civil engineer's, you know, to be working on that type of a structure and that type of facility.

So, I started developing, I guess, an internal plan of, you know, moving ahead and moving up in the organization. I got a lot of encouragement from my wife to do, you know, to do some of that moving, and recognizing that, "Hey, if you want to move up you got to move in this organization." So, I did a lot of that. My two daughters were, in Montrose, my two daughters were in junior high and into high school. So, we pretty much stayed there for seven years. And, it coincided with the completion of the project, and with the office shutting down, where one of my daughters had graduated high school, and the other one was a senior in high school. When we got, we got notices that we were being moved to Grand Junction, because the Montrose Office

was shutting down, and a lot of us, of course, knew that was coming. I mean, you know, "The project's shut down, so hey, we got to go do something different." A lot of us were banking on going to Animas-La Plata. We wanted that project. And by then, Animas was, "Hey, we're waiting for that to happen. We're waiting for the authorization. We're waiting for legislation to kick that one off."

Planned to Move to the Animas-La Plata Project

So, that was in everybody's mind, "Come on Animas-La Plata, let's get going because our office is going to shut down." And, our Project Construction Engineer moved to Durango to head up the office, because they were going to shift to a Construction Office. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, it shifted from Rick Gold, who had then gone to Upper Colorado to be Deputy Regional Director. When he left, then they replaced him with the former Project Construction Engineer from Montrose. And, he was doing double duty for a while there, going between the two offices as Montrose was tapering down, and we were starting to build construction expertise in the Durango Office.

But, we still didn't have an authorized project. So, we couldn't start staffing up over there. So, meanwhile, a lot of us engineers that were there–and we had a lot of us that are still working today: Ed Warner, who is in Grand Junction; Ed Vidmar who is in Provo; Larry Schoessler, who is up in the Billings Office; Bill who is working on construction here out of the Denver Office; Bill Holbert who is here in contracts. A lot of those engineers that kind of came out of college in the early '80s started with Reclamation. We had a whole bunch of us there now that were, we were already getting word that Montrose is going to shut down. We've got to start looking for other work.

"All of Us Wanted to Go to Durango"

So, a lot of us were putting applications out there. And, I applied for a job here in Denver, back then, and the Project Construction Engineer/Projects Manager in Durango, I remember him coming to me with two pieces of paper. And, he says, "Mike you got to pick one." One was a reassignment to Durango, and the other one was a job offer here in the Denver Office in the design shop. And, of course, all of us wanted to go to Durango. We all wanted to

go there and retire, you know. So, I said, "Hey. I'll take Durango." So, I was actually the first guy to go to Durango besides the Project Construction Engineer. And, then after that we started, you know, picking up some more people out there. We started doing some design work, some design data work.

We had a ground breaking ceremony on Animas-La Plata, where we had a, we blew up a sack of flour up on the mountainside, with the Regional Director out there. I don't believe the Commissioner came out there at the time. Boy, I don't even remember who would have been the Commissioner at that time. Beard or . . .? I don't know. Anyway. We, so we started staffing up, then, in Durango, with construction types. And, of course, Durango Office was already established, you know. They had a pretty good Operation and Maintenance Group there. They had the planning folks. A lot of the planning folks, meanwhile, moved to Denver. So, there was a, it was right through that whole transition (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) that we started off there in Durango. So, that's how I ended up getting to Durango.

We did have, we were being directly reassigned to Grand Junction, a lot of us. And, we had to, and two or three of us ended up going over there. Another couple of us rejected the reassignment because we knew we were going to be getting something else. So, it was pretty, pretty interesting times, but it wasn't like you had any stress, or anything like that. It was, back then, Reclamation, you know, we still had some construction going, and if you were in the construction business you knew you were just going to move onto the next, the next project. So, you know, never do I remember, I do not remember, I think, stressing, "Oh wow, Montrose was shutting down, now what are we going to do?" It was always, "Well, are you going to go work in Grand Junction, or are you going to go to Durango, are you going to go to Denver?" You know, there was always something there. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, that's how I ended up in Durango.

Again, no set plan, my goal back then was, if I could be the Office Engineer some place then that was my goal. Office engineers back then were running at the GS-13, 12, 13. And, at that

time our Office Engineer, in Montrose, was Ken Oullette and then Ken moved to Durango as Office Engineer. He actually followed me by a couple of months, over there. So, that's when he ended up in Durango. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, a lot of us ended up over there.

Storey: So, were you working on Dolores at all?

Gabaldon: I never worked on Dolores. That's–out of the Montrose Office, we worked on a lot of Grand Valley, Paradox, and of course Ridgway Dam. When we went to Durango, I was working pretty much on Animas-La Plata, and Paradox.[7] And, I was still finishing up a construction claim on Grand Valley Highline Canal, when I had gone to Durango. But, it was probably eighty percent A-L-P [Animas-La Plata] (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) at that time.

Storey: Paradox was the salinity control project?

Paradox Project

7. The Paradox Valley Unit was part of the Colorado River Water Quality Improvement Program and included facilities for the collection and disposition of saline groundwater.

Gabaldon: Yeah. The deep well injection project out at, near Naturita (Storey: Uh huh.) Colorado.

Storey: How were you involved?

Gabaldon: I was involved on the Operation and Maintenance side of it. The design of that project took place out of the Montrose Office. That's where they did the design of that. And, I wasn't involved in the designs of it. We had some other folks that were involved in it. And, the Paradox Project, since it was a deep well injection, we were using a lot of technology from the oil business, oil fields. So, we had some consultants that we had hired, that we had brought on from Texas. At that time, the Texas oil boom was anti-boom. It was going down, down big time. So, there was a lot of expertise out there on the market.

So, we, a lot of the design work out there was done under contract with some oil business expertise. Like I say, I wasn't involved in the designs. When I went to Durango, that's where we were doing the testing of the facility. And, I got tapped to go over there for, to do some of the Operations and Maintenance of this testing cycle, testing stage. So, I was out there living out

of a hotel for at least six months. And, that was a, get in the grease of the pumps and in your coveralls, and turn the wrenches. And, it was some heavy duty O&M, solid O&M. There we had three shifts going. We were deep-well injecting. So, we had to keep an eye on that. And, we had P-D pumps, positive displacement pumps, positive displacement pumps that were there for the trial. They were later replaced with more efficient pumps. I don't remember the type of pumps they were replaced. But, while I was there we had these P-D pumps that would break down everyday, I mean, literally. We had a, I believe four or five of those and you would cycle between those four pumps. And, pretty much one shift was spent to tear one apart and rebuilding it. And, it was kind of fun. I mean, it was cranking wrenches and, big wrenches, you know.

Storey: (Laugh) Two or three foot long ones, huh?

Gabaldon: But that, I enjoyed that assignment too. And, after that I was actually on assignment out there when I got the call from the Bend Construction Office. So, I don't know where that Paradox. I know they've replace pumps now, and they're still working on out there. I don't know exactly

what the success of that is right now, but I hear that it's working pretty good. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) They're causing some earth quakes out there, occasionally.

Storey: Yeah. (Laugh) Getting into the news, (Gabaldon: Yeah.) actually.

Durango Construction Office

Gabaldon: But, but I was, you know, in Durango. Like I said, my, I did a lot of work on the Ridges Basin Dam, did a lot of work on the Durango Pumping Plant on the design data collection. A Construction Office, a Field Office, what we do is we collect design data and that data is then given over to the Denver Office for designs. And, you know we, the design data would follow Reclamation Instructions. It was pretty specific as to what we do for, you know, if you're going to build a dam, design a dam, Reclamation instructions is very specific on what type of data you gather for the designers to do their work.

So, we would put together a report of all this information. And, I'm talking about, "Okay, here's where the utilities are. You know, here's where the nearest utility is. Here's, you have a

pipeline running across the reservoir that's going to have to be relocated." You know, we do some surveys out there. We do some geologic investigations, perhaps, you know, if you have that resource, which we did in the Durango Office. A lot of the surveying, a lot of the topog, topography-type work identifying borrow areas, identifying materials that were going to be needed for the dam, you have a lab force out there that's doing materials testing. You do work like, "Here's the nearest aggregate plant. Here's the nearest cement manufacturer," that type of data goes into this design data package that then goes to the designers to work off of. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, I did a lot of work on that.

Storey: Tope maps, maybe?

Gabaldon: Yeah. You bet. Tope maps are another big piece of that. We did the design data collection backing up to the Grand Valley and Government Highline Canal, and the laterals there. There design data collection, we'd go and talk to every farmer and say, "Where do you want your turnout?" "Oh, I want it right here." Okay, so then we survey that, we'd mark that up on a drawing. The surveyors come in behind us. They lock that in. So then the designers back in

Denver, they have that data. They know, "Okay, this is the type of turnout configuration that's going to work there, you know. Here's the elevation." Therefore they know the head, and therefore they, you know, design accordingly. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

"Field Office is All Design Data Collection"

So, what we were involved in out in the Field Office is all the design data collection for those designs. And, the same on a dam. We'd work up some alignment, road alignments, pipeline alignments. We'd meet with existing pipeline companies to have them go flag their, where their pipeline's running and work with them on getting that data to, to the Denver Office. And, we'd have a lot of meetings with the Denver Office, you know, transmitting that data and that information over to them. And then, they start doing their design work. Pretty, pretty hefty reports that go in to the designers, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) design data. It's pretty specific, like I said, on, "Okay, you know, here's a railroad crossing. Here's a, you know, nearest railroad is over here," because they need to know that as they're doing their estimates in the Denver Office. (Storey: Hmm.) And then, and then the designers

in the Denver Office will start doing some of their design, and then they work back with us to, "Hey, we need more information on this one. Can you guys go out there and survey this?" You know, "we've missed, we're thinking of putting this curve in this canal or in this lateral. Can you go out there and survey that for us?" you know. So, it's a lot of back and forth there on the design data process. So, that was a lot of my work on the Durango Office.

Storey: So, did you spend most of your time out in the field, or where?

Gabaldon: Mostly in the office, in the office writing up quantities. You know, taking a topog map and getting some data off of that for a quantity for an excavation on a pipeline or something, on a pipe works up to the outlet works. (Storey: Hmm.)

Grand Valley Canal Claim

The claim I was working on in Durango, that followed me from Montrose, on the Grand Valley Canal–this might be a little bit of an interesting story. We had–I did the quantities for the Grand Valley Highline Canal. And, what you do there is–that's before all these fancy computer

programs and stuff, but it was computer, though. You have a template of your canal, and you run that through your topog map that has already been surveyed. You know, you know the terrain, and you run this through there and, you know, with your alignment that you've already designed, and out at the end comes a quantity.

And, you try to match up your cuts and your fills on, you know, if you're going to be excavating you want to use that to fill the next section so that you don't have to import a lot of material. Or, vice versa, you don't have to haul off a bunch of material. So, you try to, you know, ideally you're going to balance that at the end of your reach of canal. And, that's ideal. Usually you don't get that, just because of a whole bunch of different reasons. Well, on this canal you have a lot of compaction that you have to do, also, because you have a berm on one side of it. We had a–I'm trying to think of the term–pretty much a parallel canal to pick up runoff. The term will come to me in a minute. To pick up runoff coming off the mesas and off the . . .

Storey: Yeah. To divert it away from the main canal?

Gabaldon: Yeah. Divert it away. So, you have these, you have the main canal that's carrying a constant slope. And then you have this other parallel canal that's going to, you know, sometimes matching that slope, sometimes going opposite, because, you know, you're diverting water to one canal, or one pipe that then is going to take it across the canal and then dump it over into the river, or something else. So, it was pretty tough matching up those as you're trying to run your template across this terrain model. So, what happened, I ran my terrain model. I came out with a number that then, to that number, you have to apply a whole bunch of factors. You have to apply swell factors of the material. You have to . . .

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Storey: There's some compaction figures?

Gabaldon: Swell figures, compaction, you have when it's in a truck it's going to do, the material's going to behave differently, so you have some factors associated with that, depending on your haul distance how much it's going to compact in the truck, you know, those type of things. So, all those numbers are factored into a quantity. I

work up the quantities. That quantity goes into the specifications, again working with the Denver Office. So, that number, my number, went in the specifications for material, and my number said that, "We're going to have to import material. We're going to have to borrow material to build this canal." I don't remember how many zeros, but let's say it was 5,000 cubic yards, probably more like 50,000 cubic yards of material that was going to have to be brought in.

During the bidding process, one of the contractors, perspective bidders, it was Ball Ball & Brosamer. They said, "Hey, can we have your raw data that came up with this number?" And, so I talked to the Office Engineer, Ken Oullette, and I said, "Hey Ken, we have a request." He says, "Okay, well what kind of raw data do you have?" I said, "Well, I just ran the template, and that's the raw data." He says, "Well, but that's not your final number?" I said, "No, you have to apply all these other factors to it." He says, "Okay, make that available to them. Put a cover letter on it, you know, disclaiming it, saying 'Hey this is raw data. It's a template that was just run over the O-G. the original ground, and it's not the final number. It does not account for swelling, for compaction, etcetera.'"

So, that was the cover I wrote on this. And the Office Engineer said, "If you're making it available to that bidder, we got to make it available to everybody else." So, we put in an amendment to the specifications that said, "This is available for anybody to, upon request." So, a couple of other contractors asked for that. And, the low bidder was Hajco, H-A-J-C-O, out of Salt Lake. They were the low bidder on that job. And, we had the bid opening, and we have the bid opening, and we go through each bidder's item by item, and we do a side-by-side comparison. We put them on a table. Pretty traditional what we do on a construction, sealed-bid type of program. And, we work on that almost over night, because we want to see if anything jumps out, any errors. Especially, you're looking at the low bidder. And, the low bidder, Hajco, on that item for importing material, bid like two cents per cubic yard. Everybody else bid like $3.00, $4.00, which was about the going rate. So, we went back to the, we went back to the contractor and said, "Hey, obviously you made a mistake." So, there's a way to correct mistakes in the bid process.

And, the contractor said, "No. No we're going off the raw data that was provided to us

that showed that we're not going to have to bring any material." "Yeah but, did you read the disclaimer that, you know . . .?" And they said, "Oh yeah, we read it." And, okay, so the Contracting Officer sent them a letter and said, "We're going to give you the contract, but we're putting you on notice that you got to meet the bid specification for that quantity, for that item, 50,000 yards, whatever it is. Be prepared to meet that." The contractor writes back, "Yup. No problem. We're going to, we've got you covered," you know.

So, the contract was awarded to Hajco. They start work out there. They mobilize. They bring in their equipment. And, they start building this canal. And by then, about that time I was moving to Durango. They start building this canal and, "Hey, we're having to bring in material, you know." And, it's like, "Yeah, we told you so," you know. So, he said, "Well, I bet if you run your template . . .," you know, because I ran my template stationing on a survey stationing usually starts at 1+00, 2+00, a hundred feet, you know, and stations in between there. So, I ran my template from this side, starting at 1+00, down to wherever the end was. Well, they started the job on that side, and they said, "If you run the job

from that direction over here, it's going to come out different, and government you owe us money, you know, because you guys mislead us." So, I ran that template from the opposite end. And, back then we didn't have, I mean I had to almost create a whole new program to, to reverse my run. And, and this was maybe three years after, maybe four years after, I first did those numbers.

So, I had to work on that one, ran the template the opposite direction, came up with the same number, you know. So, the contractor submitted a claim on that saying that they relied on the raw data. Then it got into lawyers, you know, "What has precedence, the raw data or the bid specification quantity, what's in the bid, what the contract says?" And, there was actually some back and forth there, you know. "This is more detailed." But, then you, "Well, this, it's got a disclaimer also, and wait a minute, we wrote the contractor and told him he needs to meet this quantity." So, we were pretty well, well covered.

And, I remember, as a still a fairly young engineer, having to go up to, to Salt Lake at the time with the Regional Director, and explain, "This is how I came up with my number, and this is what the contractor didn't account for. And,

this is . . ." At the end of the job, that quantity of material borrowed was within six percent of my number. So, it was like, shew, you know, because I was, you know, you start "Oh man, did I do it right," you know? (Storey: Uh huh.) But, it came in pretty–plus or minus fifteen percent is considered a good number on those. If you go under fifteen percent, or over fifteen percent, then either party can ask for reprice of that item. So, it was within six percent. We ended up settling that, I believe. There was some things we gave them. I don't remember what. But, pretty much we won that, that claim, so. Don't know how I got off on that one, only that maybe a little bit of perspective on some of the, behind the scenes on a number on an estimate that, that ends up (Storey: Yeah.) on a specification.

Storey: Now, that was the main canal on the Grand Valley (Gabaldon: Yeah.) right?

Gabaldon: That was the main canal on the Grand Valley that, that I had done the numbers on. And, my name appears on a lot of the final spec drawings also. Just because, like I said, the interaction with the Denver Office and the Field Office, through a design, it's a, it's a pretty unique, also, to Reclamation, though we don't do a whole lot

of that anymore, unfortunately. But, but it was, and it was Reclamation instructions. And, you know, very detailed steps as to, you know, what we're supposed to do in that. So, I don't know what that is. (Storey: Hmm.)

So, that's something that I carried over. In Durango, did a lot of work, my main work there was on Animas-La Plata. Then from there, I ended up going to Bend, Bend Construction Office, shifted, shifted regions at that time.

Storey: You were there, when, in Durango?

Gabaldon: In Durango, let's see, I started in '82 in Montrose. I was there for about seven years. So, I went to Durango '88, '89-ish. And then was there for four years. So, I went to Bend, '92-ish, (Storey: Uh huh.) somewhere in there.

Storey: Different job?

Bend Construction Office

Gabaldon: The Bend Office was a construction office. It was a mobile Construction Office, a M.A.S.H. unit. And–we called it a M.A.S.H. unit–and this was, this was very, the only one that Reclamation

had, and I think the only one that we have had. I mean, we have the Yakima Field Office, Construction Office. We have the Willows Construction Office. We now have the Farmington Construction Office. But, the Bend Office, Bend Construction Office was a mobile office where we would send–the concept was: You have a construction job? We'll do the construction management. We'll send a team, no matter where it is, well this was in the Region. We'll determine how many inspectors you need. We'll determine how many contract administration people you need. And, if you need materials testing, we'll do that. We're a one-stop shopping."

And, our, all of our inspectors, in fact, most of them, didn't even have a residence. I mean, they lived out of mobile homes, some of them. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) They were continuously on detail. And, that was the whole concept, and it worked great. The, the Bend Construction Office was established after Jackson [Lake Dam].[8] When Jackson Dam was completed most of the people from there went to the Bend

8. Construction of Jackson Lake Dam was completed in 1907 to supply water for the Minodoka Project. Under the Safety of Dams Act, Reclamation replaced the dam's foundation in 1989.

Construction Office that then Regional Director John Keys established that office. And, they picked Bend because at the time we had a couple of Safety of Dams projects coming up there, Ochoco Dam[9]–well I can't think of the ones down south. But, there were a couple of dams down there.

Path to the Bend Construction Office

The way I ended up in Bend is, you go back to Montrose where our Project Construction Engineer there, before Max Stodolski, was Bob Bruneel [spelling?]. Bob Bruneel [spelling?] went to be the Field Engineer in Jackson. And, when Bruneel [spelling?] went to Jackson, he asked three people to go with him from Montrose. He asked Jim Peters, who is now retired; he asked Tino Tafoya who now works in Boise; and he asked me to go with him

9. Ochoco Dam is a feature of the Crooked River Project in central Oregon. The state of Oregon constructed the dam in 1920, as part of its Veterans Farm Settlement Program. The Bureau of Reclamation conducted rehabilitation construction of the dam in 1949-1950. Extensive Safety of Dam repairs on Ochoco Dam occurred in 1988 and 1995. For more information, see Brent H. Carter and Richard A. Link, "Safety of Dams Modifications of Ochco Dam Crooked River Project, Oregon," Proceedings: Fourth International Conference on Case Histories in Geotechnical Engineering, St. Louis, Missouri, March 9-12, 1998, https://mospace.umsystem.edu, (accessed 4/9/2014).

to Jackson to run the Design Construction Estimating Office. At that time, my daughters were still in high school, so I said "No, I couldn't go." So, those other two guys went, and so the construction went on in Jackson. That office shut down. Those guys moved to Bend, and to, Bob Bruneel [spelling?] then retired in Jackson. Bob Welsh was the Project Construction Engineer in Jackson, so he took the office to Bend, which included Tino Tafoya and Jim Peters.

Well, when they got over there they were trying to establish a Design Office, a design arm in Bend, that they could never get the blessing from the Regional Office. They had the contracts. They had the construction management, but no real design functions there. And, so they were trying to recruit me. Jim Peters and Tino Tafoya would call me all the time. By now I'm in Durango, and I said, "Ah, you know, I don't know." You know, you get to know people, and you know it's a pretty tight group there in Durango who were mostly the Montrose people. So, finally the Bend Construction Office, Jim Peters was going to be retiring in a year, and they said, "Mike, can you come up? I'm going to be retiring in a year. Come up and run our Contracts Office, and you

will be poised for the Office Engineer job. You know, you'll be ready to step right in that one, because I'm going to be retiring in a year." And so, I went over there as a twelve, lateraled over. The Office Engineer was a thirteen.

Bend Office Projects

And, went over there as a twelve, worked there for about a year, and then sure enough Jim Peters decided to retire, and I applied for the Office Engineer job and ended up as the Office Engineer. But, I ran over there and ran their contracts shop for about a year. And, that office is, we had about forty people, out of that office, and at any given time in the office there was maybe about seven people, seven to ten people, because everybody, like I said, were out on jobs. We did a lot of work for other agencies there. We did a lot of Safety of Dams work for Park Service, therefore we did work in Ohio, in Pennsylvania, in Georgia, in–yeah, Ohio I mentioned already. We did work for the Navy over in Maryland. So, it was, it was a heck of a fun job. And, I was the Office Engineer so I wasn't onsite a whole lot, but I would go out there to do the bid openings, and do the construction, preconstruction conferences, those

type of things. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

And, we, we also then got Minidoka Replacement Power Plant.[10] And there, we established a Field Office out at Minidoka. So, we had a resident engineer out there. We had a full inspection crew there. This isn't, this is–so we grew by from about forty to maybe about fifty, or so, and a lot of them were duty stationed there in Minidoka, at that time, because that was a pretty big job. You know, a replacement power plant, I mean we built a new power plant basically. So, we did the construction management on that one. We also did the big Safety of Dams fix at Ochoco, which basically meant tearing down that dam and rebuilding it. And so, we were pretty involved in that one out of the Bend Office.

And, a great office to work in, great people, best, best boss I ever had, Bob Welsh, just a top-notch guy. What happened there is, people were always out, including our Project Construction Engineer, the top guy. It was the Project Construction Engineer, the Field

10. The Minodoka Powerplant upgrade called for the construction of a new 30-megawatt powerplant to replace the aging 13.4-megawatt unit.

Engineer, and the Office Engineer. And, under the Field Engineer were the inspectors. Under the Office Engineer, under me, were the Contract Administration, some engineers, and some laboratory-type things were under me. So, that's the way we were structured, and we did, we would actually, I shouldn't say "bid" on jobs, but if the Park Service was going to be doing a job, a Safety of Dams job on one of their parks, we would actually submit a proposal as to, "Hey, this is what, you know, you're going to need two inspectors, you're going to need one contract administrator, you're going to need a . . .," you know, we would crank up the numbers for them. We did some work for B-I-A [Bureau of Indian Affairs], and we would given them, "This is what it'll cost for you to use us." And we kept getting a, kept getting a lot of work there, mainly for Park Service, in addition to our own. I mean we were just, that would just fill in the valleys when maybe we'd be between jobs for us. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, Wickiup is another dam we did there in Oregon.[11] And, just some heavy duty, solid Safety of Dams type work, and power plant type work.

11. Wickiup Dam, completed in 1949, stores water for the North Unit Irrigation District on the Deschutes Project in Oregon.

Storey: Yeah. (Gabaldon: So.) Go ahead.

Concept of a Mobile Construction Office

Gabaldon: The concept of the mobile Construction Office, when–we had two construction offices in the P-N [Pacific Northwest] Region: Yakima, under Bernie Meskimen, and Bob Welsh, the Bend Office under Bob Welsh. And, by then the Region, region management, regional leadership, John Keys,[12] etcetera, they were already talking of combining the two. And, one of the big jobs on our horizon was taking out the Elwha dams.[13] You know, we were going to be taking out those dams up there. That was the big job that we had ahead of us. And, we thought, "Well, we want to

12. John Keys was PN Regional Director from 1986 to 1998 and went on to become Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner (2001-2006) and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. For more information, see John W. Keys III, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1994 to 2006, in Denver, Colorado; Boise, Idaho; Washington, D.C.; and Moab, Utah, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2008, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

13. Elwha and Glines Canyon dams are located on the Elwha River in Olympic National Park, Washington. The Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act of 1992 directed the secretary of the interior to study river restoration and authorized the secretary to remove the dams if necessary. Dam removal began in September 2011.

get that job," the Bend Office, not Yakima, you know.

And so, a couple of us started, "Okay, let's get registered in Washington State as registered engineers so that we're ready, you know, in case, when John Keys decides which office is going to do the construction management there. We'll be able to have an advantage." Turns out about that time is when the Bend Construction Office, they, John made a cut, John Keys made a cut to shut one of them down, and we were the ones, we were smaller at the time. We were just wrapping up Ochoco. We had Minidoka going, but we already had a pretty established workforce out there, and Bernie [Meskimen] had a lot more work over in Yakima, and had a bigger staff. So, a decision was made to shut down Bend and go over there. The Bend Office still exists, but it's a Maintenance Office now. Leo Bush runs that office, but it's more O&M.

When I was back there during the construction days, we still had the O&M office, which was headed up at that time by [Robert L.] Hap Boyer and Brian Person. They were out of the Bend Office. So, we had a kind of, they weren't under, they weren't under Bob Welsh.

They actually reported to Max VanDenBerg out of the Regional Office. The RATS Manager, Resource and Technical Services, who worked for John Keys. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Was it VanDenBerg?

Storey: Yeah. Yeah.

Gabaldon: Yeah.

Storey: Yeah, Max VanDenBerg.[14]

Gabaldon: Yeah. Yeah.

Storey: Van-der-berg [Van Den Berg] I think.

Getting to be Regional Liaison in Washington, D.C.

Gabaldon: Vanderberg. Yeah. So, so that's the Bend, the Bend story. We did a, we worked on some really good projects there. By the way, I wasn't there for the shutdown of the office. I had, about a month after I went to Washington to be Liaison

14. Max VanDenBerg participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Max E. VanDenBerg, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, Boise, Idaho, in 1995 and 1995, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2012, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

is when the decision was made to shut down the Bend Office. So, I mean, they were joking with me. "Okay, Mike leaves and they shut down the Bend Office," you know, but it had nothing to do with that of course. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

The reason, and still talking about career path, and if I ever had a plan I, in Bend, you know, Bob Welsh was going to be retiring some day. He was the head of that office, a GS-14. Jim, Jim McClain and I were the two thirteens under him. And, I thought, "Hey, I want that job. I want to be the P-C-E [Project Construction Engineer]." So, I thought, "How can I get a leg up on Jim McClain?" Jim McClain had been with Welsh since the Jackson days. Remember I didn't, I didn't do the Jackson. I came in afterwards. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, so and McClain had been in that Region for a lot longer than I had, so I thought, "How am I going to get an advantage over McClain on this one?" And, McClain, I thought, "Well, if there's going to be a selecting official it was going to be John Keys."

And, at that time we had Karl Wirkus who was our Liaison in Washington who was our Project Geologist in Bend. He went from Bend to go be a Liaison. Wirkus would say, "Hey

Mike," and to Jim, "You guys, this Liaison job, it's a good job. You guys ought to check into it." So, that was kind of in the back of my mind. And then, as I started thinking ahead, and you know looking at Bob Welsh's job I thought, McClain is going to beat me for that job, so I got to, I got to let John, I got to get John Keys to know me. So, so I threw in an unsolicited 171 to the Regional Director, with a note on there, "Hey, John,"–I mean, I'm in the Bend Construction Office, you know, we didn't interact with the Regional Director a whole lot, you know. Not me. Bob Welsh did, but I mean I knew who he was, he knew who I was, but not any solid dealings with him. So, that thing did go up, up to John with a cover letter saying, "Hey, if the Liaison job ever comes up, I'd be interested in it. Here's my background. Here's what I've done."

And, about the same time, they put out a notification that they needed names for people to go on two-week details, etcetera, to Washington for when Dennis Christenson–it was Karl Wirkus and Dennis Christenson popped in there as Liaison. He was out of the Grand Coulee Office. So, Christenson was out there, and they put out a notice that when he goes on leave–so, I threw in

my name. I threw in my name and said I'd be interested in doing that. So, a month later, or so I get a call from Cathy Konrath, John's right-hand person in Boise. She says, "Hey Mike, John wants to talk to you about the Liaison job." I said, "Wow. Great." She says, "Can you come out to Boise, you know, next Thursday, or something?" I said, "Sure." You know, they're about four and a half hours away, Bend from Boise, actually, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) to drive. So, I said, "Wow. Interesting that the Regional Director wants to talk to me just for a two-week detail or something." And, Cathy says, "No, this is for, for the Liaison job." I said, "Whoa." I said, "I thought Christenson just started about eight months ago?" She says, "Yeah, he's got another job. He's going to be leaving early." And, I said, "Wow."

Got the Liaison Job

So, I went and it was an actual interview. I interviewed with John Keys for the Regional Director job, and by the time I got back to Bend, Kathy had called and said that I had, you know, I had the job offer, and when can I start, you know. And it's, it's one of those deals that just got-away-from-you type thing without, you

know, necessarily having time to think about it, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) you know, because it just happened so fast. And, had I thought about it I might have not, not applied for it. I mean, I didn't even apply for it, you know. John was working off that previous package I had sent to him unsolicited. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, John was going off the success–because he said, "The best Liaison I ever had back then was Karl Wirkus." So, he wanted another "Bend boy" out there, is what John would refer to us as. And, that's how, that's how I ended up over there, as the Regional Liaison.

Just kind of a little bit of a fluke, but trying to get to that, you know, to Bob Welsh's job. And then, like I said, once I got to Washington, it was about a month later that they said the Bend Office was shut down. And, I thought, "Oh, man, that's why I'm doing all this, was to get that job." But, (Laugh) so much for that one. So, I don't know if you have, I'm talking more about progression on, and not necessarily about any specific projects or anything like that.

Storey: No. That's fine.

Gabaldon: You might be more interested in.

Storey: So, when did you go to D.C.?

Gabaldon: See, if I had my, my chronology here. Where did I leave Bend? When did I say I went to Bend? Ninety . . . ?

Storey: About '92, was it?

Washington, D.C. was a Different Environment

Gabaldon: Ninety-two-ish, and I was there for five years. So, I must have gone to the Liaison job around '97, '98-ish. Somewhere in there. And I'm probably off a year or two on my chronology here. But, I ended up going to Washington as a Liaison to John Keys. And, I got out there, you know, as I've gone through my career here. I mean, I grew up in a small town, Belen, New Mexico. Lived in Montrose, Colorado, small town. Lived in Bend, Oregon, small town. Suddenly, I'm going to D.C., and it's like, I was so out of my element, you now. Not work-wise, but city-wise, and cultural-wise, and it, it hit me–I got there and I immediately wanted to get out of there. It's like, "I made a huge mistake. Huge mistake. What was I thinking leaving the Bend Office, you know?" I mean, I had it made in Bend. That was a beautiful place to live. "What

am I doing here riding this Metro, you know, with a briefcase, wearing a tie?" you know. I mean, I owned two ties when I went to Washington. One of them had Santa Claus on it. You know, the other one I bought for the job there. So, I mean I was a field guy. I was a construction guy. And, get out there and my first day, going to my, to the office there. I'm working with this four other Liaisons: Michael Jackson, who is now in Fresno; Bob Quint; Fred Ore ; Bill Burleigh, who is now retired, for the Upper Colorado. And, I get in there and I'm thinking, "Who are these guys?" you know. You know, "I don't know these guys, you know. How am I going to get along with these guys?"

And, it was just a, everything was negative. Everything was negative for me. And, it's raining, you know, and I'm walking with a briefcase and an umbrella, and a tie, and thinking, "This ain't me," you know. (Laugh) And, I'm getting in this subway, and you know, all these people, you know. And, holy smokes, you know. And, I'm thinking, "I got to get out of here. I got to bail out somehow." And, I'm thinking, "I can't, how can I tell John Keys, 'Hey, sorry, I changed my mind,'?" I mean, this was literally a week into it, you know, thinking I made the biggest mistake of

my career. And, my wife isn't out there yet, you know, because I'm out there, because she's finishing some school. And so, I'm calling my wife, "I made a mistake. I got to get out of here." And, she's pretty much saying, "Oh, grow up." you know. (Laugh) Not like that but, you know, but she (Laugh) . . .

Storey: "Give it time, honey." (Laugh)

Gabaldon: "Give it time, honey." So, I'm thinking, "Okay, how do I–if I get mugged, if I get mugged, then I'll have an excuse. "Hey, John. I tried but, you know, sorry, I, you know, this ain't going to work for me. I got mugged," you know. And, then, back in the office we had a, this is about the second week into it, we have this Liaison to Water and Science at the time, to, a Liaison between Commissioner Martinez and Patty Beneke, and that's this Larry Todd guy, you know. And Larry Todd gathers up us Liaisons, and Larry Todd says, "Hey, I need to meet with you guys because I need to tell you what Patty Beneke's expectations are." Of course, I don't know Patty Beneke from anybody there. And, "Who's this Larry Todd guy anyway?" And, Larry's, goes over, "This is the type of correspondence," most of the correspondence

goes through the Liaisons, "So, this is what Patty expects. Action verbs, you know, fonts, you know, etcetera, etcetera." And, I'm thinking, "What am I doing here?" you know. Here's some guy telling us about fonts, you know. In Bend, you know, I'd sign twenty letters a day, you know, to contractors, and to, you know, consultants or whatever, and to Region, and to Denver Office, and . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. APRIL 5, 2005.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. APRIL 5, 2005.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Michael Gabaldon on April 5, 2005.

"This is a Great Job"

Gabaldon: Here's this Larry Todd guy giving us lectures on how to do fonts and stuff, you know. So, of course, you know, later as time went on I started realizing, "Hey, this is a great job." And, hey, "these are top-notch people here." I mean, "this Bob Quint guy, man he's sharp. This Larry Todd guy, you know. This, you know, Fred Ore, you know."

And, it's, the jobs, the work we started

doing, you know, doing visits up on the Hill, and Regional Directors come in and we're briefing the Commissioner, and we're just getting involved in all kinds of things, you know, briefing the Secretary, going to meetings with, you know, where you're in the room with the Secretary. I mean, it was about three or four weeks into it where it's like, "Hey, this is, this is all right, you know. This is a good job, you know. What was I thinking wanting to get out of here?" So, the job, I quickly came to the realization that that was one of the best jobs in Reclamation, and you know, I still think it is. But, one of the best, because I think a better one is an Area Manager. But, it was, I've had good jobs in my career, and that was, that was a really good one. I worked for, you know, John Keys, you know. And, at the time I was a Liaison we would say, "If your Regional Director thinks you're working for him eighty percent of the time, and if Steve Magnussen thinks you're working for him eighty percent of the time, you're a success," you know.

So, that's kind of what we strived for, you know. And, kind of, and we probably did, you know, probably worked eighty percent for each one of them, and just long days, and a lot of hard work over there. And, the beauty of the Liaison

is that's one of the few places, I think, in Reclamation. I can't think of another one–where you're across the hall from your counterparts that are doing the same job, for another Region, but I mean you have the same issues. You have the same, you know, the same functions and you build an incredible, incredible relationship with those guys that, you know, that just carries on for a long time. And, I, I think the other Liaisons, same deal there, you know. And, then as you transition through some of these. When I got there the Senior Liaison, actually Lilas Lindell [spelling?] was on her way out, and they were just bringing in Bill Burleigh for the U-C [Upper Colorado] Region. So, the Senior Liaison was Bob Quint and he was senior just by a–actually I back up. It was Michael Jackson, who was there a couple of months earlier than Bob Quint, and then Fred Ore beat me by about three months there. And, then Bill Burleigh and I came about the same time. So, we were all somewhat current. It wasn't like, you know, one was about to go out.

A Way to Develop Good Working Relationships

So, we spent a lot of, you know, almost the full two years together. And Jackson, when he

left, he went to the Liaison job for Water and Science, so he was still there. And, the job, the Liaison job, you worked very close with each other, but also with the Area Managers in your respective Region. So, you develop some good, good working relationships there, and just a, just a great office, great–whoever came up with that Liaison job, Liaison functions, did a great job. I mean, of course, that was the leadership back when we had Charlie Calhoun. The first Liaison was Steve Magnussen, for L-C [Lower Colorado Region]. And then after that, you know, there's been several Liaisons. If you, if you count where those Liaisons have gone, a lot of them have gone on to some pretty big things, you know, I mean. The Todd, the Magnussen, the Quint, the Gabaldon, Fred Ore, you know, Jackson. Jack Garner was a Liaison, you know. The list, list goes on there. So, it's a good, a good launching point for some bigger and better things there.

Storey: Well, tell me what the Liaisons do.

Liaison Responsibilities

Gabaldon: The Liaisons, the way I describe Liaisons is, one day you could be making copies for a

presentation that a Regional Director's going to give to the Commissioner or to the Department [of the Interior]. So, you can be spending all day making copies, and putting things in binders, and putting things in, you know, collating. And, the next day you could be up on the Hill briefing a senator or a congressman on an issue related to your Region. Now, different Regions do that differently. Different Regional Directors, I should say. John Keys was, and Roger Patterson,[15] at the time, those were the two guys that I think worked the Hill effectively, more effectively. And, it could be because, you now, I was in that Region. So, maybe other Regions saw the same thing. But, I didn't really see Bob Johnson as much, or maybe Charley Calhoun[16] at the time,

15. Roger Patterson participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Roger Patterson, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, from 1994 to 2000, in Sacramento, California and Lincoln, Nebraska, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2011, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

16. Charles Calhoun participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Charles (Charley) A. Calhoun, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, from 1994 to 2009, in Salt Lake City, Utah and Denver, Colorado, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2010, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

or Neil Stessman[17] working, working the Hill and working the Washington Office the way Keys and Patterson did.

My perspective, I may be incorrect in that one, but, but John would allow me to go to the Hill and meet with congressional staffers or even with the members, you know, without him. Other Regional Directors, you never hear of that, you know. And, that wasn't on a regular basis. Don't get me wrong. John would not say, "Hey, Mike, yeah anytime you want to go to the Hill," you know. It would on specific issues.

An example is we were briefing Patty, [Washington] Senator Murray, Patty Murray on an issue having to do with pesticides up in Washington. And, John Keys was going to go do the briefing. John Keys got called. He had to go do something else. He asked if I could just go do the meeting. And, I said, "Of course." And, I remember, I remember it was an extremely hot day. We were on the House side, John Keys and I, and John took a cab from there. I decided

17. Neil Stessman participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Neil J. Stessman, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, from 1994 to 1996, in Billings, Montana, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2009, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

to walk across from the House side to the Senate side, to Patty Murray's office, and it was an extremely humid day. I remember this because I get to Patty Murray's office and I sit down with her and two of her staffers, and I'm briefing them on this issue, and I am sweating. I am, because I ran over there, extremely humid day, and I mean, I'm, it's one of those where, it's just dripping. (Storey: Yeah.) You know, and so Senator Murray says, "Mike, you can take off your coat if you want," you know. I said, "Oh, okay. Thank you." (Laugh) I mean, she recognized that I was going like this, and you know. And, I'm somewhat nervous, probably. That was probably one of my first, just me, you know, without the Regional Director there, without the Area Manager, whoever, or whoever the case might be.

Liaisons Interacted with the Commissioners Office

But, the Liaison job's a lot of work with the Commissioner's Office, with the Front Office. You attend every meeting that's related to your Region. So, you get to learn a lot. You're, at the time it was Commissioner [Eluid] Martinez, so if Martinez was meeting with somebody from the Pacific Northwest Region or an irrigation district,

or it was a P-N [Pacific Northwest Region] issue, the Liaison would be in that meeting. And, our function wasn't really to, to engage in the meeting and in the dialog, and all of that, but it was more to be there, and the Commissioner would say, "Okay, Liaison," I mean he wouldn't say 'Liaison', "Okay Mike," or whoever the appropriate Liaison was, "Why don't you get back to John Keys on this and let him know that so and so wants us to follow up on this," and etcetera.

And so then our job would be to report right back to the Commissioner. I would talk–I mean right back to the R-D [Regional Director]–I would talk to the R-D, probably, on a daily basis, probably at least once a day. If nothing was going on, it would be "Hey, John here's what went on today." Or, "Hey, here's some of the issues that came up." At that time, a lot of the salmon issues in the Pacific Northwest, so I got to be John's rep at meetings in the Secretary's Office, with David Hayes at the time, with Patty Beneke (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) you know. So, you're involved in those type of meetings and those you do engage a lot more, you know, when you're the rep there. And then, literally, the next day you're back making copies for a

presentation, or you're scheduling meetings. The Regional Directors go back there and do House, they do Hill visits. And, it was our job to schedule those.

Specific Duties

And, there were some specifics, like John Keys, don't ever schedule him going from the House to the Senate, to the House. You know, have all your House meetings one afternoon and all the Senate in the morning, you know. So, you're scheduling. You're "Susie Scheduler," in some respects, when you're doing that type of thing. And, if you needed some correspondence pushed through, if you needed some hot issues, you're the one doing that. You're the one doing the legwork out there. If there was a, some legislation moving forward that required your, your Region's attention, you know, you're back on forth on that. So, it's, man you get thrown into a lot of fun, heavy duty, stuff. And, you're interacting with high-level people there in the Department. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, in other agencies also. So, it's a really good job.

And, I would say that's the way I got my, my Albuquerque job, because as the

Liaisons–each Liaison Office has two cubicles. I mean, a second cube, a second work area, work station, in your office. And, that's when the Regional Director comes in. That's, that's where the Regional Director has a computer and that's where they hang their hat, pretty much. So, Charlie Calhoun, who I hardly even knew before I was Liaison, in fact I didn't know him, you know, he's back there for some visits, and for some business, and his Liaison's across from the hall from me, so I meet Charlie Calhoun. And, Charlie Calhoun took a few of us–so Charlie and I would get talking and we have some New Mexico ties. You know, he was Area Manager in Albuquerque before he was Regional Director. And, Charlie is a connoisseur of green chile and red chile, and so we'd get talking about some of that, and then Charlie gets all the Liaisons and says, "Hey, let's go after work and have a beer," you know. So, we went to this place called Tequila Grill, where they have dollar Coronas on Thursday night. And, so we're there, all of us around a table, and I'm sitting across from Charlie Calhoun and we're talking New Mexico stuff, and Charlie says, "Hey, Mike, you ever think of going back to New Mexico?" I said, "Well, Charlie, I tell you what, if that Albuquerque job ever comes up, you're going to

see my name in there." And he says, "Good to know. Good to know." You know, so, I always think that I became an Area Manager just in that conversation over a Corona, there, you know. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Liaisons Get to Know the Other Regions

I don't know, but that's an advantage to the Liaison. You get to know people, and they get to know you, not just your own Region but, you know, other Regions too. And, we had, you tend to get some pretty good job offers coming out of there too. I was going to go back to do the Elwha dams that–the job I wanted was the Area Manager in Portland, and I had told John Keys that. "John, that's, that's the one I want." He says, "Well," the Yakima one came up, in the meantime, and John offered me the Yakima. And, I said, "No. I, my wife won't go with me to Yakima." So, it went to Walt Fite, that was back then. And, then about that time Carson City, they were having a tough time filling that one. And, Roger Patterson was over there and he talked to me about going over there. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, I said, "No." So, just an example of the networking that's involved in the Liaison jobs. And, so where I was headed back, then, the

Portland job, Eric Glover [spelling?] was there. He wasn't going anywhere soon, anywhere, he wasn't going to be retiring anytime soon. So, the one job that John had for me, that followed that, was to go be the construction guy on the Elwha dams, that Larry Parker [spelling?]–no, not Larry. I can't think of his first name. Parker? Rod, uh, whatever his name. (Storey: Hmm.) Parker, Mr. Parker ended up going to that job, but that was the one that John was kind of holding for me. And then, but meanwhile the Albuquerque job came up in there and I applied for that one, and ended up going over there.

Liaison Position Excellent for Training for Reclamation Leadership

The other advantage, the other nice aspect of the Liaison job is you get to know some congressional staffers. Being from the Pacific Northwest Region, I got to get involved with the Oregon State Society, being that my duty station was Bend, Oregon still. And, what was nice about that is you get to go with this group to go out to Wizards games when they're playing the Portland Trailblazers. Or, you get to go to the, the Orioles game when they're playing Seattle, or, you know, those type of things. So, that was

a pretty nice deal there too. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, a lot of good things out of that Liaison job. And, I think, if you look at the Liaisons that are there now, we have a really good group there now that I think are just top notch. And, you know, those are our future leaders. And, I think a lot of the R-Ds see that job as a good training, training place, too, you know, where you get to know the issues, the overall issues for your Region, and how the Washington Office works, how the Hill works. You know, you get to go to Senate hearings, you get to go to House hearings. You know, how can you beat that type of an education? So, that's kind of the Liaison job in a nutshell there.

Storey: Hmm. Okay. Then you went to Albuquerque?

Gabaldon: Then I wen to Albuquerque.

Storey: That would have been about?

Gabaldon: Oh, about two, about two and a half years as a Liaison. So, I don't know where we left off the chronology, but that would be '99-ish, (Storey: Yeah.) to 2000-ish.

Storey: Something like that.

Transferred to the Albuquerque Area Office

Gabaldon: Yeah, '99 I think. September of '99, I think, was when I went to Albuquerque. And, yeah, there again, I applied for that job, and ended up being selected. And, that one I was thrown into the fire. I mean it was–I get there on a September, and in November we had the Notice of Intent to Sue on the minnow. I was named in the, in the lawsuit. It was Minnow v. Martinez, Gabaldon, the Corp of Engineers, my counterpart in the Corp of Engineers, and Eluid's counterpart in the Corp of Engineers. Later we became, it became *Minnow v. Martinez, et al.* I became an et al, but it was a pretty, pretty challenging times there right out of the, right out of the get go. Albuquerque Office has the, at that time, had the hottest issue going, I think, I mean, maybe because I was there. Since then we've had the Klamath, and we've had, you know, others, but at that time, that office had its share of issues going.[18] (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We had, we had

18. In 1988, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed as endangered, under ESA, the shortnose sucker and the Lost River Sucker on the Klamath River. In 1997, the National Marine Fishery Service listed the coho salmon as threatened. "In 2001, in response to biological assessments prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), the two listing agencies issued biological opinions that

(continued...)

the lawsuit there.[19] We had some lawsuits on the Rio Grande Project down south. We had the Pecos River situations going there, low water. We had endangered species there.

And, it was, it's an office of about 170 people, not all in that office. There's about a hundred there, maybe, maybe eighty there. The rest of them are spread throughout the Field Offices. The Field Offices from Alamosa, Colorado, is the northernmost, Alamosa, Chama,

18. (...continued)
required USBR to take numerous actions, including maintenance of higher water levels in Upper Klamath Lake and two reservoirs on the Lost River and higher flows of the Klamath River below Iron Gate Dam. Releases of the new biological opinions coincided with a severe drought. Because of the new biological opinions and the drought, USBR was prohibited from releasing large amounts of water to farmers served by the its Klamath Project.... The unexpected restrictions on water supply, which severely impaired or eliminated agricultural production on the 220,000 acres irrigated by the Klamath Project, caused agricultural users to question the basis for water restrictions, while others parties ... supported the restrictions." See National Research Council, *Endangered and Threatened Fisheries in the Klamath River Basin : Causes of Decline and Strategies for Recovery* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2004), 1-3.

19. The silvery minnow was listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act in 1994. The full name of the lawsuit was *Rio Grande Silvery Minnow et al v. Martinez*. For an overview of the silvery minnow issue, see Susan Kelly and Summer McKean, "The Rio Grande Silvery Minnow: Eleven Years of Litigation," The Utton Center, 2011, www.ittoncenter.unm.edu/pdf.

New Mexico, down south to El Paso, was the southernmost. And, the area goes much further south than El Paso. It goes to where the Pecos and the Rio Grande meet down in, well what's the name of that place in Texas? Wherever it is, where the Pecos and the Rio Grande meet, way down there. (Storey: Hmm.) I'm trying to think of what the name of it is. Anyway, pretty big, pretty big Area Office. And, the lawsuit just consumed a big portion of our time there. And, we, we got into–let me back up there.

"Local Boy Came Back Home"

When I got there I was a local boy, you know. Local boy came back home. So, there was a big, there was a huge acceptance from the stakeholders out there, from the Native Americans to the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, to the, you know, Elephant Butte Irrigation District, and down even into El Paso, because here's a native-son-come-back type of thing, you know. And, that, that job there, I personally think that's very important to get in, getting some traction, you know. So, it was an instant acceptance, which was a huge advantage in that job. [Jack] Garner had the same deal. Garner actually has some roots up in

northern New Mexico. And, it, it's just something that, that's probably true anyplace, you know, where, "Hey, this guy knows us. He knows, he knows what we're about. He knows the water issues here."

My father farmed on the middle Rio Grande. I think I mentioned that in one of our earlier, in our previous discussion. So, you know, he worked, he farmed off the Middle Rio Grande Project water. So, it was, I went to Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District meetings, and that's what they would say, "Hey, Mike Gabaldon, he's, you know, grew up just down the, down the road here," so. So, that was a, I think, a huge step, a huge acceptance for a new Area Manager. That was a heck of an advantage over had I come from the outside, or, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) it would have taken me a while longer to get the traction there.

So, jumping right into the litigation, we were, we were back and forth there. We had a pre-Klamath situation. How much time do we have?

Storey: Oh, another half an hour.

Gabaldon: Okay. I've got maybe a couple of stories there that, that I, I want to talk a little bit about the mediation, and what went on in mediation.

Storey: Good.

Silvery Minnow Issue

Gabaldon: In the Minnow deal, as well as we had a Klamath-type situation there. I'm taking over a facility that, that I want to talk a little bit about that. So, let's see, which one should I start with?

The mediation. We, we were, Judge Parker had the, had the case on the *Minnow v. Keys*. And, Judge Parker ordered us into mediation. And, mediation was with–in the lawsuit, by the way, there was an environmental group[s] from Sierra Club to Forest Guardians to, I can't name them all right now, but that was the *Minnow v. Martinez*. Now it's versus Keys. But, and it was basically a lawsuit against the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corp of Engineers for the way we operate the river and that we're basically endangering the silver minnow out there. And, the interveners on the lawsuit were city of Albuquerque, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, the state of New

Mexico, city of Sante Fe, later on–I'm missing one. They intervened in the lawsuit on the government's side. So, when we would go–so , court-ordered mediation.

These were all the players at the table. We were the plaintiffs. The, I mean we were the defendants. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) The plaintiffs were the environmentalists. So, the environmentalists would sit on one side of the room and are, you know, a pretty small group compared to us, because I mean there was a lot of us. It was all the interveners and a couple of the federal agencies. And, we, the mediation was, it was–what's the word I'm looking for?–gag ordered. You know, we couldn't, we couldn't talk about what, what went on back in there as we were doing some negotiations, etcetera. I think the gag order is lifted now. I better be careful as to what I say here. I won't say anything that, that would violate that gag order anyway.

Mediating the Silvery Minnow Issue

But, what I wanted to say about it is the players, the judge, we had a judge, Judge Dejackmo [spelling?] who was the guy who was

doing the mediation. And, that guy was, he was great. He was, we had kind of, we had kind of, you didn't want to be caught up on the podium when the judge decided to go into one of his stories, you know. If you happened to be up at the podium, you know, and you'd tick him off or something, he would take off on a, you know, "One cup of water. That's all we had when I was in the army." You know, he was an older guy, you know, probably seventy years old or something. "That's all we had, one cup of water. So, you can't tell me that, that, that fish can or can't survive in water. We could survive . . ." I mean, you know, it was interesting dynamics, and it was fun. He was really–everybody really came to admire that, that judge and his style, and what he did there.

But, representing the state of New Mexico, at that time, was an attorney, Bennett Raley [spelling?]. So, I got to know Bennett pretty well in that mediation. I had known Bennett before, you know. I had come across his path a couple of times in other areas. But, that's one, one area where I got to know Bennett. I mean, we were closed-door, mediation, all day long, you know, for, we did that closed-door locked-room type thing for about three weeks. I mean, everyday,

you know, eight to five o'clock type thing, just hashing out the details of a settlement, and, what we were going to get through that summer. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, it was a, it was some very educational sessions there. The judge was pretty interested in, if somebody would say, "I have to take this back for a decision," the judge would say, "Well, who's the decision maker?" "Well, it's the, you know, governor, or the mayor." "Well, get him in here," you know, type thing. So it was a, so you went in there ready to make decisions, once this judge, because otherwise you were going to have to go call your boss under a court order or something, you know. So, yeah. I, you know, we did hash out, hash out some deals, some agreements out of there that got us through that summer.

And, I think, you know, got us through that very critical summer, because it was, you know, the river was going intermittent on us, you know, it was going dry. And, people and fish, were rescuing fish out there. So it was a, it was some pretty (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) hot times, literally, hot times. And, we were, we were pumping from a low-flow conveyance channel, which is ours, into the river, which is, I mean, we're actually pumping water into the river for the fish. So, you

know, Mark Twain, I think, said, the Rio Grande is the only river he's ever come across that needs irrigation, and that was literally what we were doing (Laugh) during that summer, you know. And, we got through, thanks to that mediation. The lawsuit, I think, continues. To this day it hasn't been settled, to my knowledge. Of course, they've gotten a lot of rain, a lot of moisture down there this summer. So, things are maybe aren't too bad.

On the, in that issue, too, you had tribal rights, you know, tribal interests there. They weren't part of the lawsuit, but they, they certainly were watching what was going on there. (Storey: Yeah.) So, that's kind of the, the mediation story. There's a lot more to it that I better check if that gag order's still on or not before I put anything on tape.

Storey: Okay.

Middle Rio Grande Project

Gabaldon: On the, on the almost-Klamath situation there, the Middle Rio Grande is a unique project. And, I don't know if you've picked up some of that in your discussions with, with others on the history

of that? But, the project was there before us, which is again somewhat different, you know. Usually we come in to build a project. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) You know, we did that back since 1902. This one, the Middle Rio Grande Project was in existence before Reclamation came around.

In the '40s, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District was experiencing some pretty tough times. They had a, they weren't able to make it, basically. They couldn't keep up their facilities. They were getting pretty old, so Reclamation stepped in. They asked us to step in and see if we can't work with them to rehab and fix their facilities. So, we did. And, during that whole process, the question came up in the lawsuit, later on, which was a cross-claim from the irrigation district against us, irrigation, Middle Rio Grande Irrigation District intervened on our behalf, on the Minnow case, but they had a cross-claim saying that we don't have ownership of those facilities. And, that's still, I think they've had a few hearings on that. Again, I've been away from that, so I don't know what the outcome was. But, basically they were saying, "Hey, wait a minute, we own those." And, the government was saying, "Hey, you own it, if we .

. ."

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BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. APRIL 5, 2005.

Storey: So, "You own it if, if we transfer title."

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Gabaldon: Yeah. Yeah, and that's, you know, I'm not going to get into who is right or wrong. That's up to the lawyers. But, that was the cross-claim on that from the irrigation district. And, our lawyers at the time, our solicitor, John Leschy had indicated that, "We own those facilities unless there's a title transfer, and since there's been no title transfer then you guys don't own it." So, the irrigation district has a cross-claim on title on that, to clear title on that, on their facilities. And, it's pretty, a pretty interesting project because we built some diversion dams that M-R-G-C-D [Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District] is saying is theirs, and these previous solicitors have said, "No, it's ours." I really don't know where we stand on that now. But, the whole issue there is, we had to write a letter to the irrigation district saying, asking them to stop diverting water to farmers, i.e., Klamath, pre-Klamath. "Keep the water in

the river for the endangered species." I actually stroked that letter. I signed it. This was July 6, 2000–2000 or 2001? Two thousand. And, basically saying, "Hey, M-R-G-C-D, please leave the water in the river," you know. And, boy that one, whew, that one, that blew up, (Laugh) you know.

And, that got to a [New Mexico] Senator [Pete] Domenici, Senator Domenici, Secretary [of the Interior Bruce] Babbitt exchange of letters that basically went something like this–well, what happened, this is all public, public record now. When that letter went to the irrigation district, the irrigation district said, "You can't do that." And, you know, it was front pages of the *Albuquerque Journal*, you know, and all of that. And, the senator, Senator Domenici put some language in legislation that didn't, that prevented us from doing anything there. So, Babbitt and Domenici said, "Wait a minute. This ain't going to work." So, they pretty much exchanged letters that Babbitt said, "Hey, if you take that language out of the legislation, Senator, I will not do anything to take over that facility," basically. Senator writes back and says, "Hey Secretary, thanks for doing that. I will take that language out, provided you do those things." So, and basically what it

said, Babbitt's letter was, "We're not going to take over that facility, unless so ordered by a judge, or unless it's in agreement with the irrigation district." So, I think those two letters still stand, to this day, you know.

So, a Klamath situation was, was prevented there, because of, just some discussions there, and exchange of letters, and it could have easily gone there. I mean, they were, they were already threatening doing some, you know, putting chains on the head gates, you know, and all that type of thing there. So, it got, fortunately, it got prevented. Fortunately for me, as the Area Manager, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) that it got, it got prevented there, so.

So, we had some pretty interesting times in Albuquerque. And, I was there about, about three years there, when, then ended up going to Director of, Deputy Director of Operations in Washington. That, that's another one of those in the category of, "Hey, I'm fine here. I'm enjoying my job. I love my job." Then somebody plants an idea, "Hey, you know, you might want to apply for that one." And, before you know it, you're getting an offer, I mean, and it's like, "Wait a minute. I haven't really thought

about this," but it, it's, it kind of takes off on you, you know. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It really does. And, so that's how I ended up in Washington this last go around. But, there's a whole bunch more of Albuquerque-type stories.

Pecos River Issues

We have some on the Pecos [River] where we were trying to sign an agreement with the Fort Sumner Irrigation District, where we would keep water in the river, in the Pecos. Again, we had an endangered species there, the bluntnose shiner. And, working with the irrigation district there, the manager of the irrigation district, I'd say, "Hey, we need this signed so that we can keep the water going," and he'd say, you know, we reached an agreement. He says, "Mike, if you want to, I'm over at the State Fair right now," he says, "I'm showing some cattle here, got some cattle here. If you come out here," you now, he told me where he was, "come out here and I'll sign the documents." So, I go over there with the documents and helped him shovel his pen out, you know, and literally shoveling the cow stuff there. And, so I, you know, that goes a long way (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) to having an irrigation district manager sign a document,

that you're out there with him, you know.

And, and so we got an agreement signed, signed there that again prevented a, maybe another lawsuit down there, kept water in the river. We compensated the irrigation district. Basically that was a, a case where we worked out a deal where we would buy out the last cutting of alfalfa, if you will, you know, that type of thing. It's almost a forebear, you know, for them foregoing irrigating that, their crops, but it wasn't the entire crop. It was just the last cutting, because we were there in the time of the year–they had already got some alfalfa in. This was, they still needed water for the last steps there. And, we pretty much said, "Hey, let's," we reached a pretty good agreement there.

Fort Sumner Irrigation District

So, I did a lot of work over on the Pecos River. Had the other situation where we go to a meeting with the irrigation district, three members, Fort Sumner Irrigation District. We're going over there to explain some legal matters on the bluntnose shiner, have our solicitor with us, and my hydrologist with us, three of us. Headed over there. I get a call on my cell phone from the

district saying, “Hey, Mike, we’re moving our meeting from our office,” this was literally a three-person board, “We’re moving it from our office to the Courthouse Annex.” I said, “Oh, okay,” you know. That should have been my first clue, (Laugh) you know, so.

We get out there and there’s the courthouse and there’s like a hundred cars out there, you know. And, we walk into this meeting and there’s literally two hundred people there, including people from Senator Domenici’s office, and [New Mexico Senator] Jeff Bingaman’s office. The lieutenant governor is there. And, they put us up on this seat, and we’re in the hot seat, you know, and these guys are angry at us, you know, because, you know, they’re hearing what’s going on, and they’re thinking that we’re going to take their water for the bluntnose shiner. This is before the deal was struck, you know. And, and boy they want us, they want to let us know that they have an issue with this. So, again, front pages of the, of their newspaper out there, their local paper in Fort Sumner, and a picture of me on the front pages, you know, trying to explain the situation.

I say to this day, that’s the best meeting I

had ever been too. It was hot. We were in the hot seat. We had to explain what was going on, and they were mad at us, and two hours later, they weren't mad at us. They understood. And, the lieutenant governor, who was there, Bradley, Lieutenant Governor [Walter D.] Bradley, under, under Governor [Gary] Johnson, he's one of the first guys to say that, "Now Mike," he says, "With all due respect, you and I have been across the table from each other in many meetings, and," he says, "I, you cannot be doing what you guys are doing out here," you know. And I said, "Well, you know, we're not doing anything," you know. "We're trying to reach an agreement." And, like I said, we reached an agreement ultimately, but that meeting was the best meeting I've been to.

I mean it was hot seat for an hour. The second hour was, "Okay, you know what, we appreciate you coming here and explaining this to us," and had one of the irrigation district, Carlsbad Irrigation District, Tom–oh, my mind's blank, C-I-D–Carlsbad Irrigation District, the manager there. It'll come to me in a minute. He stood up, about an hour into this and he said, "You know, we're all here beating up on the Bureau of Reclamation, where were we in 1972

when the Endangered Species Act passed? That's when we should have been voicing, I mean, all Reclamation's doing is they're, they're complying with the law, you know. It's the law of the land." Tom Davis. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, Tom was saying, "So, you know, it's not Mike doing this. It's not Mike's fault. It's not, and you know, Mike's worked with us. He's trying to get some agreements with the Fort Sumner Irrigation District." Also, Carlsbad's downstream from them. And, so the meeting turned, and it was, we walked out of there with people just saying, "Hey, we want to work with you. We want to keep working with you," etcetera, etcetera. And then shortly thereafter is when we ended up signing a pretty good agreement that everybody was pretty pleased with.

Storey: Sumner is the one upstream from Carlsbad, (Gabaldon: Yeah.) where it's a well field, is it?

Gabaldon: There's some well fields there, but they have a, they have a dam up there too, the Fort Sumner (Storey: Hmm.).[20] And, they have a couple of diversion dams. And, you know, they don't get a

20. Sumner Dam is on the Pecos River and a feature of the Carlsbad Project in New Mexico.

whole lot of water in that, in that river. You know, it's pretty dry, (Storey: Yeah.) pretty dry over there. And so, but good people. I mean, good, good, people. Those are, you know, I always say those are the meetings you go to and you got the guys in their John Deere caps, with the sweat mark around the brim there, you know. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

"That's What We're About"

That's, that's what we're about. That's what Reclamation's about. That's the, you know, our stakeholders. That's our customers. And, if we're not out there with those guys then what are we doing, you know? I mean that's, that's why we were established in the first place, and it's Americana, if you will, you know. It's great. It's small towns. And, if you have, you know, if you have an endangered species on their stream, and some of the implications and some of the things that could result from that, I mean, it's a federal law. We need to comply with it. But, these guys they worry, they worry about that, because, you know, it's, it trickles. If they can't farm, for whatever reason, whether it be a drought or whatever, that, that just waves across the community, you know. You're not farming,

then the guy who supplies you seeds, seed for your crop isn't working. And then the guy who's your tractor mechanic, and you know, etcetera. I mean, you know, I don't need to go int the trickling effect of something like that.

But, in communities like Fort Sumner [New Mexico], and some of those places where they rely on farming, and the whole community relies on it, you get some, you know, they pay attention to this stuff, (Storey: Yeah.) big time. And, it's a, it's great. You know, it's great working. It makes you proud working for this organization, when you see that that's, "Hey, you know the work that we do, the work that you do, the work that, whether it's, whether it's the Area Manager out there or the guy, you know, working the hydrology, or the guy doing the design on the, you know, on the canal, or whether it's you in your function, or Liz Harrison in her function, I mean it's all to deliver that water and make that power, and it's, it's a great place to work for, you know."

Reclamation Achievements

I can't think of a, I'm sure people working for other agencies think the same thing, but when

you see, when you see that result out on the ground, boy that's a, makes you pretty darn proud. I was at Glen Canyon Dam about three weeks ago, on Adaptive Management. I'm the Secretary's designee on Adaptive Management. That we'll save for another, another discussion maybe. But, I was out at the dam and working there with Ken Rice and in the innards, the innards of the dam, and what those facilities do, and the power they generate. Again, you can't help but think, "Man, we, we do some good things." And, when you look at a power plant and the simplicity of the, of the, of power generation, I mean it's, of course it's very complicated. But, when you break it down to you're passing water over something that's spinning and you know, going across magnets and etcetera, I mean that's very simplistic, but that's, man that's pretty impressive things that this agency has built and pulled together there.

Storey: Yeah.

Gabaldon: You know, very, very impressive. You can't help but think, "Wow, I'm part of this," you know, in some fashion, in some way, whether, like I said, you're working in contracts, or whether you're Ken Rice out there, you know,

doing the actual operations of the facility.

So, I'm kind of, kind of running out of steam here.

Storey: Well, this is a good time to stop I think.

Gabaldon: Okay.

Storey: Before we go on into your Deputy Director's job and so on. I'll have a few questions next time.

Gabaldon: Okay, Deputy Director.

Storey: But, let me ask whether or not any information, whether or not it's acceptable for researchers to use the information these tapes, (Gabaldon: Yes.) and the resulting transcripts?

Gabaldon: Yeah. It's fine.

Storey: Good.

Gabaldon: Uhm, the, as I mentioned earlier, there was some gag order deals in the, in the courtroom, so I would like to check–I didn't say anything that would be, that would violate that, but I'd like to talk further about that, if the, if the gag order is

lifted. But, until I confirm that, I'll, I won't say any (Storey: Okay.) anything on that.

Storey: Good. Thanks.

Gabaldon: Okay.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. APRIL 5, 2005.
END OF INTERVIEWS.