

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

JACK GARNER



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OPEN FOR RESEARCH



Interviews Conducted and Edited by:  
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Senior Historian  
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## Statement of Donation

### STATEMENT OF DONATION OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS OF JACK GARNER

1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 66, United States Code, and subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in this instrument, I, Jack Garner, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of Boulder, Colorado, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives"), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during the interviews conducted on May 24, and June 23, 1994, at the Denver Office and at the West Colorado Area Office near Loveland, Colorado, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tapes and transcripts. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.
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Date 6/23/95

Signed: [Signature]  
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**WITNESSETH:**

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Having witnessed that the materials described above by Jack Garner are appropriate for preservation as evidence of the United States Government's organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and transactions, and considering it to be in the public interest to accept these materials for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration, I accept the gift on behalf of the United States of America, subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in the above instrument.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Archivist of the United States

### Editorial Convention

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:

[www.usbr.gov/history](http://www.usbr.gov/history)

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## Oral History Interviews Jack Garner

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Jack Garner, the Eastern Colorado Area Office Manager, on May 26, 1995, at about nine o'clock in the morning in Building 67 on the Denver Federal Center. This is tape one.

Mr. Garner, could you tell me please where you were born and raised and educated, and how you ended up at the Bureau of Reclamation?

### Early Life

Garner: Well, I was born in Lander, Wyoming and actually, my folks lived in Riverton.<sup>1</sup> After the war, they homesteaded on a Reclamation project, actually, on 8 Mile Road out of Riverton. I lived there until I was about five years old and then moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. My father at the time worked for the New Mexico Game and Fish Department, and my mother was a schoolteacher in Santa Fe.

I went all the way through kindergarten through high school in Santa Fe and then went to college two years, at Fort Louis College in Durango, Colorado, and then transferred to Colorado State University, where I finished. I got a B-S from

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1. Located in central Wyoming, the Riverton Project provides irrigation water from the Wind River to 59,713 acres. For more information, see Robert Autobee, "Riverton Unit: Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program," Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Reclamation, 1996, [www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html).

Colorado State in forestry with an emphasis on outdoor recreation.

My father, must have been sometime in my teen years, went from the New Mexico Game and Fish Department to the U.S. Forest Service, where he was the District Ranger on the Pecos Wilderness Area in Pecos, New Mexico, and then later, probably about 1964, became the District Ranger on the Carson National Forest on the Tres Piedras District. So we spent a considerable amount of our time during the week, stayed in school in Santa Fe, but on Friday nights we would head towards Tres Piedras, which is a very small little community in northern New Mexico, and we spent our weekends up there, and did all the things that you do when you had a father that works for the Forest Service. Covered the district on horseback. Probably one of the first—was the first family probably in northern New Mexico to have a snowmobile, which was in about 1965 or 1966 time, a little eight-horse Arctic Cap snowmobile, and did a lot of fun things like that.

### **Attended Colorado State University**

When I was at college at C-S-U [Colorado State University], I took a class on various types of federal agencies. Actually, that was the first time I had ever really heard of the Bureau of Reclamation. As I remember, it was a natural resource class, and they were talking about the typical motherhood agencies like National Park Service and Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management. Then they talked about Reclamation, the dam-building

agency. As I remember, the professor, who I believe at the time was Howard Alden, who is now retired from C-S-U, was not very complimentary of Reclamation. Having a natural resource background, he didn't have a lot to say about it other than to recognize that they had a considerable amount of construction background on dam-building.

When I graduated, I went a couple of extra quarters so that I could qualify as a professional forester and get on the *Federal Register*. There was a job that came out in Loveland, and it was with the Bureau of Reclamation as a Natural Resource Specialist, like a GS-5 job. Well, I applied for it in March, but when I applied for the job, I went down and interviewed for it. The Chief of the 400 Division was a man by the name of Ken Dickey. The Lands and Recreation Branch Chief was Arnold Peterson.

### **Getting Into Reclamation**

Pete and I hit it off pretty good, and things were looking good until they got the *Federal Register* and found out that they had a better in front of me. He was in Denver and was interested in the job, so they proceeded to go ahead and hire him. So I went to work for the Forest Service in New Mexico on a summer temporary position, which was kind of interesting because at the time, because of nepotism laws, I could not be hired as a summer. So I had to go to work prior to a certain date, and luckily I graduated in March so I could go to work for them. But I was a Wilderness Ranger for the

Forest Service in Bakers Wilderness Area.

I applied for graduate school at C-S-U in forest management, and was accepted. Was coming back to go a school in, I believe it was August, the last part of August, first part of September, and when I got to the place that I was going to live out in Fort Collins, there was a letter in the mailbox from the Bureau of Reclamation offering me the job with Bureau of Reclamation in Loveland. I was supposed to have responded the day before I got the letter, because I was in transit coming from New Mexico and wasn't aware that I got the letter. So I frantically called, hoping that I hadn't missed the date, and I hadn't. They had found out that I was in transit, so I accepted the job, and thus escaped going to graduate school.

Went to work as a GS-5 in Loveland. At the time, that was the—let me see, I think it was called the South Platte River Projects Office, which was the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, and I believe at the time [unclear] Narrows. Narrows wasn't an authorized project, but it had a number of things to it so they referred to it as the South Platte River Projects Office. The Project Manager was a man by the name of Jim Stokes [phonetic], who hadn't been there too long and had been Power Chief, I believe, in Sacramento.

Shortly after I got there, Bob Berling became the Project Manager. I was in Loveland for about five years. I believe I started in the fall in 1972. What I really thought I was going to do was, I was going to work for Reclamation for a short period of

time until I could go to work for the U.S. Forest Service, because that was really what I wanted to do was work for the Forest Service.

### **National Resource Specialist**

What I found out in my four or five years in Loveland was as a Natural Resource Specialist, especially one of the very few at that time in Reclamation that had any recreation background, Reclamation did not have any standards or anything on recreation facilities, so I get to really write the book on recreation facilities and design facilities, and do all kinds of fun things. For somebody fresh out of college, it's like a dream job.

What I found out with the Forest Service and the National Park Service is somebody had written those books a long time ago, and so everything was very regulated. If you were going to put up a sign, you had the dimensions of the sign, you had the letter type, you had the color. There was hardly any room for imagination in the process. Reclamation hadn't done that yet, so you were able to take a little bit from all the various agencies and kind of put together your own program.

So I had a real good time in doing that. I worked with Larimer County and developed recreation facilities around Carter Lake and around Horsetooth [Reservoir],<sup>2</sup> which, amazingly enough,

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2. Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir store water for the East Slope distribution system of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. For more information, see Robert Autobee, "Colorado-Big Thompson Project," Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Reclamation, 1996,

(continued...)

they're still standing today. I designed a fire grate that had a removable—or could be used as a regular campfire-type thing, or you could put a grate in it that was used for barbecuing, and it had a multilevel so that you could use it for charcoal or you could use wood under it. So it was a lot of fun.

I really had a good time. Got in with the base. We had the Reserves [National Guard], the weekend warriors, that I kind of directed that came out, and they had heavy equipment. We moved dirt to build areas for campgrounds around the south end of Horsetooth. Actually, they had some really nice equipment, and I ended up running a lot of the equipment because they were more interested in playing cards than they were running the equipment, and I was interested in getting the work done. So I worked the equipment and did that. But there were a lot of interesting, fun things.

### **Transferred to the Mid Pacific Region**

About that time, about five years, a job came available in Sacramento as a Natural Resource Specialist. Actually, I don't remember whether it was Natural Resource Specialist or whether it was an Outdoor Recreation Specialist. So I applied for that job and ended up getting in, and moved to Sacramento.

That was a fairly traumatic move for me. The timing was not all that great. I had found out a few months before, well, actually around the time I got

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2. (...continued)  
[www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html)



the job, that my wife had Hodgkin's Disease. She had gone through extensive chemotherapy and radiation. We had just had our first daughter. We moved to Sacramento in March or April, and she died in November. So that was pretty rough, going to a new job and having to deal with all the things you have to deal with, and the emotional things you have to deal with in that type of situation.

### **Outdoor Recreation Planner**

I stayed in Sacramento for about six years, worked in the [Mid Pacific] Regional Office as an Outdoor Recreation Planner for about a year, and then youth programs came in. I had worked in youth programs in Loveland and Y-C-C [Youth Conservation Corps], and they had a Y-C-C program and a Y-A-C-C [Young Adult Conservation Corps] program that just had come in. So I applied and got the job as the Coordinator for Youth Programs for Mid-Pacific Region, and ended up operating the largest non-residential Y-A-C-C camp in actually the county. We had about 250 nonresidential employees that came in on a daily basis in the Sacramento area, and we did all kinds of, again, fun things. Got a lot of work done. Built trails, did work for all kinds of different federal, state, and local agencies. Built fences. Built picnic shelters. Built buildings. Built a shop for the drill crew at Folsom [Dam]. Just a lot of different activities. When you have that many employees and that much enthusiasm, it's amazing when you direct them how much work you can get done.

About the time when that program was ending, change in administrations and they decided that they were not going to authorize Y-A-C-C to become a full-time job. One of the guys that I had worked with when I was in Loveland originally, Dean Schachterle, retired from the Lower Missouri Region. He was the Head of the Lands and Recreation Branch. I applied for that job and was able to get the job, Lands and Recreation in the Lower Missouri Region.

### **Lands and Recreation in Lower Missouri Region**

I moved back to Denver area, to Golden, and again, in about March or April—it seemed like everything happened in March or April—at this point I had remarried. I had a new son that was about a year old, and we moved to Golden, and worked in as Lands and Recreation under Willis Ervin, which was real interesting. Willis was a real interesting person. I really liked him. A lot of knowledge. Also, the Regional Director at that time was Billy Martin.<sup>3</sup>

Worked in Lands and Recreation for about three years, and that was probably, of the jobs that I had in Reclamation, that was probably the low point of the positions that I held. I would imagine the reason for that is because up to that point, I had

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3. From 1985 to 1988, Billy E. Martin was Regional Director of the Lower Missouri Region and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Billy E. Martin, *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 1996, in Sacramento, California, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2010, [www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html).

done a lot of things associated with getting things done. When I moved into this position, it was a very established position and there wasn't a lot of room for imagination and flexibility. I got bored very quickly in that job. I had some good staff, but I just wasn't very challenged.

I remember one time we went down to the dedication of the swim beach at Pueblo Reservoir,<sup>4</sup> and Bill Martin was there. I told Bill that if anything else came up, that I would be interested. It was probably six months later that he asked me if I would be interested in going to Pueblo, because they were combining the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project and the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. Ray Willms, who was the Project Manager for Fry-Ark, was going to go to Loveland, and would head up both of them, and he would like me to go down to Pueblo and run the Fry-Ark under Ray Willms.<sup>5</sup> I was very happy to do that, because I was not very happy where I was.

### **Working for Ray Willms**

Moved down there and spent six years in Pueblo working for—I think it was six years, five or

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4. Pueblo Reservoir is the largest storage unit on the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project; a transmountain diversion development in southeastern Colorado. For more information, see Jedidiah S. Roger, "Fryingpan-Arkansas Project," Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Reclamation, 2006, [www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html).

5. Ray Willms participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Raymond (Ray) H. Willms, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, in 1994, in Denver, Colorado, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2010, [www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html).

six years, working under Ray Willms and thoroughly enjoyed that job. There was a lot of growth in it. I learned a lot. Ray was an excellent teacher, excellent boss. A lot of people didn't get along with Ray, but I really had a lot of respect for Ray. Extremely sharp individual. It always amazes me how he retains the information he does. If I ask him today what the capacity of Twin Lakes Reservoir was, he could tell me what the capacity was. He could tell me what each one of the pools, either the conservation pool or the flood control—oh, there's no flood control—but the conservation pool, what Twin Lakes account is in it, the elevations associated with. It just amazes me, the type of information that he was able to retain.

The other thing, and probably one of the interesting things about the job in Pueblo, that was probably the first job I moved out of being a Natural Resource Specialist into something that was typically held by an engineer. Being a non-engineer, Ray was very patient with me and just gave me some guidance because we were still actually in construction. We were completing the Fountain Valley Pipeline. The advice he gave to me, which always turned out to be excellent advice, is, if you ever have any questions on any of these issues all you have to do is read the specs or read the background information, and you will come up with your answer. Invariably, he's always been right. If you go in and you have a problem with a contract, go back and read the contract. The contract probably has the answer to it. You just have to read the information. Read the background

information. That always panned out.

Every time I would call Ray and say, "I've got a problem with a section of the pipeline they're putting in, and I don't know this or that," his first question out of his mouth would be, "Have you read the specs? Have you read the contract?" If I hadn't, the answer was in there and I didn't need to call Ray. So that was a very educational process, and I thoroughly enjoyed that experience.

I remember I went to an irrigation drainage seminar in Sacramento. Ray Willms caught me at the irrigation drainage seminar and said that he and Billy Martin had been talking about the possibility of having a few people go back to Washington, D.C., and they were looking at like a Regional Liaison to oversee [interference] experience in the Washington Office so that it provided the Washington Office with somebody who had some practical background in what took place in the field.

### **Regional Liaison Position**

Their concern was that because of the movement of the Washington Office staff to Denver, that there was virtually nobody in the Washington Office that had any field experience. As a result, they were making decisions on issues that affected the field, but they really didn't know how it affected the field. I told Ray I really wasn't interested in going to Washington. He was fairly persistent and said that we would do it on a two-year basis, and it would be really good experience

for me to do it.

I thought about it, and then determined that he was probably right. It probably would be really good experience. I really was enjoying what I was doing, but through the course of my career, I have pretty much determined that about five years into any one job that I had, unless there were considerable changes in that position, that it was time for me to move on and do something else because I had gotten to know that position pretty well, and I needed more of a challenge.

So as a result of that, Bill Martin and Ray Willms sent me back to Washington. At the time, Don Glaser had been back there, but not very long, and he was working for Dennis Underwood.<sup>6</sup> I'm not sure that Glaser really knew quite why I came back there, and there seemed to be a little bit of tension between probably Martin and Glaser, so I was kind of put in the middle of this thing. The position I went into was not a Regional Liaison position. I went in as a—there was like two or three positions, but one of them was Acting Chief of Environment or something, because somebody had retired or something happened, and that was virtually open.

I ended up working with Don Glaser on Garrison, and did a considerable amount of work

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6. Dennis B. Underwood was commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation from 1989 to 1993 and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Dennis B. Underwood, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews, from 1995 to 1998, in Los Angeles and Ontario, California, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, [www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html).

on that. In the meantime, they went ahead and advertised for the Regional Liaison position, and I applied for that job. I was already back there on detail and got the job. So I was the first Regional Liaison in the Washington Office. As the first one, I was kind of Regional Liaison for virtually all the regions, so I worked on Garrison,<sup>7</sup> I worked on the A-V lateral. You kind of worked on all the hot issues that ended up back in Washington, and you were the go-between between the Washington staff and the regional staff. Arroyo Pasajero in California,<sup>8</sup> I spent considerable amount of time working on that. There were just a lot of little issues that came back there that I did a lot of the legwork and answered the questions so that if Don or somebody had real strong questions, I would do the legwork on it.

As a result—well, that and a number of other things, but anyway, during the course of this moving to Washington, kind of like constant moving, when we go back to when I moved to Pueblo, I moved from Golden. We were going to build a house in Pueblo. We rented a house. We built a house. We ended up living there for a couple of years. Sold that house. Moved into another rental house. Bought a piece of property and moved up to Colorado Springs into another rental house to build a house. About that time, I went to Washington.

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7. The Garrison Unit was to be a large-scale irrigation development to provide water to about one million acres in east central North Dakota. Due to budgetary and environmental concerns, the project was drastically reduced to just over 130,000 acres.

8. Arroyo Pasajero is located in central California. Its flows originate in the Diablo Mountain Range and ends in a set of detention basins to the San Luis Canal.

So during the course of living in Pueblo, I think we moved about four or five times. That is extremely hard on family. I think that contributed, probably substantially, to the divorce with my second wife, which actually took place when I was in Washington. They moved to Washington, and then we proceeded to go through a divorce while I was working back in the Washington Office.

About a year and half, a little over a year and a half into that job, the position became available in Loveland. I actually applied for the job when Ray Willms left to go up to Billings. He either went to Billings or he went to Denver. No, I guess he went to Denver.

Storey: He came to Denver as Deputy Acting.

#### **Project Manager in Loveland**

Garner: Yes. When he left Loveland to Denver as Deputy Acting, and I applied for the job. Steve Clark got the job. It was shortly, very shortly after Steve Clark got the job that I went to Washington. Then when Steve Clark went up to Coulee [Grand Coulee Dam], they advertised the job—well, they didn't advertise the job. Actually, Roger Patterson<sup>9</sup> called me and asked me if I'd be interested in being

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9. At the time in question, Roger Patterson was Regional Director of Lower Missouri Basin Region and participated in reclamation's oral history program. See Roger K. Patterson, *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 2000, in Sacramento, California, and Lincoln, Nebraska, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2011, [www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html).



the Project Manager in Loveland, and I said, "You bet."

Basically it was a lateral from the Washington Liaison job to the Project Manager's job in Loveland, which was very interesting because that was where I started with Reclamation. I got to go back to my original starting place as the head of the office. My family stayed in D.C., and so I came back and worked in Loveland as Project Manager. The thing that became real obvious to me when I went back there, was—and this gets into kind of the changes of Reclamation, is there was a lot of—at the time I went in there when I was GS-5, there was a lot of activity. We had an outdoor crew. We had all of the power facilities. There was a lot going on. We had a lot of equipment.

### **The Office was Really Struggling**

When I came back, the district had taken on the responsibility of "O&Ming" [operations and maintenance] of the nonpower facilities. It appeared the office was really kind of struggling. We had a very top-heavy organization within the office. I think I had, when I came back, probably seven or eight division chiefs. Very, very regimented organization. Project Manager, eight division chiefs, umpteen branch chiefs, and it was almost to the point where they kind of stymied getting anything done. We had situations where we had division chiefs who told their employees that they were not allowed to talk to other people in divisions because they didn't want to find out what was going on or something, I'm not sure what. But

I could see right off the bat that I had some real work to do as far as getting this to be a surviving office.

The budget had continued to increase, primarily because of all the overhead, and overhead costs had gone up dramatically. I decided that I needed to make some serious changes. A lot of the staff that were there had been in Loveland for a long time.

I remember when I first went to work in Loveland—I talked about Ken Dickey, and Ken Dickey was the 400 Chief. I was there probably about a year, and this is back when I was a GS-5, about a year or two before he retired. Ken Dickey had forty-two years of service with the Bureau of Reclamation when he retired, all of them on the Colorado-Big Thompson Project [CBT]. He did some of the original plain-table work going from east portal to west portal across through Rocky Mountain National Park, and had just numerous stories about during the construction on the C-B-T because he was there in the very beginning, and went through the whole construction of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. A lot of the staff that were in the Loveland Office had been there not as long as Ken Dickey, obviously, but had been there for a long time.

From that point, I figured we had to get something to change the organization. I went to the Region. I sat down with Nick Tafoya and had

worked some with Larry Todd.<sup>10</sup> Got Nick and Larry together and said, "You know, I really need to change this organization, and I've got some ideas. Let's kind of brainstorm this thing and see what we do." And so we kind of all three of us inputted information. Nick kept us legal. Larry and I, with the imagination, kind of came up with an organization, and we referred to it as, and it's still fondly referred to in the Loveland Office as the Balls and Circles Diagram. It was really trying to change the way we do business in the Loveland Office and change the organization.

Today that organization is totally different than what it was four years ago. We have three division chiefs instead of eight, and we have no branch chiefs. We have increased our employee/supervisory ratio to where I think mine is like one to seventeen. The rest of them are either at least that, if not more. Our overhead costs and our costs of doing business are going down, which they should be going down. Of course, the thing that helped us tremendously was the buyout. But all of this has not been without losses to Reclamation, because of the three division chiefs I have today, none of them were division chiefs four years ago. In fact—

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. MAY 26, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MAY 26, 1995.

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10. Larry Todd participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Larry Todd, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 2000 to 2009, in Washington, D.C. and Billings, Montana, Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2010, [www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html).

Storey: We were talking about your reorganization of the Loveland Office, I believe.

Garner: Right. I'm trying to think where we were.

Storey: I think you'd been saying that of your three division chiefs, none of them were even in Loveland.

#### **Loveland Office Reorganization**

Garner: Yes. None of them were in Loveland. That's right. Actually, my one division chief came out of the Denver Office. Then I have one that I picked up from the Department of the Defense down in the Pueblo Depot. I have one that I picked up out of Personnel in the Billings Office. That's presently where we are today.

What I did do in the organization is I also established a deputy position. Actually, Larry Todd came in as the Deputy, which was another kind of unique situation because Larry had a similar background to what my background was, which was non-engineering. He was, I believe, a soil scientist out of Kansas. That worked out very well. Larry and I, we had a great time in organizing and making changes in the office, and thoroughly enjoyed the time that we had together and the success that we had in a short period of time in making the changes. But like I said, the buyouts helped a lot. Then Larry got the job in Amarillo, or not Amarillo—

Storey: Austin, was it?

Garner: Yes, in Austin as Area Manager. About that time, Bob Gilmore came back from Egypt, and I had known Gil for quite some time. Actually, Gil and I worked on—when I first went down to Pueblo, Gil was doing some of the clean-up on the Fountain Valley Pipeline when I was the, I guess, Division Chief of the Pueblo Office. Gil and I lived in Ray Willms's house that he was trying to sell in Pueblo, and Ray had already moved to Loveland, so we lived in his house. Then Gil went back to Denver, and then I went on to Loveland.

But when he came back from Egypt, I brought Gil up and ended up picking Gil up as the Chief of my Resources Area. He kind of acted as a Deputy after Larry left. Gil has a lot of knowledge in the power area, and my Power Division Chief was new to power. Gil provided a lot of good experience in that area to help in power.

Then, of course, then Gil ended up getting the job in Grand Island, so we're down to the three division chiefs and no deputy, and I'm in the process of trying to bring a deputy into that position. It's pretty tough to run an organization of roughly about 120 people with four managers, when the 120 are scattered over about two-thirds of the state of Colorado. We've got people located in Meredith, Colorado, which is over by Aspen. We've got people at Leadville, at Mount Elbert, in Pueblo, in Green Mountain, in Estes, in Loveland, and then out at the J-O-C [Joint Operation Center] with Western Area Power Administration out by the Loveland-Fort Collins Airport. So when you have people located in all those areas, it's a little bit

tough from a management standpoint, but I think we've got a fairly good leadership team going, and with the addition of the right deputy, I think we'll see a lot of success in the future as far as reducing our overhead costs, and making a very efficient organization out of the Eastern Colorado Area Office.

Storey: How many people did you start with four years ago?

#### **Loveland Office Staffing**

Garner: Actually, four years ago we had probably close to 135 people. I am down right now to an authorized ceiling F-T-Es [Full-time Employees] of 121 people. Actually, on board I have 106. I don't anticipate that we will ever go back up to 121. I'll probably run between 100 and, I would say, 110 would be max. Probably closer to 100 employees to run the organization.

I was able to retain one of the key staff from the, I'll refer to it as the Old Eastern Colorado Office, which is Tom Gibbons. Gibbons was in Pueblo, and then he's also been in C-B-T. He's an extremely valuable employee. He has a lot of knowledge. He's kind of like Ray Willms; never forgets anything, has a lot of information. I took him out of the supervisory role he was in and made him kind of a special assistant. He deals with all of the hot issues, and I don't know necessarily the hot issues, but he deals with the difficult issues associated with eastern Colorado. He has a background in contracting and in operations, so he

has a real good practical sense for what's right and what's wrong.

He knows a lot about the Trinidad Project, which we administer the repayment for the Corps of Engineers. He knows virtually every other facility in Reclamation as far as eastern Colorado. We've got Trinidad, we've got the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, we have the Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel, we have the Narrows Unit, and we have the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. Tom has a lot of knowledge on all of those, so he is an invaluable resource when it comes to interesting issues which come up almost daily of what do we do about temporary water sales in the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project and endangered species on the West Slope. Tom has the history behind it, can give you the information, and it provides you with a lot more information to make better decisions.

Tom applied for the first buyout. When the second one came, I convinced him to extend. When the third one came, I convinced him to extend again. So I've got him until December of '96. At that point, he will go out and will retire, and it will be a great loss to our office. We are trying to get as much information out of Tom as we can. We have a contract person, Julie Swanda [phonetic], who is gaining information from him as I am trying to get all kinds of people in the office to get some of that information that Tom has. But it will be very difficult to operate without Tom, because other than Tom, there is nobody in that project or in the projects that has been there for any extended period of time. Virtually all of the historic

knowledge is gone.

### **"More Water Rights Lawyers in Colorado"**

In some cases that may be good because it provides us with some fresh ways of looking at things, but in other ways, we kind of stumble into things because we don't have somebody to say, "We tried this and this is what happens." When you're dealing, a lot of the issues we deal with in today's Bureau of Reclamation are related to water management and water rights issues in Colorado. Everybody says there's more water rights lawyers in Colorado than there is in the rest of the United States put together, which is very true. So we end up dealing with—a majority of our West Slope issues are associated with water rights cases in court.

When I first came here, we had the Blue River case, in which we were getting read to go to court. We actually ended up settling that out of court.

Storey: That was the one where Denver was claiming Green Mountain [Reservoir] water?

Garner: Yes. It was all tied into the Green Mountain and Denver's rights.<sup>11</sup> There were actually about fifty-two objectors to the whole proposal on the Blue River case, of which all were satisfied and we were able to settle that out of court.

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11. Green mountain Dam is an important feature of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project on the western slope on the Blue River. The dam provides replacement storage for water diverted by the project to the eastern slope.



That kind of brings up another interesting—that's actually where I met my wife, my present wife. She is a lawyer for the Department of Justice, and she was doing the Blue River case and worked with Roger Weidelman [phonetic], who spent almost all of his time on the Blue River case. We were able to settle that out of court, and I think came with a good settlement. We are now in one or two other cases over there since Roger has left. I now have Malcolm Wilson, who is an engineer who actually kind of headed up the construction of the Leadville Treatment Plant, a very sharp individual, and had a lot of interest in not necessarily construction but water management issues, took it upon himself to go back to C-S-U to get a master's degree in water management. I convinced him to kind of stay on the rolls, and he'll be finishing up and he's doing a lot of the water rights issues on the West Slope for us right now with the Department of Justice.

Storey: Is your Dad still alive, by chance?

Garner: Yes, he is.

Storey: And in possession of his faculties?

#### **Father Oversaw Range Management with the Forest Service**

Garner: Yes, yes. Very. Still a really sharp individual. He and I get together and discuss—he always wonders why I went into Recreation. His expertise, he was a graduate of New Mexico State University in range management. I told him, he said, "You know, it's a lot easier to deal with sheep than it is to

deal with people." (laughter) I told him there's not a whole lot of difference between sheep and people when you come to Recreation.

So we exchange a lot of conversations on water rights issues. We talk a lot about a lot of the issues that come up in the *High Country News*. I gave him a subscription to the *High Country News*, and we discuss all the various things that are going on in the Forest Service and the government in general, the Sagebrush Rebellion, all the things that are happening on that, and the general philosophies behind it.

### **Influence of Allan Savory and Holistic Resource Management**

One of the things that's real interesting from his character is—and I'm trying to remember when this was, but it had to be back in the late seventies, probably early eighties, an effort was started in the Southwest by a guy by the name of Allan Savory, who came over here from Rhodesia and was talking about something called "holistic resource management," which dealt with grazing practices in the West, and how they're different, or should be different.<sup>12</sup>

My father, being a hardcore range management person—actually, I guess after I went to school about the mid-seventies, my folks took an assignment in Kenya for two years with AID [U.S.

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12. For more information on Allan Savory, see Savory Institute, "Allan Savory: Founder and President," 2014, [www.savoryinstitute.com/about-us/our-team/allan-savory](http://www.savoryinstitute.com/about-us/our-team/allan-savory) (accessed April 2014).

Agency for International Development]. My dad did range management surveys for Kenya. He came back with probably a little different twist on how he looked at things.

When Allan Savory came over and started talking about this new way of managing, which doesn't just look at the livestock industry, it looks at everything, it looks at the lands, it looks at the wildlife, it looks at the livestock, it's holistically looking at your resources. My father was very interested in that, got very much into it, still very much into it, and finds it very exciting. To me, that probably says a lot about him and the fact that he was retired from the Forest Service, or very close to retiring for the Forest Service, and yet adopted this new way of doing business and found it exciting, and has been following that ever since. So we discuss a lot of that. We discuss a lot of water rights issues. My mother is still alive. They travel extensively.

Storey: Where are they living?

#### **Parents Living in New Mexico**

Garner: They live in Albuquerque in the wintertime. They live up in the Brazos, which is around Chama, New Mexico. They live up there in the summertime.

Storey: The reason I'm asking, I'm particularly interested in—I presume your dad was a veteran out of World War II?

Garner: Yes.

Storey: And that's how he was able to homestead on the Riverton Project. I would be interested in talking to somebody who had done that. Can I get his first name?

Garner: His first name is A. J., which is my first name, only I go—he's Amon Jackson Garner, Jr., and I'm Amon Jackson Garner III.

Storey: It's A-M-O-N?

Garner: A-M-O-N. Right.

Storey: Do they have a phone at Chama, for instance?

Garner: Yes. They're not up there yet, but I can give you the phone number for that.

Storey: Do you remember anything about living in Riverton?

### **Growing Up on the Riverton Project**

Garner: Yes. I remember as a four-year-old, five-year-old kid living in Riverton. I've gone back there a few times. When I was in high school, I worked for one of my folks' neighbors who had a dairy operation on Eight Mile. They bought a guest ranch up in Dubois, and I went in my couple of summers and worked on the guest ranch up there. It was Acker Horsebacker [phonetic], and did all kinds of things, irrigated and did all kinds of fun stuff when I was fifteen, sixteen years old, for the summer.

In fact, last October when Lynn and I got married, we went up to the Tetons and spent a week up in there, did some backpacking and various things. Came back through Riverton and drove out and found the original homestead, which doesn't look a whole lot different except the trees are a lot bigger. My dad has some—well, we have some pictures of the place when he first built it. He tells us stories about putting the ashes from the stove in the morning out underneath the oil pan in the car so that the oil would warm up enough to where they could get it started. Riverton is notorious for having extremely cold winters. A lot of stories about that.

I had a brother who was about a year or two younger than I was, who actually was killed when I was in Riverton. He and I were playing, and were down away from the house. He got over to a pump that was pumping, an irrigation pump, and reached up and grabbed an electrical wire on it and was electrocuted. Not one of my fonder memories of Riverton.

Storey: Yes.

Garner: Shortly after that, I think it was about a year after that, is when we moved to Santa Fe. I think that probably had a lot of influence on it. My folks traded the place that we had in Riverton for a place in Yuma, Arizona, that's under the Wellton-Mohawk. They still have that place, a 160-acre farm that actually they exchanged the original piece they had under the Wellton-Mohawk for another piece because individuals buying up a large chunk

of that, and their place was right in the middle of it. So they traded that for the existing place that they have, which is a really nice irrigated 160 acres under another Reclamation project. So I think they made a very wise move in exchanging that Riverton property for the piece now at Yuma, because the piece at Yuma is a really good piece of property, and the Riverton stuff is marginal.

Storey: What kind of crops was your dad growing up there?

Garner: I would assume—and I don't remember much about the crops—they would have been grains, alfalfa, probably hay. Probably alfalfa was primarily what they grew there. The Yuma property, they grow all kinds of things, cabbages, bermuda for seed.

Storey: Bermuda onions?

Garner: Right. Cotton. All kinds of things. They rotate quite a number of crops down there.

Storey: But I take it the family has never lived there.

Garner: No, never has lived there.

Storey: They lease it, or—

Garner: Right. They lease the property out. There's no residence down there. On the original place they had, there was more or less a residence, but they leased the place, and the guy lived there. But this place up under the Wellton-Mohawk, there's no residence, so it's leased to one of the locals that

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farms some property down there.

Storey: Up on Riverton you lived?

Garner: Lived right on the place.

Storey: On the property? Did your parents have to build the house?

### **Family Homestead in Riverton**

Garner: They built the house. Started by building the shop and the garage facility in which they lived. That was before I came along. My sister, I have one sister who's three years older than I am. She actually lived in the shop and the garage. Then they built the house, and both those facilities are still there.

Storey: Did they have to clear the land? This was raw land? Do you know?

Garner: I don't remember. I don't know. I never asked my father that. I assumed that they probably did since they had to build the house and facilities. Everybody came in there about the same time after the war, and I think that was one of the times on the project that was land they had to clear.

Storey: You said he homesteaded, I believe.

Garner: They call it homesteading. After the war, they made parcels available to veterans, and they referred to it as homesteading. Exactly all the details of how they do that, I don't know. We just

always referred to it as the homestead.

Storey: What got you interested in recreation and natural resources management, forestry?

**Developing an Interest in Recreation and Natural  
Resource Management**

Garner: Probably my background with my father and working for the Forest Service. He worked for New Mexico Game and Fish when I was young, and then went to work for the Forest Service. We did a lot of—I used to spend the summers with him riding in the Pecos Wilderness Area and thoroughly enjoyed that. That's pretty much where I got my foundation for working or being interested in recreation. I was not all that interested in the livestock end of it. Wildlife was interesting to me, but the realities were when I went into Colorado State, and I knew this before I went into it, when I got out of high school, that everybody wanted to be working for either Game and Fish or Fish and Wildlife Service or something. They wanted to deal with animals. It was pretty obvious that that was not a place to make a living because they had people with master's degrees who couldn't get a job working in that field. I thought that recreation was something that would always have a future to it, because all I could see is that more and more people were recreating. It just seemed like a real—it was kind of a new field, so it was kind of exciting and there was a lot of new activity in it.

Storey: I keep forgetting to ask you. When were you born?



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- Garner: 1949.
- Storey: So you would have moved to Santa Fe about '57 or so.
- Garner: About '54. I was only in Wyoming for five years.
- Storey: I guess I misunderstood that. And then you were there 'til high school, which would have made it, say, about '67?
- Garner: '67.
- Storey: You graduated—
- Garner: Graduated in '67.
- Storey: You went directly to C-S-U?
- Garner: No, I went to Fort Louis College.
- Storey: Fort Louis for two years, and then to C-S-U?
- Garner: Actually, to Fort Louis for—was it two years or a year and a half? No, I guess it was two years. I think it was two years that I was—
- Storey: So you would have graduated about '71?
- Garner: I was to graduate in '71, but I decided I wanted to go on and get a professional forester certificate, which took me another two quarters.
- Storey: So, '72.

Garner: So, '72. March of '72 is when I graduated.

Storey: And that's when you went to work for the summer for the Forest Service?

Garner: Right. And then that fall I went to work for Reclamation in September of '72.

Storey: C-S-U has had a lot of ties to Reclamation in the past.

Garner: Yes. It's amazing, the number of people that have come out of C-S-U that you begin to find throughout the agency that have come from C-S-U.

Storey: But you really weren't aware of Reclamation until that class?

**"First Time I Remember Being Aware of the Bureau of Reclamation"**

Garner: No, actually until that class, and I was probably either a junior or senior, had to be a junior or senior, probably a senior when I took that class. That's the first time I remember even being aware of the Bureau of Reclamation. Had no knowledge that the Bureau of Reclamation was even involved in the homestead we had in Wyoming. Didn't put that together at all.

Storey: If we could, let's talk more about why you went to Reclamation. It seemed to be more open to you, is that it?

Garner: Well, I think the reason I went to Reclamation is

because I didn't particularly want to go on to graduate school. I would like to have worked for the Forest Service, but at the time they virtually were not hiring, and because my father worked for the Forest Service, that complicated the issue. So Reclamation was a—the position was there, and it was just kind of an opportunity to get started in the federal government.

I was, actually, when I was in New Mexico when I was with the Forest Service that summer, I was offered a job with the—I believe it was the New Mexico State Forest Service as a forester in Bora, New Mexico, which is out of Las Vegas. I decided not to take that job because I really didn't see where there was a lot of future with the State Forest Service in New Mexico, and I just wasn't ready to do that.

So I came back up, kind of waiting to see what, and when this job came open and I was aware of this job, it looked like it was in an area that I liked, the Loveland and Fort Collins area. I had a lot of friends that I'd gone to school with, and it was a good place to work until I decided what I wanted to do. The further I got into Reclamation, the more I found that I liked what I was doing, that I had a lot of flexibility in what I was doing, and it was one of those things where I thought, well, I'll be with Reclamation for a year or two, and then I'll go to the Forest Service. And here it is twenty-four years and I'm still with Reclamation, and still having a good time.

Storey: It's interesting, I've noticed that you talked a lot

about flexibility and creativity and that sort of thing, and a lot of people in Reclamation don't believe there's much in the way of that available in the organization, or at least that there hasn't been until recently, maybe.

### **Flexibility and Creativity in Reclamation**

Garner: I think that's probably true, and I think the reason for that is because the majority of the people within Reclamation in key positions are engineers. For engineers, it's kind of like engineers with Reclamation is kind of like foresters with Forest Service. They've got it all down pretty much pat as to rules and regulations and procedures you follow, and everything's pretty established. When you come into an agency like Reclamation and you interject natural resources and recreation, that wasn't in their vocabulary. Colorado-Big Thompson Project is not authorized for recreation or fish and wildlife. That wasn't something they thought of back then. They were basically established to develop irrigation in the West, and it didn't have to do with recreation and wildlife.

So the new areas that come in to an agency, you have a lot more flexibility. If the Forest Service had gone into some type of something totally different than what the Forest Service was dealing with, if they had an irrigation project, you'd probably have a lot of flexibility within that if the Forest Service administered it. So I've had the flexibility. I can see where engineers and other similar disciplines within Reclamation that have historically been within Reclamation probably

haven't had a lot of flexibility or recently haven't, because Reclamation's going away from the construction into natural resources. It's kind of like Reclamation is coming around to where I thought they should have been twenty-four years ago. They're finally getting there. So to me it's kind of an exciting concept in that we're now getting into the areas that I've had an interest for twenty-some years and have been working on.

Storey: That leads towards my next question, which is Reclamation was pretty late getting into recreation, for instance, and those kinds of activities. So you became sort of the pioneer in that area. Did you have problems getting Reclamation to think about these new areas?

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MAY 26, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MAY 26, 1995.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Jack Garner on May 26, 1995.

I was asking you about if you had trouble getting Reclamation managers to deal with these new areas that you were interested in and so on.

### **Recreation, Wildlife, and Land Management was New to Reclamation**

Garner: Yes, I would say that's historically been a problem in my career with Reclamation is that they always saw recreation, wildlife, and land management as being something that was there but wasn't really important within Reclamation. Actually, my

philosophies on, for example, recreation within Reclamation have changed considerably from the time I was a GS-5.

When I was a GS-5 in Loveland, my feeling was that we should be administering the recreation on our lands, that we should go out and hire people and run campgrounds, just like the National Park Service and the Forest Service and everybody else. Sometime during the course of my career, and I'm not sure—it probably had to do with my time in California and my association with Lake Berryessa, where Lake Berryessa was turned back to Reclamation and we had to administer it.<sup>13</sup> We had no law enforcement authority. It was an extremely difficult process. It was kind of a thankless job.

At some point in there, I determined that Reclamation probably doesn't really need to get into the recreation business. We don't need another National Park Service or U.S. Forest Service. We don't need to carry guns. We need to figure out how we get somebody else to administer these lands. If there's an interest in recreation, then there should be somebody who's interested. We, as a government agency, should not be reinventing the wheel in recreation and trying to go out there and make another agency that's going to administer recreation.

So I guess I see that my position on recreation has changed, and to some degree that's true on

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13. Lake Berryessa is the reservoir behind Monticello Dam; the primary feature of the Solano Project. For more information, see Zachary Redmond, "Solano Project," Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Reclamation, 2000, [www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html).

some of the other issues, like land management and recreation. I don't see us, in dealing with wildlife issues, going out and staffing up and having a lot of wildlife biologists out there doing a lot of things when we have other agencies that have that available to us. I think we need to be the coordinator that gets the right people in there to do the studies that need to be done, and we administer that, but that doesn't mean that we have to go out and hire a lot of people to do it. There's people out there that are available to do those type of things. They don't have to work for Reclamation to do it.

### **"We've Seen a Dramatic Turnaround"**

That's a different philosophy than I had a number of years ago in Reclamation. That may have been because for a while you kind of beat your head against a wall in Reclamation, and found out that recreation, fish and wildlife, and land management were at the very end of the priority list. I realized that you can only push those issues so far and you can do what you can, and probably youth programs was the most beneficial thing as far as getting things done within Reclamation for land management, recreation, and wildlife issues. We don't have youth programs other than Job Corps anymore, so you have to look at how do we get these resource issues done within Reclamation when we have a limited amount of staff to do it and a limited amount of money.

We've seen a dramatic turnaround in the last few years in our resource issues and the priorities associated with natural resources in Reclamation,

which is refreshing, but I don't see that the agency is going to become a natural-resource-related agency. We still have facilities that we have to maintain. We just need to make sure that what we maintain, the facilities and the lands that we maintain, we take a lot better care of than what we have in the past and we bring that priority up. I think that's the important thing. You have to bring the priority for the natural resources to where it needs to be, because it hasn't been there.

Storey: Resources management plans are one of the topics, for instance, that's going around.

#### **Resource Management Plans**

Garner: Yes. Resource management plans—of course, one of the issues I have with resource management plans is I don't—and this probably, as you can see in the history of the things I've done, I don't put a lot of emphasis on going in and doing extensive planning on things, because what happens is eventually either you change administrations, you change philosophies. People have spent a lot of time in coming up with a plan and virtually have done nothing. I'm a doer. I like to see things done. You have to do planning. You have to coordinate with—and the important thing these days is to coordinate with everybody that's within the basin or within the watershed, not just our chunk of land. We have to look at the big picture on what we're doing. But we can't spend millions of dollars in a planning effort to not do anything. There's a happy medium there. It doesn't mean you go out and do things without a plan, but somewhere in between,



you have to come up with what's a reasonable amount of planning effort.

Of course, one of the things that concerns me is I like guidelines on planning efforts. I don't like rules and regulations on how you do it. Every one of Reclamation's projects is different, and I have a hard time in trying to understand how somebody is going to write up rules or write up guidelines on planning for resources in Reclamation. That kind of gets back to the Forest Service has such stringent guidelines and rules and regulations, as does the Park Service, that there's no room for flexibility and no room for imagination.

I think as Area Managers, that's what keeps us going, is our imagination and our flexibility. We like to have general guidelines in what we do, but I don't want a cookbook that tells me every step to go through to do, because then what do you need me for? And how do we ever make any progress towards changing and staying current with what's going on if we have such stringent rules and regulations on everything that we do that there's no flexibility?

Storey: I sympathize a lot with you because I like to do things, rather than the other side of it. I think you've already pointed out there has to be some sort of happy medium between the anarchistic approach and the over-planned approach. Do you see a sort of middle ground? How do you give guidance, for instance, to the area staff about, "These are the kinds of things we're looking for, these are the kinds of things we're not?" Or is it

more driven by day-to-day business, or what? I don't know.

### **The Need to Find a "Happy Medium"**

Garner: That's a good question. I think the answer to that is kind of like somebody asked a couple of months ago, they wanted to know from an Area Manager standpoint, how do you know when to do certain things, They wanted basically a cookbook to say, as an Area Manger, when [Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation] Dan Beard<sup>14</sup> says this, how do you know how far you push that. How do you know what you go on unauthorized use? How do you know how far you go on water conservation? How do you know how far ahead of the game to get or how far out there on the limb to get? It's one of those things that I don't think you can put down in writing how you get there. It's a feel for knowing. It's experience in the agency. It's experience with dealing with people.

Probably one of the things that helped me more than anything else was my time in Washington, D.C., in understanding how things work back there and how they don't work back there, and knowing when not to get way out there on the limb, when to kind of stay back a little ways. From a resource

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14. Daniel B. Beard was the commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation from 1993 to 1995 and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Daniel P. Beard, *Oral History Interview*, Expanded Second Edition, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1993 to 1995, in Washington, D.C., Edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2009, [www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html).

management plan standpoint, we've done a few resource management plans. We make them to where they're flexible enough that if there's something that comes in that's new and different, that we're not tied and say we can't do these things; that we have the flexibility to do them. Basically what we're doing is we're collecting raw data on our lands, on our wildlife, on our recreation facilities, and we use that as a basis. We don't go through and try to nail down everything we're going to do for the next twenty years. We just want to have the information there, and what else is around in the basin so that we make better decisions.

#### **Needs Assessment on the Arkansas River**

That kind of gets into the needs assessment on the Arkansas [River]. When we had the problem with the rafters versus fishermen on the Arkansas, one of the issues that came up is we had very little information on the ecosystem of the upper Arkansas basin. B-L-M [Bureau of Land Management] was going to go in and do an extensive survey on B-L-M lands. They called a meeting to say, "This is what we're going to do." I went to the meeting, and as a result of that meeting was able to convince the B-L-M and the Forest Service and the state that we need to do a joint study to where we looked at everybody's aspects of the basin, not just B-L-M's properties.

That kind of started the needs assessment off. All we're doing in the needs assessment is gathering information so that we have a better basis in which to make decisions in the future so that we know

when we augment water for the rafting flows, what it does to the brown trout population, and it all fits together into where Reclamation is headed from a better water management, so that when we change our operations for one of the interest groups, we know what it does to the other interest groups and to the environment that we've affected.

No matter what you do in water management and water operations, you're going to affect somebody, some interest group. You can't make them all happy. It's a matter of, from an Area Manager's standpoint, using some common sense in trying to figure out where the balance is between them. That's probably one of the keys to the position is being able to balance those things, yet not being so rigid that if the balance turns out to be off one way, you can readjust that balance.

#### **"We Involve Other Federal, State, and Local Entities"**

Reclamation historically has done things where they said, "Okay, we're the experts in the field. We're going to go build this structure. We're going to do this," and they don't pay a whole lot of attention to what anybody else says about it. We've changed that process to where now we involve other federal, state, and local entities in our operations, special interest groups, Sierra Clubs, Trout Unlimited, all kinds of different interests to get input from them, whether we like it or not. We have to understand what their concerns are and be able to move forward and try to do what's best for the resource.

I've seen a tremendous move in Reclamation to better relations with Fish and Wildlife Service on endangered species issues. We always considered in the past that the Fish and Wildlife Service were the bad guys, that they were always obstructionists to whatever we did. I think the relationship with Fish and Wildlife is considerably better now. We understand what their mission is, they understand what our mission is, and we've both come a little bit towards each other, and it's made things a lot easier. I deal with Fish and Wildlife Service probably once every two weeks. Historically, when I was doing traditional Reclamation work, I hardly ever dealt with Fish and Wildlife Service. That has changed.

Storey: You've led me to another area that is of interest—G-I-S [Geographic Information Systems?]. What are your thoughts about G-I-S in Reclamation?

### **GIS in Reclamation**

Garner: Well, the problem I have with G-I-S is—actually, I don't have a lot of knowledge on G-I-S. I had seen some G-I-S stuff that was done on the Central Arizona Project and was kind of fascinated by all of the information that was presented there, but on an operating project like C-B-T and Fry-Ark, we don't have G-I-S capability in our office, and I'm not sure we need G-I-S capability.

On the Arkansas, for example, on the needs assessment, one of the other agencies has G-I-S, and we are contributing to gathering the information and providing for G-I-S in there. But it's kind of

like law enforcement; we don't need to reinvent the wheel on G-I-S. We have some people. We need to agree upon how we utilize the material and how we do it so that it's utilized by everybody, but we don't have to go out there and do it ourselves, because our way is the right way. We just have to have input into what goes on. So I don't see us in this Area Office getting heavily involved in G-I-S, because I don't see the need for it. We have a number of different agencies, either state, universities or other federal agencies, that if there's a need in an area like the upper Arkansas, somebody has the capability on G-I-S and all we need to do is contribute towards that so we can get a product out.

Storey: Well, I've wandered again. (laughter) At C-S-U, you mentioned Professor Alden, I believe it was, with the federal agencies class. Were there any other professors there that were particularly influential?

### **College Influences**

Garner: Alden was probably the most influential professor I had, primarily because there was a group of us that were very down to earth, I guess, practical. Most of the professors, most of the college experience, when it comes to academia, is related to the ability to understand the material, the ability to regurgitate the material, and those who gets the highest grades are those who have the ability to do that type and catch on to that real quickly.

There were a few of us who were very

enterprising. We did all kinds of things. We sold firewood. One of the guys had an old Model-A flatbed Ford truck that he took his safety inspection sticker off of his motorcycle and put it on the truck, and we went up into the Poudre and went to a Forest Service wood sale area and loaded the truck up, brought it down, and sold door-to-door firewood. On our spring trip for outdoor recreation, we hauled a couple of cases of beer on our backs down into Grand Canyon and sold them. We did all kinds of money-making projects to get ourselves through school. Alden probably recognized that more than any other professors, and encouraged us to think about those type of things and to pursue being creative in what we did.

Most of the other professors that we dealt with were more from the academic standpoint and were not all that enthused. One of them was Dr. Ackerman [phonetic], who is still there, who was actually a brand-new professor when I was there. We did not relate to Dr. Ackerman. He couldn't understand why we did the things we did. When we went on trips together as outdoor recreation people, he felt like that we should be camped in one little campground and all circle around the campfire and sing songs and do stuff. Whenever we pulled in to a campground, all of us went in every direction to the wind and stuck our sleeping bags or our tents up on top of mountains and pretty well got away from people. He could not relate to that. That was kind of interesting.

I'm not quite sure what that means, but as an outdoor recreation person who deals daily with a

lot of people, when I'm not in my job I don't spend much time with people. I avoid large groups. I dislike organized activities. I don't watch football, basketball, baseball. I like to climb mountains. I like to backpack. I like to do things that most people—I like adventure. That's one thing about my wife and I. We both enjoy adventure so we do not ordinary things. What that has to do with the question, I don't have a clue, myself. (laughter)

Storey: No, that's fine. But once you got to Reclamation, you mentioned that you worked with the National Guard on weekends. What did you do during the week?

#### **Natural Resource Specialist**

Garner: As a GS-5 Natural Resource Specialist, we had Larimer County and Estes, and we had the lands around it. We had administering agencies who virtually didn't have any money. My position was to administer the recreation and lands on our facilities on the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. I designed the campgrounds and worked with the county and with anybody who I could get to either volunteer or give us stuff to develop recreation facilities around Horsetooth and Carter. That's kind of where the National Guard came in. I actually went out and did the survey with our surveyor there in Loveland. We laid out the areas to take material out of the bottom of the reservoir and build benches out into the reservoir on which we built recreation facilities. I designed them, surveyed them, and then watched them, and oversaw when they were built. So it kind of started



through the whole process from the drawing board right through. Worked with the county in doing that, and we used things like S & M-C [Soil and Moisture Conservation] money to do a lot of the dredging of material out of the bottom of the reservoir, which as a result of the use of that, that kind of gets into kind of Reclamation's philosophy on recreation back then, is we used its soil and moisture conservation money to do all kinds of creative things on recreation, which is probably not exactly what it was designed to do.

I remember Jim Cook. When I was in, I think it was Sacramento, Cook went back to Washington, and Cook knew that around Reclamation S & M-C was used for that and he didn't think that was an appropriate use, and he virtually stopped the use of S & M-C funds. That's one of those things where because recreation was such a low priority, we scrounged wherever we could to get money to develop recreation facilities. That's just one of the places we got it from.

Storey: You say you worked on C-B-T recreation development, but I'm only hearing you talk about East Slope. What about West Slope?

### **West Slope Recreation Work**

Garner: West Slope. See, on the West Slope on C-B-T, the facilities around Granby [Lake] and Shadow Mountain [Lake] were all turned over to, at the time I believe that was the National Park Service. One of the areas was Willowcreek Reservoir. Willowcreek, we developed a campground.

Actually, at the time we had a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service so that recreation facilities that we developed on federal lands, National Park Service was kind of our agency to go to, and they did. They had landscape architects and they did the stuff.

Interesting story about that is the Willowcreek was a beautiful little reservoir and they were going to build a campground over there. We went to the National Park Service and got a landscape architect out of the Denver Office who was actually from somewhere down in the South. He came out and looked at the site, went back and drew up a set of plans. I went over to spend a week in laying out this campground. We started off, and he had done it on a grid system. He wanted to go in and establish the grid system in this lodge pole pine forest that came down right to the water's edge, which meant through the process of establishing a grid system in order to survey it in, which is what he wanted to do, we'd have to cut down about half the trees.

The first day, we started to establish the baseline, and I could tell that it was going to take a long time to figure out how to establish this grid system and do a lot of destruction to the area that we were making a campground out of. So I proceeded to tell him that we'd go ahead and establish the grid system and he could come back next week and we would lay this thing out. So he went back to Denver.

So I took the crew, which is a Bureau of

Reclamation crew, and I took a handful of [unclear] and walked, based on what he had drawn and what the contours of the ground work were, I just started pounding [unclear] down through to make the road, and had the caterpillar right behind me, and laid the whole thing out. By the time he came back next week, we had already laid out the roads, put the pads in, graveled it, and were putting in picnic tables, and never used his grid system. That's one of those where you kind of plan things to death. He had made these plans, and one way or the other he was going to make this plan fit on this piece of ground, even if he had to change the ground to do it.

Then we did some work on Green Mountain Reservoir on the West Slope. At the time that was administered by the state. Did a land exchange over there to get us an area of where we could develop the campground. Green Mountain's kind of a desolate place sitting between Silverthorn and Kremmling. It's getting more populated now. Since that time, the Forest Service has taken over the responsibility, which is a positive. The state didn't have any money to administer it, and it was just kind of run on a shoestring. It has improved. It's still not an area that's going to have a lot of recreation facilities around it. Because of Muddy Creek going in the other side of Silverthorn between Aaron and Steamboat Springs, there will be increased recreation in that area. I see a lot of increased recreation between Silverthorn and Steamboat Springs because of Muddy Creek and Green Mountain Reservoir. I think you'll see a lot more development going in in that area. But that

was twenty-some years ago and Green Mountain hasn't changed a whole lot in twenty-some years. But it's beginning to change now.

Storey: It's still pretty desolate.

Garner: Yes, it is still pretty desolate.

Storey: You were there, I believe five or six years at Loveland?

#### **Loveland Office Management**

Garner: I think it was more like about four years, I think. I started in '72 and I think I left in like '76.

Storey: When you first went there, Jim Stokes was the Project Manager?

Garner: Right.

Storey: What was he like as a manager? What kind of style did he have?

Garner: Probably fairly typical of the old Bureau of Reclamation manager. He was a nice guy, but I did not approach him. His division chiefs talked to him. None of the employees really talked to him that much. But he was a nice person. It's just that's the way it was. I can't remember ever having a meeting with Jim Stokes and ever sitting down and having a conversation with him. He had a power background, and it was a very organized, very regimented type of operation.

Storey: What about Bob Berling ?

Garner: Berling was a lot friendlier, a lot more outgoing. I remember numerous times Berling dealing with issues that I dealt with. He was a lot more of a human resources person than Stokes was.

Storey: Over the period of time that you were there, did you get more money into a recreation budget?

Garner: I would say I got more money for recreation. I wouldn't say it was in the recreation budget. I would say it was creative in how I got the money through S & M-C through other programs. I directed money to recreation activities. But there was, at the time--well, there really wasn't a line item for recreation because recreation is not an authorized purpose of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. So whatever I did for recreation had to be in the name of something else that was an authorized purpose.

Storey: Who was your direct supervisor?

Garner: Arnold Peterson.

Storey: Was he a Division Chief?

Garner: No, he was a Branch Chief. He was the Branch Chief for Lands, for Lands and Recreation. I'm not sure what they called it. Pete was originally from Nebraska. Pete, really interesting. Pete is still in Loveland, retired a number of years ago, twenty-some years ago, I think. Real difference between him and Ken Dickey, Ken Dickey, who was his

boss. Ken Dickey lived for the Bureau of Reclamation. Virtually everything that he did in his waking hours had something to do with the Bureau of Reclamation. When Dickey retired after forty-two years, he was dead in two years. I find that really interesting when you look at the people within—

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MAY 26, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MAY 26, 1995.

Storey: People who spend their whole sort of waking life devoted to an agency.

Garner: Devoted to an agency. What you find out is that when they retire, they have no other interests. Invariably what happens is within a relatively short period of time, they die of a heart attack or they die of something.

Arnold Peterson had a lot of other interests. He had a farm in Nebraska. He invested in stocks and watched the stock market very closely. He retired because he figured it was time to retire. He still has a farm and has all kinds of investments, and is doing quite well in Loveland. You see that if somebody devotes their entire life, or the agency is their life when they retire, what do they do? They're kind of lost. But if you have other interests, then they seem to do quite well.

Storey: What was Peterson's management style like?

### **Management Styles**

Garner: Pete was real easygoing. He kind of let me do what I wanted to do. He gave me a little guidance now and then, but he was a very mild, very quiet person. As long as you were headed in the direction that Pete thought was all right, he didn't interfere with you, kind of let you do what you wanted to do. Of course, I enjoyed that because I did all kinds of things.

Storey: How many people did he supervise in his branch?

Garner: I think I was it. There was probably another one. At some point I brought in a couple of helpers that I kind of supervised, and Pete oversaw us, but there might have been two or three as a maximum. Then Ken Dickey was Pete's supervisor, and he had the O&M crew and he had Water Operations, and all that kind of stuff. So we had more people.

That probably gives you a pretty good idea of the way Reclamation has changed in that when I started there, Pete was pretty much "it" in Lands and Recreation. Now in Lands and Recreation we have a person in Environment, we have a person in Lands. We have Contracting. We have Water Operations as a whole another sub—there's probably six to eight people doing—and I can't say the same job that Pete was doing because everything has changed. There's been a lot more emphasis on resources as a result of that, a lot more people have gone into that area.

Storey: And then Ken Dickey was the Division Chief?

Garner: Right.

Storey: So that would have been the hierarchy? You, Branch, Division, Project Manager.

Garner: Right.

Storey: Could you tell me more about Mr. Dickey and his management style, for instance? How many folks were under him as a Division Chief, that kind of thing?

Garner: There were probably fifteen or twenty people under him as Division Chief. Ken could have a really hot temper. When I came into that job, Ken was at the end of his forty-two-year career. He retired probably a year or two after I came there. Ken had been in that position for a long time, was extremely comfortable with the position, and he basically told stories all the time. Some of them he told numerous times, the same story. But he was pretty easygoing. He saw me as kind of a newcomer and somebody that was different than people he had dealt with before. So he spent a lot of time telling me stories about the project and all the things that went on.

When you dealt with issues on Horsetooth or Carter Lake, he would remember who they bought the land from and all the problems they had in buying the land for the reservoir, and who's the problem, who isn't the problem. Had a lot of history, which I wished I'd written down some of it, but it comes back to you every once in a while. He was pretty much retired in place, but had a lot of knowledge. You could go to him and ask him, you may ask him a simple question, and he'd give you



an extensive, long answer that you probably didn't need, but he had a lot of knowledge.

Storey: Did he ever become involved in your business much?

Garner: No, no, he didn't, not hardly at all. The only time that he would ever get involved in the business is when I would get into issues on design of a facility like a campground, and we talked about cutting fill quantities. He loved to get into cut and fills, figure drainage, and he liked to do the engineering associated with it, which was probably something he really didn't need to do but he enjoyed doing it. So a fairly good example of somebody who came up through the ranks and was still kind of practicing their hobby. He was an engineer. He loved to do the facts and figures and figure quantities. Every change he got, he didn't manage much, he just kind of did those kind of things. He would love to go out with the O&M crew when they replaced slabs on the canal and stuff, and get out there and see what's going on, and figure out the yards of concrete that needed to go in and that kind of stuff.

Storey: Mr. Berling—where did he come from? Do you happen to remember?

Garner: He originally was raised in the area, I think, actually in the Broomfield area and had lived pretty much in the Loveland, Berthod, Broomfield, Longmont, Brighton area virtually his entire life. I know he was in the Denver Office for a while and then went to Loveland.

Storey: Why did you decide you wanted to move from Loveland?

**Decision to Leave Loveland**

Garner: The main reason was that I was pretty much at a dead end job in Natural Resource Specialist. The only opportunity I had was to take the Branch Chief job, and Pete retired about three years after I was there, and he was probably a twelve, and I was like a seven. So there was no chance in me getting that job. Jerry Westbrook came into that job, and I just knew that and Jerry was relatively young, that it would be along time before that job became available. There really weren't any other jobs within that office that I would qualify for being a non-engineer. So in order to advance, I had to go somewhere.

Storey: And you chose Sacramento.

Garner: Right.

Storey: Had you visited there?

Garner: No. Never been there.

Storey: How were you hired?

Garner: I put in an application. Actually, I don't even remember whether I got a phone interview on that or not. I was not sent out on an interview. They called me up. I would imagine and, in fact, I got some indication that Neil Schild had checked with—the guy I was talking about in Denver that I

ended up, Dean Schachterle, because Neil knew Dean. Neil had been in Denver and knew Dean. Called Dean, Dean said, "Yeah, he's a good guy." That's how I got the job.

Storey: So you never went out there?

Garner: No.

Storey: Never had been in the [Mid-Pacific] Region?

Garner: No.

Storey: I mean in that area?

Garner: No in that area. I had been to California and figured that of the places to go, that that would be a place I was interested in going.

Storey: Well, I would like to keep going, but I know that you have an appointment coming up. I'd like to ask you now whether or not you're willing for the information on these tapes and the resulting transcripts to be used by researchers both inside and outside Reclamation.

Garner: Sure. No problem.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MAY 26, 1995.  
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. JUNE 23, 1995.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Jack Garner,

Area Manager of the Eastern Colorado Area Office in Loveland, Colorado, on June 23, 1995, in the late morning at the Area Office. This is tape one.

Mr. Garner, I think the last time we had started back through your career and had discussed your first stint here at Loveland, and had then gotten to the point where you moved to Sacramento as—was it a Natural Resources Specialist or was it an Outdoor Recreation Specialist?

Garner: Actually I think it was an Outdoor Recreation Specialist. I think that's what it was.

Storey: And you were one of the first in Reclamation?

#### **Recreation Specialists were New to Reclamation**

Garner: Well, probably not in California. I think at the time, there was another Outdoor Recreation Specialist. I was probably one of the—well, I know I was the first person with outdoor recreation background in the Loveland Office. They never had anybody with that background before. When I moved to California, at the time that I moved there, there were a lot of the things going on like Lake Berryessa and a lot of activity, so they were starting to get into the recreation business, which they had not to that point done much of. So there was more of an emphasis on recreation and there were a few recreation people on the staff.

Storey: Already. So were you working for one of them?

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Garner: Actually, the guy I was working for was Mike Schaeffer [phonetic], who was an engineer, and he did not have any recreation background. I think the people in the office—and I believe it was Code 450, which was like recreation and lands, maybe it was recreation and wildlife. There was a landscape architect and another recreation specialist and myself and just a few of them in there. He oversaw that office. He worked for next to immediate supervisor would be Neil Schilds. He was the 400 Chief.

Storey: This was in '76?

Garner: '76. Right.

Storey: Tell me about Lake Berryessa. What was going on up there? What kinds of special issues were involved?

#### **Lake Berryessa Issues**

Garner: I'm trying to think, when I got there, Berryessa was—what had happened is Napa County, I believe, Reclamation had kind of given Berryessa to Napa County for them to administer it, and Napa County kind of let things run wild, and Reclamation didn't do a whole lot about it, because typically we are not in the land or in the recreation business, and we turn it over to some other agency to administer. In this case, when they turned it over to the county, the county let concessionaires and cabin sites and all kinds of other things come in to the point where the general public got a little bit aggravated about it and actually ended up going to

Congress.

Congress, through some legislation, directed Reclamation to take back over the administration of Lake Berryessa, and more or less kicked the county out. Either they kicked them out or the county decided they wanted out of it. We got into a real mess, which I think there's a number of marina locations that have been allowed to pretty much establish themselves with very little controls and something like 1,500 trailer sites that were like summer homes, but some of them turned out to be not just summer homes; people were living there year-round on Reclamation lands.

The idea was to go back in to clean all that up, get some control on the summer homes and establish dates in which they can be there. Immediately, when Reclamation got into it, they got into an issue of politics. It turned out that I think one or two of the congressmen in California had summer homes at Lake Berryessa. To date, I don't think they've ever resolved many of those problems because they fought a real uphill battle. The guy that was the head of the Berryessa Office at that time was a guy by the name of Bob Weir [phonetic], and he was working for Billy Martin. He was from the Forest Service, and not very long after I got there, Bob Weir was virtually transferred back to the Forest Service and he went back to D.C., because he tried to push some of the issues, and get some of the things straightened around. There are just too many factions out there to try to do much of anything one way or the other. He politically got into trouble and they ended up

sending him back to the Forest Service.

Berryessa is an interesting case in Reclamation because of the fact that they gave us something back. We virtually had no law enforcement authority, still don't have any law enforcement authority, and you're out there telling what I would consider a fairly rowdy crew how they're supposed to recreate, yet you don't have any authority to do anything about it if they violate that. So it gets to be a real ticklish issue, and probably still is. In some cases, like New Melones and some of those other areas that we took over the recreation, we were able to contract with the state or with local county sheriffs for them to do law enforcement authority. But it's real tough in today's world to run a major recreation facility without some kind of law enforcement authority.

### **Reclamation Unprepared to Manage Recreation Facilities**

Originally why I came into Reclamation when I was here, I felt like Reclamation really ought to get into the law enforcement business and run the facilities, rather than turn them over to other agencies. I've since changed my mind on that. I really think that we need to turn these facilities, the recreation and land-type issues, over to other agencies that can handle them. In Berryessa's case, some other federal agency needs to come in there and administer those facilities that has law enforcement authority. I don't see Reclamation getting into the recreation/law enforcement business. We've avoided it for a lot of years, and I

don't see anybody pushing very hard to do it in the future.

Recreation is kind of a thankless job. You provide National Parks, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management. You provide areas for people to recreate. It's not a money-making proposition. If it is a money-making proposition where you turn it over to a concessionaire, concessionaire makes a living or makes good money off of something associated with the federal facility, and then they come in and say that it was a good deal, and that the guy should have never been allowed to do that, but yet the federal government, as a whole, can't make money off of recreation. So it costs the taxpayers money for the recreation.

Storey: Money they don't seem to want to spend nowadays.

Garner: Right. Money they don't want to spend. That's exactly right.

Storey: Out at Berryessa, were there environmental issues? What were the problems that were being run into out there?

#### **"Problems at Berryessa were People Problems"**

Garner: Most all the problems at Berryessa were people problems, just uncontrolled use of the reservoir. When Napa County administered it, they virtually didn't have any rules. You have a lot of people coming up out of the [San Francisco] Bay Area that had large jet boats with no restrictions on noise



control or designated areas for the speedboats. You had speedboats running into fishing boats. You had people swimming in the middle of the lake and getting run over. It was just kind of a no-man's-land for recreation. So you had a really rowdy crew, a lot of alcohol consumption, a lot of stuff going on, and virtually nobody to control it. So it was primarily—and no control of recreation areas. Anyplace they could get off the road, they'd go with their four-wheel drives down to the lake and they'd do pretty much whatever they wanted to.

Storey: And a lot of development?

Garner: At the areas there's I can't remember how many actual locations. It's like either five or seven locations of where you can primarily access the water. Those were pretty much restricted because they put gates up, and they were marina operators, and they charged people to get in for public access into those areas. So it made it real hard for the general public to get in, and then when they did get in, there was virtually no control on what took place when they got in.

Storey: So you were brought to Sacramento to deal, at least partially, with Berryessa?

Garner: At least partially. I probably dealt less with Berryessa because they had a team put together to deal with Berryessa. Bob Weir headed that up. He had a staff at Lake Berryessa and they really did not utilize us very much in the Region. They were kind of their own world. We got involved in

a few things back and forth but really not a whole lot.

### **Dealing with the Corps of Engineers at New Melones**

Mostly what we dealt with were the other reservoirs that were in the Mid-Pacific Region. At the time, the Corps [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers] was building New Melones [Dam] and they were going to turn the recreation facilities over. I did quite a little bit of work on location of Visitor Centers and campground locations, and all of the various issues associated with New Melones. And then there was other issues on Stampede and Boca and Millerton [reservoirs]. We did reservoir reviews. We did all kinds of various things associated with all the recreation facilities.

Storey: But we didn't actually administer any of those?

Garner: No. Well, except for New Melones. See, we were going to be administering as soon as they finished it. The Corps was building the facilities and they were turning them over to Reclamation, which we now administer the recreation on the New Mellones.

Storey: So we have, then, two reservoirs in Mid-Pacific now?

Garner: Right.

Storey: So you were working with the Corps to design the facilities?

Garner: Right. They were designing them and I was kind of overseeing what they were doing.

Storey: Were there a lot of coordination problems? How did that work?

Garner: No. Actually it was fairly—it wasn't a bad relationship between the Corps and us. We did fairly well. Our biggest problem was probably convincing the Corps to do some of the things we felt were important, like a decent visitor center to get people into, and the Corps was not really interested in doing that, and we had to come to some kind of a compromise on this. But typical, typical problems associated with dealing with an administering agency which is virtually what you do on the job.

Storey: Were you there when we actually took over management of New Melones?

Garner: I don't think so. I must not have been, because I can't remember it. Of course, that doesn't mean much. (chuckles) The problem was when I went into Sacramento's Outdoor Recreation Program, I was only in that position for probably a year and a half, maybe two years, before I got heavily involved in youth programs, the Y-C-C [Youth Conservation Corps] and then soon Y-A-C-C [Young Adult Conservation Corps]. When I got into those, I did not deal in those issues, those recreation issues, anymore. I basically headed up the Region's youth programs and had probably in excess of close to a thousand kids at various times that I had to figure out how we were going to keep

busy and have them do meaningful work. So that's what I did. I dealt a lot with the same administrating agencies because they had the facilities that needed to be built and a lot of things that needed to be done, and so I coordinated those activities with them, but I didn't deal on the routine day-to-day stuff that I was dealing with before.

Storey: Before we move on to the youth activities, do you remember any of the other things that you were doing? Any of the other particular projects that you were dealing with?

#### **Other Mid Pacific Recreation Issues**

Garner: Let's see. When I first went there, there was a small equalizing reservoir down near Delano, California, and I can't even remember the name of it, but there was a consulting firm out of San Francisco that had actually done the landscape plan for that and they were just finishing that up as I got there. I went down and did the final review on that, on that stuff.

We did a lot of reservoir reviews on Millerton. We didn't do much on Shasta because we really didn't do reservoir reviews on reservoirs that were administered by other federal agencies. So if it was administered by the Forest Service, National Park Service, or somebody else, we really didn't pay a whole lot of attention to it, which is good. They basically need to administer.

The only ones we really did were the state, worked with state parks on Folsom and then quite

a bit of the stuff on the eastern slope of the Sierras in Carson City, Lahontan and that area over there. We had a lot of land management issues. There was the Truckee Outlet, like a sixty-four-acre track or something up at [Lake] Tahoe that we owned and had trespass issues on that we dealt with. There was a—they call it the something pasture that's out in Midland, Nevada, that we own. It's kind of a wildlife area now.

Storey: The Carson area maybe?

Garner: Yes, Carson City. It's out towards Fallon, out that direction. Then Boca and Stampede [Reservoirs]. I think the Forest Service was actually doing some work on Boca and Stampede, and we were helping and doing some additional work. It kind of gets confusing as to what I was doing from a recreation standpoint, and then when I got into the youth programs, because like I said, I dealt with a lot of the same people, and the primary difference was in the recreation end of it, I was doing the paperwork associated with it, and then in the youth programs, we were actually doing the work. We reviewed quite a few environmental documents on various projects.

Storey: That would be for the recreation aspects?

Garner: Right. Recreation aspects of it, some legislation work. There was quite a bit of work being done on trying to get law enforcement authority at the time. Did some landscape architecture work. We had a landscape architect in there, and he and I worked fairly close.

### Land Issues at Lake Casitas

One of the things that we spent a considerable amount of time on was Lake Casitas,<sup>15</sup> which is down close to Ventura, between Ventura and Santa Barbara. It's a Reclamation reservoir that the little town that's right next to it is Ojai, which is a very, very expensive place to live. It's kind of a long story, but what happened on Lake Casitas was they had a nitrification problem with Lake Casitas, and they contributed part of that to the surrounding lands where they said that because of the rains that they get and because of irrigation drainage, that all these drain waters were going into Casitas and causing all of this problem.

Storey: Bringing in the nitrogen from the fertilizers that was—

Garner: And causing all this water-quality problem. It was strictly a drinking-water reservoir. Now, the recreation was handled on Lake Casitas by the local water district, which was a little unusual, but it was probably one of the major money-making recreation areas within Reclamation. Their occupancy rate year-round was something like 80 percent. It was incredible. It was kind of like a glorified K-O-A campground, huge place, beautiful place. But, I mean, they ran this thing like it was a business and made money out of it.

The story goes that a guy who had a chunk of land right next to Lake Casitas wanted to develop,

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15. Lake Casitas is the main storage reservoir for the Ventura Project in Southern California. For more information, see Thomas A. Latousek, "The Ventura Project," Denver, Colorado: Bureau of Reclamation, 1995, [www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html](http://www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html).

bought this chunk of land, wanted to develop it for like a trailer park. I wouldn't call it a trailer park down there. It would be a very ritzy trailer park. The county commissioners would not let him do that, and they passed something that said he could not do that. Well, he was obviously very politically connected. So what he decided to do was he wanted to get that turned into a park, which would be adjacent to Casitas. So he went to his local congressman, who he knew very well, and convinced the congressman to introduce a bill to include all of that area, that whole area, not only his, but to eventually have the whole area around Lake Casitas as a park. The primary reason for that was because of the water-quality issues associated with the surrounding landowners and the water going into Lake Casitas.

### **Land Purchases Around Lake Casitas**

About that time, the congressman died, and the new congressman came in. This was one of the pieces of legislation that was sitting there. I think it was Robert Lagomarsino was the congressman. Anyway, he got this thing introduced, and, of course, they wanted to name the park after the ex-congressman.<sup>16</sup> Well, the thing flew right through, and all of sudden they handed this whole package

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16. The congressman who originally introduced the law was Charles Teague. For mor information, see U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources, *A Bill to Authorize the Secretary of the Interior to Acquire Private Lands in California for Water Quality Control, Recreation, And Fish and Wildlife Enhancement, and Other Purposes*, H.R. 1922, H.R. 13507, Hearings, 93<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., April 22, 1974.

to Reclamation and said, "You've got the reservoir. They're going to create this park. Now, here's the money. Go out and buy all of these residences and all of this property around Lake Casitas. We're going to make this into a park."

So I went down there with Cecil Graham [phonetic], who was like the 430 Water Operations Chief at the time. He was like an ex-Marine, and he knew what his mission was. He was headed towards doing that mission. Well, Ernie Ralston [phonetic] and I, he was a landscape architect, went down and we had kind of a little different ideas than what Cecil did, which is kind of interesting. But anyway, we actually set up an office down there. Steve—let me think of his last name, he works for Western right now. Anyway, he set up an office and they were going out and buying these properties that were like million-dollar pieces of property with these houses on it and giving them like life estates. Once those people died or left, then they virtually would tear the house down and then let the land go natural.

Well, Ernie and I got into this thing and started studying this thing fairly closely, and what we found out was there's a major canal that comes into Lake Casitas, the Matillija I think it is. It comes out of a canyon that's about two canyons over. Turns out that probably 80 percent of the water-quality problems come out of that canal. It doesn't have much to do with the surrounding landowners. But yet here we have this congressional act that says thou shall go out and buy these lands. So we bought all these lands and then we had to develop a



land-use plan for all the lands around Casitas, and that's what Ernie and I did.

### **Public Opposition to Land Purchases**

We had public meetings in Ojai, which was real interesting, because the locals were real hostile about the fact that the federal government was coming in and buying these lands in the first place. Once you understand the history of how all this got going and all of the politics associated, you could probably understand. The problem Ernie and I were faced with is we had to develop a land-use plan for all of these lands, and we had to get public input. So we went through the public input.

We had a couple of meetings. The first one was a really hot meeting. There were probably 100 to 150 people at that meetings. We stood up there and tried to explain to them what we were doing, and they obviously did not want to hear what we had to say. But it was interesting. Spent a lot of time on that.

- Storey: Do you remember the name of the man who wanted to develop the trailer park?
- Garner: No, I don't. Part of the problem is when I came in there, this had already been set into motion, so it was bits and pieces that you get from people talking about to put the whole picture together because nobody really wanted to talk about that issue. It was like Congress has passed this act that says, "You're going to do this," legislation that says, "Reclamation, go in and buy these lands." When

we started questioning why are we doing this in the first place, it was really tough to get answers out of people as to why we were doing it. Once we kind of got the idea of why, we understood why people didn't talk about it, because it wasn't something they probably wanted to be very proud of.

Storey: If I'm getting this picture, we have a smallish reservoir?

Garner: Right.

Storey: Surrounded by nice homes?

#### **Water Problems at Lake Casitas**

Garner: Nice homes. Nice. A lot of the movies that are filmed, that show the California countryside. I'm trying to think of the one that, like "The Bionic Man," or "The Bionic Woman." I think it was "Bionic Woman." All that stuff that's on kind of a ranch location with a white rail fence. That's all filmed on those lands right there. They film a lot of movies in there right now. So it's really nice country.

Storey: And the excuse for this was that the fertilizer and so on from the homes was washing into the lake?

Garner: Right.

Storey: Probably encouraging algae growth?

Garner: Right. And causing—they had a real problem with the lake not turning over, and they needed oxygen

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in it, so they had a bubbler thing out there, and they had lots of nutrients in it, and they contribute the nutrients to the adjoining—and some of it's farm ground. The farm ground, they were like orchards. They're like avocado orchards, and garbanzo beans, which I never quite knew what a garbanzo bean was, but I figured it out real quick. They were contributing in that the cropping and the fact that a lot of these places were really nice homes that had horses, and the fertilizer that was coming off of there, they contributed that, that that was contributing to the problem.

Storey: The manure.

Garner: The manure. In reality, what was really the major problem was the canal coming in from drainage.

Storey: And it was picking up the nitrogen from the farm areas over there?

Garner: The farm areas and other sources. I don't know what they were, because I never investigated them, but that was a major contributor to what was going on in the lake.

Storey: And was that the major source of water for the lake?

Garner: Besides the small drainage, it was a major source of water into the lake. [Tape recorder turned off]

Storey: So you worked on that for part of your year while you were there?

### Land Resource Planning

- Garner: Yes. That was probably quite a bit of it. But that was actually a lot of fun. I mean, that was kind of like Ernie and I sat there and did a lot of the land resource planning that we had learned in school. You've got to actually implement what you were doing on a chunk of land that was obviously going to be dramatically changed, so it was like doing a resource management plan. In fact, that's exactly what it was, a resource plan.
- Storey: Did we have any staff down there?
- Garner: No, we had no staff at Casitas. We had two people at [Lake] Cachuma, which was over the hill from there a ways, and they were dam tenders, primarily. They operated at Bradbury Dam. But Casitas itself, we had no—actually, I'm trying to think what our connection was with Casitas. If we built it, then obviously we must have turned it over to the district for us to not have anybody there but the dam tender, so the district must have had the operation and maintenance responsibility for the whole thing.
- Storey: So how did they set you up for this? Did they have an office that they set up temporarily? Did you just go and stay in a motel? How did this work?
- Garner: We just went and stayed in a motel. We did a considerable amount of our prep work back in Sacramento. Then we would go down there on occasions for like a week at a time and do our work. When they actually started purchasing the

property down there, which was during the time that I was down there, Steve Wagner—I think it's Steve Wagner—Steve Wagner was moved there and he set up an office. He was actually the real estate person who bought all these pieces of property and negotiated all the contracts on Blythe Estates.

Storey: And we purchased both the farming property and the residential property?

Garner: Right.

Storey: How much did it cost? Do you happen to remember?

Garner: Millions.

Storey: Millions and millions.

Garner: I don't remember how much.

Storey: Was the lake used for recreation?

#### **Casitas was a High Use Recreation Area**

Garner: Yes, very heavily recreated but no body contact. So you weren't allowed to swim in it.

Storey: But you could fish?

Garner: But you could fish. Right.

Storey: Boats? That kind of thing?

Garner: A lot of boating. High use, because you were so close to the Los Angeles area. Extremely high use. They had a reservation system. They were booked virtually all the time.

Storey: When you were going to work there, how did you go down?

Garner: Flew to Santa Barbara.

Storey: From Sacramento?

Garner: Yes. And then rented a car.

Storey: So you didn't drive down.

Garner: No. It would have been a good probably eight-hour drive to get down there.

Storey: And from Santa Barbara?

Garner: Thirty, forty minutes.

Storey: And am I thinking correctly, Ojai would be north of Santa Barbara?

Garner: Actually, it's probably, because of the way that that point comes out on California where Santa Barbara is, it's a little bit north but mostly east of Santa Barbara.

Storey: But on the coast, I think.

Garner: Well, it's back from the coast a ways. It's probably fifteen miles back from the coast. Up in the hills.

That's where Ojai is. Because if you go from Ojai right straight to the coast, you would hit, I think it's Ventura. That's where you hit the coast.

Storey: So this is a fresh-water recreation area?

Garner: Right.

Storey: As opposed to an ocean area. I'm wondering about the competition there. Why would people go there instead of to the beach, say?

Garner: Primarily because you've got a lot of vegetation, and you could put your boat in and fish in the area, and it was just like any of our reservoirs around here. You could camp. The beaches were—camping was pretty tough to do at the beach. For a day activity, it's fine, but if you wanted to go camping, then you just about couldn't do that. So it was one of the few water-based recreation areas that had camping on it.

Storey: In that area.

Garner: In that area. Well, in most of that area. [Tape recorder turned off]

Storey: I think we had just stopped talking about Casitas, or reached the end of it, pretty much. Tell me about reservoir reviews. What's a reservoir review, and how are they conducted?

### **Reservoir Reviews**

Garner: Recreation reservoir reviews are primarily

conducted on lands that are owned by Reclamation and administered by other non-federal agencies, state parks, counties, whoever happens to administer them that are non-federal. What we do is, I think it was about every third year, we would go out and do a review of their facilities. We would look at their recreation facilities. It would be a walk-through review. You'd look at their books, you'd look at everything. You'd check their recreation facilities to make sure they met like health and safety standards, that there weren't doors falling off of outhouses, and that the water tap receptacles were the right height, and more and more things that just make sure that they met more or less standards for recreation facilities. Then we'd write up a report on that, oftentimes had a series of pictures, we would send it to them and say—it's kind of like an R-O&M, review of maintenance for a dam. You write up a report. You send it to them, and then you give them a period of time in which to correct the deficiencies that they have. Then you do another reservoir review, and you verify that they've done it. It's kind of a catch-22 deal, because what happens is you do a reservoir review. If you've got a real good administering agency, you're kind of nitpicking them. So it's kind of a waste of time to go do it. If you've got a real bad one—

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. JUNE 23, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JUNE 23, 1995.

Storey: So the reason you would have a bad one—

Garner: Is because it's probably a reservoir that's in the



middle of nowhere, gets very little public use, and you had to twist somebody's arm to take over the administration and recreation in the first place. They're hanging by a shoestring, and they don't have money to go in and upgrade these facilities, which kind of gets into the whole title-transfer issue. It's the good ones that everybody wants, and the bad ones, and I wouldn't say they're necessarily bad, but when you have a reservoir in the middle of Montana that's a long ways from any population center, who is going to want that reservoir for recreation purposes when there's virtually nobody that goes there? When you have one that's like Pueblo, where you have on like Casitas that is close to a major metropolitan area, has a high occupancy rate, obviously everybody's going to want in on that because they know it's a money-maker.

Storey: In your experience, what happens when we have somebody administering a recreation area and they have all these deficiencies, and Reclamation points it out to them, and they don't correct it? Or do they correct it?

#### **Reclamation's Relationship with Administering Agencies**

Garner: Well, it depends. It depends on the concessionaire or the administering agency. If it's an administering agency, if it's good administering agencies, they correct the problems. They agree with it. I think that's one of the things we're finding today. You take most state agencies like Colorado State Parks, they have virtually the same regulations we have, and so when it comes to handicap facilities and

making sure they meet the requirements for those, they have the same requirements, so they do that. So our need for reservoir reviews on good administering agencies, there probably isn't much of a need for it.

On the bad ones, they're hanging on a shoestring in the first place, and they don't have the money to go do it. The only reason they're there is because nobody else will take it. So what is your recourse? Your recourse is, okay, you cancel their lease. Okay, you cancel their lease. What happens? Reclamation has to take over the administration of that facility. We have no law enforcement authority and we don't have the personnel to do it. So you're between a rock and a hard place. So you try to get somebody in there that's going to do it, and they may not do a great job, but it's better than not having anybody there to do it and having the resource damaged by not having anybody.

Storey: Do you remember any of the reservoir reviews that you did while you were there in Sacramento in particular, either good or bad?

#### **Good and Bad Recreation Areas**

Garner: The ones that were good, I remember a couple of them. Millerton, which is run by the state of California State Parks, that was a fairly good facility, good campgrounds, well maintained. Casitas was well maintained, high density but well maintained, and they did a very professional job at it. There were a couple up in the Central Valley,

north of Sacramento, called East Park and Stoney Gorge, which are out of Willows.

Storey: I know them.

Garner: They were run by more or less a concessionaire, because we couldn't get anybody to take them over, and they were absolute disgraces. The concessionaire had old trailers that he parked out there, and there was trash everywhere, and junk cars, and all kinds of other stuff. It was a terrible facility. We tried to resolve that problem because there were national forest lands adjacent to those, so we wanted to have the Forest Service take over the management of those facilities. The problem was the East Park and Stoney Gorge were not within the forest boundary. So the Forest Service couldn't administer those facilities.

I don't know what they're doing with them today, but they're probably not a whole lot better than they were—well, we did kick the concessionaire out of there. Then that left it to the Willows Office to administer the recreation. They did as best a job as they could do to administer the recreation. In that case, that was a local, pretty much of a local area. A lot of people from Willows and that area would go out there on weekends, and we didn't get a lot of people from all over coming into the East Park, Stoney Gorge area.

Those were some that I remember. Some of the ones in Nevada, like Lahontan, that was a fairly marginal operation. It was run, I believe, at the time by the state and it wasn't a very good facility.

Storey: Way out there, a couple hours from Reno. Fallon isn't much of a population center.

Garner: No. It's kind of in the middle of nowhere, and most people that go there aren't considering water-based recreation. Plus you've got Pyramid Lake, which is a much larger facility.

Storey: If I'm figuring correctly, you graduated with a degree in recreation from C-S-U and did that for about six years.

Garner: Right.

Storey: How did the reality of recreation work match up with your expectations for it?

#### **Meeting Personal Expectations in Reclamation Work**

Garner: Pretty much along the lines of what I thought it was going to be. Well, I say that, except that when I was in Loveland, I would say it matched up pretty well because you got into virtually all kinds of activities that related to recreation and land resources. You did design stuff. You did it all. You did everything from A to Z in recreation and land management.

When I went to Sacramento, when I was Outdoor Recreation Planner out there, the first part of that was a lot more administrative work and a lot more paperwork, and not so much hands on work. That's probably why I remember the Casitas stuff because that was a lot of fun. You were developing something, you were dealing with

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people, you were doing things.

The other administrative stuff I didn't particularly care for. That's probably why the youth programs got in there is because in youth programs, you do things. You plan things and you build things and you get things done, and there's not a lot of paperwork associated with that. So it's not a lot of bureaucratic baloney. It's a "do" program.

Storey: How did that job change come about, do you remember?

### **Youth Programs**

Garner: Well, when I was in Loveland, we had a Y-C-C program, and I ran the Y-C-C program and they did a lot of the work for me. When I went to California, the Y-C-C program was being run by Larry Hancock, as a matter of fact. He and Ken Collins had actually done some work with the Y-C-C program, and they had had a couple of camps. Hancock went on to something else, and so did Ken Collins. Neil asked me, because he knew that I had done some stuff, if I was interested in coordinating the Y-C-C stuff, and I said, yes, I was real interested.

Storey: Neil?

Garner: Schilds. So I got into doing that in addition to my other duties, and so we had like ten Y-C-C camps scattered from Santa Barbara to Klamath Falls, and then all the points in between. We had one in Carson City. We had one in Lake Berryessa. We

had them all over. But there were ten of them, total. I would work with each one of the field offices, and get them to hire the staff for it, set up the tools, order all the materials and supplies for summer program to do that. Then I coordinated all of those efforts.

Then Y-A-C-C came along, which was the older program, Young Adult Conservation Corps, for virtually eighteen-to twenty-three-year-olds. That's a year-round program. I applied for that job and got it. Instead of working for Neil Schilds, then I worked for Paul Olbert, who was Assistant R-D for Administration. Then that was a full-time job. Between that and Y-C-C, that was a full-time position.

- Storey: And Y-C-C was Youth Conservation Corps?
- Garner: Youth Conservation Corps, primarily for fifteen-to eighteen-year-olds.
- Storey: A summer program?
- Garner: A summer program. I went to schools all over the state of California and gave presentations on Y-C-C. Kids applied for it like they applied for a job and then were selected. We drew a lot of kids out of the L-A area.
- Storey: So this wasn't a training program?
- Garner: No. It was an environmental work program, is what it amounted to. We had an environmental education portion of the program, but then they

actually went out and worked and built trails and did a lot of other stuff, but they learned a lot about the environment.

The only problem, I would say, with Y-C-C is Y-C-C catered to probably upper-middle-class kids who were interested in doing outdoor work. You did not get many of your minorities and underprivileged-type kids because most of them had no interest in the forest and building trails out there. When you go to downtown Los Angeles and try to convince somebody that building a trail out in the middle of the woods is a fun thing to do, you have a hard time doing it. So it primarily catered to upper-middle-class white kids.

Storey: Men and women?

#### **YACC Training Program**

Garner: Men and women both. Y-A-C-C, on the other hand, was more of a—well, it was a training program and it provided an opportunity for an eighteen-to twenty-three-year-old to go out and get some practical work experience. In that case, we got a cross-section of kids throughout economic and racial and everything else categories.

Storey: Is Y-A-C-C what most folks refer to as the Youth Corps in Reclamation?

Garner: No, that's Job Corps.

Storey: Oh, okay. I'm confusing it in my mind.

Garner: Yes. Job Corps is different in that they go to a training facility. They have Job Corps camps. They go there and they basically are residents and live there for a period of time.

Y-A-C-C, they had a couple of those, which are kind of like Job Corps. In my case, I had a Y-A-C-C camp that had 200 kids, but they were all non-residential. They came to work every day. They did not live there. They just showed up at a location. In a lot of cases, what we did is we farmed these kids out to all kinds of different agencies, Fish and Wildlife Service, B-L-M, city park, state park, everybody, and they would work for those people and learn how to do things. Either they would work on their landscape crews, they would work on their—whatever. Wherever they needed help. Bookkeeping, whatever the person had an interest in and we could find a position somewhere, we'd put them in that position. That turned out to be a very good program. Unfortunately, when it was going real good, before it ever got to be a full-time program, we changed political parties, and the first thing that [President Ronald] Reagan did was axe that program. But it actually—

Storey: In '81?

Garner: Right. Well, it took them 'til about '82 to do it. But the success rate—we had a store which we have here, Q-M Woods. In California, it's Lumberjack. It's the same type of thing. We actually have a number of kids because of the experience that they got in working with handtools, materials, supplies,



all that kind of stuff, we were a main source of employment for Lumberjack stores. They came to us to find good people to work in their stores. So we placed a lot of people throughout the system because we just taught them how to work, taught them to show up to work on time and get a day's worth of work.

Storey: But they weren't necessarily working on Reclamation projects?

#### **Coordinated Youth Program Work with Other Agencies**

Garner: No, no, they worked on some Reclamation projects, but not all of them.

Storey: So Reclamation was one of the places we placed them?

Garner: Right.

Storey: Did we have training, or did we pull them together for training or anything, or lectures?

Garner: Most of it was related to work, would be work training. Most all of it was in field training. Of course, we had safety training and a few other things like that they had to go through, but we had work leaders who were older, who actually had some practical background. We had a couple of people who were like contractor types that went to work for us that knew a lot about construction, and it was mainly on-the-job training on how to do things, how to build buildings. We built a drill crew building for the Folsom Field Office. A concrete

block and then a metal frame over the top of it.

Storey: When you say that the Y-A-C-C was not residential, you mean these people were all local?

Garner: Yes.

Storey: And they just went to work wherever we could find a place for them?

Garner: Right. We had different set-ups. We had a base camp that was at Nimbus [Dam], that we built actually with the crews that had like four buildings and had an administration building and then like a warehouse where we had tools and supplies. A number, probably half of the 200-and-something, would show up there every day, and we had vans. They had their hard hats and their boots and their gear and everything, and they would collect tools for whatever job they were going to do, and they would go out and get in the van. We would go to whatever location we happened to be working. Other ones we had on the payroll, and they would report to other locations where they would do virtually the same thing. They would go to work for these people.

Storey: So we paid them through Reclamation?

Garner: Right. It was part of a budget we got through—it was a trial program so they contributed money to our budget, the Department [of the Interior] did. The Forest Service, the National Park Service, B-L-M, a lot of these agencies had Y-A-C-C members. Very similar to Job Corps.

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Storey: Reclamation is often pictured by people as being a very single-minded construction development agency. Why were we doing this when many of them weren't working on Reclamation projects?

**The Program Provided Opportunities to Develop Work Ethic**

Garner: Well, I would have to say that probably Reclamation-wide, quite a few of the Y-A-C-C people were working on Reclamation projects. For example, they had a Y-A-C-C program here at virtually the same time, and they worked at Horsetooth and Carter Lake. The difference that I had was I had a camp that was located in a major metropolitan area located in Sacramento. I had a large base to draw from, and the only real Reclamation facility we had was Folsom Lake. You can only put so many people out working at Folsom Lake. So I diversified and went in to do other things.

I guess it kind of gets to the philosophy behind it. The whole idea behind this and why it was a test program was to provide an opportunity for eighteen-to twenty-three-year-olds to learn how to work and then go out and be productive individuals within the society. Whether they do that on Reclamation land or anybody's land to me doesn't make a whole lot of difference. As a taxpayer, if we can teach them to do something, then they're not on the welfare rolls. So putting them to work for a county park or putting them to work for the state or whatever, I didn't care who I put them to work for as long as they taught them how to work.

Storey: Do you remember some of the particular successes of the program while you were running it?

### **Youth Program Successes**

Garner: Goodness, a ton of people we got placed in various locations. The Lumberjack stores are good example of those. We had numerous county parks within Sacramento area. That was about the time that Proposition 13 rolled around, and that's when they cut the taxes, and a lot of the parks that had been providing a lot of services no longer had people to do it. We provided people for them to do landscape and maintenance. In almost every case, those people were eventually picked up by the park. If they lasted a week with the park and they got the work ethic down, then they were hired because they proved to be a good employee.

We had students who came through who would come back three days into the job and say, "This isn't for me," and leave. If they lasted two weeks or three weeks, somewhere in there, then you knew that they would probably make it, and most all of them did. They all have jobs and they're all working. In fact, I got a call right after I got out here from one of the women who worked, she was a payroll clerk for us, a Y-A-C-C employee, and she ended up marrying one of the crew chiefs and they now live in, I think it's Weed, California, which is up by the Oregon border. It's either Weed, California, or Weed, Oregon. He works for public service and she does bookkeeping for somebody. So they both have done quite well.

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Storey: So what I think I'm hearing in this discussion is that the successes were not in the projects that these folks accomplished, but in the fact that they learned how to work and they got jobs.

Garner: Yes, and I would say there was success in the projects that they completed. I mean, they did some really nice stuff, but they had to have people show them how to do it. In the showing them how to do it and then being able to do it is the success of the program. We built a lot of picnic shelters like the ones that you go right by coming in here on the Flatiron. I'm sure those were built by Y-A-C-C. There was kind of a standard design that came out and it taught them how to take virtually a kit and drawings and follow the thing, and build them. We built them all over the West. But the fact was that they learned to be at work on time, get eight hours worth of work and learn how to do something.

Storey: There were quite a few folks down there today, as a matter of fact. It looked like two or three groups of youth down there.

Garner: Yes, actually I think it's some kind of a military deal where they get together once a year. They've been there virtually all week. I think they're leaving today.

Storey: What kinds of problems did you run into in the youth programs?

#### **Problems Associated with Youth Programs**

Garner: Primarily drugs. Drugs were the biggest problem.

That was a tough issue. You ended up having authority over these kids that's different than virtually anything that I've seen since. What I'm getting at is, we had cases in which we knew kids were probably smoking dope, and so we would call them into the office and make them empty their pockets. Now, you probably couldn't get away with that today, in the first place, because of their civil rights to do that. But the point was that invariably they had a joint. I think in every case we found drugs on the person.

All we did at that time was fire them. We did not call the sheriff. We didn't do anything illegal to them. All we said is, "When you came in here, we told you no drugs." They had drugs on them, and they're out the door. That was just the policy.

We had to enforce that numerous times to remind people that that's what the policy was. It was run, I think the point was, though, a lot of these camps started out as being kind of like the Y-C-C camps. It was kind of fun. You had a lot of really enthusiastic people, and it was kind of a lot of bonding and dealing with a lot of fun issues. When they tried that in Y-A-C-C, that didn't work because the nature of these young people were young people, most of which had dropped out of high school, or barely made it through high school, did not have any work ethic, and they weren't interested in environmental education at all. What they were interested in was a job.

So you had to run these things almost like a military operation, because if you let one kid get by

with smoking a joint and coming back to work, then everybody would have been smoking a joint and coming back to work. So you had to establish rules, and you had to live by those rules, and you could not vary those rules.

Personnel people had a real tough time with that, because you have to go through all of the procedures to take care of somebody. "Well, if he did that, then we have to do this, and you have to do that." It's like dismissing somebody in the federal government, and it never happens because of all the paperwork it takes to do it and the length of time. We didn't have those regulations. These people were not considered federal employees. So if they violated the rules, they were fired. There was no question asked. They were out the door.

Storey: How was it set up organizationally? You coordinated the program out of Sacramento?

### **Youth Program Organizational Structure**

Garner: Right. I forget what my position or title was, but anyway, I coordinated Y-C-C and Y-A-C-C out of the Region. Then I reported to an Assistant Regional Director. But Joe—I can't remember his last name, he was in Washington. Hipps [phonetic]. Joe Hipps was the Youth Program Coordinator for Reclamation, and they still kind of have that position. It's in Denver and it's a Job Corps Coordination. He coordinated Job Corps and these other ones. He kind of took care of all of the Y-A-C-C and Y-C-C part of it as far as the national, the whole Reclamation-wide issue, and

then we took care of it in our individual areas. That's where I reported to the Assistant R-D.

Storey: And then under you?

Garner: Under me, in Y-C-C, I had like nine or ten camp directors which I hired on a temporary basis. They virtually hired the staff that ran the camp. For Y-A-C-C, I had a camp director, and he had like a deputy, and then they had all these work leaders and staff that worked for them. Towards the end of it, the camp director left and I actually became the camp director in addition to being the coordinator. So I moved out to the camp and was the camp director.

Storey: Away from the Regional Office, then?

Garner: Right.

Storey: Then you mentioned that it was disbanded in '82 or so.

Garner: It was '82. I actually ended up getting a job out here in Sacramento about the time that it looked like Y-A-C-C was going to go down. I left, and they closed the camp probably six months after I left.

Storey: You got the job where?

Garner: In Denver.

Storey: At the Denver Office?



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**Transferred to the Lower Missouri Region**

- Garner: No. It was in Lower Missouri Regional Office.
- Storey: That was in '83, I believe?
- Garner: Probably '82. Spring of '82.
- Storey: And Bill Martin was the Regional Director while you were there?
- Garner: Bill Martin was the Regional Director.
- Storey: Did you have anything to do with him?
- Garner: Not a lot. I met with him probably on a couple of occasions. That was about it. I primarily worked through Willis Ervin, who was the Chief of 400, and then, of course, Willis reported to Bill.
- Storey: Then Dean Schachterle was in Denver?
- Garner: Dean Schachterle was who I replaced.
- Storey: In Denver?
- Garner: He retired in Denver, and I replaced him in his job.
- Storey: This is in the Lands and Recreation Branch?
- Garner: Right. Chief of Lands and Recreation.
- Storey: As I recall, you didn't care for that position, either.
- Garner: No. That was a boring job.

Storey: What did Lands and Recreation do in the Denver Office? Was it different from the Sacramento office?

### **Lower Missouri Land Issues**

Garner: Not that much different. It was fairly similar to the job that I first took in Sacramento as an Outdoor Recreation Planner, except the Denver Office didn't get into recreation that much. It was mostly land stuff. You dealt with making sure where the property lines were, and that we had track maps and pesticide reports, and virtually all of the paperwork that goes on with lands and recreation. Reservoir reviews all over the region.

Storey: For recreation?

Garner: For recreation. Trespass issues. If the project office couldn't handle the trespass issue, they came to us and we tried to work something out.

Storey: Tell me about trespass issues. What's a trespass issue?

### **Trespass Issues**

Garner: That's where somebody decides that they want to expand their yard or expand something and use federal land. We have numerous cases in which, for example, Horsetooth, where people have the adjacent lands around Horsetooth Reservoir, and they decide that they want to put a deck on their house. As long as they're a taxpayer and that land belongs to the federal government, then I'll just take

this little piece of land and call it mine. That's why I'm paying my taxes for. So they build their deck out on federal lands. Then we proceed to try to get them off of there, which is a waste of time, in my opinion.

Storey: Tell me more.

Garner: Well, the problem is that in order to properly go through, what you do is you go through and you threaten people, and you say, "If you don't remove your structure from here, we're going to take you to court." If the person knows anything at all, they know darn good and well that it will probably never get to court, because in order to go to court, you have to go through all of the legal ramifications of what you have to do, and then it has to go to the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice does not have time to deal with Mickey Mouse trespass cases, so they virtually never go to court.

So you run a bluff the whole time of trying to get people off of federal lands. Probably the best way to do it is if somebody builds a deck, is you send them a couple of letters and tell them, "If you don't remove the deck by a certain time, we will remove it for you," and then go in there and remove it. And then it's up to them to file suit against you. Then we have to go to court. But for us to try to get them to do it, forget it. It will never happen.

Storey: Do you remember any instances of trespass situations when you were head of the Denver Office?

**Trespass Issues were "Virtually Everywhere"**

Garner: Numerous instances of trespass, not only in the Denver Office, but virtually everywhere. We had a situation in Sacramento when I was out there and I was actually in youth programs, in which we had a guy up between Nimbus and Folsom. We own a lot of the land up in between in that canyon where now a bike trail goes back up in there. Really pretty country. There was a guy who built a deck in his yard, moved the fence that we had to built his deck and yard—

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JUNE 23, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JUNE 23, 1995.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Jack Garner on June 23, 1995.

This person had taken about a quarter of an acre of land for a yard and a deck and everything.

Garner: Right. I went to my boss, who was Paul Olbert, and explained to him that we had a real problem here. The reason it came up is because we were building a property line fence with youth programs and we ran into this problem.

To make a long story short, the guy was some senator or congressman and was very well connected, and I basically got told to mind my own business. To date, I'm sure that guy still has that chunk of property. It just infuriates me as a taxpayer because of his political connections.

Storey: This is between Nimbus and Folsom?

Garner: Yes.

Storey: Any other examples that you remember?

Garner: I've got examples of Horsetooth where we had one place where we had a guy put an outhouse on federal land. Actually we have removed, or been able to over a period of time, to remove a number of them.

### **"My Philosophy is Good Neighbors Have Fences"**

Before I left Loveland, when I was first here, we had some real problems with trespass in the inlet at Horsetooth where all the recreation is. I got a very bad name for building fences. My philosophy is good neighbors have fences between them. So I had built a three-railed pole fence all the way around the inlet to Horsetooth, which amounted to a lot of people moving a lot of trailers and eliminating a lot of driveways and taking a lot of landscaping out. But today we have a facility that is open to the public and not somebody's private yard. So there's numerous cases of trespass.

Storey: How would you characterize the difference between how the Project Office would become involved in that kind of thing and how your office in the Region would become involved in that kind of a situation? What are the thresholds, and how do you separate the responsibilities and so on?

Garner: Normally, if you get into a trespass issue, if we get into a trespass issue here, we try to handle that issue. What we would do is we could call the Region and ask the Region, "What are your procedures for trespass?" You issue them a letter, a certified letter, and then you tell them you have to have this removed within a certain period of time. Then you issue another letter.

According to the Solicitor's Office, you have to follow a certain regiment or process by which you notify them of trespass. What you want to do when you're in this office is you want to make sure that you follow that process and you want them to know what the process is. So we would depend upon them to give us a cookbook for how to get rid of a trespasser. Now if they get into it—I don't know if there were that many issues other than being aware of trespass issues in the Region, where you actually got personally involved in those issues. We normally did not do that. You just gave them the process, and when they came back and said, "We've done all the process, but the guy still hasn't moved the trespass," you just kind of went, "So what do we do now?"

Storey: Did you ever go out and actually remove anything?

Garner: I have.

Storey: So if I'm understanding, the Region when you were heading the Lands and Recreation Branch would have been providing guidance to the project offices?

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### The Land and Recreation Branch Provided Guidance

- Garner: Guidance and probably standards, like on pesticides. It was like what the procedure is for applying pesticides and what labels you have to use and all that kind of stuff. It's a lot of the cookbook-type things that you would look at. It's kind of like a resource management plan is you would go to the Region and say, "Give me an example of a resource management plan," and they would send you something. So they provided you guidance.
- Storey: Then how would your branch be relating to the Denver Office?
- Garner: Actually, I had very little relation to the Denver Office.
- Storey: How long were you there?
- Garner: Three years.
- Storey: Did they do any land management planning or anything like that at that time?
- Garner: Yes, they actually were doing land management planning. I had a landscape architect that worked there. Actually, two of them, Rick somebody and Wayne somebody. They did a lot of the recreation design, land management planning activities for the area offices because the area offices didn't have landscape architects. That actually worked out pretty good. That was a pretty good service they provided. If we had an issue here on landscape plan or something, we could pull somebody out of

the region and have him come down and do planning for us. So that worked out pretty good.

Storey: How many people in the branch?

Garner: About seven.

Storey: So maybe one of them was a trespass specialist?

Garner: There really wasn't anybody that was a trespass specialist. Well, yeah, I guess there probably was. Probably Arlen Shineman was the trespass person. Tony Cappellucci did land records, like land classification stuff. He was really the expert on that. Pat—I can't remember her last name, she did all the land records, kept the official files on platte maps and all that stuff.

Storey: That's for the Region?

Garner: That's for the Region. Then the two landscape architects, Max Haegele was—what was Max Haegele? He was kind of like a Natural Resource Specialist, did a lot of the recreation stuff. Checking out various reservoirs.

Storey: Three years there.

Garner: Three long years.

Storey: Wanted to be elsewhere. That turned out to be Pueblo.

Garner: Right.



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### Coming to the Fry-Ark Project

- Storey: For the Fry-Ark Project? Now, you didn't go down there as Area Manager, did you? Or Office Manager, I mean. Or did you?
- Garner: Yes, I did, kind of. I can't remember all the details. At the time what they were doing is they were combining the Colorado-Big Thompson Project and Fryingpan-Arkansas Project. Ray Willms was the Project Manager in the Fryingpan, and I think Bob Berling was the Project Manager up here. Berling left, so they combined the two, and Willms was going to become the Project Manager for both projects.
- Storey: The Regional Director was?
- Garner: Bill Martin. Hadn't changed. So what happened was I went down to Southeastern Conservancy District Board meeting with Bill Martin and Ray Willms and a few other people, a couple of personnel people, and they basically introduced me as the head of the office now. I was really Acting Project Manager until they actually did the official combination. It took them a while to do that. Ray kind of detailed up here, and I was down there, so he was Project Manager in C-B-T, I was Acting Project Manager down there. Then when they did the combination, he was Project Manager for both projects, and I was the Chief of the Pueblo, or the Fryingpan-Pueblo Office.
- Storey: Do you remember when they combined the two offices?

### Combining the Regional Offices

Garner: It had to be in '85. Actually, it was kind of interesting, because about, I'm going to say six months after they did the combination down there is when they combined the two regions. Nobody had a hint at the time that we did the combination there that that's what was coming, and that was kind of surprising, which was a real turn of luck for me because had I been in the position I was in in the Region when they combined it, I would have probably ended up in Billings.<sup>17</sup>

Storey: You saying you wouldn't wanted to end up in Billings?

Garner: No, I personally liked going to Pueblo. I much preferred the project over a Regional Office.

Storey: It seems as if people follow Bill Martin around a lot, that he has people whom he sees as good managers, and he moves from California to here.

Garner: Right.

Storey: And people move from California to here, and so on. Did you get to know Bill Martin better after you went down to Pueblo?

Garner: No. No, because Bill Martin then went to Billings.

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17. In 1985, Reclamation merged the Lower Missouri Region in Denver, Colorado, with the Upper Missouri Region in Billings, Montana, to form the Missouri Basin Region. Three years later, Reclamation closed the Southwest Regional Office in Amarillo, Texas, to form the Great Plains Region, headquartered in Billings, Montana.

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- Storey: But he was still your Regional Director?
- Garner: Yes, but I never saw him. I mean, I only talked to Bill Martin in the course of my career probably five times. The only time I really talked to Bill Martin about my career was when I saw him down at Pueblo at the dedication of the Rock Canyon swim beach area, and I told him at the time that I didn't particularly like what I was doing in the Region, and if there was something else that came up, keep me in mind. That was virtually what I told him. That's really the only time I ever talked him other than dealing on a specific issue, which there weren't that many times.
- Storey: A Branch Chief wouldn't be talking to the Regional Director much?
- Garner: No.
- Storey: Who was talking to the Regional Director?
- Garner: The Division Chiefs.
- Storey: So that would have been one level higher?
- Garner: That would have been Willis, and that would have also been Ray Willms, as Project Manager. Those are the people that you talk to as the Regional Director.
- Storey: Ray Willms, I presume, would have selected you for Pueblo? Well, now wait. How did that work?
- Garner: I can't answer that. I have no idea. All I know is I

got a telephone call from Bill Martin asking me if I wanted to go to Pueblo. Now, how they came up with me, I don't have a clue.

Actually, my dealings with Ray Willms prior to going to Pueblo were not all pleasant. He was the Project Manager in Klamath when I was in youth programs and I had a Y-C-C camp up there, and Ray Willms did not have a lot of use for youth programs. They were kind of a pain to him. They took his staff, and he didn't like that stuff. So he and I went round and round numerous times on youth programs. So I had not really dealt with Ray Willms on a very positive note until I actually got to Pueblo. So I have a feeling that Ray Willms wasn't the one who selected me to go to Pueblo. So I have no idea who did other than Bill Martin.

- Storey: Was this a lateral for you or was it a promotion?
- Garner: No, it was a lateral.
- Storey: So they could just pick you up and move you administratively. You didn't have to apply or anything?
- Garner: Right.
- Storey: You were down there for, I think it was six years?
- Garner: Yes.
- Storey: I gather your relationships with Ray Willms changed.

- Garner: Yes.
- Storey: I know last time you talked about him.
- Garner: I think very highly of him. He's a very, very sharp individual.
- Storey: You were sort of an Area Manager within the Project Office?
- Garner: Right.
- Storey: How did that work? Did Ray pretty much let you run the area, or was he involved, or how did that work?
- Garner: In the initial thing, because he had been there for a while and he knew all the players and everything, he interjected himself, but he shortly backed out of the situation to where he let me virtually take over his stuff. He only came down every once in a while to go to a board meeting or to do something. He pretty much stayed out of the picture.

I would call and talk to him a lot on various issues because I was getting into areas that I virtually had no background in. Ray was real good about that. He basically would give me advice. He would coach me on, "Go read this," or, "Go read that," or, "Look at this," or, "Look at that." He never really gave me the direct answer. He wanted you to come up with the answer. Sure enough, if you went and did what he said, you'd come up with the answer,

Storey: In the Pueblo Office, what was the area of responsibility?

**Pueblo Office Responsibilities**

Garner: I took in all of the Southeast District, all the agricultural area from there to Kansas. So you had all the Reclamation Reform Act issues, which there's a lot of them down there. You had the Pueblo Reservoir and all the operations of the water for Fry-Ark, from the West Slope on down. I did not deal with Mt. Elbert power facilities or the operation of those facilities up there. I didn't deal with that. So it was primarily the water operations, which was the whole thing, and then from Pueblo Reservoir to Kansas.

Storey: Do we have Martin Reservoir?

Garner: No. That's Corps.

Storey: That's a Corps project that the farmers drain every year.

Garner: Right. Actually, it's pretty much a flood control operation.

Storey: What kinds of issues did you run into? Managing water along the Arkansas is what it sounds like it amounts to.

Garner: Well, that and other issues associated with it. We were still doing a lot of construction. We were constructing a fish hatchery below Pueblo, and we were finishing up construction of recreation

facilities, and we were finishing up construction of Pueblo Pipeline, which takes water from Pueblo to Colorado Springs. So a lot of construction issues at the time.

Then it moved more into the Reclamation Reform Act and making sure the land class and the eligible and the ineligible lands, which I spent a considerable amount of time working on. Writing up commingling plans for commingling water, native water with project water.

Storey: Native water?

Garner: Yes. Native water, which is native to Colorado East Slope versus imported project water, West Slope Water. They have rights for the native water that are different than the rights for the project water, and how you administer those under R-R-A [Reclamation Reform Act] gets to be an extremely complicated issue which we don't have enough time to talk about.

Storey: You mean today, I hope. (laughter)

Garner: Probably within our lifetime.

Storey: Tell me about R-R-A issues. Somehow Colorado doesn't leap to mind as a major R-R-A hot spot.

#### **Reclamation Reform Act Issues**

Garner: No, it doesn't. Most of the R-R-A issues are in

California and in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>18</sup> In the Southeast District, we have probably the majority of the R-R-A problems within the Great Plains Region.

Storey: We're talking acreage limitation problems, I take it?

Garner: Right.

Storey: They exceed the, what is it, 940 or—

Garner: 960, 960 acres. And the problems down there are that you have a number of entities, families, for example, the Proctors. The old man and his wife had thirteen kids, a lot of which own property down there. Every Sunday they get together to decide how they're going to operate all of this. When you start getting into R-R-A and you start getting into leasing agreements and partnerships and all of this other stuff, somebody like the Proctors cause you major nightmares.

We also have a lot of property down there because of the economics in the Arkansas Valley that has been foreclosed on and picked up by banks. What's the one big one? Well, anyway, Colorado Bank and Trust has a number of property and there's a couple of other national banking firms that own property down there. Then you get into the foreclosing issues and how you serve water to those properties, and what period of time you serve them to. We pretty much got into it, or I got into it

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18. In 1982, Congress passed the Reclamation Reform Act, which, among other things, increased the acreage limitation eligible for receiving project water from 160 acres to 960 acres.



with a couple of people that worked for me down there. We got a handle on most everything that was going on. So we controlled it, and we developed a fairly good plan for administering it. That's probably why you don't hear much about it, is because it works.

It's just that a couple of big issues that are real problems are issues that Reclamation has a problem with Reclamation-wide, and you're not going to solve it on the Arkansas. One of them is return flows. Once the water is used once, we basically give the water to the district and they can claim that water again and sell it to somebody. They get the revenues from it. We're saying that if they're able to capture that water, if they're able to claim the return flow, then R-R-A applies to it, which makes it extremely difficult to administer because not only are you accounting for the water when it's used the first time, but you have to continue to account for the water every time it's used until it goes away, which is a-

Storey: Until it's consumed?

### **Imbalances in Administering RRA**

Garner: Until it's consumed, which is a nightmare to do. Which to me is totally ridiculous because the administration of something like that costs way more than the benefit you get out of it.

Probably one of the things in the B-R-C [Budget Review Committee] this year that was pretty enlightening to me is the fact that California,

where you have a lot of R-R-A problems, they're selling water at full cost to people to serve their lands because they're in excess. Well, they're making like five, six million bucks a year off of these full cost water. So they're making money.

We're not making anything here. The whole region probably makes 100,000, a couple of 100,000 dollars. So when you look at it from the taxpayer's standpoint, why would we spend the same amount of money administering Reclamation Reform in this region as we do in California, where in California they make money, we make nothing? We really don't have much of a profit. So when they come out with standards that say thou shall review these districts every two years, or every three years, that may be appropriate in California. Here, every ten or twelve years may be appropriate, because we don't have a problem.

Storey: How many water districts were you dealing with out of Pueblo?

#### **Dealing with Project Water Users**

Garner: Well, there's only one water district, but that one water district has thirteen ditch companies underneath it, and each one of those are independent ditch companies.

Storey: So you had to deal with each one of them independently?

Garner: Right. Well, you work through the district but you have to deal with them independently. You have to

go in to the ditch company, you have to learn the by-laws of the ditch company, and what they can and can't do with water. You have to learn how they turn out water, how they serve the various parcels of land. You have to know where the laterals are. You have to know who owns the land, who irrigates the land, who leases the land, who farms the land.

Storey: Why would we care about the ditch company's rules and regulations? We deliver the water to the ditch company.

Garner: Because it depends on how the ditch company administers the water. In some cases, if it's a mutual ditch company, then for every acre-foot of water that comes into that ditch, they get their equal share of that water, that farmer does. So if there's water in the ditch, he gets a share of it. Other ditch companies, they only get a portion of the water that's in the ditch that belongs to them. There may be a full ditch, but it may not be that they get that portion at the time.

The problem is if under that ditch company you have ineligible lands, they have native water and project water in that ditch. You have to know exactly how much of each one of them is in the ditch. The native water has to go to the ineligible lands and the project water has to go to the eligible lands. That's why you have to know what their by-laws are. It's because if they get an equal share of that, they don't care whether it's native or project water; they're going to take their water. You have to make sure that you have an adequate number

amount of native water in that ditch to serve all the ineligible lands under the ditch so that they're not putting project water on ineligible lands. So you have to know everything there is to know about those ditch companies and how they deliver their water.

Storey: How does Reclamation manage that? Did you have staff in Pueblo who spent all their time watching this?

Garner: I had one person and myself. The two of us developed a commingling plan for it and went out and made it work.

Storey: You're saying that the whole staff in Pueblo was two people?

Garner: The whole staff that dealt with R-R-A was two people.

Storey: That must have kept you busy.

Garner: Yes. But I learned more than I ever want to know about R-R-A.

Storey: How could you keep track of this kind of stuff with, you said thirteen ditch companies?

#### **Eligible and Ineligible Lands**

Garner: Right. It's not a problem if the ditch company doesn't have any ineligible lands under it. If they're all eligible lands, it's fairly easy. They can take whatever they want and use their project water.

But if they have ineligible lands, and that's what keyed it, there were probably four of the ditch companies that had ineligible lands. So you really had to know exactly where those ineligible lands were and how they were irrigating. So you did spot checks to go out, and you would meet with the ditch rider, and go take a look at them, and see how they were doing it. You had to learn a lot about water.

Storey: I guess so. Do you have any recollection of how much was native, what proportion was native water, normally?

Garner: Fry-Ark water, project water in there was probably maybe 20, 10 to 20 percent. Well, it kind of depended. You'd normally start off in the year, like right now they've got tons of native water. There's no project water. As they get towards—it's pretty much finishing out their crops in August. Their native drops way off, and so you can end up with quite a little bit of project water. Probably 80 percent project water. But over the course of a year, the actual amount of water that's project water in comparison to native water is real small. You're only talking less than 10 percent of the total water supply is project water. But when that 10 percent is critical to use, it could be 90 or 100 percent of the ditch.

Storey: What I think I'm hearing you talk about is trying to assure that unauthorized use was not made of project water.

Garner: Correct.

- Storey: My impression has been that Reclamation wasn't a whole lot concerned about unauthorized use. Did you feel that you were in an unique position, or do you feel that the sense that unauthorized use isn't so important is a misconception? Or how do you react to all of this? (laughter) Before I get tangled up further.
- Garner: Well, I guess when I went in there, Ray Willms kind of set the tone for what I was supposed to do. He talked about the unauthorized use. At the time it was basically ineligible lands. Whether it's unauthorized, that's kind of a Johnny-come-lately term.
- Storey: That's a new term, yes.

#### **Unauthorized Water Use**

- Garner: It was water that was being applied to lands that weren't authorized for the water. Ray made it real clear that he wanted to make sure that we did everything we could to prevent that from happening. So I was basically doing what I was told to do. Given the amount of time and the amount of manpower that has been put into that effort on the Southeast, and where we are today, I would say that we could probably considerably cut back on R-R-A efforts because I think we've got them fairly well educated. We could concentrate—there's some of those ditch companies down there that we don't need to do reviews on. There's only some parcels that are ineligible that we need to keep track of.

So that's one of the problems with rules and regulations is rules and regulations, the way they're written, are written for all of Reclamation, and primarily are written for the problems of California. Not everybody has the problems of California, yet we have to go spend all of our time and taxpayers' money in trying to make sure that we don't have the problems they do.

Right now I can say, no, we don't have the problems. Northern's a good example. Northern [Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District], in their wisdom, was exempt from R-R-A. In their legislation, they got exempt from the Reclamation Reform Act, except for water conservation.

Storey: Well, they were exempted from the acreage limitation.

Garner: Right. Which virtually exempts them from R-R-A.

Storey: From R-R-A. Right.

Garner: The only thing that really applies is water conservation.

Storey: Why are the lands unauthorized to receive project water?

#### **Unauthorized Lands Exceed 960 Acres**

Garner: Primarily because they're in excess of the 960 acres.

Storey: So the Proctors, for instance. Daddy Proctor and

Mama Proctor own 960 acres, say. Can they then have another 960 acres for which they have native water rights?

Garner: Yes. They can do that as long as none of the project water that went on their 960 are native. But that's when you get into your ditch decrees and your Southeast District operating principles, because the Southeast District says if I have 960 acres—let's say I had a couple thousand acres and I had water rights, native water rights for those 2,000 acres, and I decided in my great wisdom to sell half of my water rights to the city of Colorado Springs because they're going to pay me big money for it so that they can turn it into municipal water. Then the district has a criteria that says if you sell those, then those lands that you sold those water rights off of are not eligible to receive project water.

Storey: This would be project water rights.

Garner: Right. We don't have that rule in Reclamation. They can sell their native water and we could still provide them with project water. But according to the district, if they sell their native water, we won't provide them with project water, which gets to be a real interesting issue, because then it's administering R-R-A really doesn't—the district has a whole different set of regulations because, for example, 80 percent of the Colorado Canal, which is out towards Ordway, covers that whole area out there. They sold it to Colorado Springs. They sold their native water rights.

Well, now the district says those lands can't



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receive project water. Now, we wouldn't say that, because, in our opinion, they're still eligible. They haven't done anything to be ineligible. They've got less than 960 per person, and all this other kind of stuff, so they can receive it. But the district says no, they can't.

Storey: So now, am I getting the right idea? They sold native water rights—

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Storey: The question was could they sell project water, too.

Garner: Well, "they" meaning the farmer?

Storey: Yes. Could the farmer say, "Colorado Springs, you can have my share of the project water"?

### **Selling Project Water Rights**

Garner: Well, they could probably do that, but they have to buy the project water from the Southeast District at eight dollars an acre-foot. The city is looking for a long-term supply. So they come in every year, the farmer does, to put in an allocation for water from the Southeast District, so it's a yearly thing.

What Colorado Springs is looking for is I want to buy water rights that means in a drought year I've got the water rights. The farmer in a drought year may not get project water, so then he has nothing to sell to the city. So there really wouldn't be—cities aren't interested in that.

Storey: That kind of a water right.

Garner: Right.

Storey: Were there any of the ditch companies that were easier to deal with than others, or worse to deal with than others?

Garner: Yes.

Storey: What kinds of things came up?

#### **Difficulties in Dealing with Ditch Companies**

Garner: Well, they have a real hard time. They don't like the government coming in and learning about their operation. So a lot of what you did you had to do on your own because they would not tell you anything. You had to go out and look at laterals and figure out—first place, you had to figure out where the ineligible lands were. So you drove out there and you found out where the ineligible lands were. Then you found out how they got water and you found out where the measuring devices were. Then you might go to the ditch company. You would have told the ditch company we're going to do this, but I'll be damned if they'll tell you where this person lives. They won't tell you anything.

So you go out and find it out. Then you go to the ditch, to the lateral, and then on a certain day when it's questionable as to whether they're getting project water or not. You would probably come out there with some kind of measuring device and measure that ditch to find out, in actuality, whether

what the ditch rider puts in his records are what's in the ditch. It was kind of like the I-R-S [Internal Revenue Service] coming to visit you. As you got known better and they understood what you were doing, it was a little easier, but it never was real easy. They still are very protective of their records.

I remember one instance where the ditch rider is on the Catlin [phonetic] Canal, old Frank Molinsky and Elmer were riding around, and Frank was pointing out these various things to me. He had this book, and I said, "Okay Frank. What's this lateral here? What's the capacity of this lateral, and how much is served out of this?"

He would flip over this thing, and he'd look it up and he'd say, "It's this, this, and this."

I said, "Frank, is there any chance of getting a copy of that book?"

He said, "Nope."

Well, at the end of the day, when Frank, we took him back to his place, we started to head out. He had dropped his book in the van, sitting in the back of the van. So I turned around and took the book back to Frank, and said, "You left this in the van." It would have been real easy to go copy that thing and then send it to him, but that had a lot of valuable information. But they're not going to tell you that stuff. You have to find it out. You have to work for every little bit of information to determine what they're doing, because they don't want you to know what they're doing.

Storey: They're using Reclamation project water, but they don't have to provide us with information?

**Ditch Companies Do Not Have to Provide Reclamation Information**

Garner: True, because they're buying the project water from the Southeast District. Their feeling is, "I'm paying you for the water. It's none of your business what I do with that water." Especially someone like Frank Molinsky, because Frank Molinsky has been there since the beginning of dirt, and he was one of the ones that originally started the project. Frank's point is, "If us farmers wouldn't have been in there fighting for this project, you wouldn't have had this project in the first place, and you wouldn't have all the recreation facilities and all the people enjoying what you enjoy. So thank your lucky stars that we did this for you."

Storey: I've heard that somewhere else today. (laughter)

Garner: Yes.

Storey: What about if you went to the district? They wouldn't tell you? They couldn't tell you?

**Water District Did Not Help**

Garner: The district had a staff of three people. They had a receptionist, they had a bookkeeper, and they had the general manager. That was it. That's all they had.

Storey: And this office is out at Ordway, isn't it?

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- Garner: No. The district office is right in Pueblo, the Southeastern District office. The ditch company, Colorado Canal, has an office in Ordway. Then the Catlin one is in Rocky Ford, and they are scattered all over everywhere.
- Storey: If that's all the staff they had, how did they know that they were distributing the water the way they were supposed to be?
- Garner: They didn't. They didn't care. It wasn't their problem.
- Storey: They just collected the money?
- Garner: Right.
- Storey: And passed on Reclamation's share to them?
- Garner: Right.
- Storey: Who owns this district? Are they a nonprofit? How does this work?
- Garner: It's very similar to Northern. It's like a quasi-municipal operation. They take in their revenues and they pay a general manager, and they have a board. They pay their board travel expenses and meals and stuff like that. Then they put all the money in the bank and they hope some day that they can buy out Reclamation.
- Storey: How many acres under these thirteen ditch companies?

- Garner: Two hundred and eighty thousand.
- Storey: That's an awful lot to keep track of, for two people.
- Garner: Yes. Well, you have to keep track of the ones that have problems.
- Storey: So first you have to figure out which ones are the ones with problems.
- Garner: First thing you have to do is figure out the ones that have problems.
- Storey: Then you have to go out and deal with Frank Molinskys.
- Garner: Right, and people like Frank Molinsky. Right.
- Storey: Was he an irrigator? Was he a ditch rider? What?
- Garner: He's a farmer. He also was, at one time or may still be, like the president of the Catlin Ditch Company. So he probably isn't anymore. But he's an institution in the valley.
- Storey: We're talking maybe 10 or 20 percent of the water. So I guess, in a sense, Reclamation water along the Arkansas there is supplemental water? Am I thinking right?
- Garner: Oh, yes. Yes. It's all supplemental.
- Storey: To keep the watermelons and the cantaloupes nice and plump.

Garner: Right. To finish them out by the end of the year, to make sure they've got lots of good water.

Storey: So we store the water at Pueblo. Anywhere else? Twin Lakes?

Garner: Twin Lakes and Turquoise.

Storey: And those are all our facilities?

Garner: Right.

Storey: Did we have any particular problems with them?

#### **Water Management at Twin Lakes and Turquoise**

Garner: No. We primarily do a lot of water management on those, balancing water between accounts because we have a lot of different people who have accounts. You've got the various cities, like Colorado Springs, Pueblo, that own like this Twin Lakes Canal. They own their own trans-mountain diversion systems. They have space in Turquoise and in Pueblo. So it's balancing all of this.

Storey: Does that mean they paid for part of Pueblo?

Garner: No.

Storey: How did they get space, then?

Garner: Because there was originally a lake at Turquoise and Twin, and they had space and C-F&I had space. Well, C-F&I [Colorado Fuel & Iron] and Twin Lakes Canal Company had space in both of

those. Then we came in and enlarged them. So they retained the right to those facilities. So we consider water within Twin Lakes or Turquoise, we consider it within the system, which means we could have it in Pueblo or anywhere we want to have it. They can't say, "That's my water in Twin Lakes," because we may have it at Pueblo out there because it's advantageous for us to do that.

Storey: Well, I can see I've just scratched the surface of a fascinating topic, but believe it or not, we've been talking for two hours again.

Garner: Well, good. I'm done.

Storey: I really appreciate you taking the time and I'd like to ask you again if you're willing for researchers inside and outside Reclamation to use the information on these tapes and resulting transcripts.

Garner: Sure.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much.

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END OF INTERVIEWS.